

Rise of the Psychic Spirits

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Preface

Planet Rancientia is an Earth-sized exoplanet, millions of light years from Earth. It is the ancestral home world of the spirit race, to which the main characters in the fantasy/historical fiction comic book series *Spirit Guild* belong. The following work explores the rise of the psychic spirits of Rancientia, and details the events leading up to Queen Dalasia's spirit guild initiative, which sent young spirits to Earth on a mission to destroy Thayer, a First Spirit who committed treason. The events depicted in *Rise of the Psychic Spirits* set the stage for *Spirit Guild*, which takes place on Earth in 1776 New York.

Part I: Rise of the Psychic Spirits

A long time ago, on planet Rancientia, the psychic spirits awoke on the White Realm, and found that they were strong. The White Realm, a floating mountain made of ice and snow, was truly a majestic place. Thick, gnarly, and leafless gray and white trees abounded amid sparkling silver rivers, that snaked down crags and poured into the Winding Sea, which soaked the shores of the mainland below. The spirits were somewhat humanoid in appearance, but much taller than humans of Earth. There were thirty of the First Spirits, and they were named, in alphabetical order: Astra, Chapen, Dalasia, Deatrice, Elissa, Ellawine, Ether, Fawn, Gilden, Halbar, Hollis, Hollix, Kroon, Lancet, Loxwill, Maye, Mercury, Maune, Nalena, Omera, Orea, Pearo, Petrius, Quinna, Ramm, Richold, Rylett, Tessa, Thayer, and Thissett.

Dalasia was the most revered of the First Spirits, due to her kind disposition and powers of foresight. Using their collective strengths, the spirits forged a great fortress of ice and stone atop the highest mountain peak on the White Realm. At Gray Fire Castle (as they came to call it), the spirit race flourished. They soon mastered their various psychic crafts. Sustenance and mirth abounded on the White Realm, and for thousands of years the spirits were happy and content, without need or desire to leave their icy world.

However, in the year 4660 A.A. (After Awakening)¹, Dalasia had a vision that other life-forms dwelled below them, on mainland Rancientia. The spirit race had an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and so, Dalasia led an expeditionary force consisting of Thayer, Chapen, Gilden, Loxwill, Quinna, and Tessa to the mainland below. In a massive boat, they sailed over the cascading Winding Sea to the shores of the mainland. They carefully hid their vessel, and began their long, incognito journey throughout mainland Rancientia.

To the east, they found beautiful landscapes of gigantic, hilly yellow forests, where slender rivers and streams cut down and across the winding hills. The air was crisp and filled their hearts with joy, and they stayed in the east for many years. To the west, they found a much more unpleasant and unwelcoming terrain. Most of it consisted of red sand deserts, with no shade from the hot sun for numerous miles. They did not linger there, and continued west until they reached the shores of Blood Sea. There, angular reddish-black rocks jutted out of the sand and vast red ocean. The spirits were fascinated by the seemingly endless sea. They camped there for many years, studying the tides. Dalasia was certain that, if life did exist outside of the White Realm, it was near Blood Sea.

¹ A.A. stands for “After Awakening,” and began once the spirits took their first breaths. From this point on, until otherwise noted, all dates are given in Rancientian time.

Many years passed at the shore, but the spirits did not find other life forms on planet Rancientia. It was not long until the spirits became divided on whether or not they should continue the search for life, or return to the White Realm. In 4710, Dalasia despaired, and began to doubt her foresight. Some of the group, like Thayer and Ramm, held her responsible for, as the latter stated, “wasting our energy on an invaluable venture.” Others remained firmly on Dalasia’s side.

On one particularly cold evening, Dalasia stared over the red ocean. Her piercing blue eyes peered out into an unending cosmos full of starlight. Chapen soon joined her, and she confided to him that “if we should find no life here, then surely my foresight is deceiving and impure.” For the first time, silver tears streamed down her face. They were cold. She lamented, “how can I live with such shame? My abilities are useless.”

“My lady,” Chapen said, as he lifted her chin and wiped the tears from her eyes. “Your foresight is fueled by the light of your soul. Your light is more rich and powerful than anything else this world can ever offer. It can never be useless.” Chapen’s kind words gave Dalasia some comfort that night, but as time passed, and still no life forms came from Blood Sea, she lost faith again. With great melancholy, Dalasia decided that the group should return to the White Realm. However, her sadness was not to be eternal.

Part II: The War of King Brimbold

In 4716, while on their way back from the west, the spirits finally discovered other life forms, who they called the Magi. The Magi had corporeal bodies of many different shapes and sizes, and were altogether quite exotic looking to the spirits. They were magicians, who used the energy of Rancientia itself to perform spells, and to warp its physical parameters. The First

Spirits were enthralled to find the Magi, until they discovered the true state of life on the mainland. A sect of Dark Magi—manipulators of black magic—had turned against and enslaved the Light Magi, who were generally peaceful and practiced white magic.

The spirits soon learned that, after a few swift battles, King Brimbold and the Dark Magi laid waste to the Light Magi. The First Spirits were truly disgusted at what they witnessed, particularly the harsh slavery of the Light Magi. They decided to go back to the White Realm, forge a plan, and return with the the might of all thirty First Spirits. Upon their return to the White Realm, Dalasia explained what they had seen on the mainland. After some consideration, the spirits unanimously agreed that, once they liberated the Light Magi and destroyed the Dark Magi, they would unify Rancientia, and rule over it in peace.

Years of training on the White Realm commenced. Time after time, Dalasia proved herself to be the most powerful of the First Spirits, followed by the silver-tongued Thayer. Ultimately, the spirits chose Dalasia as Commander, and after much planning and training, were finally ready to descend upon the mainland. In 4730, Dalasia and the First Spirits launched an all-out attack on the Dark Magi below.

At the Battle of Blood Sea, the psychic spirits easily overpowered the unprepared magicians. The clash resulted in a number of Dark Magi deaths, and the liberation of hundreds of Light Magi. The Dark Magi who survived the battle retreated to their central fortress in the east, called Yellow Horn. Yellow Horn was very well secured, nestled high above sea level, at the top of a thick, gnarled mountain forest. There, King Brimbold bided his time, with hundreds of evil warriors ready for war. While Dalasia and the spirits debated how to most effectively attack the keep, the calculated king cast two powerful hexes. In 4731, he trapped the spirits Loxwill and Mercury in the voids of Rancientia. In 4732, he lured Kroon, Tessa, and Petrius to one of his

outposts, and killed them all with a death spell. Prior to this, death had been unknown to the spirit race. Each spirit felt the cold weight of death on that horrid night, and their rage grew. King Brimbold, greatly weakened from casting the spells, retreated to Yellow Horn's most secured area, in hopes of gathering his strength.

In mid-4733, the enraged First Spirits crashed upon Yellow Horn like a wild storm. As the spirits slew King Brimbold's remaining army, Dalasia tracked the King, who attempted to flee the castle. She caught up to him, and seized control of his mind. He did not move. Seeing red, she psychically crushed his body from within. Dalasia carried the King's corpse to the center of action, and held him high. Upon seeing their dead leader, the surviving Dark Magi surrendered, but were shown no mercy. Thayer, Ramm, Deatrice, and Gilden slew them all. The war ended, and the spirits rejoiced as the Light Magi were universally freed across the mainland.

Part III: The Life Spell

The virtuous Magi immediately started righting the wrongs perpetrated by the rebel sect. Although they could not bring the fallen spirits back to life, they helped recover Loxwill and Mercury from the voids. As a result of her unwavering leadership, determination, and bravery in battle, Dalasia was named Queen of a united Rancientia by her spirit counterparts and the Light Magi. Indeed, the Light Magi were awed by the divine looking, powerful spirits, and were indebted to them for freeing them. However, one point of contention arose between the races: the saving of King Brimbold's book of dark enchantments.

In one of her first decrees as Queen, Dalasia ordered Thayer, who was considered the greatest scholar among them, to hide the book amongst his vast collection of tomes and scrolls. Obviously, the Light Magi saw the preservation of the spells as dangerous, and urged the spirits

to destroy them. However, the stubbornness of the spirits overpowered them. It was mostly due to the Queen's love of all knowledge—regardless of how evildoers used it—that she could not destroy the book. During a post-war meeting in 4734, Queen Dalasia firmly told Rassett, the strongest of the Light Magi, that “it was our thirst for knowledge which brought us hither, and which freed you from your bonds. It is for this urge that we will linger here, to learn your ways, and you to learn ours. Do not trouble yourself with the book of darkness any longer.” Thayer vehemently backed his Queen, assuring the Magi that the spells “would be well hidden, and safe from prying eyes.”

Despite this argument, the trust between the races grew, and, in time, the spirits learned as much from the Magi as the Magi learned from the spirits. They discovered that, by combining their respective abilities, it was possible to harness the very essence of the First Spirits to create life forms in the wombs of female Magi. Queen Dalasia favored the idea of procreation and worked with the Light Magi to preform the Life Spell. The Second Spirits were born of this union, with unique talents and appearances. Some looked akin to the First Spirits, while others were born with more animalistic and fantastical shapes, owing to their Magi lineage. Although these beings possessed both magical and psychic talents, they were less powerful than the First Spirits. Once the Second Spirits matured, they birthed the Third Spirits, who possessed the same skills, albeit of a weaker nature. In appearance, the Third Spirits looked akin to the First Spirits, but were smaller in size. The four main characters in *Spirit Guild*—Blaken, Marston, Rowen, and Seddus—belong to this generation of spirits.

Part IV: The Treason of the Order of Purity

The intermingling of Spirit-Magi bloodlines did not sit well with a small sect of spirits. In

councils, Thayer often argued against the promulgation of procreation. In 4866, he fumed over “the infiltration of Magi blood into the pure line of spirits,” and stated that “the White Realm gave us life, and meant for us to rule over it. Yet, we share the glory with the inferior peoples of the planet, instead of embracing our own destiny.”

Soon, he formed the Order of Purity with Ramm, Loxwill, Deatrice, and Pearo. In secret, Thayer’s discontent led him to study the book of King Brimbold. In time, he became a master of the dark spells, which were enhanced by his intellect. He convinced the Order of Purity to help him “cleanse” Rancientia by overthrowing the Queen, and destroying the Magi race altogether. Thayer became obsessed with the thought of becoming king, and ruling over a planet inhabited by First Spirits alone. In 4916, after many years of plotting, the Order of Purity moved against the virtuous forces by casting a hex which made all pregnant Magi lose their babies. The Fourth Spirits had been murdered in utero. Sadness, confusion, and chaos quickly abounded on Rancientia.

Queen Dalasia and the rest of the spirits immediately set out to counter the rebels. The Queen, who had long feared that Thayer had become corrupted by the book of King Brimbold, had prepared defensive spells with the Light Magi. She rallied all of her forces under the white, silver, and violet banners of the White Realm. Consisting only of five members, the Order of Purity, although powerful, were outnumbered and could not withstand the combined forces of spirit and Magi. Pearo abandoned the team, and fled to the western mainland. Ramm, Loxwill, and Deatrice were soon captured, and banished to the voids. Seeing his dreams of dominance slipping away, Thayer cast a rifting spell, which released a giant crimson leviathan from the depths of Blood Sea. He retreated to the old fortress of Yellow Horn, where he used his remaining power to cast an Escape Spell. The Escape Spell allowed him to rift onto the planet

Earth, in the year 1442 A.D.² The spell drained Thayer of his energy, and rendered him to nothing but a pale mist, which drifted aimlessly in the winds of Earth for many years.

Thayer slowly grew stronger by preying upon human fears and temptations. After hundreds of years of haunting, he finally grew strong enough to take a human host. In 1741, he usurped the body of wealthy British officer Ingram White. In his new human form, Thayer dubbed himself Pan, out of admiration for the Greek god of the same name.

Pan learned that he could usurp Earth's energy by manipulating its spatial dimensions. He opened rifts called "dark worlds," nonphysical places that existed within the planet's voids. Through these rifts, Pan travelled miles in minutes regardless of natural barriers, and, as a psychic, used mind control to enslave minions for his devious bidding around the globe. He became a lover of women, games, and random acts of violence. For his own sport, he effectively sparked the American Revolution in 1770 with the "Boston Massacre," as seen in issue one of *Spirit Guild*. Pan used Britain's material wealth for his own needs, and, by autumn 1776, when the narrative of *Spirit Guild* begins, is at the height of his powers and influence on Earth.

Part V: The Spirit Guild Initiative

Queen Dalasia long brooded over Thayer's escape. She blamed herself for his betrayal, and the irreversible damages caused by it. She remembered all too well that she ordered him to keep the book of King Brimbold in the first place. To make matters worse, the First Spirits failed to defeat the leviathan released by Thayer. It continued to wreck daily havoc on her people. One night, at the brink of true despair, Queen Dalasia had a vision of Thayer in human form on Earth, usurping the planet's energy, and causing hysteria among the people there. Dread overcame her,

² From this point on, dates listed are in Earth time (A.D.).

for she knew that, should Thayer be successful in reaping all of Earth's energy, he would be strong enough to rift back to Rancientia, to finish what he started. To counter this future, Queen Dalasia (aided by Rassett) cast an interdimensional rifting spell of her own using white magic. If cast properly, Second Spirits and Third Spirits could be sent to Earth, where they could take hosts, and manifest unique abilities to combat the villain. Using this spell, she developed the spirit guild initiative to kill Thayer while he remained in corporeal form on Earth.

Queen Dalasia truly understood the severity of the quest, and let only the most assured spirits join the initiative. Indeed, the only way for a spirit warrior to leave Earth was to die, whether at the hands of Pan, or of old age. None of the First Spirits—not even the Queen—was certain what happened to the fallen heroes of Rancientia after death. From 1746 to 1776, the latter date being when the narrative of *Spirit Guild* begins, all guilds have failed to defeat Pan. Most have perished in battle against him and his armies. Queen Dalasia's latest and most promising spirit guild (being the thirty-third group to transfer onto Earth) is composed of Third Spirits Blaken, Marston, Rowen, and Seddus, who took long-tailed weasel hosts on Long Island, New York in 1776. There, they developed unique powers in their new bodies. The Weasels must somehow persevere against all odds, and find a way to destroy Pan on Earth.

Author's note: The story continues in *Spirit Guild #1: Powers of Earth and Hell*, coming summer 2018 from Evil Kat Comix.