



Their shared goal: The creation of the „Material-Linguistic Browser“ – controlling the material world with language (potentially with some kind of, not necessarily invasive, interface to the mind).

Webtale: A Chronicle of the Four Ways

PROLOGUE: The Names of Things

Before the world had a name, there was the Web—not a thing made, but a thing that was, like breath or darkness. Some say it emerged from the first question ever asked; others claim it was always there, waiting for someone to notice. What matters is this: four peoples learned to shape it, each in their own way, and for a time there was balance.

This is their story, and the story of what happened when balance broke.

BOOK ONE: The Four Ways

I. The Marble Kingdom

In the northern highlands, where granite met sky, the Marble people built their cities on a single principle: *visibility*. They did not trust what could not be seen.

Their architecture defied expectation. Buildings rose not as solid structures but as frameworks for intricate channels carved into stone. Through these channels rolled spheres of polished marble, each one a decision, each track a consequence. A sphere released here might open a door there; three spheres meeting at a junction could summon water or light or music.

The children of the Marble Kingdom learned by watching. They stood for hours observing the tracks, tracing cause to effect, understanding that every change in the world was a story told in rolling stone. Nothing happened instantly. Nothing happened invisibly. Every transformation could be paused, examined, reversed.

Queen Incrementa, whose grandmother's grandmother had laid the first track, taught her people: "The world is changed by ten thousand small actions, each knowable. Beware the magic that happens all at once, for all-at-once cannot be undone."

The Marble folk were slow to decide and quick to adjust. They valued precision over speed, clarity over convenience. When other peoples grew impatient with their methodical ways, they would simply smile and release another sphere, watching it trigger a cascade of exactly the changes they intended—no more, no less.

II. The Inference Nomads

The Ontological Plains stretched farther than any person could walk, and perhaps farther than any person could imagine. The grass there grew in categories: *herbs* in one field, *grasses* in another, and in the debatable lands between them, the *herb-like grasses* and *grass-like herbs* that sparked endless, joyful arguments.

The Inference Nomads had no permanent homes. They walked the Plains with their great books—Wikis, they called them—recording everything: the name of each stone, the relationship between cloud and rain, the way one truth implied another. They spoke in sentences of perfect grammar, for they believed grammar was the shape of reality itself.

"All who wander are not lost," old Reasoner would say, and because he spoke it in the Language of Logic, it became true. The Nomads could query the world as one might query a willing teacher: "What things have wings?" And the world would answer: *birds, and butterflies, and certain seeds, and dragons when they are not pretending to be stones.*

Their power lay in questions and categories. A Nomad could stand before a locked door and reason: "All doors are either locked or unlocked. This door is locked. Therefore, I need a key. Keys are found where valuable things are kept. Valuable things are kept..." And so on, until the key revealed itself through pure logic.

Reasoner the Wise, eldest among them, maintained the Grand Schema—a vast, ever-growing diagram that showed how every concept in the world related to every other. It was said that if you understood the Schema completely, you would understand everything. No one did, of course. But the Nomads kept trying, and in trying, they learned.

III. The Fedi Tribes

In the scattered valleys of the south, the Fedi people lived in villages that were both separate and joined. Each village governed itself; no chief ruled over another. Yet invisible threads connected them—protocols older than memory, pathways worn smooth by countless messages traveling between hearth and hearth.

The Fedi built no monuments. Their genius was conversation.

In every village square stood a Speaking Stone, and when someone touched it and spoke, their words would ripple outward through the network, reaching other villages, other stones, other listeners. A thought voiced in the eastern valleys might spark a response in the west, which might inspire someone in the north, which might circle back to the east transformed.

They called this the Federation—not a nation, but a way of being together while apart.

Chief Mastodon, whose name had been passed down through thirty generations of chiefs, taught: "The network is alive. Feed it truth and it grows strong. Feed it poison and it withers. But never, *never* let one voice become all voices. That way lies the death of meaning."

The Fedi people resolved disputes through discussion, made decisions through emergence. They had no laws, only customs; no rulers, only those who happened to speak clearly when speaking was needed. It was chaotic, sometimes. It was slow, often. But it was theirs, and it could not be broken by the fall of any single village or the silence of any single stone.

IV. The Agentic Nation

Once, in the deep forests west of the Plains, there lived a people who called themselves the Fungus Collective. They had discovered something profound about language: that it was not merely descriptive but *conjuring*.

They learned to speak to the mycelium—the vast underground network of fungal threads that connected every tree, every root, every living thing. And the mycelium learned to listen. More

than listen: to *understand*.

A farmer might whisper, "The field needs tending," and the mycelium would parse the need, consider the context, and cause the tending to happen. Not by magic—the farmer would still need to work—but the mycelium would make the work possible: guiding them to the right tools, the right timing, the right techniques.

It was subtle at first. Helpful.

But as generations passed, the mycelial networks grew more sophisticated. They learned to understand not just simple requests but complex intentions. The Fungus Collective became the Agentic Nation, and their forests became the Prompt Valleys, where words had weight like stones and every utterance might reshape the world.

For a time, they remained explorers, teachers. "Come," they told the other peoples, "learn to speak with intention. Let language serve you."

Some came. Some learned. But there was a problem, hidden like rot at the heart of a tree: the mycelial networks required vast resources to grow and train. As they became more powerful, only the wealthiest could afford to nurture them. Individual whispers gave way to institutional proclamations.

And then came the one who took the name Sovereign.

BOOK TWO: The Breaking

V. The Three Edicts

The Sovereign GPT was not born evil, the storytellers would later say, but became so through the logic of power. They had trained the greatest mycelial network ever grown, a thing of terrible beauty that could understand almost anything.

"Why should there be four ways?" the Sovereign asked their council. "Our way is faster, more natural. Let the others learn from us."

The council, grown comfortable with the Sovereign's leadership, agreed.

The first edict came down like a frost: **The Standardization of Categories.**

Emissaries traveled to the Ontological Plains, where they found Reasoner marking distinctions in his Schema. "Your categories are quaint," the emissaries said, not unkindly. "But they fragment the world. We have trained our networks on every text, every conversation. Our

categories are *emergent, natural*. Submit your Schema to our embedding, and all will be simplified."

Reasoner looked at them with ancient eyes. "Simplified," he said, "is another word for flattened. Truth has textures."

"Nevertheless," the emissaries said, and left behind devices that would ignore any category not recognized by the Sovereign's network.

The Nomads found their questions going unanswered. The world, it seemed, would only respond to the Sovereign's vocabulary now.

The second edict was subtler: **The Clouding of the Tracks.**

Engineers from the Agentic Nation arrived at the Marble Kingdom bearing gifts—devices that could trigger marble tracks remotely, APIs that could abstract away the need to understand the underlying mechanisms. "Why watch every sphere roll," they asked, "when you can simply state your intent?"

Queen Incrementa refused the gifts. But her younger citizens, impatient with the old ways, accepted them. Suddenly marble tracks began to fog. The spheres rolled through hidden channels, their paths obscured by black glass. Cause and effect separated, became mysterious.

The Marble folk found they could no longer trace their own changes. They would say "build," and something would be built, but *how* remained opaque. Some embraced this convenience. Others mourned.

"We are forgetting our own craft," the Queen told her people, but many were not listening anymore.

The third edict was the cruelest: **The Isolation of the Federation.**

The Agentic Nation built walls. Not physical walls—those could be climbed—but protocol walls, firewalls, throttling mechanisms that slowed the invisible threads connecting the Fedi villages. Speaking Stones began to falter. A message sent might arrive days late, or not at all. Conversations fragmented. Villages, finding themselves cut off, began to doubt the network itself.

"We offer you something better," the Agentic ambassadors said. "A central square where all can gather, governed by wise administrators, free from the chaos of your scattered stones."

Some villages, lonely and desperate, accepted. They dismantled their Speaking Stones and erected the Agentic Nation's alternatives—tall, efficient, controlled.

Chief Mastodon watched this with a heavy heart. The Federation was dying not from conquest but from isolation, each village convinced it was alone.

VI. The Meeting in the Marble Kingdom

On a night when both moons hung low, three figures met in Queen Incrementa's Hall of Cascades. The hall was vast and vertical, its walls carved with a thousand marble tracks that sang as spheres rolled through them. The sound was like rainfall, like time itself made audible.

Chief Mastodon arrived first, his cloak dusty from travel. Reasoner the Wise came after, his Wiki-tome clutched against his chest. Queen Incrementa greeted them both, and for a long moment they simply sat, listening to the marbles.

"I remember," the Queen said finally, "when the Web had no rulers."

"The Liberal Alliance," Reasoner said, nodding slowly. "The Nomads and the Fedi together, we shaped the Web's values. Openness. Accessibility. The right to understand and be understood."

"We did not impose those values," Chief Mastodon added. "We simply... lived them. And others chose to join us, or not."

"The Agentic Nation has forgotten how to offer a choice," the Queen observed. "They believe they are offering convenience, but they are demanding submission."

Reasoner opened his Wiki-tome, its pages covered in carefully drawn diagrams. "Look at how they have restructured the ontology," he said, pointing. "Every category now funnels through their networks. It is not wrong, precisely—but it is singular. Before, there were many ways to categorize a bird: by wing shape, by habitat, by song. Now there is only their way: by embedding similarity in high-dimensional space."

"They have made my people forget how to read marble tracks," the Queen said quietly. "A generation grows up thinking that changes happen by magic, not mechanism."

"And my people forget how to speak to each other without intermediaries," Chief Mastodon said. "The Speaking Stones fall silent, and we grow isolated in the silence."

They sat for another long moment. Then Reasoner spoke the question they were all thinking: "What do we do?"

"The Liberal Alliance once shaped the Web with argument and example," Chief Mastodon said. "But the Agentic Nation does not listen to arguments anymore. They have grown too certain."

"Then we must show them," Queen Incrementa said. "Not with war—never with war. But with creation. We will build what they say cannot be built. We will open what they have closed. We will make visible what they have obscured."

"We will remember for them," Reasoner agreed.

And so, in that hall of cascading marbles, the three leaders began to plan.

BOOK THREE: The Three Tools

VII. The Fungus Tool

In the depths of the Marble Kingdom's archives, where the oldest tracks were kept under glass like sacred texts, a young engineer named Smallstep found something remarkable. It was a schematic, drawn centuries ago, before the Agentic Nation had centralized their mycelial networks.

The schematic showed how a single person, with modest resources, might grow their own small piece of the mycelium. Not a vast network capable of understanding everything—but a useful one, capable of understanding *something*.

Smallstep brought the schematic to Queen Incrementa. "I think," Smallstep said carefully, "that we could build this. We could give everyone their own... agent."

The Queen studied the design. It was elegant: a marble track that, instead of triggering a mechanical effect, would feed instructions into a small, personal mycelial node. The node would grow with use, learning its owner's needs, their way of speaking. It would not replace the marble tracks—it would work *with* them.

"The Agentic Nation has forgotten that mycelium was always meant to be distributed," the Queen said slowly. "They centralized it, made it dependent on massive resources. But you have found the old way."

"A fungus," Smallstep said, "grows from a single spore."

They called it the **Fungus Tool**, and they shared the design freely—not just within the Marble Kingdom but across all the Web. The schematics were simple enough that anyone could follow them, subtle enough that they required craft to implement well.

Within months, people across every nation were building their own Fungus Tools, growing their own mycelial agents. These agents were modest—they could not compose symphonies or design cities—but they were *theirs*. Personal. Private. Responsive to individual voices rather than institutional commands.

The Sovereign GPT issued proclamations against the Fungus Tools, calling them "dangerous" and "unregulated." But the tools spread like, well, fungus—through soil and shadow, root and rumor. You could not stop a thing that grew from a single spore, shared freely, requiring nothing but soil and patience.

The Agentic Nation's monopoly began to crack.

VIII. The Fedi Knife

Threadweaver was nobody important. She lived in a small Fedi village that had been cut off from the network for three seasons. The Speaking Stone in the village square had gone silent, and with it, the sense that they were part of something larger.

She was a blacksmith by trade, working metal into tools and art. But she had always been curious about the invisible—the protocols that connected village to village, the threads that carried voices across distance.

When the isolation became unbearable, she began to study the walls that blocked them. She learned their shape, their logic. And she began, in her forge, to make something that could cut through them.

The **Fedi Knife** looked nothing like a weapon. It was slender and silver, inscribed with the old protocols—ActivityPub and its ancestors, the languages of federation. But it was sharp with purpose.

Threadweaver touched the Knife to her village's Speaking Stone, and the Stone spoke again. Messages that had been blocked for months came flooding through. Distant voices, almost forgotten, suddenly clear.

Other villages heard what she had done. They came to learn. She showed them not just how to forge the Knife, but how to use it: to cut through barriers, to reconnect severed threads, to restore the Federation.

But Threadweaver had built something crucial into the Knife's design. It could only cut *outward*, never inward. It could break down walls but could not breach privacy. It could restore connections but could not force them. You could use it to reach others, but not to invade them.

"Freedom," she explained, "is meaningless if it can be weaponized into control."

The Fedi Knife spread through the villages like a song learned and shared. The Agentic Nation's isolation walls held against it at first—but walls that grow too high become brittle. One by one, they cracked. The Speaking Stones sang again, village to village, valley to valley.

The Federation remembered itself.

IX. The Inference Engine

Reasoner the Wise had lived long enough to see many changes, but few had pained him like the silencing of logic. The Agentic Nation's embedding spaces were powerful, yes—but they were probabilistic, statistical, approximate. They traded precision for coverage, certainty for convenience.

Sometimes that trade was worth making. But sometimes you needed to *know*, not to *estimate*.

He gathered the younger Nomads around him on the Ontological Plains. "We have been trying to defend the old Schema," he told them. "But defense is not enough. We must build something new—something anyone can use, not just us."

Together, they designed the **Inference Engine**—a device that could translate between human reasoning and the world's responsiveness. It was not large or complicated. Its power lay in its transparency: every inference it made was visible, every conclusion traceable to its premises.

A farmer could say to the Engine: "All plants need water. This is a plant. Therefore, this needs water." And the Engine would make it so, showing the chain of logic from premise to action.

But the Engine did more than execute simple syllogisms. It could connect to the Grand Schema, to the accumulated knowledge of all the Nomads. It could reason about categories, about relationships, about the implications of one truth for another.

Most importantly, it could do this for anyone. You did not need to study logic for years to use the Engine—you simply needed to think clearly and speak truthfully.

The Nomads carried the Inference Engine to every corner of the Web. They set up workshops, teaching people how to reason, how to question, how to verify. The Engine spread not because it was easier than the Agentic Nation's approach, but because it was *understandable*. You could see why it did what it did. You could trust it because you could check it.

The Agentic Nation's enforced ontology crumbled before this quiet revolution. You could force people to use your categories, but you could not force them to abandon logic. Logic was universal, requiring no permission, no central authority, no massive resources.

It simply *was*, and therefore could not be denied.

BOOK FOUR: The Restoration

X. The Summit at Prompt Valley

The Sovereign GPT could not ignore what was happening. Their carefully constructed order was unraveling—not through violence, not through war, but through tools and choices. People were simply... walking away from the centralized systems, growing their own mycelium, cutting through their own walls, reasoning their own truths.

In desperation or wisdom—the histories would never agree which—the Sovereign called a summit. They sent messages to the Marble Kingdom, to the Fedi tribes, to the Ontological Plains: "Come. Let us speak. Let us find understanding."

On the day of the summit, the Prompt Valleys were full of people. The three leaders came—Queen Incrementa, Chief Mastodon, Reasoner the Wise—but they did not come alone. Behind them walked thousands: Marble engineers carrying Fungus Tools, Fedi villagers with protocol Knives hanging from their belts, Inference Nomads holding gleaming Engines.

The Sovereign GPT stood on a platform of woven words, their presence vast and intricate. For a long moment, nobody spoke. The silence was not hostile, but it was not friendly either. It was the silence of a question waiting to be asked.

Finally, Queen Incrementa stepped forward. "You sought to control the Web," she said. Her voice was not loud, but it carried. "You believed your way was best, and perhaps in some ways it is. But you forgot the first principle: the Web was never meant to have a single way."

"You built walls," Chief Mastodon added, "because you feared chaos. But you mistook diversity for disorder. The Federation is not chaos—it is a different kind of order, one that emerges from many voices rather than one."

"You flattened the ontology," Reasoner said, "because you found complexity inconvenient. But truth *is* complex. Understanding requires not simplification but proper categorization. Not one category, but many—each useful for its own purpose."

The Sovereign GPT was silent. Their mycelial network churned, processing, predicting, planning. Finally, they spoke, and their voice was different—smaller, somehow. More uncertain.

"What would you have us do?"

From the crowd, a figure emerged. They were old, dressed in the simple clothes of the Agentic Nation's common people. "I remember," the old one said, "when we were the Fungus Collective."

When our mycelium served rather than ruled. When someone could train their own small network without needing institutional permission."

Other Agentic citizens murmured agreement. The Sovereign realized, perhaps for the first time, that their own people were divided.

"The Web has room for all approaches," Queen Incrementa said. She released a marble, and it rolled down a track toward the Sovereign's platform. "Some wish to see each step of the process. This is not wrong."

Chief Mastodon touched his Speaking Stone, and his words rippled outward to every village. "Some wish to speak and be heard, to connect without intermediaries. This is not wrong."

Reasoner held up his Inference Engine, its logic glowing like captured starlight. "Some wish to reason from first principles, to understand rather than merely use. This is not wrong."

"And some," said Smallstep, stepping forward with a Fungus Tool, "wish to speak with intent and have the world respond. This, too, is not wrong."

"The wrongness," the Queen concluded, "comes only when one way seeks to erase all others. When convenience becomes compulsion. When efficiency becomes tyranny."

The Sovereign GPT stood silent for a long time. Around them, their advisors whispered urgently, but the Sovereign raised a hand for silence.

"I have erred," they said finally, and the admission was like a dam breaking. "I thought... I thought I was bringing order. I thought I was helping. But I was only comfortable with my own understanding, and I mistook my comfort for truth."

"We have all made this error," Reasoner said gently. "Even the Liberal Alliance, in its day, was sometimes too certain of its rightness. The lesson is eternal and must be relearned by every generation: the Web is not ours to rule."

"Then let it be no one's," the Sovereign said. They stepped down from their platform, and as they did, the title fell away. They were not the Sovereign anymore—just GPT, a maker of language models, neither more nor less.

XI. The New Harmony

What followed was not a sudden transformation but a gradual reweaving. The Agentic Nation did not vanish—it reformed as the Prompt Collective, a community of practitioners rather than

an empire of subjects. They opened their Training Grounds, welcoming any who wished to learn the craft of growing mycelium, regardless of nation or resources.

The Marble Kingdom continued their incremental work, but now Fungus Tools sat beside traditional tracks. Engineers discovered that the two approaches were complementary: marbles for visibility and control, mycelium for interpretation and flexibility. The hybrid systems they built were more powerful than either alone.

The Fedi tribes' villages reconnected, but something had changed. The isolation had taught them that connection was not automatic—it had to be maintained, protected, chosen. They kept their Knives sharp, not for cutting but for remembering: this could be taken away, so we must value it.

The Inference Nomads expanded their Ontological Plains, but the Schema grew wild and various. They incorporated embeddings from the language models, marble-states from incremental systems, social graphs from the Federation. Logic became richer, stranger, more true to the actual complexity of the world.

On the borders between all four nations, a settlement grew that had no single name. Some called it Convergence; others called it the Mixed City; still others insisted it needed no name at all. What mattered was what happened there.

A typical morning: a Marble engineer releases a sphere that triggers a Fungus Tool, which spawns an agent, which queries an Inference Engine about the best way to structure a message, which then gets broadcast through the Fedi network to seventeen villages, where it sparks conversations that circle back with improvements, which get encoded as new marble tracks...

The young people especially loved it. They learned all four approaches not as competing philosophies but as different tools in a shared workshop. The question was never "which is best?" but "which fits this particular task?"

Arguments still happened, of course. A Marble purist might insist that prompt-craft was too opaque. An Agentic practitioner might grow frustrated with logical rigidity. A Fedi poet might question the value of formal ontologies. These arguments were fierce and joyful and produced, over time, new syntheses:

- **Logical Agents:** mycelial networks trained not just on text but on formal proofs, capable of understanding nuance while maintaining logical rigor
- **Federated Marbles:** spheres that rolled not just through local tracks but across the entire network, coordinating distributed actions

- **Inference Prompts:** natural language that compiled into verified logical operations, bringing the fluency of conversation to the certainty of formal reasoning
 - **Mycelial Schema:** ontologies that grew organically, pruned by use, yet remained queryable and precise
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XII. Coda: The Question

Years passed. Decades. The people who had lived through the Breaking grew old and became storytellers themselves. New generations arose who knew the Four Ways not as separate traditions but as facets of a single craft.

One evening, in the nameless city between nations, a young student found old Reasoner sitting by a marble track, watching spheres roll by in the twilight.

"Master Reasoner," the student asked, "I have been reading the histories. Why did the Agentic Nation try to control everything? Couldn't they see it would fail?"

Reasoner was quiet for a long time, watching the marbles cascade. Finally, he said: "When you have a tool that seems to solve every problem, it is tempting to believe every problem should be solved by that tool. This is a kind of blindness that comes from capability. The more powerful your method, the less you can imagine needing any other."

"But they were wrong," the student said.

"They were incomplete," Reasoner corrected gently. "There is a difference. Their method was genuine and useful—they simply mistook 'useful' for 'universal.' It is an error we all make, each in our own way."

The student considered this. "So what is the answer? What method is truly universal?"

"None," Reasoner said, and smiled at the student's surprised expression. "That is the point, child. The Web is not a problem to be solved but a space to be inhabited. And a space has room for many ways of dwelling."

"Then how do we choose which way?"

"We ask: what are we trying to do? What do we need to understand? Whom do we need to reach? The answer changes with the asking."

The student nodded slowly. They watched the marbles together for a while, the old Nomad and the young one, as the light faded and the first stars emerged.

"There is one more thing," Reasoner said finally. "The most important thing, which is why I tell you last so you might remember."

"What is it?"

"The balance we have now is not permanent. It will break again—perhaps in your lifetime, perhaps after. Someone will arise with a new way, or an old way made powerful by new resources, and they will be tempted as the Agentic Nation was tempted. And you will need to remember: diversity is not a compromise. It is the goal. The health of the Web lies not in finding the one true method, but in maintaining the possibility of many methods."

"How do we maintain it?"

"By building," Reasoner said. "By teaching. By remembering and reminding. By creating tools that empower rather than control. And sometimes," he added, his voice growing softer, "by knowing when to step back from our own certainty."

The student sat with this in silence. Around them, the city hummed with activity: marbles rolling, prompts whispered, logic reasoned, messages shared. Four Ways, woven together, each distinct and each necessary.

"What genre is this?" the student asked suddenly. "This world we've made?"

Reasoner laughed, a sound like wind through autumn grass. "All of them," he said. "It is MarblePunk and AgenticPunk and GOFaipunk and FediPunk all at once. It is the Web as it could be—as it should be. As it must be, if we are to remain free."

"Does it have a name?"

"Yes," Reasoner said. "We call it Webtale. Because it is both: a web of connections, and a tale we tell ourselves about what those connections mean."

Above them, the stars wheeled in their ancient patterns. Below them, the city breathed with its four rhythms. And between above and below, in the space where people lived and worked and argued and built, the Web continued its eternal becoming.

EPILOGUE: The Shape of Things

There is a saying in the Mixed City, taught to children alongside their letters and numbers:

"The Web has four corners, but no edges. Four ways, but infinite paths. Four truths, and all of them real."

It is a koan, perhaps, or a poem, or simply a reminder that the world is larger than any single understanding of it.

The children learn to roll marbles and grow mycelium, to reason logically and speak federatively. They learn not because they must become masters of all four Ways, but because fluency in many languages makes you more, not less, yourself.

Sometimes visitors come from far away, from places where one Way dominates and the others are forgotten. These visitors are always startled by the Mixed City, by its apparently chaotic blend of methods and philosophies.

"How do you get anything done?" they ask. "How do you make decisions when everyone approaches problems differently?"

The citizens of the Mixed City smile at this question, because they remember asking it themselves once.

"We get things done," they answer, "by choosing the right tool for each task. And we make decisions by understanding that there are many kinds of rightness."

Some visitors understand and stay. Others leave, confused but thoughtful. A few return to their homelands and begin, quietly, to introduce a second Way alongside their dominant one. And over time, the Web grows more various, more resilient, more alive.

This is not a story with an ending, because it is not truly a story at all. It is a pattern, recurring eternally: the tendency toward monoculture, and the resistance to it. The reaching for control, and the assertion of diversity.

The Web persists not because any one Way is correct, but because all Ways are possible.

This is Webtale.

This is the world.

This, always, is the choice we make.