

Of the Sky, Of the Sea, and of the Stones
Chapter 2 - Of the Sky
Part 1 - The Flying City

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“If only I could be so grossly incandescent”, I thought aloud as I peered up into the clear, cyan sky, which harboured a beautifully shining sun. For when I was in my adepthood, and in my early twenties, I ventured towards the northwestern island of Carpalia, located just south of where the frigid Koivu sea chilled the world. As the ship that I had hired to transport me was approaching my destination, I had clamoured aboard the deck to witness a sight that I had only heard about in tales and books.

Dawn in the north was supposed to be something of a different experience than elsewhere. I did not understand how a sunrise could be different, but after that morning I knew. It was as if the north was closer to the sky, somehow, for everything could be seen with much more clarity.

When once the sun was just a yellow orb in the sky, from here I could see its true nature. Flaming arcs leapt from its surface, like serpents of golden magma. They writhed and thrashed before sinking back beneath the molten sea of the sun’s surface. I had no idea if those lengthy arcs were living creatures or simply phenomena created by the sun’s intense heat.

The sky itself also took upon different qualities as well. The wind did not simply blow in a single direction, but there were many, many tiny gusts of individual paths that weaved and wisped to and fro about the place. This actually made travel somewhat difficult, as the sails were nearly useless. Unless a particularly strong gust came along, they would do little to propel the ship. The cyan of the sky also shone, as if reflecting light from the sun like the sea.

I looked around on deck and found everyone to already be up and at their various tasks, despite it barely being past dawn. I could not blame them, as who would not want to be awake and witnessing such a gorgeous morning.

Then, from around the eastern side of the small island of Carpalia, came sight of my true destination. For I had no business on Carpalia itself, as it was mostly

barren and only of interest for particular volcanic samples, which currently interested me not.

I had come here on information telling of a rare floating city that had descended from the clouds. Majestic cities such as these were no myth, or fable, but have been documented multiple times by various people and cultures around the world. They were strange, and rare to behold, but definitely real.

Before me, gleamed a city of such shining splendor that tears had come to my eyes. Glowing, gold spires tipped with deep blues rose from a perfectly round dais of huge proportions. The dais itself was resting upon what seemed to be dark, roiling, storm clouds, which were hovering just above the surface of the sea. There were a few ships nearby, all seemingly anchored. As we passed them, heading towards the shining city, I saw that on their decks were their crews, all staring and pointing and discussing the strange city. No one had yet tried to approach it, for fear of the unknown often ruled the hearts of sailors, though many times for good reason.



Fig 8. The city was so bright that I was hardly able to look at it without hurting my eyes

The seas of Okeanós are treacherous. And any accident on the waves could lead to disaster, for sometimes no help would be around for hundreds of kilometres. Though now, the ship that I had hired approached the shining city that rested upon an angry storm. As we neared, the sounds of thunder and wind were growing louder and louder. The height and scale of the city soon became apparent, as the top of the ship's mast didn't even reach the bottom of the dais resting upon the storm.

Just as I was thinking of how I could possibly make my way into the city, a massive door slid open along the side of the titanic dais. Front this new opening

unfurled a strange ramp made from a very thin, yet brightly reflective material. After being fully deployed, a liquid then began streaming downward from the opening in the dais. The entire structure then moved rapidly before the path of the ship, which gave the captain and crew no time to react whatsoever.

Thankfully, though, this was not done with ill intent, as my transport ship sailed effortlessly up the subtle waterfall and into the opening of the dais. Beyond, all upon my hired ship were stunned by what we saw. For through the opening in the dais was a tremendous network of wide and narrow canals integrated with expansive and incredibly organized docks. It was a harbour the likes of which I had never seen before, and as I observed the expressions of the sailors beside me, I could tell that they felt the same.

I was overcome with innumerable questions then, but all thoughts stopped as I looked up, beyond the harbour at the towering spires beyond, and amongst the highest peaks I saw forms of true myth. Of creatures only whispered of in legends. For what I saw flying among the tallest towers could only be described as ancient and of unmistakable description. The children of Ziz, mother of The Sky and empress of light, wind, and storms.