

### THE THIRD AGE - WANING

The third age, also known as the waning, is the prophecy of end times, a description of the end of the world as we have learned to know it. When the great skywhales dive down from the clouds and break the world back into its most primal matter, the prophecy will see itself fulfilled, and the cycle of life shall begin anew. This is the way the universe works, and this is the fate every living creature of Aradea is bound to. From the void came all, a song that began life, a vortex that wove the strings of existence together, and aether that worked as a glue between all blocks of life. And when everything ends, when the last light of the last shore dwindles and dies, everything must return and become void again - become nothing again. From that nothingness a new beginning may spring, a new world may be born through the verses of might sung by the spirits of the welkin.

Like the Immortals made the world, all the same they must descend from the misty heights to have it unmade. The end is a miracle, just like the beginning once was, and those who witness such times will live and die in fear and awe, for the might of the Immortals is glorious and true. But before the Immortals walk among the mortal men, ten omens of doom must become reality, ten songs that will build a melody - a spell that will bring everything to an end. This third age, or the waning of the world, is written in the Book of Ages, which was one of the ancient tomes the prophets brought to the people - the ten grimoires of old. It is said that this grimoire is the one of Leileth, the mysterious lady of the past, present and future - the keeper of all times.

On the withered pages of the Book of Ages it says that the end comes upon Aradea along with ten tribulations, all of which test loyalty, courage, humility and compassion of men. Those who pass the test shall rise, and they are granted life eternal in the green pastures of the other side. Those who fail shall fall, and they are lost and forgotten. Each omen is a manifestation of a specific Immortal singing the final spell, and alongside with their voice comes the tribulation. In the end, the united strength of all divine voices will tear the world apart and the dying light of Solari will diminish, until it turns lifeless and fades to black. Darkness will take over, and the entire Welkin mourns the loss of one of its children, but the end of one world announces the birth of another, thus the cycle continues and nothing ever truly ends.

Before the omens begin, the world becomes saturated with knowledge, and the coldness of steel replaces the warmth of Awen. The knowledge will smother wisdom, and the fires of industry shall scorch the once fertile land. The cities will grow out of control, and the smoke of facilities brings sickness and death. Everything shall dwindle in the acid rain that corrodes metal and kills the wood. The world will decay before the eyes of the last people. They shall cry, and they shall mourn, but the destruction they have caused cannot be atoned. This fate is the doing of man to himself. The guilt and shame haunting their dreamless sleep is fully earned by their own deeds. The world is drawn to filth and depression, the beauty shall fade and wither away like dying leaves in the fall. And in between the beginning and an end of the age, there shall be no more than hundred years of agony, and during that period no child is born to witness the miracle of the Immortals, but the mankind is to diminish and die.

These are the visions of the end; the foul scent of betrayal and lies, the bitter taste of stolen dreams and broken promises. It is everything that was not supposed to happen, and nothing those hopes and expectations the people reached for. The beggars and thieves shall rule, and kings and queens serve, and everything will be upside down and inside out. Chaos sets in, pushing the common structures humanity had stood against for countless centuries all aside, destroying the very spine of values and principles, the core of society - the common ground for helping and supporting one another. During the years before it all comes to an end, everything collapses and all intelligent creatures become like primal predators once more, and they consume one another in the grand game

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of survival.

### The Great Fire in the Sky (Avareth)

In its wrath of dying existence, the solari shall burst in ravaging flames that reach into the world, appearing as rain of fire. This is the first sign, and it will occasionally appear until there is nothing left to burn. This unspeakable devastation will remind people of the humble roots they once came from, and in the heat of the raging flames, they shall pray, but all requests and pleas are left unanswered even for those attuned. The vicars and mystics, the weavers of the aether, all left in silence - all left in despair as the world around them is set ablaze. And they shall watch helplessly as the civilization they worked to build becomes ashes and dust.

### The Waves of Destruction (Anduniel)

The oceans will tremble when the anger of Anduniel is unleashed. Great waves wash over the lands, wiping out entire villages and vales. The memory of nature shall fade, and the greatness of mankind will crumble. The weather becomes completely unpredictable as the moons depart and disappear into the depths of the welkin. Storms shall ravage the land. Lightnings, blue, purple and red, lash from the clouds, hammering the once peaceful and beautiful terrain that has turned into black and desolate. The people will mourn and moan about their twisted fate, but it is too late to calm the storm, too late to appease the Immortals.

### The Prey Becomes Predator (Mariel)

All the wild animals, gentle and wary, turn around to face their hunters, and there is bloodthirst in their eyes. The order of nature will be overthrown as packs of new beasts roam the land. The predators that once were will flee, and those given the strength and power will turn against each other, and in the end all animals develop a carnivorous appetite. This will lead to a sudden collapse of entire ecosystems, which will feed the ongoing destruction. And as the animal kingdom buries itself in violence and blood, even the guardian dog and the purring house cat turn against their masters, and suddenly there will be threats in completely unexpected places.

### The Wrongs Are Made Right (Galadin)

The slaves shall gain freedom, and the old masters become slaves, and in the process they are all made equal. Wars shall be waged. Wars with no ending, and with no winners. And while all the wrongs are made right, the balance of the world is shaken and the rights become wrong, and nothing that once was stands upright and steady. The structure of mankind is thrown aside, and the ugly core of all filth is revealed. The sun will sink behind the horizon and falls asleep for all eternity. Darkness will take over, and the night that sees no end shall begin. The scale of justice will rust abandoned, and the final court sentences the world to demise.

### The Quiet Departure (Leileth)

As the keeper of time departs, and the natural cycles that act as wheels of the world cease rolling, no man can tell the difference at first, but dire are the consequences of her leaving. The fire of a new life now cold; the children of all nations unborn - the last cycle ongoing. The knots in the fabric of time unfold, and the true countdown to extinction begins with uncontrolled pulses in everything affected by time. Battles of past and future rage, and even the disappeared, the Drakhars and Valhars, the feared and revered shadows of the past shall return to fight once more alongside with their glorious deities.

### The Anger of the Rock (Tharos)

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The earth shall quake and shatter, the very bedrock cracks and water rises to cover the land, and all this, too, shall mark the coming of the end. The people shall cower and look for shelter, but there is none to be found, for everything falls around them. Those highborn in their high towers are doomed as much as the lowest Gibberlings in the caverns, and it all will collapse into dust where no life sprouts. The thousand hammers of Tharos work no longer to shape the world, but to destroy it altogether. The legacy of his followers will vanish in the wake of doom.

### The Wind That Shakes the World (Sardius)

The wind shall rise and strike against the monuments of men, and rain, red as blood of the innocents, shall pour from the sky to remind every living soul of their fall. The woeful whispers in the howling wind bring an echo of lost opportunities and final warnings that all failed to heed, all failed to see. The signs now clear as daylight, broken and blown in the breeze. The mystical navigator shall watch and learn from this madness, and his disciples shall chant the verses from the book veiled in mystery. His figure, clad in black, skeletal face hidden by the ragged hood, remains in the shadows and smiles at the doom of men.

### The Pungent Stench of Every Illness (Neferlyn)

There will be chalmers, jigglegough and redspot fever, and a number of nameless, even worse diseases breaking out all over the continents. No creature is safe from them, and all remedies shall lose their potency. This is a bane of the Lady of Marshes. Her ill-fated fingers crawl everywhere, spoil the soil and create blisters on land that oozes out the wickedness men have locked in their souls. No mother or a child is safe from this misery, no father is able to protect his family. The people are to dwindle and die, and the Immortal Neferlyn shall finally achieve her dreadful goals.

### The Sinners Shall March (Morbane)

The dead shall rise from their graves and march against the living in a last effort to break free from the silent chains of the underworld. Screaming out their ages old pain and suffering, the skeletal figures with rotting flesh still dribbling about seek justice for their iniquities. The fires of the world cannot remove the cold from their bones, but the warmth of the living flesh offers temporary solace by allowing them to feel what they once were. This drives them mad, and they dig through the fresh bodies to spill the remnants of blood that still holds remains of a heated heart.

### The False Prophets (Sagriel)

These men will appear as the second coming of the original prophets, but their words are lies, and their teachings attempt to contradict the grimoires. They will cause confusion and fear among the people with their prophecies, and while doing so, they will prepare the world for what they call the return of the Immortals, which indicates that the divine spirits who created the world from nothing would assume their physical forms and come back to their people, but this is what truly happens. The Immortals grow more distant each passing day, and their might in the world slowly diminishes. Awen will die and becomes unresponsive and useless, the aether in the fabric of time and space shall turn inactive, which is like termination of blood flow in the veins. The secret writing loses its meaning, the prayers echo in the empty welkin. It is the end of everything.

When the omens have swept across the world, and mankind is on the verge of final fall, the four skywhales, that have guarded the world from anything that may threaten Aradea from the endless welkin, will dive down from the skies. Their massive bodies will sink into the ground, sending shockwaves around the world that destroy all that had survived through the ten omens. One

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last mournful cry will escort these magnificent beasts back to their dreamless sleep, and even the Immortals shall feel a sting in their consciousness as their beloved allies and ages old friends collapse into the oceans.

As the ground cracks, and crevices deep enough to reach the planet core open, molten lava spills out upon the already scorched and dying land. The air has now turned poisonous, and the elements of life are all gone. Breathing is not possible - life is not possible. The last light of the solari dies out, and the broken world is left in the dark. The end is not a sudden grand explosion, but sad and prolonged struggle that slowly fades into oblivion.

Before and during the omens, the educated prime, namely the mystics, sages and highest vicars, study different options to prevent the pending doom, but their efforts are in vain. The corruption and taint progress too fast to be stopped, and as the power of Awen begins to perish, a lot of these wise men go mad. Some of them choose to end their lives, and some of them begin to feed the destruction with their twisted visions and dark alterations. The hope lingers long, and many struggle hard not to fall into despair, but eventually it is inevitable. Even the bravest heart fails to remain strong in the severity of the omens. This is the truth in its naked, plain and most honest brutality.