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To members of the Council and those who audience these pages,

This treatise presents a collection of ideas, conditions, and advice on world building for others who follow me, may they glean insight from my experiences. I have chosen this path of recording over more extraordinary methods in hopes that, should I complete the task satisfactorily, it may act as a guide for godlings that follow.

Split into three distinct but related parts, the unifying theme of this work is mapping a new world. Book the first concerns the rudimentary decisions in world building and their implications, including but not limited to the manner in which landforms appear, why they appear in that fashion, and advice on creating maps based upon sound physical geography. Book the second concerns ecologies, various biomes and environments created by the interaction of weather and physical geography, the creatures occupying these various environments, and advice on mapping these places. Book the third concerns the limitations environment places on intelligent races, tools of culture that intelligent races use to overcome their environment, and advice on mapping cultures. Following these three sections is a collection of useful reference appendices.

The base world for comparison and reference is Earth, which functions without major magical intercession. All discussed deviations are from the perspective of Earth-like worlds, and numerous examples are drawn from Earth. In this work, magic – a complex factor in world creation—is treated as another source of accessible energy. Like sunlight and geothermal energy, magic is a building block for life and links the traditional features of many fantastic worlds to the intricate mundane web of life: vast underground populations; amazingly lush, fertile, and inexhaustible environments; and a plethora of massive predators whose existence must be magical.

Some argue that gods create worlds. Period. Others point out that gods may be living in a closed system created by a greater force, as godlings' creations are no more real except to those living in the creation. Regardless of how things are made, our primary goal is proper functioning. Things must work on their own without the constant intercession of their creators, other gods, and their magic. That being said, gods still interfere; however in the best of worlds, it is minimally necessary. With all these considerations, I humbly submit my observances for your enjoyment, scrutiny, and perusal.

Kierian the Bold
Petitioner for God of War and Bringer of Justice

Satisfactory
*See back for comments

Interlude

Kierian moaned at the first tinges of consciousness. He opened his eyes and rubbed the sleep from them. As his senses awakened, he noted the strangeness of his surroundings. The air was stiff like a skin pulled over a drum—still, yet stretched with taut energy. The light was neither dim nor luminescent, but it glowed vibrantly. The room was hardly a room, absent of walls, ceiling, and floor. Then there was the gnome sitting ten feet away from him, reclining with a pipe and making scribbles in a little pocket book. Looking up from his writings, he smiled warmly.



"You're up then," Noj spoke matter-of-factly as he closed his book. "Good. We have lots of work to do."

"Where am I?" Kierian asked in confusion. "And who are you?" He placed an anxious hand on the hilt of his blade.

The fastidious gnome's smile faded. "You don't know?"

Kierian rose to his full height, surveying his surroundings. "No. This place is not known to me."

"Oh dear." Noj sat down again and motioned for Kierian to take a seat. To Kierian's surprise, there was a chair for him where there had not been before.

"What sorcery is this?" Kierian drew his sword and looked around. He sensed a change in his blade. The sword was different in his grasp, lighter and weightier at the same time.

Noj looked up muttering Gnomish curses. "Please, just sit down, and we'll straighten this out." He opened his brown plaid waistcoat to reveal his possessions, of which were no weapons or devices of sorcery. "As you can see, there is little need for your sword."



Kierian cautiously took a seat but refused to sheath his sword, resting it beside his leg. The gnome flipped to an earmarked page and produced a pencil from his breast pocket. "Are you Kierian of Rockmoor?"

"Yes," answered the surprised fighter.

Noj looked up and nodded in confirmation. He moved the tip of his pencil down the page. "And you slew Korgol the Destroyer, God of War, Bringer of Chaos, Widow Maker, Devourer of Souls, etc?"

Flashes of memory sparked a recollection. There was a battle, a victory, then lightening; it wasn't natural, but powerful. "Yes. I suppose I did," conceded Kierian.

Noj closed his book with a reaffirming smile. "Then there is no mistake. You are Kierian of Rockmoor, God of War, Bringer of Justice." The satisfied gnome noted Kierian's blank expression. "Don't worry. Everyone starts out with a short title. You'll get more as time goes on, though most gods would abandon 'of Rockmoor' for something less... common."

Kierian stood, pacing back and forth for a few moments. "So let me get this straight." Kierian's precise steps echoed crisply in the emptiness. "I kill a god, and I take his place. Easy as that?"

"Yes and no," Noj replied with a hint of scholasticism. "The position is temporarily empty, and a period of chaos will reign until the new God of War asserts him or herself. Since you killed the last God of War, you have precedence to fill the position, provided you prove ready."

Kierian's brow furrowed, and he took his seat again. Pacing on a non-existent floor unsettled him while the lingering traces of mortal suspicion and doubt interfered with his divine intelligence. "Ready?"

"Yes. There is the small matter of the task." Noj relit his pipe, realizing this was going to take a while.

Kierian leaned toward the gnome. "What's 'The Task'?"

"The trial of the gods where you must prove able to wield your divinity."

Kierian loosed his sword from its sheath. Shining in the eerie glow of this place, the godling decided to call it the Blade of Righteousness. "Bring whatever foe or beast the gods dare pit against me."

Noj shook his head and stifled his laughter. "No, nothing of that sort. You killed Korgol the Destroyer, Spiller of Blood, Foe of Peace, Friend of Death, etc. That alone proves your prowess, regardless through might, wisdom, or trickery. Now you must prove your understanding."

Kierian was well over six feet tall, seventeen stone, encased in gleaming metal armor, and bore the Blade of Righteousness. This was all the understanding he had ever needed. "What must I do?" he asked in a dubious tone.

Noj answered plainly, "You must create a world."

Kierian roared, releasing peels of laughter in the expansive space. "You really had me going for a moment. 'You are the new God of War.' That's great. Who put you up to this? Was it Cora? 'Cause I didn't mean to leave her in the pit trap. I just got sidetracked on the way for help, and by the time I got back, she was already in town."

"Why do I get the difficult ones?" Noj thought to himself. "Suit yourself. Create something. Think of something, and shape it in your mind. You can give it smells and texture and taste. Go ahead." The terse edge in the gnome's tone and the imperious wave of his hand did not escape Kierian's notice. He closed his eyes and began creating. It was quiet and still. Then the smell of meat pie filled the air. Kierian opened his eyes to a golden-brown meat pie whose juices were bubbling through the buttery crust along side a frothing mug of ale.

"Did I do that?" Kierian asked incredulously.

"It wasn't me," answered Noj. "I'm a vegetarian." Kierian crept forward and held the warm pie in his hands. "It's not real, you know," injected the gnome. "Nothing created here is, except for those living within the creation itself."

The famished warrior bit into the pie. It felt like he hadn't eaten in ages. Warm juice and ale dribbled down his chin as he washed it down with a deep drink. It was the best tasting meat pie and ale he had ever eaten, but something was strange. It was a bit off. No, it was entirely wrong. "Where are we?" Kierian asked with a new intensity.

Noj straightened upon hearing the Voice of Divine manifest in the fighter's tone. "The testing ground. It's where godlings practice creating and test their theories on world building."

"And who are you?" Kierian's mind focused into a singularity. The food vanished like a memory.

The gnome stood and bowed to his new lord. "Noj Danask, well versed in the knowledge and engineering of building worlds. I am here to assist you. I put into motion that which you desire for your world. You will record your findings, and should the Council approve your process, you will come into your full divinity."

"And if I refuse?" Kierian's serious demeanor gave him a ferocity that Noj hadn't seen as of yet.

"Then you are neither here nor there, neither mortal nor god, shunned from enjoying the innocence of one and the power of the other."

They sat in silence together until Kierian rose and cleared his throat. "Right then. Where do we start?"

Noj opened his book. "At the beginning."

Mapping Your World

Maps are home to the stuff of legends and nightmares: Atlantis, Xanadu, terra incognita, "Here there be dragons!" A wise gnome once said, "A good map is almost a history." Maps show the past: treasure maps, maps of dead empires, and maps of sunken ancient lands. Maps show the present possibilities: harsh deserts, fertile meandering rivers, steamy jungles, and barrier mountains populated by fiercely independent people. Maps also show the future, for well I know that every conquer looks towards a map and dreams of empire. Maps may represent a world clearly like the finest prose or as cryptically as the best of poetry. It is because of this that I have chosen to use maps in creating my world.

Though maps of pen and paper do not require much in divine power, they are not so easily made. Most are unaware of all the landforms and physical geography worlds demand. Where to place mountains, rivers, swamps and deserts are important questions that must be answered, even for worlds which deviate from our given base planet, Earth. The more a world mimics the basic forces of nature, the more engrossing the world becomes for those living in the creation. The goal then becomes a map of the world that can run itself without magic, for if we create such a world, any magic we do implement simply adds to its charm.

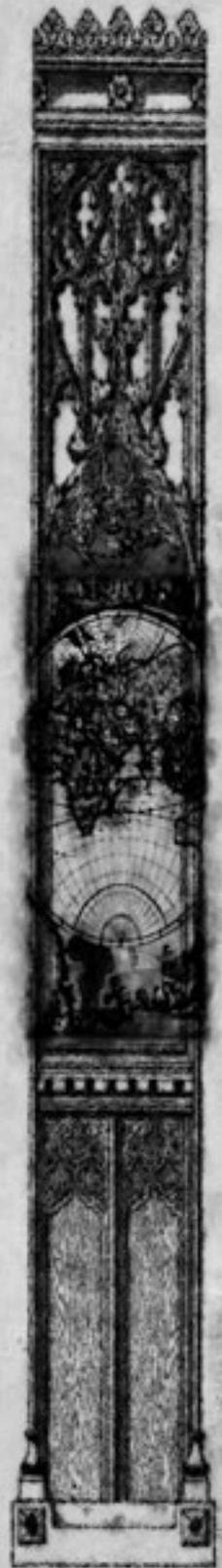
Originally I found building a planet that requires as little magic as possible an odd request, especially considering my new abilities. Now I know it a valuable lesson. Once we godlings know how a mostly non-magical planet works, we can step away from the basic design into more complex and fulfilling ones. Bears, tigers, and even dinosaurs may be interesting, but they all pale in comparison to the complexity of a fully functioning magical world inhabited by orcs, ankheg, and dragons.

Beginning Considerations

It's tempting to run into world creation before thinking about the world as a whole, hastily plopping down mountains, rivers, deserts, and jungles. When enthusiasm gets the best of patience, however, godlings end up with ragtag worlds whose geography and biomes make no sense and must be supported by magic. Although magic is an important part of every world, magic shouldn't be used to explain how a river flows over a mountain, except in very special circumstances. Magical geography should be used to intensify experiences, not explain everyday phenomenon. Remember godling, the initial magic allowance for building first worlds is slim; maximize your potential by minimizing your mistakes. Such mindful consideration may one day lead to building whole planes created entirely through magic. But as of yet, that is the future.

One of the best ways to minimize mistakes is through observation. Any artist will tell you that seeing the world properly is the first step in creation. Before making maps, spend some time with a good world atlas; it contains everything we need to know about making independent, viable worlds and realistic maps. Hopefully the remainder of this tome expands your knowledge base, allowing you a new sight in how the world works through an atlas. For example, consider continents. Though we have all been taught seven traditional continents, this artificial division impedes accurate physical vision. There are really only four giant landmasses on Earth, along with several smaller islands. Of these four giant landmasses, two of them have very small isthmuses separating them roughly in half.

In this quest for proper vision, every step of the mapping process should involve some visual aid, even if you are planning a deviant, themed world, such as an archipelago world. You will benefit from time spent looking at Earth. Accurate vision prevents jarring inaccuracies and makes new worlds require less magic. If you're of



the scholarly bent or find your gnome to be lacking in forthrightness, find an ancient tome concerning geology or physical geography. Look for one in the library. There are several available, and they will cover the processes of creation to minute details. Sometimes details are exactly what you want. Please read through this whole section before beginning your map. It will help you create a better world.

Step One: The Big Picture The Heavenly Spheres

Before starting a new world map, a creator must make decisions about what the world looks like and how it interacts with the matter outside of its atmosphere. Is the universe just like the base material one, but with more or less magic? Is the new planet the center of the solar system? Do crystal spheres hold everything in their unchanging order, or do the gods move the planets and sun? Perhaps the world rides along on the back of a giant turtle? These types of questions and their answers are part of the fun in creating new worlds.

Ironically, it is here that we have the most flexibility with new worlds. The same intelligent creatures that don't like rivers flowing uphill have no problems accepting a world surrounded by crystal spheres that move the celestial bodies across the sky while intersecting the many planes. Magic on a massive, universal scale is more easily accepted than on a small scale because creatures don't interact with astrophysics as much as they interact with gravity. Sometimes the big miracle is the most believable.

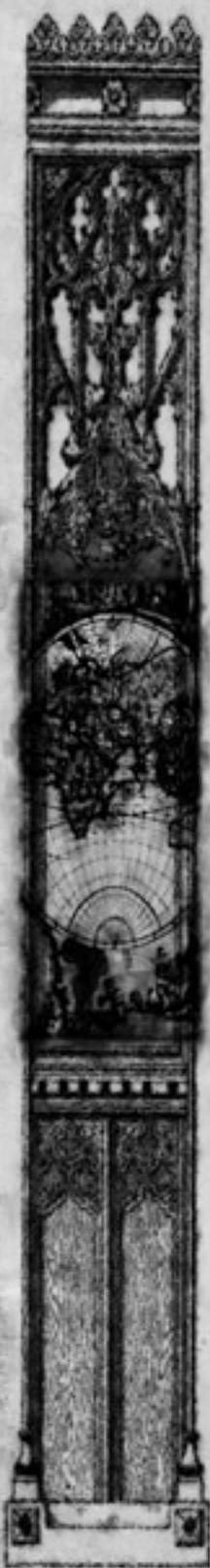
Dealing with the various cosmological and world-shaping possibilities is beyond the scope of this treatise. Flat worlds, water worlds, and hollow worlds all have their place in the metaverse, but their unique patterns require serious dedication to their exploration and power beyond what godlings possess. Our focus is on Earth-like worlds, but that's far from limited. Even on the strangest prime material planes, standard types of weather and erosion usually play their part upon landmasses, just like they do on Earth. It's just the way the multiverse likes to work.

Axial Tilt and Seasons

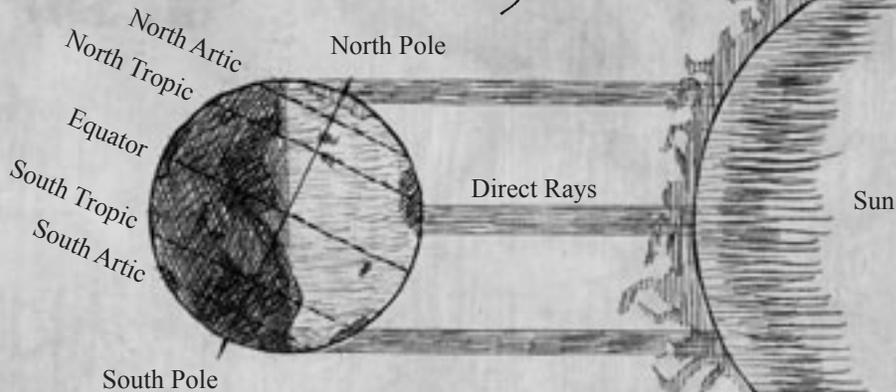
Earth sits slightly tilted at 23.5° and rotates around this axis every 24 hours, forming a day. It also revolves around the sun every 365.25 days, forming a year. These three simple things—axial tilt, length of a day, and length of a year—are some of the most important aspects of any new world. They will have the greatest effect upon what a new world looks like.

Planets maintain their axial tilt and rotation, regardless of where they are in their annual cycle. A planet's rotation around its axis creates day and night, shifting exposure to the sun's rays in its rotation. Axial tilt determines seasons with winter occurring when the planet is tilted away from the sun and summer when the planet is tilted toward the sun. When one hemisphere is tilted away from the sun, the other is tilted toward the sun, meaning that while it's winter in one hemisphere, it's summer in the other. Axial tilt also influences the length of day and night through the creation of seasons. The amount of time the hemisphere is subject to the sun's rays determines the number of daylight hours. During the winter, the days are short, and the nights long, while during summer the reverse is true.

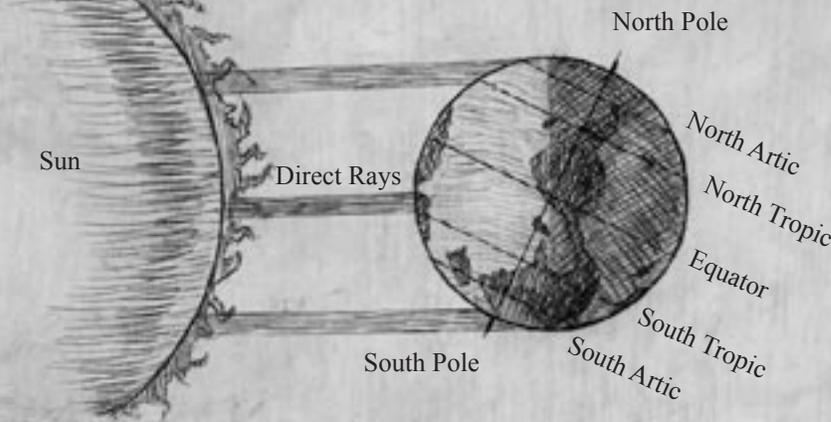
You can create a grid by identifying the points on the top and bottom of the planet around which the planet rotates, known as the poles. This grid allows you to pinpoint any specific location in relation to the poles, which are fixed points. Latitude is the distance measured north and south of the equator, with the equator at 0° and the poles at 90° . On Earth (or any planet 8,000 miles in diameter), each degree of latitude is roughly 69 miles, which varies due to polar flattening, but only by about 0.5 a mile. Since axial tilt provides us both with seasons and a way of locating specific places on a



June 21



December 21



planet, it also provides us a useful way of measuring daylight times. Using latitude in conjunction with axial tilt conveys a lot of information about a planet's daylight hours and climate.

Axial tilt determines the lower and upper limit of daylight on your planet. The lower limit of daylight is the place that experiences at least one complete day of darkness and one complete day of light a year. On Earth, this takes place at 66.5° latitude, which also correlates with the arctic regions of the planet (66.5° - 90°). As you travel closer to the poles, you experience more days of continuous light and continuous dark. Around the poles, day or night can last weeks. The upper limit of daylight is the place where the sun is directly overhead for at least one day of the year. On Earth, this takes place at 23.5° latitude, exactly 23.5° from the equator, which correlates with the tropical zones (0° - 23.5°). As you approach the equator, you experience more days with the sun directly overhead.

Notes on Deviant Axial Tilts

When you chose the axial tilt of a new planet, you are also determining the location of the arctic circles and the tropics, which influence basic climate. For planets to be Earth-like, axial tilts must be close to Earth's range (15° - 32°), depending on how much seasonal variation a godling wants. The greater the axial tilt, the more seasonal

