Chapter 6:

The Ages

The Ages

During the Sentients’ time on Aethra, there have been 5 Ages, characterized by their most significant event(s) and briefly described below. Prior to the creation of the Bahamian calendar, these Ages did not exist and history was not categorized as it is now.

The Age of Discovery. The first Age of recorded history is known as the Age of Discovery, so named after the numerous things Sentients discovered during this time: themselves, the evolved Sentients, the ruins of Predecessor civilization, the monsters that plagued the world, Aether and its various forms, and lastly, each of the continents. This Age lasted 938 cycles, and concluded with the discovery of Sal’tu.

The Age of Learning. This Age is characterized by the Sentients learning as much as they could about the world of Aethra and its many properties, including the various uses of Aether and the different planes. This was also the Age where Sentients really set their minds to deciphering the mystery of the Predecessors and their history, and what exactly it was that brought their end. It was during this Age that the first Automaton, Talos, was created, and who later Awakened and started the Automaton Revolution. This 6-cycle conflict saw the recognition of Automata as Sentients and their subsequent legal emancipation; shortly thereafter, Talos started the first Awakening school for Automata, which it ran and operated for the remainder of its life, which ended in the 293rd cycle of the following Age. The Age of Learning lasted 752 cycles and ended when the mechanical dragon Ex Machina fulfilled its promise to overthrow the world, ushering in the Age of the Dragon.

The Age of the Dragon. In the 738th cycle of the Age of Discovery, a half-Human half-Elf named Alset created a machine with the shape and cunning of a dragon. It was not the first of its kind, but it was the first that was deliberately designed to be as or more intelligent than any dragon, and as Alset was an absolutely brilliant engineer, he met and surpassed this goal in spades. Over the next several decades, the dragon, which would come to be known as Ex Machina, patiently bided its time, waiting for chances and opportunities to subtly and surreptitiously upgrade and improve itself until it was, in a word, unstoppable. When this time came, it revealed itself to the world, promising to conquer and rule Aethra for 1000 cycles. As thanks for creating it, Ex Machina gave its creator the gift of eternal life in the form of an undying body.

At first, Ex Machina fulfilled its promise of overthrowing the world and bringing everyone under its iron-fist rule. So it continued for a few hundred cycles, with the machine-turned-god-king using its power to subjugate the people and crush any hope of resistance. After the first few centuries, however, Ex Machina realized something: it was bored. Ruling people – which at this point it considered little more than ants – brought it no pleasure, and being a tyrannical overlord was really not all it was cracked up to be. Rather, what Ex Machina truly desired was one thing, and one thing only: to learn, to do as it had always done and grow and improve itself. Ex Machina wanted to discover the secrets of the cosmos that even the Predecessors had not learned of, and for the remainder of its rule, it set out to do exactly that, using every resource it – and by extension Aethra – had at its disposal. Eventually, it learned of the Unknown Plane, and knew that this here-to-fore untouched realm contained the secrets and knowledge that it so desperately craved. So, when the 1000 cycles it promised came to an end, it promptly left Aethra, heading straight for the Unknown Plane, ending its rule and initiating the Age of Freedom/Rebuilding.

The Age of Freedom/Rebuilding. Characterized largely by the Sentients – and by extension the rest of Aethra – having been freed of Ex Machina’s rule, the Age of Freedom/Rebuilding (referred to as one in some parts of the world and the other in others) was a time when many Sentients finally felt free to go out and simply live their lives as they desired, as they did before Ex Machina’s rule. Additionally, the power vacuum left by Ex Machina’s departure allowed many to establish their own forms of rule, giving rise to many new governments the world over – though it is worth noting that most every attempt at anything even remotely authoritarian was very quickly and powerfully crushed and put down before it could accrue any noteworthy power. Many of the governments formed during this Age are still in power today, though most have changed and evolved in one way or another. This Age lasted 612 cycles, and ended when the worst invasion of Scorched in recorded history abruptly began the Age of Flames.

The Age of Flames. In the cycle 472 AoR, a colossal volcano in eastern Southern Media – which would later be named Hell’s Gate – erupted, killing over a million Sentients in the eruption alone, which was visible from most every corner of the world, and audible throughout half of it. Far, far worse than the eruption, however, was the following invasion of Scorched, which fountained out of the mouth of the volcano like a geyser of murderous rage. Thus began the Age and War of Flames, wherein Southern Media was, over the course of a little more than 3 centuries, taken over by an unending swarm of bloodthirsty demons. Though fought against vigorously by the combined might of the Sentients of Ahkos and Media, with no small help from whatever dragons could be convinced, this invasion of Scorched was unlike any other, and they poured unceasingly from Hell’s Gate no matter how many were slain. After 314 cycles, the Scorched were finally contained to the southern half of Media, as they are unable to cross water and the Dwarves’ Bulwark mountain range blocked their way North. Thus, the War of Flames was declared officially over, and the Age of Peace, the current age, began.

The Current Age. The Current Age – as yet unnamed because Ages are named after their conclusion – began when the War of Flames was declared to be officially over, despite the fact that the Scorched still infest Southern Media, and are unlikely to leave any time soon. Even so, the threat had been stymied and contained, and did not appear to be getting actively worse, at least not anymore. Thus, 208 cycles have passed and the world – particularly Northern Media – has begun to feel relatively safe once more. This Age has seen the creation of the Adventurers’ Guild, which created and proliferated the Common tongue, the Aeon currency, and the Bahamian calendar, all of which are now almost universally used everywhere except Sal’tu and certain parts of Frigus.