

Of the Sky, Of the Sea, and of the Stones
Chapter 2 - Of the Sky
Part 12 - The Foul Tide

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The figure in the dazzling robe stepped away from their flying mount, which was essentially a huge, dark grey bat. The brilliant man's face was not unlike that of the cyan folk, though was severe in expression, and light yellow in colouration. The rainbow feathers of his fully unclosing robe covered his entire body from the neck-down. His clean shaven head and face were like that of a golden bust, though without the lustre of metal.

Around me, I noticed the cyan folk nearby began kneeling and chanting slowly, piously. They all turned towards the bright figure, whose presence now seemed to make the rest of the world darker, by comparison. Not wanting to stand out, I approached a nearby group of four, and knelt next to them. As I did so, I tried to glean what they were chanting. I strained my ears and heard but a single string of syllables repeated over and over: "mahuizotl ilhuicatl".

I had never heard anything in this tongue in my entire life. They were such foreign and strange syllables to my ears, but for some reason they seemed to please the shining figure at the top of the steps leading to the fountain. The shape of a twisted knot of a sea serpent spewing water upwards loomed just behind him. With a content expression, they then addressed all of the people of Temptes Equit who were present.

"People of the city that rides upon a storm. Rise." They said, to which the people obeyed. "I am Xiuh, cleric of Ziz, and I am here to deliver a message from above." At this, many of the cyan folk began chatting excitedly among themselves. The group next to me spoke in a reverent tone about this rare and incredible occurrence. Xiuh then continued, "Ziz, her children, and her unending grandchildren, have seen your plight and have offered their aid. I come to herald their assistance. When they appear above to cleanse the city, do not be afraid!"

At this, many of the blue-skinned people around me began to clap and cheer. One man, far to my left, then spoke up, addressing the brilliantly robed Xiuh, “Thank you, oh great herald! I have been ill since that hideous crimson eel attacked, I cannot sleep, I have trouble breathing, and...” he then trailed off as he fell to his knees. The deep bags under his eyes were evidence of his words. Before he slumped over completely, two others caught him by the shoulders.

After seeing this, I could no longer deny the sickness that was seeming to spread through the city, undeniably caused by the foul, black bile the titanic eel had sprayed all over the city. Though now gone, the sinister ooze’s effects were apparent.

The kneeling man’s body then began to shudder and convulse, to the alarm of his comrades. His eyes rolled back into his head and dark red ichor began to leak from his nose and the corners of his mouth. His companions jumped back, fearful of his condition, and as they did so he fell flat onto his face.

I stole a peripheral glance at the cleric of Ziz and noted that his expression was the same, despite that of everyone else being shocked and fearful.

What followed next was a cause for true terror. The facedown man’s spine then began to elongate. Each vertebra poked outwards like a needle, until his entire back looked like a fine-toothed comb of thin, bony spikes. From the tips of the spikes then flowed reddish-pink goo until the entire man’s body was covered. The large, reddish-pink mass of goo then solidified and changed to a light pink. The same shade as the tongues of the monstrous crimson eel that vomited forth a dark tide.

The newly transformed creature then reared up, to reveal the form of a man-sized and slug-like being with only a wide, uneven mouth as a feature. People began to run and scream as the new tongue-beast began turning about, approaching cyan people hungrily. One person, an elderly crone paralyzed with fear, was caught by the fiend. It then proceeded to knock her over and gush fell slime from its mouth, covering her in a disgusting tar.



Figure 19. Xiuh as he left

Xiuh then apparently had seen enough. He got back onto his flying steed and took off, though, as he flew away, I saw the same neutral, yet pleasant, expression. Not one of enjoyment, but one of apathy.

I turned my attention back to the tongue-beast and saw that the woman who it had coated in its regurgitations was now shifting form as well. Noting that I was the only person left in the area, I proceeded to make myself scarce. Before the wretched things could turn their attention to me, I ran to the library and let myself in. I looked for a way to secure it and found the door bar nearby. I quickly put in place, hopefully to prevent the entrance of the pink predators, and rushed to find the head librarian.