Catha and Ruidus

When the people gaze into the morning sky, they see the sun, a blazing disc the size of a gold piece, looking back at them. It is the domain of the Dawnfather, a god of life and light honored politely by nearly all the realm’s denizens. At night, the skies are filled with countless distant stars, a gleaming silver-white moon called Catha, and occasionally, a dim, ruddy moon called Ruidus that is nearly half Catha’s size. Both moons are the domain of the Moonweaver, a capricious god of trickery and illusions, but there are sects throughout the world that believe only Catha represents the Moonweaver’s cunning and grace. Catha’s pearly glow is said to bless the just with cunning and caution, and to make hidden the goodhearted when they require stealth and subtlety. Ruidus, the second moon of Exandria, is much smaller and farther away. With a slower rotation around the world and dark redbrown coloring, Ruidus is often difficult to see among the stars of the night sky and nearly impossible to spot during the day. Little is known of Ruidus, though older cultures and texts speak of it as an omen of ill tidings, or even a remnant of a Betrayer God plot left abandoned and unrealized. Ruidus is so surrounded by disquieting rumors and folkloric tales of misfortune that some believe another unknown god or power rules this small, reddish-brown moon.

"***During the Founding, a time when the gods still walked the face of Exandria, the world's divine creators discovered an unidentifiable power seeping through the fabric of reality. Legends assert that this alien influence was a threat to all life on Exandria, and the gods banded together to banish it. This cancerous incursion of dark power is said to have crystallized into Ruidus, the small, vermilion moon that hangs in the sky along with Catha, the world's natural moon. The gods agreed to create a tale about Ruidus to conceal its alien origin from the mortals of the world, informing them that it was a moon of ill omen, and its magical influence was always to be avoided. This tale concocted by the gods was not a lie, for Ruidus's alien magic twists the fate of those who are born or embark on ventures while bathed in its vermilion light.***"

Cultures around the world tell countless legends of prideful rulers who made grand plans or attempted deeds under the moon’s full light—when it shines a brilliant vermilion rather than its

usual ruddy color—and were forced to watch in horror as their endeavors fell to unforeseen misfortune. It is said those who fall afoul of Ruidus failed to give it the deference it is due—and so superstitious folk rarely dare to make plans while the full light of Ruidus shines above, let alone enact them. Worse yet, some tales forebode dark fortunes for those born under the light of a full Ruidus, a curse of ill luck that will follow them throughout their lives. Though the cruel practice of moon-sacrifice is no longer permitted in any city, some far-flung settlements still secretly sacrifice children born under a full Ruidus to “save” them from a cursed life, and to appease the dark and unknowable appetites of the red moon. Fortunately for the superstitious, Ruidus is rarely full. While its cousin, Catha, completes a full cycle approximately once a month, Ruidus’s haunting, halfyear orbit, combined with its eerie and unexplainable tendency to simply not appear in the sky on certain nights or glow with unknown light, creating an unexpected full moon, has only added to its mythic reputation as an omen of ill fortune.

"*O Ruidus, grant humble chorus leave*
To sing the song which hails the zenith of
Your accurséd, thrice-blessed Apotheon;
Remember’d best by deeds in war, and yet
Whose acts were driven oft by fate most foul.
His kindly brow bore gifts from gods
of change,
And art, and moon, yet in his soul was pain,
The suffering of your vermilion light
Drove the Paragon to a desert realm
Bestrewn with blades and drenched
in crimson blood.
So hear, O moon of curséd deeds and fates!
The song of he who rose above your great
And mighty pow'r, to save Exandria.
***From flames of war fanned by the Ruiner's blade.*"**

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