

The Year 782 had just barely started when we all saw the telltale sign in the sky. A stark green Breach. It confused us, scared us, bewildered us, awed us, and to this day, many are not entirely sure where it came from, or what came of it. For many, it is better to forget, as anyone who had died during that year and half were revived all at once. The Risen was big news at the time, but even that has become rather accepted as the third year since its occurrence passes.

But we often forget something else that occurred thanks to that fateful green light. During this time, an U'ala Kahiki, a Selkie from the Federation, sought out Eldin Sindri Pock Zook Seebo Zarzuket Bastargre Butterbiscuit Cheshire Lynx Sapling Grasshead Woundglower Glim Beren, Tree-talker, Spirit-friend, God-brother, The Last, of Aranarth. Together, U'ala and "Zook" saw the suffering spirits that had been cast out of the divine plane, and decided to take matters in their own hands. With U'ala's leadership and Zook's loyalty, the Druid Order was formed. They reached out to the other continents, trying to get representatives from a wide a source as possible, and soon their numbers began to grow.

Many volunteered for the safety the Druids provided, others for the knowledge they held, others solely for altruistic reasons, to help the poor nature spirits. Even others joined under rumors that the two had unlocked new magics that had been lost to time, that further enhanced one's bonds with nature and the spirits. Indeed, some Druids took on another title known as "Essential" to imply they mastered skills that others could not. Others still, divorced from any Druidic context took on the title of "Essential" as well, claiming it fit their magic as well.

All was well, but it was not to last. You see, it is easy to merely help spirits without context, but soon it was clear that the Druids were merely curing symptoms, and not the cause. The fact is, all the work the Druids have done for Valdea is easily the best kept secret.

To explain, we must go back. Far back. We are not alone in this world. We have always known this, with demons below us and the divine above us. But it wasn't until extended trade with the Federation did we realize that there was also something right next to us. "Void" creatures have occasionally shown up in the history books under different names, but the Federation with its near regular plaguing of it took it to the front and center. What was an obscure myth became an observable fact.

And the facts are hard to ignore. Creatures of anti-magic and evil step out, and will destroy all in their path unless utterly destroyed themselves. Federation experts divulged a deadly secret, things that walked into the portals didn't walk out. While the Demon Realm and the Divine Plane have been explored and documented by many individuals throughout history, such as Scythe Black, Skar Skinchanger and Doc of Aranarth. But no one has ever been able to document what exists in the Void.

Furthermore, an even darker secret was revealed by the Federation Experts. Things that disappeared had a tendency of returning, completely tainted by the void. An island of Lupus vanish off the map? For the next few months there would be an abundance of Void Lupus across the Federation, unidentifiable and identical, almost as if they were a Lupus silhouette, as opposed to a unique Lupus.

It is unknown whether such things are the possessed husks of the victims, or merely residue of the void formed in their image. There have been no success in “saving” the creatures that step out, and after thousands of years and thousands of history, the Federation has stopped trying.

If this was the only problem with the Void, it would not be relevant enough to be featured. But it would seem that just as every dimension we are aware of has a hierarchy, the Void is no different. In the year 780, a plague spread across the continent, worsened by the landings of the Firsts.

It is now the opinion of the Druids that the plague had originated from the Void, and that it was purposely cultivated, maliciously, to destroy us all. This is not a popular opinion, as it could easily turn every Disease Mage (as Disease Magic also rose out of the plague) into a target or a possible enemy. However it is suspected that such a reason as to why Disease Magic requires a license to practice, and that those in the Council have known of such repercussions far longer than the mass public.

The plague originator was dubbed “Pestilence” by the Druids. Amongst the higher ranks, they believe that Pestilence is but one of four Void Creatures of supreme power. The others named “War” “Famine” and “Death.” It is unknown if these are titles merely given to them for ease of classification, or if there is perhaps a greater importance to their roles. While some seem to believe such names date back to Eldar times, it doesn’t take any great amount of superstition to understand the basic concept. Void creatures can destructively manipulate the world around them, and a creature dubbed “Pestilence” will do so with disease, while a creature dubbed “War” will do it with violence and slaughter.

Pestilence did not go away even after the plague evaporated (which U’ala references as a joint effort between Crusaders and Divine-kind). This void creature had taken up refuge in the abundant and fertile land of Ceres, and was spreading its disease and undead armies without abandon, able to build up its sources as early as 781. It wasn’t until 783 did the Druids march into Ceres to fight the Void Creature.

The religious of Ceres state that the Void was attacking three sacred sites to their goddess, Ceres, and claim that the Void was trying to split their goddess, which in their mythology was said to

have been what caused the terrible wars between the Satyrs and the Fauns before they merged into the Ceres-Born. The Druids valiantly fought at the three spots, pushing back the forces of the Void at every turn. But the battle was not over yet, as Pestilence had spread its forces to two other locations in Ceres. Acting quickly, the Druids split up as well, and fought to quell it in a two-pronged attack. In the north, by a lava lake, the Head Druids, including U'ala Kahiki and Zook engaged with the Void Creature itself. Even with combined strength, Pestilence did not fall, but was merely pushed back and away.

However, the Druids reported an important find. That magical dispelling seemed to have a profoundly negative effect on Pestilence.

Ceres had been saved and many Druids were dead. Pestilence had retreated, but it was only a matter of time before such a creature would cause harm elsewhere in Valdea. While the victory was temporary, the land of Ceres, and the divinity of Ceres' Goddess, was safe.

After this, Zook set out to track down something called a "Daughter of Famine." Famine, being another powerful Void Creature, had a different strategy than its Pestilence counterpart. Famine split its power among other smaller void creatures, so that devastation could pass further, and Famine itself, while weaker overall, would have less overt weaknesses, and be harder to completely obliterate.

Famine, as was informed to me, had 4 "daughters" and 3 "hounds" that it had split its power amongst, as well as the original Famine itself. In simplicity, it was a Void Creature with a Void Army, unlike Pestilence who took advantage of our own non-void dead to manipulate them against us.

It took a year and a half for Zook to be able to find one of the daughters, in the year 785. The daughters had their own corrupted magic, much like other void creatures did, but their form took on something similar to the power of mermaids, or the endbringer Simurgh. The daughters would sing their corruptive void influence on those around them. While killing the daughter was possible, as it was weaker than it should be, reports and research showed that it would not work--most likely that power would merely go back to the original Void Creature, Famine, and give it a power boost. Other theories implied it was all part of Famine's "master plan."

Stuck in a no-win situation, with the daughter causing destruction and havok, and having spent nearly two years trying to find the blasted creature, the Druids rallied against it, and forced it to retreat back into the void from whence it came.

Another powerful insurmountable creature of the void, another devastating toll of lives for the Druids, but another freed land. This time it was an abandoned isle in the Federation, so while the immediate lands were not affected, those around the island were now safe.

The Druids set out for other counterparts to destroy of Famine, but did not achieve much success. In fact, the “hounds” mentioned previously began to take a heavy toll on them, as it was soon revealed that Famine had custom made them to counteract the powers the Druids had accumulated through the spirits. There were now void creatures with only one goal -- to murder the Head Druids.

U’ala and Zook held fast, strong as ever, but other leaders were not so lucky. Ak’aabid, one of the best clairvoyants in all of Valdea, was stricken down brutally. Ak’aabid had risen to small amounts of fame due to becoming the “High” Druid, or the one rallying the troupes and leading the cause. With their death, U’ala took on the reins, retiring from the Crusaders of the Council in order to be the Leader of the Druids full time.

The time to mourn was not available, as the Druids took on other duties, as the attacks were only getting more devastating, not just from the void, but from politics as well, as the terrorist fringe group of the Mortalists split apart and began to eat itself alive, frequently hurting the Druids as well in the crossfire.

After extensive research, the Druids were informed of the next big void attack, despite it only being a handful of months after the big fight with the daughter.

This fight, however, would not be so easy to get to. For those who don’t know, the world of the underwater is still a place of mystery, with only the Selkies and the Mermaids truly knowing what goes on in the depths. One historical mention of them are the “Leviathans.” Creatures that once hunted and destroyed Mermaids and other such victims. They had since long ago been put into cages, ensuring the safety of mer-kind.

This void attack took place at the bottom of the ocean, with the direct purpose of destroying one of the cages in the Federation. This time, the Druids were first, able to alert the nearby Angler Selkies and sending out a scouting team just in time to see the massive voidgate erupt. Shapeshifters and breathing potions at the ready, the Druids quickly descended into their bloodiest battle so far, for this time it wasn’t just an individual Void creature versus the Druids. Pestilence and its armies, the hounds of Famine, and the Void Creature War were all present for the underwater skirmish. The Druids reached out as well, pulling assorted Selkie tribes and powerful allies from across the lands. The fight lasted so long that Druids started to drown from running out of Breath Potions. Religious figures of the Drowned God and of other denominations

contributed to the best of their abilities, due to their exemplified abilities to not be affected by the pressure and suffocation of the ocean.

The ocean ran red--but the end was in a victory for the Druids, or what was left of them. Mass forces had been nearly obliterated, but not just for the Druids. This time the forces of the void took a heavy loss as well.

The void was gone, and for their hard work, a Leviathan cage that had been weakened, but not broken. The world saved narrowly yet again, due to the tireless hard work of U'ala Kahiki and Zook and the countless allies in the network they had amassed in such a short period of time.

From the efforts of defending the Leviathan, they found more information that the Void didn't want them to procure. From the items in the cage itself, they were able to draw out another creature of the void--this one called the "Chronomancer." The Chronomancer had been hiding in their very own Grove, amongst the spirit amalgamation known as the "Varuah." Such a creature was quick to disappear, but Druids report that it might be a rogue void creature, being against the Entity of the Void as opposed to supporting it as all other Void Creatures do.

Since then, the Druids have continued fighting the good fight against the Void. They have not tried to keep any of what has been written a secret, but there has never been any formal publication of what they did until now. It's not hard to see why, it is a clustered mess of information that is rooted in various religions, mythology, magic, science, and more. It is why they finally decided to hire us to write a simplified version of their struggles for the world to know.

Because the world deserves to know. The world deserves to know why the Druids do what they do. They are not the only force against the Void or the other forces of evil, but they rose to the occasion when no one else would.

There are other groups that contribute in similar ways. The Holy Triumvirate, the Crusaders of the Council, The Endbringer Response Teams, all organizations that are accumulating a lot of power. And it is scary to us. Because if the Druids or any other group did decide they had enough of us, they would have the power to mold Valdea into what they wanted. And if they make one mistake, we might end up void paste on a wall.

But there are monsters out there. Real monsters. And while it's important for us to keep updated and read the occasional tabloid tripe about how a leader doesn't enjoy children that much, it's even more important for us to have perspective on what's going on. The Druid's might not always be headed by the wise U'ala Kahiki, and even Zook has formally retired his title, but so

long as the Druids stay in good hands, and continue to fight the Void that has plagued the Federation for millennia, they will have my support. If they make bad moves or bad decisions, I will of course criticize them thusly, the same way I would criticize anyone who made bad moves or bad decisions. But just as one stays loyal to a goodhearted King or Queen, it is a no-brainer to stay loyal to the Druids who fight every day to make sure we don't have to worry about what lies between the cracks of reality.

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Further Information Available in Cotton Paper Pamphlet called Order of the Druidae written by U'ala Kahiki and Denethor Hartebreak:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rc-SPqNTUG-4dmwgKTXek6O3dFoj7zsB8PWf0NvI-Do/edit?usp=sharing>