

The Creation of the Crater

There were many tedious duties as High Priest of Taal in Talabheim, but Dieter Weisswald loved telling the old stories to the children during the Summer Solstice. “They are so young and inquisitive,” he mused, “such a shame that the world is so dangerous a place.

“Tell us how the crater came to be, Venerable Father?” asked Johann. He was a ten-year-old boy and bright beyond his age.

Dieter settled his old bones down onto the stump of the tree. “That tale has been a favourite of mine since I was a lad like yourself some fifty years ago,” he said. “Now, listen closely.”

“It happened a long time ago in an age of when the Gods were young. The world was a different place back then: there was peace and harmony between the land and the few who inhabited it. Large-eyed demons came to the world to call it their own, but the Gods in their infinite wisdom gave them a land where the setting sun comes to rest after a hard day’s labour. Then the Great Disaster struck and other, more powerful beings came into our world.

“They were invaders full of evil and destruction. The Gods saw the damage to the land and took up arms against the attackers. This was the Gods’ War, and it wreaked great damage to the world. Led by the brothers, Taal and Ulric, the Gods forced the Powers from Beyond into an uneasy stalemate. The Earth Mother could not see her creation abused any further, so she called for a truce with the Four Lords of Chaos.

“The Sun God Oermath, her husband, was outraged. How dare his wife reach a truce with the invaders? This could not be permitted, even if it meant he must do battle with his wife and kin. Oermath’s allies were Solkan and Arianka, themselves newcomers to our world, though implacably hostile to the Four. They were determined to continue the war, whatever its consequences -- the Four would not be allowed a toe hold in this world.

“Taal and Ulric knew their mother’s mind. It was within the Earth Mother’s power to utterly destroy the outworlders, but the force required would destroy all life on the world, including her mortal children. The Earth Mother could not bring herself to murder her kin. Taal and Ulric could live with her truce, since both brothers had grown powerful during the Gods’ War and were certain they would win, even if it took an eternity.

“Taal and Ulric were more worried about the immediate threat. The sibling newcomers, Solkan and Arianka, were encouraging Oermath to battle his wife for supremacy. In their own way, the Law Gods were as much a danger to the natural order as those of Chaos. Still, they did not have Oermath’s power to destroy everything. Taal and Ulric knew that they had to act decisively if they were to save what they had left.

“Ulric’s son Mórr was sent with Manann Taalson to hold the attention of the Law Gods, through the use of trickery, if necessary. With the Law Gods occupied, the two sons of the Earth Mother attacked her husband, their father. The battle was furious but short, and the brothers cast

Oermath down from his celestial throne to the forest below. A huge crater was formed where the Sun God crashed. Defeated and humiliated, Oermath yielded to his sons' demands that he honour the Mother's agreement. Oermath was then banished to a land far to the south. In his rage, Oermath burned that lush southern realm, reducing it to a desolate, sand-filled wasteland – the land we now call Araby.

“And that, my son, is how this crater known as the ‘Eye of the Forest’ was formed.”