

Of the Sky, Of the Sea, and of the Stones
Chapter 2 - Of the Sky
Part 8 - Seated, with Book in Hand

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After reading aloud the words upon the grand doors before us, the Head Librarian gently pushed them open. They made way before us easily, as if much lighter than they should have been. And we passed the threshold, I poked at the leftmost door with an index finger and it slid open a bit further. “Wondrous...” I said quietly to myself, thinking of what my mentor would say of this fascinating architecture.

Though, as I turned my attention forward, I was greeted by a vision of knowledge the likes of which I had not seen since visiting the grand archives on Orosilla. Bookshelves twice as tall as I were arranged in huge, concentric circles with four main areas void of obstructions to be used as paths. At the centre, where we were apparently headed, I spied a desk covered with stacks of papers, books, scrolls, and writing implements.

When we reached the centre, I noticed then that this area was at the top of a radial slope. On all sides, the bookcases around us descended gradually before we could see over them. There must have been close to five hundred bookshelves, if my estimates were correct.

“Welcome to the Central Library,” Cais smiled proudly as he gestured his hands at the surroundings. “Amongst the sea of shelves, there are quite a few desks to sit and read at. Writing supplies can also be requested at any given time. Usually, there is a cost associated with the supplies, but the Grand Advisor herself has offered to cover any expenses incurred while you are visiting the library.” The cyan-skinned man then paused, allowing me to process the information.

“Thank you, truly! This is wonderful. I cannot wait to get started,” I beamed happily, like a child surrounded by sweets. “I must prioritize my reading, even though I want to look at every single book in this library! Could you please show me to your section housing information about The Sources?” I then asked.

“Of course! My task would not be complete until I see you seated and with a book in your hands,” the librarian agreed. “One moment, though,” he then added as he retrieved some things from a drawer in the document buried desk. From within, he drew out a bottle of glue and a small loop of ribbon. “Please wear this,” he extended the white ribbon to me. “That is your access bracelet. It is a sign that you are authorized to be here. Please do not lose it, as security can be...unforgiving,” he then grimaced as he peered over my right shoulder.

As I put the access bracelet around my left wrist, I glanced in the same direction as Cais. On top of a bookshelf behind me, sat the orange cat with the many black spots and the stern glare. They then turned to the side, displaying their flank laden with vibrating circles. Just then, every black spot froze and then opened to reveal many eyes housing constricted, vertical slit pupils. They then shut quickly and their host lied down upon the wooden surface. The entire time their two head-bound eyes were gazing at me, judgingly. This must be the library’s security, or at least one aspect of it.

“Please do not mind him, you are quite welcome here. Olhos is merely letting you know that he looks after the books. As do the other library staff,” Cais informed.

At the time of my being in the flying city of Temptes Equit, I was in my early twenties, though before this point I had visited MANY libraries across all of Orosilla and the nearby north eastern islands. This was the first time that I had encountered library staff that were not human. After subtly shaking the disbelief from my head, I nodded to acknowledge the Head Librarian’s words, though as I took notice of the glue bottle he was placing on the desk, I could not help but ask, “What’s the glue bottle for?”



“Nothing, right now. It’s empty,” Cais then sighed, “but that’s a problem for later,” he finished before guiding me down a different path than we arrived on.

Figure 15. Mao, one of the feline librarians.

We walked for a bit, before stepping away from the main path down a smaller one that appeared on the left. Soon, we were at a comfortable looking reading area. There were a few other people

here as well, most of which ignored us and continued their reading. Many were seated in soft looking chairs, though there were four simple wooden tables at the centre of the lounge. The only person seated here was completely surrounded by stacks of books and papers, consumed by their work and was writing at a feverish pace, though almost inaudibly.

Cais silently gestured for me to have a seat anywhere that I liked; which I did upon a plush-looking beige armchair. The majestically maned one walked to a nearby shelf and returned with a thick book bound in a colour similar to his cyan skin.

I took it and looked upon the cover. In stylized Koivan, the text read: 'Theories of The Sky. Volume One. By Cretum Trina.' I had never heard of this author before, but that was probably because I knew next to nothing of these people's culture and history. "Thank you," I mouthed quietly at Cais.

He nodded before he leaned in close and whispered, "My pleasure, if you have any questions, please ask Mao." He then pointed to the table a little ways in front of my seat, which upon now rested the violet, yet iridescent, cat that we encountered outside.

As I smiled at them both in assurance, the Head Librarian took his leave, heading back the way we had come, likely with important business to attend to. After watching him go, and noticing Mao leap silently onto a nearby, unoccupied chair, I turned my attention to the tome now in my hands. I was almost salivating at the thought of uncovering the secrets of The Sky, so I did not hesitate to open it and begin visually drinking in the profound words.