

The Story of Marius Seren, retrieved from the Mirror Realm of Dark Pass on the Plane of the Sleepless Dead.

Marius Seren was born to the race called the Ral; known throughout the planes as the Shining ones. They traversed the planes seeking knowledge. The Ral people were split into two factions the Elementalists and the Necromancers. Cold they were with a voracious appetite for complete understanding of the multiverse, seeking perfection with the ultimate goal of eternal life.

Among the Necromancers was Marius who had a thirst for knowledge was great even among his own kind. It was said his determination and intellect was second only to lord Cardinaris himself. Marius was part of the Family of the dead (the first family). As a young man he became firm friends with Dymwan the son of Cardinaris. However as he grew into manhood his studies took up all of his time and his dedication to learning became so much more important than his juvenile friendships.

It was during this time that Marius started to work under the tutelage of Cardinaris. As this relationship developed it became clear that Cardinaris began to treat Marius better than his own son. It was during this period seeds of hatred for Marius was planted in Dymwan's heart.

Cardinaris began to take more counsel from Marius even speaking of his grand plan to embody the whole of the Plane of the Sleepless Dead into himself. Marius had already helped research the grand ritual invocations and science for binding power within your own body but had warned Cardinaris not to proceed until they understood more about the movement and anchoring of the Plane of the sleepless dead.

However Cardinaris was under political duress and time constraints. He pushed ahead with his plan. Later generations referred to the attempt as the Great Catastrophe.

When the Ral people came to see this spectacle they were mainly necromancers, although there were some curious elementalists among those in the audience. It was a disaster and when panic set in and they had no choice but to flee from the great concentration that was developing before their eyes. It was always unclear whether any closest to the experiment survived and what actually became of the great necromancer Lord Cardinaris. A huge number were sucked helplessly into the vortex between the two ancient planes. The others were immediately

possessed by the spirits of the undead. A large part of the city in the region of the temple was flattened and as the decay and corruption spread outward, the Ral people fled to their homes or used whatever means were at their disposal to escape the catastrophe.

The failure of the cosmic invocations and rituals caused the Ral home-plane to merge with the Plane of the Sleepless Dead and the Ral people were left with no other option but to abandon their home; they fled to Orin Rakatha where they were awarded two Towers. Unsurprisingly, after the Catastrophe, somewhat of a wedge was driven between the elemental and necromantic factions of the Ral. Many among the elementalists directly blamed the necromancers for the fate of their plane and thus the two factions separated and the end of the race known as the Shining ones was complete.

Each faction took one Tower, The Elementalists named their tower 'The Aldonar Tower' after a leading sorcerer named Aldonar, and this is the tower in which the Valley Alliance now dwells.

The necromancers followed Dymwan and he named their Tower, arrogantly, as 'The Tombs of Dymwan'. Next the young Dymwan took his revenge upon Marius and managed to convince the necromancers that the "Family of the Dead" was responsible for the Catastrophe and through political manipulation; he then had complete dominance over the necromancers. He disbanded the other necromantic families, and incorporated all necromantic Ral under his banner. Thus the people of Ral were split and are now known as the Aldonar (the elementalists) and the Dymwan (the necromancers).

After the great Catastrophe Marius was unconcerned with his boyhood friends motives and machinations all that mattered to him was what had gone wrong and what had happened to his mentor Cardinaris. In secret he began to study what was left of Cardinaris' private library and tried to investigate further.

When Dymwan leant of Marius' "snooping" he was even more determined to remove this thorn in his side. Marius was banished from the Dymwan tower and more importantly from the libraries and research facilities within the tower.

It was only natural that Marius took refuge within the Aldonar Tower with the Elementalists that had been part of the once whole Ral civilisation. He spent many years within the Aldonar tower

learning more of the Elemental arts. He even became friends with Aldonar himself and many times the two of them spoke at length of the folly of the Ral race and the decline of the Shining ones.

Now I will describe what happened during the following years when Marius largely enjoyed a quite existence. In those years that followed the Aldonar tower was quite active upon Orin Rakatha, and although they had abandoned necromancy, they still had strong links to the evil sphere. Naturally, they were singled out as enemies by the Halmadonians and the newly formed Tower of the Sun, who attacked them at every opportunity. The Tombs of Dymwan, however, were content to 'hide' within their tower, rather than risk their status in joining a War.

Eventually, there came a great battle between the Aldonar Tower, and the aforementioned forces which followed the Good Sphere. The Aldonar suffered a convincing defeat and, in the knowledge that they could not hope to hold their Tower at the next Time of Reckoning, begged the Dymwan for aid lest the knowledge of the Shining ones be lost. This is when Dymwan, as cunning and manipulative as ever, hatched his diabolical plan to ensure the return of his father, centuries later.

Dymwan, rather than offering military aid or space within his tower, instead convinced the Elementalists that the best option was to place the remainder of their race inside Tombs. In these Tombs they could be protected and also hide all the secret of the Ral, The Aldonar would be preserved by the use of alchemical ingredients and Dymwan 'promised' to awaken the Aldonar, later, when the forces of Good were no longer so predominant. The Aldonar were embalmed in the many hundreds of barrows that still, to this day are hidden in dark places around Orin Rakatha. Thus, when the Halmadonians arrived to finally destroy the Aldonar, they would find what they thought to be mostly mass graves and suicides. As the Halmadonians crusade to bring a balance in favour of good to each plane they visit they considered the Aldonar no longer a threat to Orin Rakatha and returned home, believing their work to be concluded.

This is where Marius returns to our story.

As I have said Aldonar and Marius were of one mind with their lament at the fall of the Ral. It would mean everything to protect the knowledge that the Ral processed. Marius knew the spiteful Dymwan too well and advised Aldonar not to trust the necromancer. So it was decided that instead they would both try to deceive Dymwan.

While the Tombs were being populated by Aldonar on Orin Rakatha, it was Marius who oversaw the migration. He would have access to all the knowledge of the necromancers in the Dymwan tower during this period and it was also Marius that would perform the protections within the tombs and create the guardians.

What Dymwan didn't know was that all of the most precious knowledge was not to be hidden in the Orin Rakathan Tombs. Marius had learnt of the existence of Dark Pass on the Plane of the Sleepless Dead. It was created during Cardinaris' failed attempt to embody the Plane of the Sleepless Dead many years before. It is a realm situated through the middle of the Plane that can be accessed from the Aldonar Tombs located within the Ikarthian Triangle on Orin Rakatha. Inhabiting the Dark Pass were some of the Aldonar that were thought lost after the "Great Catastrophe". One called Janus was now Reamlord of Darkpass and he welcomed Marius and the some of the Royal Family. But Janus remembered the way Cardinaris had thought their lives forfeit after his initial failed attempt to embody the Plane of the Sleepless Dead and he had revenge upmost in his mind.

volunteered to replace one of the Royal Family in the Tombs on Dark Pass and act as a sleeper ready to protect the others, if as he suspected Dymwan acted while the Royal Family was vulnerable.

So the Aldonar slept , unaware or maybe arrogant enough to ignore the determination Janus.

Centuries later when Marius finally awoke ...he was bewildered and lost he observed folly of the Royal Family and himself. Their protections had failed and they had been decimated and corrupted by Dark Pass, the remaining Aldonar Royalty succumbed to vampirism.

With Janus ruling over a Royal House of Unlife, Orin Arcata seemed a distant memory to the inhabitants of Dark pass. But the relationship was reignited again when most recently Cardinaris was finally successful at embodying the Plane of the Sleepless Dead into himself. A cosmic anomaly was created, a parallel pocket of Orin Rakatha came into existence; some call it the Mirror Realm. It cannot be explained but the close proximity of a very powerful energy source that now appears to have merged with Dark Pass during Cardinaris's embodiment might have created the conditions for this strange occurrence.

I continue to watch the necromancers with interest, as the fate of Marius is also of great import to the remnants of the Aldonar.

By my hand

Amorteph