

# Panthalassa

It startles people when they notice: Heaven has no oceans.

There's a space for one, sort of. To one side of Jordi's Savannah is an area best described as "not defined." It isn't empty, because "empty" is a definition, as is "blank," "vacant," and "formless." There should be **something** there, and there isn't, but nothing else can take up the space. And it's definitely supposed to be an ocean. It's obvious by looking, although "looking" is the worst word -- except for all possible others -- to use to describe the action.

More to the point, a sufficiently old enough denizen of Heaven will remember the days when there was an ocean there. It was called Panthalassa, and it supposedly stretched forever. In a very odd way, it certainly stretched from Heaven to Hell -- at least, old records narrate all the fights between Oannes' (Archangel of the Waters) Servitors and Vephar's (Demon Prince of the Oceans) that took place upon it, and Hell certainly once had an ocean of its own. There is a section of Hades that still looks

unmistakably like a seaport, complete with long-dry canals.

Panthalassa had several unique features to it. To begin with, it was the only place on the celestial plane where one could see the sun, moon, and stars (it was never determined if these were the same as the ones on the corporeal plane). While there was never a constellation that would have been impossible to find *somewhere* on Earth, there was no consistency. A traveler could go from bright noon to star-laden midnight in an instant, and the night sky never appeared the same way twice. Despite this, travel was actually fairly easy. Compasses would always point to either Heaven or Hell, and those trying to use the stars and the sun to navigate somehow could get just enough information to chart a proper course.

The other major feature of Panthalassa was that it was not simply an ocean; there were also islands, ranging from very small, to several times the size of Eurasia. The records indicate that one could find, or at least hear of, anything there. Strange ruins, odd cultures, wildlife not seen on Earth in eons (or ever seen at all), rumored colonies of Outcasts and Renegades and Grigori and ethereals and entities not so easily catalogued, hidden fortresses of Archangels, Demon Princes (or both!), legendary outposts of different celestial planes, wild

Tethers -- Panthalassa was an adventurer's Dream, and that wasn't even taking into account the life found in the ocean itself, or the mysteries found at its bottom.

It is suggested -- even dead, Oannes' and Vephar's nature clouds the issue -- that Panthalassa was some sort of mass hallucination that took humanity's subconscious collective perception of the Far Marches and filtered it through the dynamic tension of two Superiors engaged in Word-conflict. The ocean would be the Marches itself, the islands all Domains, and naturally one could always find one's way back to one's Heart.

That would explain why the ocean disappeared some time after both celestials were dead, although it does not explain how an Archangel and a Demon Prince could collectively have sufficient influence to bring it off. For that matter, it does not explain why there was an ocean before the Rebellion, either. On the other hand, the alternative explanation (Panthalassa was simply a very large forked Tether) is not especially satisfying, either, if not outright impossible under the laws of metaphysics. The very silly explanation -- it was a "real" ocean that God drained in order to bring about the Flood -- would be dismissed outright, except that the dates match up exceptionally well.

However it worked, there are angels and demons who would like it to work again. Some interesting things on the islands were lost when Panthalassa disappeared; some entities want those things back, and some just want to see them for themselves. The military aspects of having a sea route to Heaven or Hell appeal, too. And, of course, there are those who simply loved the ocean itself. Not all of them were angels.

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