

## >>>>> BEGIN INTRO FICTION

“Fifty thousand, as agreed.” The man in the white suit laid an ivory credstick the width and shape of a pencil on the white linen napkin. The older gentleman, dressed entirely in black despite the Mediterranean sun and the heat of the afternoon, nodded almost imperceptibly and sniffed his wine.

The man in black took a sip from the glass, fingers playing on the stem, deliberately ignoring the credstick.

“Tell me about Napata in ‘66.”

“That wasn’t part of the deal, Don Fianchetto.”

“Elias. We are in the same business, you in I, the trade and craft of secrets. In the time of our association, you have come to me to engage in that economy of lies and truths. I myself have come to you when in need of archeological intelligence, a formerly rarified aspect of our field brought to sudden prominence by the events of the Awakening.”

“A mutually profitable arrangement.” Elijah interjected.

“Indeed.” Fianchetto sipped his wine and licked his lips before continuing. “and this time, to profit us both once more, you must tell me about what you found during the Draco Foundation dig under Dr. Edward Oden excavating the black pyramid outside Napata in 2066.”

There was a mechanical click from beneath the table, the kind you only hear from a very old-fashioned gun. Elijah was silent, lips tight.

“Elias, we have been friends for some time.” Fianchetto said, leaning across the small table. Something hard jabbed into Elijah’s crotch. “I will not ask again.”

“Oden was excavating the foundations of what might have been the oldest known a Nubian-style pyramid.” Elijah croaked. “Under one of the stones he found a broken clay vessel and fragments of parchment or hide. One of them was particularly well-preserved. It had a magical aura.”

Fianchetto nodded slowly. “What happened?”

“There was an attack on the camp. The tent with the fragments was burned down, nothing could be recovered.”

Fianchetto tutted. “It was my hope you would be off with the artifact before the *ghuls* attacked.”

“You were the one that hired me to steal the map fragment?” Elijah said, eyes wide.

“Then, yes. I still do not know how it ended up in the museum, or why you chose to steal it again, though I do appreciate the effort you have saved me by doing so. Now, give me the map fragment.”

With exaggerated care, still uncomfortably aware of the gun pressing into his balls, Elijah reached into his white suitjacket and withdrew a clear plastic envelope; the ancient map fragment could clearly be seen. Fianchetto waited for Elijah to withdraw his hand before reaching over and placing the envelope in his own pocket. Neither man took their eyes off the other. Elijah felt the pistol removed from his crotch.

“Why?”

“You don’t need to know.”

The man in black finished his wine and stood, one hand slipping the credstick into his pocket.

“The girl Æther is at the airport, waiting for you. She is unharmed, as I assured you. Farewell, Elias, until next time.”

## >>>>> END INTRO FICTION

In 2011, the magic came back. The key concept to take away from that is that there was magic once before. If you subscribe to the Ancient Wisdom channel, you’re probably envisioning flying islands and ancient civilizations of men and elves led by priest-kings. That’s the vision the Atlantean Foundation would like to sell you, the reality is a bit less trideogenic.

When scientists finally calmed down and first started to accept the hypothesis that maybe magic—or whatever you want to call it—was responsible for UGE, Goblinization, the sudden appearance of paracritters, the expression of proven paranormal abilities, and other strange phenomena, there were many questions left unanswered, and a few new ones came up. Why wasn’t there a hint of paracritters in the fossil record? Were pre-Awakening accounts of paranormal activity incident of actual magic use?

> After all, you can’t just take a dragon’s word for it.

> Sticks

Given that magic and paracritters generally subscribe to metahuman myth and legend, there’s always been a lot of support for the idea that there was a previous “Age of Magic” before the Sixth World, and the presumption that at some point this period of high-mana ended, and regular human history began. The complete lack of actual metahumans in any historical record suggested to most that if there was a period when magic use was as strong and prevalent as it is today, it must either have been prehistoric and left few (if any) traces.

Some went so far as to posit that this rise and fall in magic might have happened repeatedly throughout history, which the Kano-White Eagle Theory of Metaphysical Phenomena calls the mana cycle.

## >>>>> BEGIN AETHERPEDIA KEYWORD SEARCH: MANA CYCLE

The natural and periodic rise and fall of the ambient level of magical energy (or the relative proximity/synchronicity of astral space) in the world, which is broken into the “up” or “positive” portion of the cycle when the mana level is actively rising, and the “down” or “negative” portion of the cycle when the mana level is actively lowering. The “active” portion of the cycle is when mana levels (whether currently rising or falling) are sufficient to allow the expression of metahumans and paracritters via UGE. The current “active” part of the mana cycle started 24 December, 2011.

## >>>>> END AETHERPEDIA KEYWORD SEARCH

> So how long is one complete period of the mana cycle?  
> /dev/grrl

> About four to five thousand years, according to the keynote speech Eهران the Scribe gave to the Young Elven Technologists in 2051.  
> Slamm-0!

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The Humans are confused.

This is their normal state of being. Their lives are so short, they never have time to think things through. I know this is a gross over-simplification, that there have been many brilliant Human scholars throughout the ages. Even the Da Vincis and the Einsteins, while brilliant enough to see a glimpse of the larger pattern, and imaginative enough to visualize a complex and interconnected world, still did not have the time to analyze their own thoughts. It takes years, sometimes hundreds of years, to get the correct perspective on ideas, even your own ideas. Humans just do not have the luxury of that time. They are also limited by their devout belief in not believing. Since the earliest recorded Human history they have had stories of magic, great unexplained ancient civilizations, and other mysteries. The Humans chose not to believe these and thus, when the mother returned the magic to us, they became disoriented and confused, their normal state of being.

In all fairness, I must admit that most of humanity was not very advanced when the great mother took the magic away the last time, so it must be hard for them to deal with its return. What I am about to tell you must remain an elven secret. I know that the Humans will eventually discover it, but it should be delayed as long as possible.

All things that the great mother gives us, she also takes away. Nature, as the Humans call it, moves in cycles: the rising and setting of the sun, the seasons of the year, the flowing of the tide, it is always a cycle. Magic also runs in a cycle, it comes and goes from the earth, as does the warmth of the summer sun. Its cycle is measured not in hours, as the sun's is, but in thousands of years.

From a scientific viewpoint, magic, when charted, is a semi- regular wave form moving through the history of the earth. There are slight fluctuations throughout the wave, and the wave itself is not completely uniform.

The point in the cycle at which the world becomes magically alive or magic falls dormant is called the Threshold Level. Every magical race and, in some cases, each individual within a race, has its own specific magical trigger point for metamorphosis to occur, thus the transformation of the world takes place over a period of time. Traditionally, the Threshold Level has been set as the date of the awakening of the first Great Dragon on the upswing and the hibernation of the last Great Dragon on the down swing. The average time between Threshold Levels is approximately 5,200 years.

As the last age of magic came to a close, Atlantis was readying itself for disaster. The isle of Atlantis was protected from the forces of nature by the magic of its inhabitants, and thus it could not exist after the magic dropped below the Threshold Level. The Atlantian culture was a racial hybrid that had achieved both scientific and magical wonders, but in its later years, it turned against itself by fighting nature to maintain the island. As the end came near, a migration of technology and culture spread from the isle to the rest of the world. This is the reason mankind's ancient calendars all start within 100 years of each other. The Hebrew, Egyptian, Chinese, and most importantly, Mayan calendars all show the direct influence of Atlantian culture.

The Mayan calendar is the most amazing, as it contains a complete description of the magic cycles, including this current crossing of the Threshold. The Mayan calendar was created in the year 3372 BC (using the Christian calendar), just at the end of the last cycle. The Mayans described the cycles as "worlds", and stated that only certain life forms made the transition from one world to the next. The calendar, written over 5,000 years ago, predicted the exact day the Threshold Level would be passed. If we convert the Mayan dates to the current Christian calendar, it correctly states that the Threshold would be passed on December 24, 2011. On that day, the first Great Dragon was seen in Japan. The precision is amazing.

Atlantis sank on August 12, 3113 BC, thus marking the end of the Fourth World and the beginning of the Fifth. The Sixth World began on December 12, 2011 AD, and will end, according to the Mayan calendar, on April 4, 7137 AD.

We have the intervening time to enjoy what the Great Mother gives us and to use responsibly the double-edged sword of technology that our Human cousins have created. We must use both the energy of nature and the power of technology to try to fix the damage done by our short-lived relatives.

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> Holy digital necromancy, snoogums.  
> NetCat

> The dates the Scribe gives are based on the Mayan Long Count, give or take a year, and do not correspond with what is known from the surviving Sumerian records or other contemporary sources. Just for comparison, the isle of Thera—identified by the Atlantean Foundation as the most likely candidate for mythical Atlantis—was destroyed in an eruption around 1600 BC.  
> Snopes

The problem with the Nobel-prize winning smooth and progressive mana cycle theory as proposed by Akiko Kano and Arthur White Eagle is that there's very little evidence to support it. Many magicians and scientists began looking for empirical evidence to prove or disprove the validity of pre-Awakening magical expression. What they first seized on were spike babies—metahumans and paracritters that expressed before 24 December 2011. While clearly an example of pre-Awakening mana expression, these rare occurrences flew in the face of a gradual and universal rise in mana.

> Well, mostly. The entire Century Ferret paraspecies Awakened in late December 1999; a rare example of a premature Awakening. Century ferrets are notoriously allergic to high-mana areas, perhaps as a consequence of the species' very low expression threshold.  
> Smiling Bandit

Proponents of the mana cycle theory amended it to account for the presence of spike births and pre-Awakening Goblinization due to temporary and localized “spike” (rapid increase) in the local mana level at times and places where the creature developed. Current investigations along these lines suggest that Spike births often occurred in groups and can be linked to certain “spike events”—a particular time and place in the common history of every member of the group.

> Which isn't to say that everyone at 1100 Cermak Rd, Chicago from 11:35-12:42 on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1989 suddenly turned into orks or anything like that. If you don't have the metagenes or whatever, nothing happened. But if any pregnant mother had a fetus with elf or dwarf genes, or if someone had latent ork or troll genes and suddenly it hits 2021 mana levels...things could have happened, and apparently did.  
> Winterhawk

The majority of confirmed spike babies and spike events occurred very close to the Awakening—usually within ten years—but there are some apocryphal cases that may have occurred decades or centuries before the Awakening (particularly if a Tír researcher is on the case). There's the more puzzling issue of Awakened remains, which are noticeably lacking. Paracritters, whatever their bizarre Awakened attributes, generally eat, shit, and die like everything else. Despite that, before the Awakening nothing that could be definitively attributed as a dragon coprolite, fossilized unicorn bone, or a troll's footprint preserved in wet sand.

> Speaking as a scientist, that's not actually as big a deal as you're making out. Fossilization and other preservation methods are so rare that even today we have massive gaps in the fossil records—and it's not like we don't have *any* paracritter fossils, they're just incredibly rare. The found a fossilized dracoform in Germany just last year or so.  
> Nephrene

> Plus, there's some paracritters (I'm looking at you Woolly Mammoth, Saber-toothed Tiger, and Humped Horse) that were already in the fossil record and surprised the hell out of everyone when they came back after the Awakening. Makes you wonder what other fossilized remains were misidentified during the downcycle.  
> Snopes

> One school of thought hold that when the mana level dips below a certain threshold, physical objects with a high intrinsic mana concentration—such as orichalcum, or dragon bones—may vanish from this plane, like pixies and other fae creatures, only returning when

the mana level reaches that threshold again; this is related to certain alchera explanations as well.

> Axis Mundi

> Of course, alchera could also be caused by mental or emotional impressions; mana is psychoactive and responds to metahuman will and belief. Buildings and monuments, when invested with sufficient importance by metahumans, may develop echoes of themselves in the astral—a perfectly logical theory that doesn't require physical objects to disappear into the metaplanes.

> Winterhawk

Spike babies aren't the only examples of pre-Awakening magic. Throughout the world, magicians have discovered that a small fraction of the antiquities that have survived to the present period are ancient enchantments, presumably from earlier magic-using cultures. Other items discovered after the Awakening incorporate some Awakened material (orichalcum, unique radicals, dragon bones, etc.) or display relatively accurate representations of paracritters.

> Uh...so a vase with a minotaur or elf on it is proof that there was a Golden Age of High Magic? That sounds pretty stupid to me. I mean, there's been elves and dwarfs on everything imaginable for decades before the Awakening, and it's not like a bunch of spike babies modeled for them.

> /dev/grrl

> I believe Elijah is referring generally to the paracritters that don't meet our popular expectations. Bowdlerized myth has given rise to a number of forms for the minotaur, for example, but the paracritter itself looks nothing like any of them. Therefore, an accurate depiction of a minotaur on a five-thousand year old piece of crockery could actually be taken as possible evidence that such paracritters as we know them existed back then.

> Axis Mundi

> What AM isn't saying is that to be significant, it has to be a depiction of a metahuman or paracritter whose form is not identical to popular culture interpretations of the beastie. Some paranaturalists believe that the subconscious belief of metahumanity has shaped these creatures to conform to our expectations of them; therefore the only way to verify that this is not the case—or at least, to rule out such bias—focus is given to artistic interpretations of those paracritters that do not fit into the popular mold, such as leshy, blood kite, and gorgon.

> Winterhawk

> Which is more or less mute, since the only publicly announced relic of that sort is a small statue of a preces, the Sixth World's only carnivorous rabbit—and even that is being debated by paranaturalists.

> Haze

## **ARCANOARCHEOLOGY**

## **OCCULT PREHISTORY**