**Oghma’s Faithful**

**by Alexis Álvarez and Microsoft Copilot**

**Chapter 5: The Presentation**

Afternoon, 1 Marpenoth, 1732 DR

The Celestial Observatory was constructed centuries ago by an alliance of elves and gnomes. Combining the architectural elegance and arcane knowledge of the elves with the gnomes’ engineering prowess and meticulous attention to detail. The observatory stood as a testament to their shared dedication to knowledge and the stars.

Currently, the observatory was maintained and operated by a small community of gnomes, who continued to uphold the legacy of their ancestors. They were joined by a few elven scholars who resided there, contributing their wisdom and expertise in celestial studies. The gnomes handled the intricate machinery and technological aspects, while the elves focused on the arcane and scholarly pursuits.

Eldrin concluded a presentation with dozens of familiar and new faces in the audience: “...and so, by integrating the sacred texts of Oghma with our cartographic practices, we not only enrich our understanding of the Inner Planes but also honor the legacy of knowledge that our deity bestows upon us. In conclusion, this new methodology offers a more holistic approach to mapping, allowing us to uncover hidden pathways and deeper connections within the planar realms. May our continued pursuit of wisdom light the way for future generations, just as Oghma’s scriptures illuminate our path today.”

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Sunset

Eldrin had wrapped up his presentation with a sense of fulfillment. He had left the lecture hall buzzing with excitement and curiosity, and he could see the spark of inspiration in his colleagues’ eyes even now as they gathered in the Celestial Garden, where the discussions continued, each topic flowing seamlessly into the next, spurred by the themes he had introduced. Eldrin listened intently as his fellow scholars shared their thoughts and questions, grateful for the opportunity to engage in such vibrant intellectual exchange. The peaceful atmosphere of the garden, illuminated by the soft glow of enchanted lanterns and the first twinkling stars in the darkening sky, provided the perfect backdrop for their ongoing dialogue.

Since his return to Secomber in Flamerule after a monthlong expedition in Silverymoon, EldrinThistlebrook had gained a bit of prominence in academic circles, particularly in the field of planar cartography. Now that the talk was over, some colleagues had gathered in the Observatory’s Celestial Garden to discuss a variety of topics initially spurred by Eldrin’s presentation, among them Planar cartography, Astral navigation, alignments’ influence on mapping, ethical considerations in planar exploration, and Oghma’s role in knowledge preservation.

At the table were seated Mira Redford—a human wizard, scholar, and public servant—and others whom he didn’t know as well, including:

* Fror, son of Gromk: m dwarven cleric of Oghma, lawful neutral
  + Conversational Perspective: Emphasis on Law over Good such that order is the highest good, and the optimal environment under which magic should be studied, given the replicability of results.
* Stardust Cajole, f favored soul of Oghma, neutral
  + Conversational Perspective: A balance should always be striven for in magical praxis. Exactitude is an assumption violated more often than not in this universe, and a spellcaster should always be heuristically in tune with this. No calculation or law can ever truly reach this state.
* Cyan, f air genasi wizard-aristocrat
  + Conversational Perspective: The pursuit of beauty—be it in the form of the arts, lust, science, or arcana—is an intrinsic virtue. To collect beauty is to be its benefactor, and this is the case with magic items and other preciosities.

Persephone Thornberry, f rock gnome diviner

* + Conversational Perspective: Oghma’s secrets are many, and time is a valuable resource to be evaluated against cumbersome, time-consuming methodologies. Studying the cosmos has become more of a science and less of an experience.
* Isfahan Dilmun, m half-elf archivist
  + Conversational Perspective: The city of Secomber is failing to meet its citizens’ demands insofar as transparency of public records is concerned. Emphasis of Law must be upheld by administrative efficiency, and is compromised by dysfunctional governance.

Mira Redford leaned forward, her eyes sparkling with curiosity. “Eldrin, your methodology for planar cartography is fascinating. How do you think integrating Oghma’s scriptures will change our current understanding of the Inner Planes?”

Eldrin smiled, pleased with the engagement. “By incorporating Oghma’s sacred texts, we can uncover hidden pathways and deeper connections within the planes. These scriptures offer insights that mundane mapping techniques might overlook, revealing the intrinsic relationships between various realms.”

Fror, son of Gromk, nodded thoughtfully. “Order and structure are paramount. The replicability of results is essential in our studies. How do you ensure that these new methodologies remain consistent and reliable?”

Eldrin replied, “We must strike a balance between the divine guidance of Oghma’s scriptures and our empirical observations. By cross-referencing the texts with our maps, we can verify the accuracy and consistency of our findings.”

Stardust Cajole interjected, “But we must remember that exactitude is often an illusion. The universe is ever-changing, and our understanding of it must be flexible. How do we account for the inherent unpredictability of the planes?”

Eldrin nodded in agreement. “You’re right, Stardust. We must remain adaptable and open to new interpretations. The scriptures guide us, but we must also trust our instincts and experiences as we explore the planes.”

Cyan, the air genasi, added, “The pursuit of beauty is a virtue in itself. Mapping the planes is not just about accuracy but also capturing their essence. How do you ensure that your maps reflect the true beauty of these realms?”

Eldrin smiled, appreciating her perspective. “By combining artistry with precision, we can create maps that are not only accurate but also evocative. Our maps should inspire wonder and appreciation for the planes’ inherent beauty.”

Persephone Thornberry chimed in, “Oghma’s secrets are many, and time is a precious resource. How do you balance thorough research with the need for efficiency?”

Eldrin responded, “We must prioritize our efforts, focusing on the most critical areas first. Efficient methodologies and collaboration with fellow scholars can help us achieve our goals without sacrificing depth and quality.”

Isfahan Dilmun, the half-elf archivist, concluded, “And what about transparency and accessibility? How do we ensure that our findings are shared with the broader community for the benefit of all?”

Eldrin answered, “It’s vital that our work is accessible and understandable to others. We must publish our findings and engage in open dialogue with our peers, ensuring that knowledge is preserved and disseminated for future generations.”

The conversation flowed seamlessly, each participant contributing their unique perspectives and enriching the discussion. The Celestial Garden’s serene atmosphere provided the perfect setting for this intellectual exchange, and Eldrin felt grateful for the opportunity to engage with such brilliant minds.

The evening wrapped up soon after that engaging discussion, and Cyan offered those without a ride a seat in her coach, if they wanted. Stardust took her up on the offer, and the two went into their carriage and headed home along with others headed to their respective homes.

Mira and Eldrin took a separate carriage into the city, and took the conversation further.

As the carriage rolled through the streets of Secomber, Eldrin and Mira continued their conversation, delving deeper into the topics that had sparked their interest earlier. Mira praised Eldrin’s innovative approach of using Oghma’s scriptures in planar cartography, prompting Eldrin to share how his time in Silverymoon had inspired the idea.

They discussed the ethical dilemmas of exploring and documenting the planes, acknowledging the need to balance the pursuit of knowledge with respect for the inhabitants and natural phenomena. Eldrin emphasized the importance of acting responsibly and considering the potential impact of their work.

Mira suggested organizing a collaborative research project to bring together diverse perspectives and expertise. Eldrin agreed, recognizing the value of collective efforts in achieving greater understanding and innovation. They also explored future directions in cartography, with Eldrin expressing a keen interest in mapping the connections between different planes and understanding their interactions.

Their conversation touched on personal growth and faith, with Eldrin reflecting on how his dedication to Oghma had shaped his values and approach to knowledge. Mira found his commitment inspiring and admired his resolve to explore, learn, and share his discoveries.

As the carriage drew closer to their destination, the conversation shifted to lighter topics. They shared anecdotes and laughed together, feeling a deep sense of camaraderie. Eldrin appreciated the connection he had forged with Mira, grateful for the enriching exchange of ideas and the support of like-minded individuals. The evening had not only deepened his understanding but also strengthened his resolve to continue his quest for knowledge.