



*Before the days of men, before the dragons, even before the very gods we view as eternal, lived the Timeless Ones. Ageless and deathless, they wandered the planes and gathered unto themselves such knowledge and power as, had there been gods, none could have stood against them.*

*With none to call their rival, the Timeless Ones turned upon each other. Constant plots and schemes divided them and they spread themselves across the multiverse, each group seeking dominance over its realm and all who dwelled within.*

*And thus came to the young world a group of these beings. They found the lands bare and uninteresting and chose to make their home in the darkest depths of the infant sea. There they continued their pursuits in the unfathomable chill and darkness of the world's core while, above them in the sun, the gods came to be and created new races to live and be on land, sea, and air.*

*In time the deep masters became aware of this new life and sought to study these creatures and expand their vast stores of knowledge. They watched the young races struggle to learn the ways of magic, and of the mind, and of the elemental forces that formed the world – things the deep masters had known since the birth of the world or before.*

*At first the Timeless Ones were content to observe the world above. But then Azazel, the oldest of them, asserted his power and sought to rule all below the sea and above, slaying any who opposed. The deep masters were again divided, and for generations they waged civil war for control of the world while, above them, the surface races prospered in ignorance of their possible fate.*

*So powerful were the Timeless Ones that few survived the strife, but among those few was Azazel. In the end he stood alone against three of his kind in a struggle such that neither side could find advantage. Azazel called down every manner of catastrophe such that the world itself was in danger of ruin should the conflict continue.*

*The three who opposed combined their strength to save the fledgling world. They created for themselves a great black stone, forged from an ancient mineral, and imbued within it a large measure of their power. With their combined might focused through the gem, the Three defeated Azazel.*

*Yet so foreign to their kind even then was death that the victorious Three could not destroy Azazel. They made an opening at the root of the great mountain Dudael and cast him therein. And using the power of their stone they covered him in darkness and deprived him of water until the long dreaming took him for all eternity.*

*The struggle against Azazel left the deep masters with little taste to enjoy the world they had saved. They departed for other dimensions, but left their black stone with the long-lived people of the wood and bade them guard it for all time, lest Azazel awaken and its power be needed again.*

#### Translator Notes:

- The document was written in Sindene, a long-dead language from which the current Sylvan and Aquan, among other languages, are derived. The most recent verified sample of written Sindene is a 5000-year-old stone tablet.
- As should now be clear, this document is not an original. Analysis of the paper indicates that this scroll is a mere 800 to 900 years old. The pen strokes and letter spacing suggest that it was not so much written as drawn – that is, whoever made this scroll was copying something as closely as possible without actually understanding what the words and letters meant.
- The sketch at the top is, obviously, of the black stone you received from the elves. The symbols etched into the stone are not letters in any known alphabet, nor do they match any runes that we can find in our library. If one accepts the story in the scroll as something other than a myth, then it is likely the runes originate with the culture of the so-called Timeless Ones.
- The name Azazel appears in a few mythological writings that date back to before the current Nessenese calendar. In those works the name alludes to a great evil that lies dormant in the depths below. As usual with mythology, there are no identifying details – Azazel could be anything, or more likely nothing.

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27 Dierdos 1120