



# THE LAND OF BLADES

## A BRIEF HISTORY

A Fantasy World Primer by

**Daniel Kwan**



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## INTRODUCTION

The Land of Blades is a region of the Radiant Lands forged from centuries of bloody conflict. For the past 500 years, the region has been under the domain of the Yue Dynasty - a line of kings and queens descended from a legendary swordsman who brought peace to the land. Its name comes from the region's famed blacksmithing traditions and legendary sword masters. To the people of this land, "Yue" is a name used to describe the dynasty, its territory, and the culture of the region. The coastal region is naturally protected from two sides (north and west) by the White Dragon Peaks and Sundered Spires. Its coastal eastern and southern borders are on the Azure Expanse (a great sea). The landscape of the Land of Blades varies from the verdant fields of the Vermillion Hills to swaths of dangerous, untamed frontier lands in the White Valley.

## OVERVIEW

Age	Description
Creation - <i>The Age of the Shapeless Lands</i>	The Great Divergence - the primordial giant parts heavenly, hellish, and the mortal realms while creating the sun, moon, stars, divinity, and humanity. After this great feat, the giant died and its essence became the mortal and immortal realms.
<i>The Age of Mortals &amp; Gods</i>	While the most of the gods resided in heaven, the Masters (five powerful beings borne from the first gods) were compelled to care for the mortal lands. They entered the the realm of the mortals and lived among humanity to shape the development of the land and guide humanity's growth. From this moment forward, the mortal realm became known as the Radiant Lands.
<i>The War of the Immortals</i>	The powerful Sapphire Flame turns to darkness and causes discord among the Masters. This culminates in all out war between the Masters. The Lord of Rain, a great dragon, is slain in the conflict and the Sapphire Flame is exiled to the void. However, its will and pride remained in the Radiant Lands.
<i>The Age of Warring Sovereigns</i>	The remaining Masters fled for the Immortal Islands, a paradise surrounded by storms, where they would reflect on their failings. The most powerful region of the Radiant Lands at the time, the Land of Blades, quickly fell into perpetual violence as powerful warlords vied for control of the region. This age ended after 300 years of violence when the forces of the enigmatic Zhao Yang (who possessed the will of the Sapphire Flame known as the Decree of Fire) violently unified the land.
<i>The Reign of the Eternal Flame Emperor</i>	Zhao Yang proclaimed himself the Eternal Flame Emperor and ruled the Land of Blades by force and fear. The Divine Flame had been reborn and continued its quest to conquer the mortal realm. The Eternal Flame Emperor's rule was challenged by a mighty alliance of rebels from the Land of Blades and the denizens of Monkey Valley.
<i>The Great War Under Heaven</i>	After a decade of conflict, the Eternal Flame Emperor was defeated by the alliance of the Land of Blades and Monkey Valley. He was imprisoned for eternity by the hero Xing and the Gibbon Marquis in an otherworldly prison located between hell and the mortal realm.
Present - <i>The Reforged Age</i>	After a decade of conflict, the Eternal Flame Emperor was defeated by the alliance of the Land of Blades and Monkey Valley. He was imprisoned for eternity by the hero Xing and the Gibbon Marquis in an otherworldly prison located between hell and the mortal realm.



## THE AGE OF THE SHAPELESS LANDS

In the beginning, the world was unformed and chaotic. This was the Age of the Shapeless Lands. All that existed in this endless place was a primordial giant, a transcendent being residing over the realms to-be.

After untold millennia, the Great Divergence occurred. With a blade fashioned of pure energy, the giant parted the primordial realms - creating heaven, hell, and the mortal Radiant Lands. After this great event, the giant drew his final breath - creating the sun, moon, stars, winds, divinity, and humanity. Its physical form became the features of the landscape.

## THE AGE OF MORTALS & GODS

After the death of the giant, the most benevolent of the gods, the Heavenly Regents, inherited the will of the giant and were compelled to shape the mortal and immortal realms. Weeping at the sight of what the giant's sacrifice had created, their tears falling to the lands below heaven. These tears formed the Masters - mighty beings fated to aid in the development of the lands by imparting humanity with essential knowledge and skills.

Wandering the Radiant Lands disguised as mortals, the Masters guided the earliest leaders as advisors and heroes, helped the downtrodden, and kept emerging forces of darkness at bay. Although they bore physical similarities with the mortals of the land, the Masters were powerful and unfathomably long-lived. Each one was associated with a foundational element to the world and qualities they brought to the inhabitants of the land.

Millennia passed and the Land of Blades emerged as one of the largest and most powerful regions of the Radiant Lands. During this age, great clans peacefully coexisted in the Land of Blades as they collectively flourished under the guidance of the Masters.

### THE MASTERS

#### *The Mountain Carver*

The Master of earth who taught humanity the importance of patience, hard work, and stability. The earliest walls that protected humanity from the elements were created by the Architect.

#### *The Lord of the Forge*

The Master of metal who imparted the qualities of firmness and determination, while teaching humanity the art of combat and bladesmithing. A legendary master of sword-making who forged treasured blades for the first great clan leaders.

#### *The Divine Archer*

The Master of wood who taught humanity warmth, generosity, and the skills required to thrive off of the land. A hero who slayed many great beasts.

#### *The Lord of Rain*

The Master of water and the first dragon to inhabit the Land of Blades. Taught humanity wisdom and flexibility.

#### *The Sapphire Flame*

The Master of fire who imparted strength and persistence upon humanity. The Sapphire Flame taught humanity about death and rebirth.

## THE WAR OF THE IMMORTALS

Confident that the prosperity displayed by the denizens of the Land of Blades, the Heavenly Regents created the Immortal Islands - a paradise in the Azure Expanse free from death and sorrow, with a grand palace of silver, and a tree that grew enchanted fruits. Shielded by great ocean storms, the new home of the Masters would not be accessible to mortals.

While the rest of the Masters no longer wanted to meddle in the affairs of humanity, the Master of fire would not leave the Land of Blades and instead rallied humanity against the benevolent Masters in an attempt to establish their own domain below heaven.

Forced to reveal their true forms, the Masters fought a destructive battle that lasted seven days. The ferocity of the Sapphire Flame could not match that of the benevolent Masters, who exiled their corrupt sibling from the world - thrusting them into the limitless miasma between space and time. As a result of the destructive battle, the progress made by the Masters had come undone and the Lord of Rain was slain. No longer an embodiment of their divine virtues, humanity now carried the spark of the Sapphire Flame's ambition and destructive intent. Dejected, the remaining Masters withdrew to their promised home in shame.

## THE AGE OF WARRING SOVEREIGNS

After the exodus of the Masters to the Immortal Islands, the Land of Blades became divided and ravaged by perpetual conflict. The alliances of the great clans eroded as they established their own powerful, independent kingdoms that claimed dominion over the land. This was the Age of Warring Sovereigns - a period of violent diplomacy and bitter conflict.

Amidst the chaos, a ruthless warrior named Zhao Yang emerged and claimed control of the small

kingdom of Ji. Wielding a power known as the Decree of Fire, he became the Sapphire Flame incarnate and led his followers on a ruthless 10 year campaign to conquer the fragmented Land of Blades by force. As the 300 year-long Age of Warring Sovereigns came to a brutal end, the Zhao Yang's and his forces had laid waste to the land and reduced his enemies to ash with his divine power. In the aftermath of his conquest, he proclaimed himself the Eternal Flame Emperor.

## THE REIGN OF THE ETERNAL FLAME EMPEROR

Under the rule of the Eternal Flame Emperor, many economic and political reforms were enacted to suppress scholarship and strengthen the military might of the land. As grand fortresses were constructed, scholars who survived the Age of Warring Sovereigns were executed and their libraries reduced to ash.

The Eternal Flame Emperor ruled the Land of Blades through violence and fear for the next 200 years. As the people suffered and the land fell into ruin, a heroic swordsman of upright moral character named Xing staged a daring rebellion to overthrow the Flame Emperor and end the hardships endured by the people of the land. Knowing that hope and courage would not be enough to free the people from their wicked ruler, Xing sought the aid of a survivor from the War of the Immortals. Using a magical staff crafted from a branch of a plum tree and inlaid with three pieces of carved jade that fell from the moon, Xing called upon the legendary Gibbon Marquis, master of Monkey Valley and guardian of the hellish realms. Together, they would lead a daring campaign to usurp the powerful ruler of the Land of Blades.



## THE GREAT WAR UNDER HEAVEN

Wielding a blade known as Zhanlu, the Noble Shadow, Xing and the Gibbon Marquis led a rebellion against the Eternal Flame Emperor alongside six famous martial artists. In what was referred to as the Great War Under Heaven, they vanquished the corrupt ruler and sealed him in the darkest depths of a great lake in Monkey Valley - eternally weakening the Decree of Fire. The Burning Sanctum, the seat of his empire, was cast into the Azure Expanse by the Gibbon Marquis.

## THE REFORGED AGE

At last victorious, Xing established a new dynasty known as Yue and the smoldering land was made anew by the hard work of the people. In a period known as the Reforging of the Land, Xing took on the name Yuchang and established the Yue Dynasty - of which he was crowned King. Weary by the conflicts that ravaged the land, the newly established Yue Dynasty vowed to rebuild the land to its former glory and splendor. Under his leadership, the Land of Blades became the forge of heroes and scholars; the home for those with an unbreakable spirit. A new age of peace had begun. King Yuchang established a new capital in Old Dragon's Nest, a natural stronghold at the base of Paradise Mountain in the White Valley. From his seat of power, he allocated local domains for the Noble Families of Yue that contributed to the Great War Under Heaven. These regions became known as the Vermillion Hills and the Azure Lowlands.

Knowing that the power of the staff and the splendors of Monkey Valley would entice generations to come, the King's ordered it broken into parts and entrusted to the great martial arts masters - who called themselves the Virtuous Confederacy. This alliance of warriors grew into six orthodox martial arts sects representing the most cherished aspects of Yue culture - swordplay (Red Plumb Blossom), spirituality (Mountain Orchid), freedom (Vagabond), medicine (Divine Physician), art (Moon Joy), and scholarship (Radiant Ink).

Stories of the Eternal Flame Emperor and the Staff of Xing would fade from the memory of the people. His will however, once a raging fire, endured as a weak glow waiting in the shadows. Some believe that the will of the Eternal Flame Emperor could be heard as whispers in candles and campfires - gathering strength beyond his prison.