

First developer AMA

The following pages were created based on text copied from the first developer lore AMA, March 14, 2023

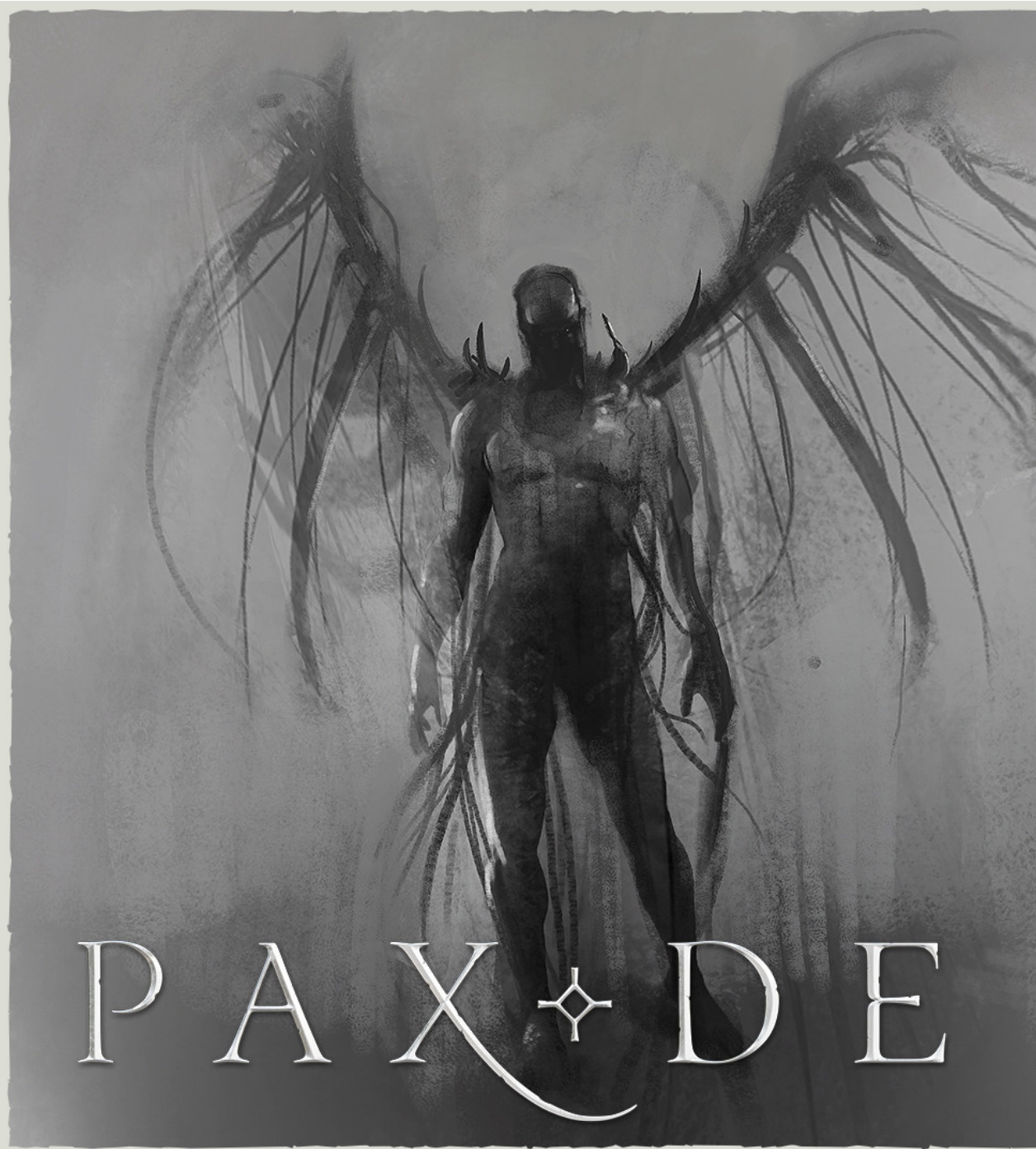
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Intro

When the transgressions of man against the Divine seem to have become irreversible and evil has managed to consume and corrupt every living being, She creates a new slab of earth on top of the old one, burying everyone and everything and creates a new iteration of Her beloved, but sometimes neglected Creation. As far as we are concerned this has happened nine times, creating in the process nine circles of Hell.

Evil however does persist, despite the Divine's efforts to bury it. Each time a new Creation has been added, banished outcasts from Heaven and earth add to the ever-growing hordes of evil that govern the discs of the underworld. There, the history is unbroken, the hatred is ever-growing and the power of anger is unrelenting and fresh.

~Firebrand Silas of Anatolia



PAX ✦ DE

Pax Dei and Verisimilitude

Is you is, or is you ain't of this world?

Pax Dei is not our world. It is not a copy of medieval Europe, neither geographically nor when it comes to countries and locations. It is one of the endless possible parallel creations in a universe ruled by the divinity the medieval mind believed was real. A world that is pressured from all sides by the enemies of the Divine and contains all sorts of beings hiding from the Divine, the Enemy below, or both.

In making the Pax Dei setting and lore, we have created for ourselves a sandbox of sorts. We have gathered the elements and ideas of what people held true about Life, the Universe and Everything, back in the early middle ages, and then... We gave it a little shake.

This means that a lot of the things you see in the world will definitely ring some bells, you may think you know how things behave or where they are from, and often you will be right. But you will also be wrong a lot of times.

Inspirations

Of Pax Dei

We wanted to create a world where players could live out their lives in relative safety, build, grow, harvest, take care of their animals, and go on adventures without having to battle other players at every step. We also realized that for the world to be dynamic and survive, there had to be conflict and even war from time to time, with the destruction and violent ambitions that follow. Pax Dei, the Peace of the Divine, enables this. In a world that is surrounded by evil beings and ambitious people, remaining under the watchful eye of the Divine keeps all that strife at bay.

Of the world itself

When it comes to original inspirations for the game, the question that sparked it all, I think, was imagining an early medieval world where, as people believed, heavenly forces were real and present, and the legions of darkness were also real and present and actively trying to corrupt the world from outside and within and in addition to that, you had the creatures of ancient myths still around, trying their best not to get squished by the supernatural powers at be.

Whether or not people believe in these things still today, the way this was expressed and written about and how these factors governed much of life in medieval times suggests, in many ways, the greatest RPG ever played, complete with strict character advancement, magical systems, monsters, dark dungeons, funny costumes, heroes and villains and cloaked preachers with a big staff and pointy hats, claiming to hold the power of miracles.

Another interesting aspect of this setting is that, to a varying degree, people know or have heard of various parts of it. Both from history and

also from contemporary culture. Movies, paintings, books, and games, so whatever we would be making in a setting like this would have the advantage of us not having to explain everything ad nauseam down to the smallest detail. It would, as any good setting would do, create a familiar backdrop to whatever adventures are played out in the Pax Dei world.

This is exactly what “low fantasy” means. We are not inventing anything really or altering the core of human nature, we take the basic concepts, rules, and constraints of things as they were believed to be and then reorganize the contents to make a living world full of wonder and mysteries. This is, for example, what Game of Thrones did very well, something we all loved to watch and learn from.

One thing that is important to note here is that even though this setting is far away from us now in time, using elements that relate to this period in our history does require a certain amount of respect. We are, for example, not using anything within the setting of Pax Dei that touches on specific religious entities people still hold dear. It would be very wrong to do so. But all these things are a part of our common intellectual and historical heritage, ours as much as anyone else's. We take it seriously, without prejudice or malice, and with all the respect that it deserves.

We want to enjoy it with you all, in the best way possible.

Of Fables and myths

In addition to the main scene of Divinity, demonology, angelology, and all the rest of it, our common background is full of yet older, wondrous tales and fables. Celtic myths, the Kalevala, the dark fables from Rus, Anatolian and Greek stories from antiquity, the amazing flora of Persian and Indian mythology, and yes, even things further afield.

The only thing that connects the world of Pax Dei directly to a location in the real world is that the angle we use from which the world is viewed is somewhere in Europe.

The player community and collecting lore

We can probably do it, but you can do it better!

As with all content in the game, we want it to be in such a form that the community can coherently collect and present what they want of it onto their own community websites, and lore is no different. I am sure that there are a lot of potential historians, cartographers, archaeologists, and record-keepers out there who are itching to dive in and shine within the Pax Dei community.

Some of the information you can get is of course, character information, and you will need to acquire it in person to benefit from it, but a lot of the information will be player information, things that the player can use when navigating the world and utilizing its contents.

Character Background

Today is tomorrow's background.

One of the main dogmas when it comes to designing the lore and setting in Pax Dei is that while the past must be ours, the future has to be entirely yours. We provide the sandbox, the set of rules and limitations the world exists in, and within it, you can be who you want to be.

Your avatar in the world will start with a clean and empty slate, giving you the chance to entirely create and shape your own reputation and be whoever you want to be in the eyes of your fellow players. And you do so through your words, actions, deeds, and who you associate yourself with in the game.

Do you want to be a farmer? Become a farmer. Do you want to be known as a demon hunter? Study the magic and delve into the dark reaches of the dungeons of the world. Do you desire to be “The Chosen One”? Do things that have your fellow players view you as someone very special.

Devs in the game/Easter eggs

The hen is not the egg.

The only monument we care about is making this game of ours as good and exciting as possible. Inserting into it obscure private jokes or things that not everyone has the same chance of understanding or uncovering is against that mission.

Having said that, who does not love good easter eggs? There may, in time, well exist obscure references to historical figures, works of fiction, legends, films, and even other games that we want to give a hat tip to and honour by a direct or indirect mention.

On Dungeons

Handmade for a reason. A lot of reasons.

Dungeons are always steeped in lore, mystery, and purpose. Without it, there would be no point in making them all by hand.

Dungeons must be hard and unforgiving. The fact that someone finds a dungeon entrance does not promise that anyone will be able to explore it throughout. Indeed, we envision that in the beginning, dungeons are places where you try and try again to delve into, but every time you get your backside handed to you.

And let's say you find some of the real masters of that place. That you find her does not mean you can beat her. You may try and try again, you may learn a few things, go home and return later with twice as many people, and perhaps she will kill you all again.

The point is that the game does not make any contracts with the player. No one promises you that if you do A, B, and C, get into the good graces with some overlord, and grind to max level, you will be rewarded with a shiny dragon. IF there is a dragon, anyone will be free to walk up to it and get unceremoniously eaten.

But yes, a dungeon will have immediate occupants, a gathering of enemies and monsters who try to thwart you at every step, a collection of entities with their own reason to be there, their own agenda and history, mysteries and resources. But that is not all. Did these current inhabitants create this place themselves? Or did they move into something that was already there? Is there perhaps some ancient evil lurking way below that awaits discovery? Or does this place lead to other, hitherto undiscovered places, or locations that are not of this creation?

Dungeons. Thinking about RPGs in general, no places are as vivid in one's mind as the really good and juicy dungeons.

How to discover lore in the game?

Seek and you will find, or die trying.

There are several avenues we can use to allow players to piece together the past and learn about the forces that are at work all around. Obviously, we will post bits and pieces on the website along with concept art and even screenshots, and whatever appears there is canon, absolute facts about various topics from the history of the world. And then, some things will be revealed or hinted at through forums like this. In Discord or elsewhere.

The full spectrum of how lore is revealed in the game is something that will be evolving as we implement features that are planned pertaining to that. As the Alpha starts, the things that you can use to start piecing together the history of the world are item and NPC names, descriptions, names of places, different types of old structures, and visual queues as you delve into the enemy's strongholds.

Oh... and the books! Read, and you will find.

A lot of the questions in this section had to do with books, what books are in Pax Dei, how we will use books, and how we will learn from books, so I would like to repeat here what I have said on this previously;

The inspiration we have taken from books in medieval times:

- Libraries in early medieval times were incredibly valuable, storing the treasures of the mind.*
- Entering a library was a privilege given to few, and more often than not, books were chained to the desks, to make sure they would not be carried away.*

- *Certain important libraries operated under a Papal directive, forbidding people to remove books from them, on pain of excommunication.*
- *Entering a room full of books gave a promise that not only were you in the presence of great minds, but also in the house of great rulers who understood the meaning of knowledge.*
- *Books and the texts within them were often believed to have supernatural qualities, divine or otherwise magical.*
- *Manuscripts were full of intertextual layers, symbols, and illustrations that often said alternate stories and contained hidden meanings or messages.*
- *Making books before the advent of paper was a huge undertaking and expensive.*

As you can perhaps deduce from the inspirations, we have thought a lot about this, and there are grand plans in place for books in the game, almost none of which will be in the Alpha. And even though we, as a rule, do not want to talk much about upcoming features right now, I feel this is something we need to outline a bit better, in order for things to make sense.

I cannot at this moment promise when or how exactly books will be implemented, but here are some bits that may jog your imagination, as it does ours.

Ideally:

- *Owning a good library should be impressive, for a reason!*
- *You should be able to glean all sorts of lore snippets and recipes from books.*
- *Books should not be a wall of text you need to read through.*
- *Books should be involved in appointment play.*
- *Books should be a part of crafting.*
- *Books should be an element of the economy.*

Yes... We love books

The concept of books

The role of books

The power of books

The promise of books

The magic of books

The mystery of books

Books!

Magic

I create as I speak!

Magic is older than mankind and has always been attributed to the things we cannot fully grasp. It is, therefore, with great reverence and respect that we attempt to define magic in the world of Pax Dei. To understand the concept a bit better, I should mention a few definitions of how the universe of Pax Dei is put together.

“The natural world” is everything that originates and is found inside the current creation.

“The extra-natural” pertains to things and beings that originated in creations past (yes... there have been many) and somehow survived the wrath of the Divine, as one creation was destroyed and another made on top of it. Quite logically, if adventurers happen one day to find their way deep, deep down into some of the major dungeons of the world, there is a distinct possibility that they will glimpse parts of these extra-natural and long-forgotten worlds and learn of things that were never meant to remain or survive.

“The Supernatural” This is essentially everything in the universe that was never a part of any creation. Most of this exists as an ethereal spirit world, but there may also be physical realms within it, created by powers other than the Divine.

So, what is magic? As magic, as thought of in the world of Pax Dei, it is something that originates outside of creation, and those living within it can not understand its process to the fullest, nor can they grasp the origins or the power behind it. All they can do is experiment and, over time, play with it, using best practices, preferably without burning down their village or losing their fingers in the process.

I am obviously not going to spill the beans on magic too much, it is something we want players to discover and experiment with. I can,

however, talk a bit about the nature of magic.

It has been said that magic in Pax Dei is real and unquestioned. What does that mean?

First and foremost, magic needs to be viewed as a part of normal existence. It needs to be logical, given the ideas about what the forces at play are and what the worlds are made from. Verisimilitude is key.

Secondly, we, as inhabitants of the world of Pax Dei, only see what seeps into this world of the powers beyond. Who knows what is out there, really?

The colour of magic

What we DO know for sure is that when this world of Pax Dei was made, spirit power was used to extract the elements of creation, earth, water, air, and fire, from the ether and manipulate them to make everything we see today.

We also know that the Divine gave spirit to some of the things that were made and thereby sparked life, a magical force in itself, unique to creation.

This also means that everything that lives has within it an element of spirit, as well as the elements of creation. It should be noted that some beings were gifted a stronger spirit than others.

This spirit element can be observed, communicated to, and manipulated by the Divine, and this is the basis of what is called Divine magic. I.e., Divine magic uses spirit to manipulate the elements of creation and tends to bring energy into the natural world.

Likewise and as a testimony to the origins of the Dark Lord, demonic magic is also spirit magic, driven by the same mechanics, nature, and elements as Divine magic. But that is where all comparison ends. This type of magic originates in the desire to outdo the Divine, and be larger, greater, more detailed, and more impressive. Demonic magic is also a selfish force. I.e., Demonic magic uses spirit to manipulate the elements of creation and tends to draw energy from the natural world.

The origins of the other types of magic that are known will not be revealed here, but give them a short mention:

- *Druidic magic uses life force to manipulate the elements of creation. Powerful as it may be, it does not exist outside the natural or extra natural realms. Another important bit... as it does not employ spirit, it is not detectable either by the Divine or the demonic.*

- *Shamanic magic uses spirit beings within the natural world to manipulate life force directly. It has no direct effect on the elements of creation. As one might expect, this type of magic does not go unnoticed among the supernatural powers.*

There may still be other shades of magic out there, but more about that later.

Names in the World

What is in a name?

In line with the past being ours and the future yours, a lot of old names remain in the world from centuries past. Either they are names of old kingdoms, or they are named after important events that took place there, but most of them are names from ancient times, and no one really knows what they mean anymore, even though there are plenty of theories...

Not all, perhaps, but most of the heartlands, rivers, lakes, and mountains will have names. Also, significant places, holy sites, major dungeons, and other historic sites will usually have a name, either on the map or hidden away somewhere in the game.

*The name of the world is a common name for everyone who has ever lived there, some call it Earth, others refer to it as the Creation, those who guard the forest talk about **Duenu**, and yet others talk about Rex Mundi's Deception. It all depends on your perspective.*

*The main region we will start with during the Alpha is called Gallia, and it is divided into several heartland provinces, such as Merrie and **Kerys**, among others. But what YOU as a player will be naming is what you make. Farms, villages, towns, outposts, castles, or even lands consolidated under larger player alliances.*

And yes, of course, there is a chance some people will come up with terrible names, but the upside to that is that you will to that extent, know them before you even meet them. However, I do believe that people will most often find worthy names for the things they can be proud of.

Origins

From whence we came.

Without going into too much detail, here is a part of an ancient text, written around the time when the world of Pax Dei was comprehensively described for the first time.

Current State of Affairs

*For almost a century now, since the slaying of the last redeemer, no sanctified emissaries of the Divine have shown themselves on earth. No prophets, no redeemers, and no new saints have been revealed and only the occasional rumours of far away manifestations of the divine have been reported. The seat of the **Holy See** remains empty, all the great kingdoms of the heartlands have crumbled and lie in waste and ruin. The fabled monasteries founded by **Oroael** the sixth redeemer have been robbed and deserted and the great paladin strongholds of **Armozel** the fifth redeemer have been lost, only legends remain, rumouring of their whereabouts.*

Has The Divine forgotten her children?

*No one knows for sure, but what is obvious to all is that Pax Dei, the protection of the Divine, has shrunk more and more, leaving ever larger swaths of land open to the ever growing darkness creeping in from the **Rimlands** and the agents of the **Dark Lord** grow bolder every year. In fact, the only civilized place that still stands is reportedly **Axis Mundi** itself, or so we hope. No one has been let in there since the murder of **Loios**, and besides that, a handful of nearby settlements.*

Creation is crying out for salvation, crying out for able bodies and minds to stand against the encroaching darkness, to pick up the banner of light and once more drive the forces of evil whence they came. In order to accomplish that, old fields must be broken anew, trees cleared, roads rebuilt, villages erected, and industries created.

The lost wisdom of centuries past must be rediscovered, relics and holy sites unearthed, churches built, and the will of the Divine once again transformed into proud bastions of faith both at home and in the furthest reaches of the world.

~ Sages Annals, the final chapter.