

Realms of Refuge

COSMOLOGY

Heads of Plot, this document includes the accurate truth about the Realms of Refuge Cosmology for localized Plot Teams and National Events to build upon.

As a player, check with your local Plot Team about whether or not the contents of this document is common or rare lore, or even disputed or lost knowledge within the Realm from which your character comes.

The Realms

The Realms of Refuge exist as independent worlds, each developing along their own unique paths, separated from other Realms by an ethereal and metaphysical space known as the Light Between. More and more Realms are pulled into Refuge through unknowable means, and sometimes new pathways open in the Shadow Ways by which previously inaccessible Realms may be entered. Realms may take almost any form - from islands adrift in an endless sea of night to continent-sized discs of land (all flat, mind) to entire planets or even solar systems. Oftentimes, the planar physiology can differ wildly between Realms, but there is always the constant of the Shadow Ways, connecting them to other Realms.

The Light Between

Separating each Realm from every other, the Light Between is a place of chaotic energies and matter, anathema to mortal life. A swirling, primal place, thought by some to be the primordial source of all magic - and perhaps even life itself, the Light Between radiates a terrible, blinding kaleidoscope of baleful light, splitting apart realities, constantly reforming and reshaping itself - and whatever might happen to enter into this violently bright realm. It is a place where things go and are lost forever, or from where things best forgotten emerge to prey upon the living they so desperately envy. Whatever its true nature may be, travelling across the Light Between itself to pass from Realm to Realm is considered impossible - such a trek must always be undertaken through the Shadow Ways. It is fortunate that the Light Between cannot long exist outside of the reality of its own self - but woe betide any who encounter even a momentary rift to this place spilling into their world.

The Shadow Ways

Spread between the Realms like an infinitely-complex spider web of paths, the Shadow Ways serve as tether, anchor, and road. Each of the Realms has places where the Shadow Ways naturally occur, though they may not always be present unless circumstances are just right. In some places they may be accessed through great, towering gates, in others there might simply be a fogbank on the moor, while still elsewhere they can be found at the bottom of a pit in a deep, dark cave. Traveling the Shadow Ways is a discombobulating experience at the best of times - at the worst it is hopelessly difficult to find your way; time and space flow strangely there. Still, the Shadow Ways sometimes demonstrate a seeming Will of their own, making the path more clear or obscure, depending on their own inscrutable desires, though sometimes this apparent sentience is attributed to such mythical entities as Fate. Occasionally, The Shadow Ways will even extend into the Realms themselves, plucking hapless individuals from their daily lives and transporting them across a span of Realms in the space of a heartbeat, usually at a time and place where their actions may prove pivotal in a given situation. Still, due to their proximity to the Light Between, the paths can sometimes be dangerous to travel - no mortal has the power to fully control the Shadow Ways, and even experienced Shadow Walkers have occasionally stepped into them and wandered for what seemed like hours, only to emerge from the very same spot moments later.

The Reverie

A byproduct of The Shadow Ways, the Reverie is a metaphysical realm that exists solely within the dreaming minds of those who access it, when they access it. It takes up no physical location, and as such can be accessed anywhere also connected to the Shadow Ways - so long as the proper preparations are made. The Reverie is a place where the Will of the individual can be used to manipulate the matter of the Reverie- and a means by which to communicate across the whole of the cosmos. Physical items cannot be transferred in the Reverie but memories of text can.

The ability to access the Reverie is not universal - it takes those of a particular strength of Spirit, Shadow Walkers or certain unique people, to walk that wondrous place and in some Realms there are those uniquely gifted in manifesting their Will in the Reverie.

OOG: *Anything posted to Public Reverie forums should be expected to be accessible by anyone with access to the Reverie. Local Plot Teams reserve the right to determine which NPCs, if any, have access to the Reverie. Physical objects can never pass into or out of the Reverie.*

Refuge

All of the Realms and The Shadow Ways that binds them together make up Refuge - the Safe Haven, the Mortal Harbour. As far as anyone knows, Refuge has always been here - and always will be. How it was first created is anyone's guess, but it is constantly expanding and contracting as new Realms are drawn into itself from where they drift through the cosmos or lost to circumstance, with new pathways opening frequently along the Shadow Ways.

Shadow Walkers

Those folk are usually of strong spirit and character, for good or ill, who are naturally able to walk the Shadow Ways are known as Shadow Walkers, though in truth there are many and varied names for them depending on their realm or civilization.

OOG: *Every PC is a Shadow Walker, whether or not they are aware of their ability to Resurrect.*

The Planes

Linked to every Realm is a nexus of Elemental Planes. Consisting of Stone, Lightning, Ice, Fire, Order, Chaos, Life, and Death, these planes are separate and unique to each individual Realm, and may or may not host a cast of thinking beings and specific presentations of what an Element "means" in the context of that particular Realm.

However, these Elemental Planes are but secondary echoes or branches of the Primary Elemental Planes, which represent fundamental origins and return points for magical energy. However, any entities that may or may not exist within these Primary Planes do not display communication methods understood by mortals, and even planar scholars struggle to distinguish "them" from energy fields and other natural phenomena, and the Planes themselves exhibit no manner of intent or meaning beyond their existence.

A Primary Plane is a source of limitless energy, but mortal species within the Realms of Refuge are utterly incapable of interacting with them, even with Empowered or True Empowered Formal Magic. Formal Spells such as Contact, Summon <Elemental>, and Banish will instead interact with the unique Secondary Elemental Planes which "orbit" each Realm of Refuge.

Still, scholars from across the Realms agree that at the nucleus of the unique Secondary Elemental Planes, there can be found tremendous Gates which link them to the Primary Planes. If this is indeed true, what may lie at the heart of the Primary Planes...?

Plot: *These mysteries and more should, like the Light Between and the Shadow Ways are, not to be defined by the local Plot team but instead provide explicit room for Regional and National event collaboration.*