

The World of Aetheria

The Age of Verdant Dominion:

Long before human footsteps ever pressed into its soil, **Aetheria belonged entirely to the Elves**. A race so entwined with magic that some claimed to be the Gods themselves. To Elves, magic was not a tool, but a birthright. Even those born without the skill to cast spells, enchant runes or call upon divine powers still had the flow of arcanum in their blood.

The Elves were split into four great Houses, each devoted to a different philosophy of magic:

- **Aetheris** – purity of arcane perfection
- **Sylvaran** – dominion over nature and life
- **Pyrelion** – destructive and transformative flame
- **Noctyra** – shadow, foresight, and forbidden knowledge

Aetheris's leader, Au'Rel was born with unnaturally powerful magic. He could see the arcanum ley lines that flowed through the world, and use them to access all forms of magic. He thought this made him the highest-born elf, and that the Aetheris kingdom should rule over the others with absolute power.

This belief led to the Fracture, the first and last war between Elven kind. Pyrelion and Sylvaran joined forces, while Noctyra gladly joined Aetheris in order to further their own goal of accessing powerful forbidden magic.

The war lasted over a century, and the continent was ravaged. Pyrelion and Sylvaran decided to seek aid from a neighbouring continent that until now had been forbidden to set foot in Aetheria. They invited the first humans to join them in their war, offering them free passage and the right to live in Aetheria if the war was won.

It took another decade of fighting, but eventually the Aetheris powers faltered and were defeated. The royal line of Aetheris was purged, while it's people were permitted asylum and the chance to start again.

The Noctyra royal line massacred their people in a ritual that cursed their home, and fled Aetheria - with no trace of them to be found.

The Age of Convergence:

A quieter era... but not a simple one. Humans did not leave; they helped rebuild and settled in Aetheria. This age brought much doubt and questioning, but eventually humans and elves began to mix, fall in love and create families.

The first Half Elves were born, carrying the emotional fire and resilience of humanity, and the dulled innate magic and longevity of elven blood.

The Sylvaran and Pyrelion houses merged into one through a royal marriage that united their people. Another three centuries passed before the royal family from the human home continent visited to witness the birth of a new elven royal. It was during this visit that the Elven Prince fell in love with the Human Princess.

Their love was questioned at first; tensions between humans and elves had been rising, with some people believing humans had overstayed their welcome and were destroying elven culture. Humans believed that because their ancestors fought in the war, they had the right to be there.

Eventually, they decided their unity was the final puzzle piece to unite the realms. They married and took on a new name to start a new lineage and age: they became King and Queen Thorne and bore the first royal half-elven children.

However, nobody could anticipate what this union would awaken. The mixture of royal Sylvaran and Pyrelion blood had already brought about powerful magic, but the mixture of human blood bastardised and warped this magic, which only came to light during a dragon attack.

The Age of Fire:

Dragons are formidable creatures that are not to be challenged. Primordial bastions of nature that the ancient Sylvaran lineage banished from Aetheria due to their violence. This ancient magic had dulled over time, and dragons found their way back to Aetheria, seeking food and new hunting grounds.

The capital came under siege by a terrible red dragon, its wings spanning the length of some countryside towns. The capital city was almost brought to its knees, the palace in ruins... When a baby's cries stopped the dragon in its tracks.

It stared at the firstborn Thorne son, its teeth bared and breath ashy. And then... it bowed.

The Thorne lineage possessed an innate magical ability to calm and control powerful dragons. They said the dragon sensed the baby crying when it was born and flew across the ocean to protect it.

Dragons, once a distant and catastrophic force, became powerful allies to the Thornes. Generations passed with each Thorne child given a dragon to care for, and in turn it cared for them. When the Orcs travelled the ocean to conquer Aetheria as part of their world conquest, they did not anticipate having to fight against dragons. What would have been centuries of further bloodshed was reduced to a dot in history, with the Orc armies demolished in just a few days.

Similar attempts to claim Aetheria through the ages had all been thwarted, the bond between Thorne and Dragon only becoming stronger with each new generation.

Under the Thorne rule: War ceased, Trade flourished, Magic and Innovation merged, Humans and Elves lived in uneasy but growing harmony.

The Coming of Valis:

Then came the Valis family, survivors; they claimed... Refugees.

In fact, the Valis family is what remained of the **Noctyra** Elven house. When they fled during the war, they found a continent populated by humans ripe for the taking. They infiltrated and began the rise of a new kingdom far across the realms, out of reach of Aetheria and its prying eyes.

While there, the surviving royal Noctyra family continued their studies of dark and forbidden magic, hoping to one day return and claim their home. After news spread of the Thorne family and their unique ability to control dragons, Noctyra attempted to do the same.

They created a new line of half-elven children and named it the Valis lineage. This unique mixture of elf and human gave rise to a tainted arcanum, Blood Magic. A powerful and dangerous magic that allowed the Valis family to control the human population of the continent.

This Blood Magic only grew stronger with each generation, just like the Thornes, and Queen Valis decided to reach too far. During a blood moon, she attempted to amplify her magic and take absolute control over her subjects, but the ritual backfired. A blood curse rippled out and ravaged the lands, draining the life from every living thing it touched.

It almost destroyed the Valis family, but they fled and decided to return to Aetheria under the guise of refugees. The outside world did not know of the Valis family, so their occupation and destruction remained secret.

The Valis family used their unique magic to infiltrate and embed themselves into the Thorne court. They became advisors, trusted allies and friends to the King and Queen. They waited, and they learned what they could.

The Night of The Blood Moon:

When the next blood moon rose, the Valis family were ready; their coup began. The Valis Queen performed her ritual and took control of the Thorne family, clouding their minds and filling them with lies, doubts, and rage.

The Royal Family turned on one another, and the sky burned with their blood. Dragons brought down cities and towns before turning on each other. Brothers, sisters, uncles, cousins... All fought one another until there was nothing left.

Only one resisted... The Queen. Her magic was more powerful than the Valis family anticipated, and she saw through their evil plans. In her final moments, with the kingdom collapsing, she made a difficult choice. Using her magic, she sent her newborn son, Elias Thorne, to a distant realm where he would be safe from the Valis's reach. She charged her most trusted servant to watch and guide Elias, give him as normal a life as possible until he reached of age to return home and reclaim the throne.

The Enlightenment:

All was thought lost when the mad Thorne family turned on one another and their kingdom. It was most fortunate that the Valis family fought to save Aetheria from destruction. They used their magic to subdue and apprehend the surviving Thorne lineage, and brought them to justice.

The Age of Fire came to an end with their execution, and the Valis line rose to power. They used their blood magic to subtly influence the people of Aetheria. Worship of any Gods became outlawed, the Valis family seeing themselves as Gods. Their grudge against the other ancient Elven houses remained constant throughout history, and as such the Valis family stripped Elves of their rights.

They were forced into servitude, and those that didn't were executed. Elves now live in fear, some in secret groves deep in the Aetherian forests.

The Valis family rules with an iron fist, but the human and half-elven people of Aetheria do not see it that way. For every Blood Moon, the queen performs her ritual to assert dominance over her people, an unwavering dedication to her family.

Dorian Valis was born shortly after their reign began. He is the only Valis child brought up without knowing what their family had done. They hoped he would one day become king, and without knowledge of their past, he would rule without the lie hanging over his head. He would rule without the need for the blood ritual, and Aetheria would forever be in servitude to the Valis family.