

Chapter1: The Clans

Long ago, in the highland areas, were peoples who lived in groups known as clans. These groups mainly comprised family members. Each clan had a leader who was generally the strongest, wisest, or craftiest. Each leader had an immediate family, which was better off than other member families. Generally, clans worked for the common good of their people. Reward was typically given by the leader, as was justice and punishment. The great benefit of the clanship was that there were greater numbers against adversity as opposed to being alone.

Each of the members had their role, some less desirable than others. It was the men who did the hunting and jobs that took greater strength, while the women did those requiring intricate skills like tanning, cooking, and planting. Most clan members were satisfied with their roles because they understood they could not change their circumstances unless they decided to leave the protection of the clan.

Life was hard and daily it consisted of the performance of tasks necessary to survive. The clan people understood this and a common principle took hold, which was, "If one wants to partake, contribution is required." This principle was a natural one and it also applied to the orphaned and where possible, the handicapped. Some were fortunate enough to have family members strong enough

to provide for them, but many lived on much less than others and often perished. Because of the despair of people and their incredible burden of poverty, rituals began to develop and spread. Rituals were used to control the behavior of the masses by giving them something to look forward to in place of their miserable circumstances, or something to be afraid of—rituals like punishment in the afterlife for wrongdoing, being born into obligation to others, and affording levels of respect given to people based on the power they hold rather than their character.

Clans were located throughout the land and each identified with a specific geographic area. On these lands, each clan lived, drew water, gathered wood, picked wild fruits and vegetables, hunted, and grew crops to their limited ability. The geographic area that the clans lived in influenced greatly their daily lives. Some territories were lower in elevation and more favorable to growing certain crops like wheat, corn, and grapes, as it was warmer. Others were near the sea. The sea satisfied many needs with an endless supply of food. Some clans were located in the mountain territories, where there was an abundance of lumber and game.

Over time, the clans populated and expanded, and poaching began to occur. In the beginning, it was hardly noticeable, but as time passed, and as food and water became scarce, clan fights began to break out. This went on for centuries until one year there was an unusually severe drought and game was scarce. This led

some clans to plan surprise attacks on others to protect their food and water supplies.

The planning of surprise attacks was a paradigm shift for the clan's way of life, as it led to groups of clans creating alliances. This led to even greater wars. Over time, the wars were greater and more frequent, and each time more people died. The super wars became a way of life and the only way to delay further conflict was for one side to either annihilate the other or take the survivors as slaves.

As the resources were limited, the peoples knew very little about productivity. Over the centuries, clans migrated over the lands and no one clan was indigenous. The peoples populated to the point that conflict was a matter of survival and a natural phenomenon. It was understood that there was just not enough food and resources to go around. Life was based on the principle: "The strong survive and the weak perish." This principle was fundamental, and however unsympathetic it might seem, it was one that required learning. Over time, the clans that managed to survive would grow stronger having learned this lesson.

Some clans were more advanced than others. Some of the more advanced sometimes helped the less advanced to develop their assets and natural resources and the less advanced benefited greatly from the use of the resources and the transfer of knowledge. The more advanced clans were compensated for their assistance in resource goods and the good will strengthened their alliances.

Those clans that remained dependent and needy often perished anyway or lingered with greater neediness.

Not all clans were generous and helped others. There were opportunists who learned to take advantage and exploit others for their own selfish motivations. There were tyrants and slave masters who found opportunities to advance themselves to the ultimate power. They often used others for their own purposes. Some maintained slavery. The powerful maintained their dictatorships through fear and policies that kept the public weak. For some clans, their circumstances were too much to bear and they succumbed to defeat, victimhood, and ultimately suicide. But, a few pushed back, persevered, and occasionally escaped to freedom. It was these successful efforts of the few that would someday inspire others and ultimately the clanships at large.

All clan leaders had power over others, but the power exerted over others varied across the spectrum. If a leader was tyrannical, it was hard for the leader to survive too long, as another ambitious person would scheme to take the leader down. Knowing these risks, many tyrants were ruthless at having people killed based on the least suspicion. But, when the pressure mounted among the people to a point too great to bear, they sometimes successfully struck back and occasionally at the peril of the dictator's head. This phenomenon led to the advent of politics and deception that was exploited by those talented enough to use it. In many cases, rituals

and religions were used as a basis for aggressive actions against dissenters.

It was realized by tyrants that in order to maintain power it was necessary to control the power of the people. The people's power correlated to its numbers and it could be controlled by managing public opinion. But that was a difficult balance to maintain with limited resources. Tyrants came and went because of their inability to properly control public opinion. Super clans would rise in power and fall in power and the cycle would go on for centuries. The cycle wouldn't be broken until a messenger arrived.