



REMEMBER THEIR NAMES NO MORE

“**C**ommand them to worship us, revere us, and serve us always!” said the gods in unison.

The priests wrote their words into the magic given to them.

Janus stood up towering like one of the finest trees of Lebanon and spoke in a soothing and delicate tone, “I am the god whose faces see the past and future—the endings and beginnings. I am the means by which Rome passes through the gate into the new year. I am their guardian; their portal.”

The priests fell to the ground lying on the checkered marble floor with the arms out spread. Motionless, they lay fading into the pattern before the council of the gods.

“While these mortals are insignificant to us; they can be useful.” He glanced down fixing a heavy stare onto the nothings lying before him. He released a gurgling snort as he took a quick breath adding, “Inspire, no—conjure the emperor and command him to award my name to the first month of their year. The new year will begin at every winter solstice—keep them worshipping us; we are the great Sun deity.”

With his foot, he jabbed one in the side. “Up, get up and write this down!”



His harsh tone mirrored his heavy darkened rings under his deep set eyes. “They will celebrate the new birth of the sun on December 25th and every day at its rising.”

Suddenly, he fell into a whining sob, “**Re** will not be forgotten. He did not lose the battle on that fateful day when the Israelites left Egypt.”

He turned slowly and addressed every god seated in the council. “They need to fear us—our deity personifies the great heavenly lights that look down on them, overshadow them, and consume them when they disobey us. They must never forget!”

He added, “Such an unclean creation, don’t you think **Februarius**?”

The priests struck the pages with zeal barely time for eye contact.

Janus commanded, “They must purify themselves at the beginning of the new year—in the second month—a Februa ritual.”

The god dressed in decorated bronze plates covered in glistening chainmail stood up and shouted, “Enough! Enough of your way.” The rustling of his metal and the weight his armor shook the room. All eyes of the council locked onto him, as he stood face to face with Janus. A ghostly silence crept throughout the room touching everyone with a cold shiver. **Mars** raised his hands with an innocent surrender, relieved sighs warmed the air. Then, he struck. Mars threw all his weight against Janus sending him toppling into a series of jumbled back-steps.



The gods of the council murmured into a rumble, while the two stood locked in a telepathic battle.

Janus conceded with a forced reply, “Your name will be awarded to the third month.”

“Never!” shouted Mars. “I have always held the first place. This change is treachery!” He shook his fists less than an inch from Janus’ chiseled cheek bone.

“Calm down, brother. The people won’t fight in the dead of winter. As soon as the temperatures warm, you will have your way. Teach them how to battle. Keep them fighting against each other; busy them so that they won’t turn against us.”

Mars laughed and as he turned away, so Janus thrust a sharp blow into his diaphragm leaving him gasping and shrieking. “You need to remember too. I am the oldest Roman god and there is none like me.”

Buckled in pain, Mars watched Janus dance before the council rejoicing in his victory. As Janus moved within reach, Mars grabbed his wrist and put all his remaining strength into a quick kick against the back of his knees. Janus began to collapse and Mars pulled him down pinning him onto the floor with the collapsing weight of his body.

“You’ll give me a day of the week as well. I will *not* be forgotten,” Mars demanded.

The council sat deliberating among themselves.

Mars pressed against his throat. “Answer me!”

Janus released a soft gurgling. “The Anglo-Saxon gods want the names of the week.”

“Never!” Like a volatile mix thrown into a fire, Mars exploded into a rage. His face warped into rivers of deep wrinkles, his eyes the centre of the fire, his teeth clenched pushing down onto Janus’ throat until Janus mirrored him. He repeated, “Give me one day of the week *and* one of the planets!”

Mars pressed deep into Janus’ throat unable to hold back a delighted chuckle.

“Stop!” **Saturni** shouted. “You will get a day of the week. The Anglo-Saxons want your protection.”

“Of course, and so should all, including everyone in this room. I want a planet, too!”

Janus stared toggling in and out of consciousness.

Time tip-toed into minutes, until **Aprilis** broke the silence, “Janus, give him a planet. The mortals love the glory of war.”

Mars loosened his grip and Janus raised his hand half-mast.

“Get off me!” Janus gurgled in a dry raspy whisper. “You’ll get a planet.”

Mars smiled, sneering with his nose puckered. “It didn’t have to go this way.” He added with a cold fixed stare looking up at the gods in the council, “If only he wasn’t so into himself!”

Mars leaned into Janus as he pushed up, straightened the front panels and marched back to his seat.

Janus pulled himself up holding onto the edge of the long table lined with prowling eyes when the beauty of Aprilis’ rose-lit cheeks caught his attention.

“My dear, you will have the fourth month of the year. The goddess of love and life will be adored everywhere.” With both hands, he cupped her face framing it as he leaned over slowly and kissed her.

Her awkward smile, she could not hide. She stood to acknowledge his graciousness, but took a step back leaving him to totter into the empty space, and replied, “I was once the second month of the year dear Janus. Why change what is already in place?”

“In place? We moved the calendar to begin when the great Sun begins a new life. No greater place you have and have always had—when love ignites life—flowers bloom, plants grow. You are the precious symbol of all that brings life. Your names are many, my **Eostre**. Yes?”

“It is the most beautiful time of the year,” she whispered.



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The council chimed in agreement.

“Janus! You flirt like I am invisible!”

Janus tilted his head and rubbed his chin. “I owe you nothing, daughter of Faunus.”

“Daughter of Faunus! That is my point.”

She reached out stretching across the table with one leg out for balance. He approached her with hesitation, so she pushed her hips onto the table, sending her chair rocking into a fall as she grabbed his golden sash.

“My name is dying like those wretched mortals. O Janus, give my name eternal life. Give me the fifth month of the calendar.”

He studied her tender complexion, her soft flowing hair, her youth. “You are a model of perfection—I didn’t notice before. My dear **Maia**, I will give you the fifth month and we will also celebrate with a festival, Bona Dea. Women will celebrate fertility and your name will live eternally.”

A low raspy voice broke the mesmerizing magic that captured Janus. “While you’re hypnotized by the beauty of female youth, dear Janus, I will simply announce that the sixth month is mine. I am, after all the Queen of the gods. Don’t insult me further by your disrespect!”

“**Junius**,” he replied, painfully breaking his stare. “Of course.”

Still under the lingering spell, Janus turned slowly to each of the gods in the council. “Enough of the calendar! The names of the weeks are already assigned. The Anglo-Saxons have spoken. They will have Sun’s day, Moon’s day, **Tiw’s Day**—their name for Mars.”

Janus turned and waited for Mars to nod his approval, but he instead remained motionless with an unbreakable stare following Janus as he moved from council member to council member. His silence was the peaceful confirmation Janus hoped. They all understood the need to appease his passion.

“Continuing, following **Tiw’s day** will be **Woden’s day**—**Mercury**, who sits in this fine council is our commerce specialist. He has a brilliant business mind, manufacturing products of mass destruction. Let them think they are worshipping **Odin**, but truly they will become the leaders of financial corruption. Now, let’s not forget **Thor’s day**.” He turned to **Jupiter** and bent down on one knee adding, “The great god of the sky and thunder.”

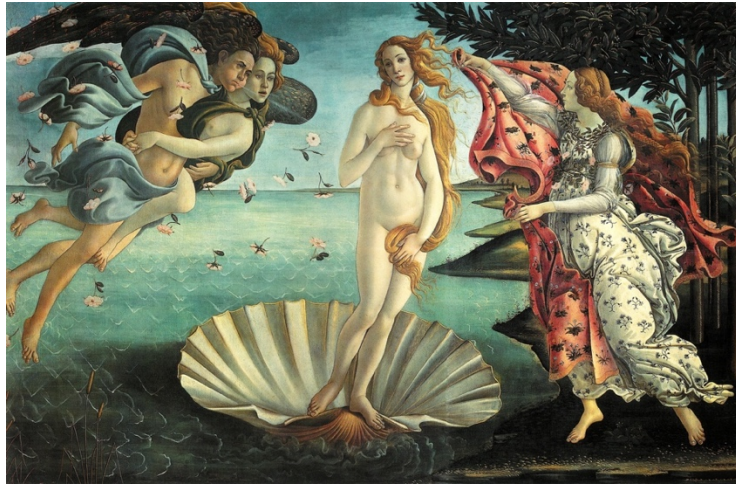
After a quick glance back at Mars, he continued, “**Freya’s day** will follow. Love and beauty, our **Venus** will be remembered on that day. Finally, the seventh day will be Saturni’s day.” He stood before Saturni and bowed.

The council began to murmur.

“Silence! I am not finished. All of you here will be remembered. The mortals will look daily into the heavens to calculate their times and seasons. We will be embodied into the heavens like no others.”

Janus walked and stood before **Mercy**. “You are a critical piece in the play. Without a ruling class in commerce, we cannot succeed.”

He turned to **Venus**. “Our passion for love, beauty, and pleasure will shine over the mortals and they will memorialize you.”



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Janus glanced over his shoulder, his eyes to the floor, he added as a passing comment, “Mars, your demand has been granted.”

Janus walked to the centre where the checkered marble stones formed a complex kaleidoscopic star and stretched out his hands towards each of the great ones. “**Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune** will take the names of the remaining great planets for these gods, we serve.”

The council stood and applauded his final words. “Council adjourned.”

These **rogue gods** didn’t hear the final words that echoed the great room. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of gods—the Almighty announced the fate of these **self-glorifying gods**. “You are ‘gods’; you are all sons of the Most High, but **you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler**” (Psalm 82:6-7).

“O house of Israel... For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you back into your own land. **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And **I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.** You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; **you will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness**” (Ezekiel 36:22, 24-29).

“Thus says the Lord God: **I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.**’ And **when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit** [the Holy Spirit] I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Ezekiel 11:18-20).

And the God of Israel’s final word on that day was “**I will remove the names of the Baals [gods] from your lips, and they shall be remembered by name no more**” (Hosea 2:17).

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich.