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## Human History

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The year is currently 2650 CE. Humanity has gone through a long and messy history since the 21st century, the relevant parts of which are detailed below.

**Azis and Cits:** In the 24th century, an inter-continental war broke out. During this period, humans developed an array of technologies, by far the most important of which was “artificial zygote insemination”, which is a combination of intensive genetic engineering and psychological conditioning that result in the birth of Azi, a highly talented and specialized form of human. Through years of extensive psycho-sensory training, these humans can be trained as experts in just about anything. Azi make wonderful soldiers, mechanics and scientists, and during their upbringing each is conditioned with specially-prepared visual-auditory stimuli called “tape”. During their training period, they are conditioned to respond mostly to the orders of a specific human handler. They will do most things asked of them by their supervisor as long as it does not conflict with their basic taping.

Azi have come to play a prominent role in human society, but having a class of humans that are extremely good at what they are trained to do, and unlikely to question most orders, is of course a temptation for some Cits (“citizens”, or non-Azi humans). There are a few dark souls who might wish to usurp Azi for their own ends. Every now and then, stories surface of Azi who have been re-taped too quickly. Taping is a process designed to take weeks or months. There is no safe way to re-tape an Azi in a shorter span of time. It can be done, but at a terrible price. The Azi is rarely able to recover, and may be non-functional for the rest of his or her life. The legal consequences for re-taping an Azi too rapidly are extreme.

**Elementals:** One hundred years ago, the world was changed forever when Konrad Strauss, in a foolish attempt to make more powerful Azi soldiers, somehow managed to build a connection between Earth and the elemental planes known as the Conduit. Through the Conduit came four hugely powerful elementals - one each of fire, water, earth and air. What ensued was a period of utter chaos as the elementals wreaked havoc across the world. Although they have since spawned many more minions, the four original elementals still reign supreme over their factions.

Literally hundreds of thousands of people have died since the elementals were created. It is not clear that the elementals have even noticed. Humanity has long sought a way to fight back, but with limited success. Despite years of research by scientists such as Galina Schwartz<sup>1</sup> and her Azi partner Percy Bentz, the unorthodox Sofia Alexandrov, and Konrad Strauss’s granddaughter Katherine, humans still have all too few ways to resist elementals. It doesn’t matter whether the elemental is fire, water, earth or air - humans die when they get too close. For the strongest elementals, “close” could be within 100 meters. Some of the weakest elementals do not passively destroy things, but can do so easily if annoyed. A few humans believe that this fact is something humanity has not capitalized on the way it should. The diplomat Benedetta DeLuca is testing the idea that if elementals could be made to see the value of humans, they would not destroy, and maybe even actively protect humans. So far Benedetta is still alive, so perhaps it has some merit. It all relies on the continued goodwill of the elementals however, and that makes many people understandably nervous.

One particularly disturbing phenomenon involving elementals is that of mind control. It has recently come to light that some elementals are taking an interest in humans in a bad way. They are apparently inducing some form of mind control, that can compel humans to do things against their will. To compound the problem, the phenomenon often leaves the human with amnesia, and so their actions can only be pieced together from the accounts of bystanders.

A small, militant faction called the Extinguishers took it upon themselves to battle the elementals. Led by gifted military leaders, such as members of the Garrett family, they used ingenuity and contraband technology to lure a few of the weakest elementals to their deaths. However, no human, however cunning, can stand against the stronger elementals, and so, within the last 10 years or so, a new movement emerged among the humans. Its proponents argued that humanity should seek not to fight

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## Elemental History and Nature

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Being an elemental on the human plane is strange for you. There are many concepts that humans have that just so *alien*. Time passes here. No, more than that - time passes and it *matters*. Humans age and die, something that never happens to elementals. And humans have such a strong sense of property. Everything is “me” and “mine”. They get so very upset if you happen to wander through a field and flood it, or the wind from your passing destroys a small town. They seem to think it is somehow your responsibility to replace it. And do they whine and complain when a human ends up dead! It certainly isn't your fault that they are combustible. How the species ever survived without the ability to reform their substance is quite beyond you.

**History:** Everyone knows the history of elementals on this human plane. One hundred years ago, a human somehow managed to open the Conduit and pull through 4 mid-level elementals, one of each of the cardinal elements Fire, Water, Earth and Air. These elementals, Fire Queen Caldera, Earth King Olympus, Air King Mistral, and Water Queen Aquifera, quickly expanded over the earth by aliquoting their power into minions. As on the elemental plane, there is no love lost between the factions and infighting reigns supreme. Each faction is always trying to one-up the others and gain mastery over the whole world. Differently from battles on the elemental plane, however, there is no fifth element, Quintessence, to control the other four and maintain balance.

**The Conduit:** The Conduit is the weakest point between the human and elemental plane. Once every 10 years or so, the planes come into close proximity with each other. Every 100 years or so, the planes come particularly close, and it is therefore particularly easy to open the Conduit between the planes. That time is now. The planes will be most aligned right at midnight. The last time the Conduit was opened was 100 years ago when the first elementals were brought over.

**The Suppressor Field:** As a general rule, elementals do not like to be near the Conduit because it has a damper field of some kind. For reasons unclear, even the strongest elementals on this plane cannot wield their powers with impunity in the field. Powers are so dampened in fact, that an elemental and a human might be nearly equally matched in fighting prowess.

*The suppressor field extends over all of game space.*

**The Hierarchy:** One of the most important aspects of elemental culture is the hierarchy. Lower rank elementals must defer to higher rank elementals of their faction. The King or Queen is the highest ranking element of the faction on this plane at primal tier. Most factions have three or four tiers under the King or Queen. Since the suppressor field dampens all elemental power, it will be harder than usual to determine the rank of an elemental. Although it is rarely necessary, an elemental of higher rank can compel a lower ranking elemental of the same element to do some task.

The hierarchy is more than just a social formality though. Since all lower ranking elements are spawned from the Kings and Queens, their survival is tied to that of their leader. If the leader of an elemental faction were to die, all of the other elementals of that faction would be crippled.

**Enslaving Humans:** Elementals also have the ability to compel humans to some extent. This is not common practice because it is rare that elementals find some use for humans. Enslavement is a long and tedious process and doesn't last for very long; it is rarely worth the trouble. It does potentially have its uses however, particularly to tip the balance between elemental factions.

**Elemental Essence:** All elementals have elemental essence. Normally essence is just part of who you are, but under certain circumstances it can be given away or forcibly removed. It is a great tragedy to lose essence and elementals normally avoid it at all costs.

**The Elemental Council:** Once every 5 years, the elements hold a council. For one night only, the factions put aside their squabbling and come together to discuss issues that affect them all. Normally the council is held on an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, as far away from humans as possible, but since the two planes are so close together tonight, the Conduit has

been selected as the location, despite the suppressor field. Representatives from the Fire, Earth, and Air factions will all be in attendance; Water has elected not to come. However, for the first time ever, humans will be present. Mistral is considering an alliance with them and has invited them to send representatives to the Elemental Council.

**Members**

- Caldera: Queen of the Fire elementals, who has publicly proclaimed that she intend to open the Conduit to bring over more elementals of all factions.
- Pyro: Second tier Fire elemental, who is impetuous and militant.
- Ember: Second tier Fire elemental, intermediary between Caldera and Mistral.
- Shale: Second tier Earth elemental, a strong believer in following the rules.
- Quake: Second tier Earth elemental, a believer in the use of unorthodox ways to achieve goals.
- Skarn: Third tier Earth elemental, Shale's underling.
- Mistral: King of the Air elementals, who of the elementals has the closest ties to humans.
- Zephyr: Second tier Air elemental, a scientist who is fascinated by humans.

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## The Quintessence

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You are one of the few elementals on this planet who know something about elemental planes, either because you came from them yourself or because you have learned about them from one of the elementals who did. You do not know the cosmology that relates the elemental plane to this hot piece of rock, water, and air, but while this alien planet is very different than your ultimate place of origin, most elementals on Earth have adapted well.

Just like on the elemental plane, the four elements have been in a state of near-constant warfare since arriving. You have astutely realized that these battles are in some ways different here. In particular, they are substantially more destructive. Low and even mid-ranking elementals often sustain serious injury that take months to heal. In rare occasions, elementals have actually died. These deaths rock the entire hierarchy. The amount of fighting has consequently declined substantially as the factions try to work out why the consequences of fighting for dominance on this plane are so extreme.

The only thing that is missing from this plane, which exists on the elemental plane, is the Quintessence. The Quintessence is best described as a fifth element. In appearance, Quintessence elementals are white glowing balls or streaks of light, in varying sizes. Rather than wielding one of the four cardinal elements of fire, water, earth and air, the Quintessence elementals claim to be all about maintaining the “balance” between the elements. It is not entirely clear how they do this, but they do. No elemental faction has ever managed to gain the upper hand against the others on the elemental plane, no matter how it tried. Whenever any elemental faction seemed to make progress, the Quintessence, despite being few in number, managed to restore order and balance very rapidly. This is aided by their ability to control other elementals of any type, thereby stopping any fights in progress. They could also provide a white substance useful for helping elementals heal after the battles were over.

However, while the Quintessence balance, they also control, suppress, and diminish. Most elementals of the other four types are happy and thriving without their influence. Losing that freedom is not desirable. Most elementals (of the few that know about Quintessence) probably consider that freedom to be far more valuable than any fluctuations in the destructive power of the elementals’ battles on this planet.

Nonetheless, there is a certain feeling that bothers you sometimes. A sense that something is missing here, related to the absence of the Quintessence.





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Literally hundreds of thousands of people have died since the elementals were created. It is not clear that the elementals have even noticed. Humanity has long sought a way to fight back, but with limited success. Despite years of research by scientists such as Galina Schwartz<sup>1</sup> and her Azi partner Percy Bentz, the unorthodox Sofia Alexandrov, and Konrad Strauss’s granddaughter Katherine, humans still have all too few ways to resist elementals. It doesn’t matter whether the elemental is fire, water, earth or air - humans die when they get too close. For the strongest elementals, “close” could be within 100 meters. Some of the weakest elementals do not passively destroy things, but can do so easily if annoyed. A few humans believe that this fact is something humanity has not capitalized on the way it should. The diplomat Benedetta DeLuca is testing the idea that if elementals could be made to see the value of humans, they would not destroy, and maybe even actively protect humans. So far Benedetta is still alive, so perhaps it has some merit. It all relies on the continued goodwill of the elementals however, and that makes many people understandably nervous.

One particularly disturbing phenomenon involving elementals is that of mind control. It has recently come to light that some elementals are taking an interest in humans in a bad way. They are apparently inducing some form of mind control, that can compel humans to do things against their will. To compound the problem, the phenomenon often leaves the human with amnesia, and so their actions can only be pieced together from the accounts of bystanders.

A small, militant faction called the Extinguishers took it upon themselves to battle the elementals. Led by gifted military leaders, such as members of the Garrett family, they used ingenuity and contraband technology to lure a few of the weakest elementals to their deaths. However, no human, however cunning, can stand against the stronger elementals, and so, within the last 10 years or so, a new movement emerged among the humans. Its proponents argued that humanity should seek not to fight

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## The Quintessence

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You are one of the few elementals on this planet who know something about elemental planes, either because you came from them yourself or because you have learned about them from one of the elementals who did. You do not know the cosmology that relates the elemental plane to this hot piece of rock, water, and air, but while this alien planet is very different than your ultimate place of origin, most elementals on Earth have adapted well.

Just like on the elemental plane, the four elements have been in a state of near-constant warfare since arriving. You have astutely realized that these battles are in some ways different here. In particular, they are substantially more destructive. Low and even mid-ranking elementals often sustain serious injury that take months to heal. In rare occasions, elementals have actually died. These deaths rock the entire hierarchy. The amount of fighting has consequently declined substantially as the factions try to work out why the consequences of fighting for dominance on this plane are so extreme.

The only thing that is missing from this plane, which exists on the elemental plane, is the Quintessence. The Quintessence is best described as a fifth element. In appearance, Quintessence elementals are white glowing balls or streaks of light, in varying sizes. Rather than wielding one of the four cardinal elements of fire, water, earth and air, the Quintessence elementals claim to be all about maintaining the “balance” between the elements. It is not entirely clear how they do this, but they do. No elemental faction has ever managed to gain the upper hand against the others on the elemental plane, no matter how it tried. Whenever any elemental faction seemed to make progress, the Quintessence, despite being few in number, managed to restore order and balance very rapidly. This is aided by their ability to control other elementals of any type, thereby stopping any fights in progress. They could also provide a white substance useful for helping elementals heal after the battles were over.

However, while the Quintessence balance, they also control, suppress, and diminish. Most elementals of the other four types are happy and thriving without their influence. Losing that freedom is not desirable. Most elementals (of the few that know about Quintessence) probably consider that freedom to be far more valuable than any fluctuations in the destructive power of the elementals’ battles on this planet.

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## The Quintessence

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Just like on the elemental plane, the four elements have been in a state of near-constant warfare since arriving. You have astutely realized that these battles are in some ways different here. In particular, they are substantially more destructive. Low and even mid-ranking elementals often sustain serious injury that take months to heal. In rare occasions, elementals have actually died. These deaths rock the entire hierarchy. The amount of fighting has consequently declined substantially as the factions try to work out why the consequences of fighting for dominance on this plane are so extreme.

The only thing that is missing from this plane, which exists on the elemental plane, is the Quintessence. The Quintessence is best described as a fifth element. In appearance, Quintessence elementals are white glowing balls or streaks of light, in varying sizes. Rather than wielding one of the four cardinal elements of fire, water, earth and air, the Quintessence elementals claim to be all about maintaining the “balance” between the elements. It is not entirely clear how they do this, but they do. No elemental faction has ever managed to gain the upper hand against the others on the elemental plane, no matter how it tried. Whenever any elemental faction seemed to make progress, the Quintessence, despite being few in number, managed to restore order and balance very rapidly. This is aided by their ability to control other elementals of any type, thereby stopping any fights in progress. They could also provide a white substance useful for helping elementals heal after the battles were over.

However, while the Quintessence balance, they also control, suppress, and diminish. Most elementals of the other four types are happy and thriving without their influence. Losing that freedom is not desirable. Most elementals (of the few that know about Quintessence) probably consider that freedom to be far more valuable than any fluctuations in the destructive power of the elementals’ battles on this planet.

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## Human History

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The year is currently 2650 CE. Humanity has gone through a long and messy history since the 21st century, the relevant parts of which are detailed below.

**Azis and Cits:** In the 24th century, an inter-continental war broke out. During this period, humans developed an array of technologies, by far the most important of which was “artificial zygote insemination”, which is a combination of intensive genetic engineering and psychological conditioning that result in the birth of Azi, a highly talented and specialized form of human. Through years of extensive psycho-sensory training, these humans can be trained as experts in just about anything. Azi make wonderful soldiers, mechanics and scientists, and during their upbringing each is conditioned with specially-prepared visual-auditory stimuli called “tape”. During their training period, they are conditioned to respond mostly to the orders of a specific human handler. They will do most things asked of them by their supervisor as long as it does not conflict with their basic taping.

Azi have come to play a prominent role in human society, but having a class of humans that are extremely good at what they are trained to do, and unlikely to question most orders, is of course a temptation for some Cits (“citizens”, or non-Azi humans). There are a few dark souls who might wish to usurp Azi for their own ends. Every now and then, stories surface of Azi who have been re-taped too quickly. Taping is a process designed to take weeks or months. There is no safe way to re-tape an Azi in a shorter span of time. It can be done, but at a terrible price. The Azi is rarely able to recover, and may be non-functional for the rest of his or her life. The legal consequences for re-taping an Azi too rapidly are extreme.

**Elementals:** One hundred years ago, the world was changed forever when Konrad Strauss, in a foolish attempt to make more powerful Azi soldiers, somehow managed to build a connection between Earth and the elemental planes known as the Conduit. Through the Conduit came four hugely powerful elementals - one each of fire, water, earth and air. What ensued was a period of utter chaos as the elementals wreaked havoc across the world. Although they have since spawned many more minions, the four original elementals still reign supreme over their factions.

Literally hundreds of thousands of people have died since the elementals were created. It is not clear that the elementals have even noticed. Humanity has long sought a way to fight back, but with limited success. Despite years of research by scientists such as Galina Schwartz<sup>1</sup> and her Azi partner Percy Bentz, the unorthodox Sofia Alexandrov, and Konrad Strauss’s granddaughter Katherine, humans still have all too few ways to resist elementals. It doesn’t matter whether the elemental is fire, water, earth or air - humans die when they get too close. For the strongest elementals, “close” could be within 100 meters. Some of the weakest elementals do not passively destroy things, but can do so easily if annoyed. A few humans believe that this fact is something humanity has not capitalized on the way it should. The diplomat Benedetta DeLuca is testing the idea that if elementals could be made to see the value of humans, they would not destroy, and maybe even actively protect humans. So far Benedetta is still alive, so perhaps it has some merit. It all relies on the continued goodwill of the elementals however, and that makes many people understandably nervous.

One particularly disturbing phenomenon involving elementals is that of mind control. It has recently come to light that some elementals are taking an interest in humans in a bad way. They are apparently inducing some form of mind control, that can compel humans to do things against their will. To compound the problem, the phenomenon often leaves the human with amnesia, and so their actions can only be pieced together from the accounts of bystanders.

A small, militant faction called the Extinguishers took it upon themselves to battle the elementals. Led by gifted military leaders, such as members of the Garrett family, they used ingenuity and contraband technology to lure a few of the weakest elementals to their deaths. However, no human, however cunning, can stand against the stronger elementals, and so, within the last 10 years or so, a new movement emerged among the humans. Its proponents argued that humanity should seek not to fight

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**History:** Everyone knows the history of elementals on this human plane. One hundred years ago, a human somehow managed to open the Conduit and pull through 4 mid-level elementals, one of each of the cardinal elements Fire, Water, Earth and Air. These elementals, Fire Queen Caldera, Earth King Olympus, Air King Mistral, and Water Queen Aquifera, quickly expanded over the earth by aliquoting their power into minions. As on the elemental plane, there is no love lost between the factions and infighting reigns supreme. Each faction is always trying to one-up the others and gain mastery over the whole world. Differently from battles on the elemental plane, however, there is no fifth element, Quintessence, to control the other four and maintain balance.

**The Conduit:** The Conduit is the weakest point between the human and elemental plane. Once every 10 years or so, the planes come into close proximity with each other. Every 100 years or so, the planes come particularly close, and it is therefore particularly easy to open the Conduit between the planes. That time is now. The planes will be most aligned right at midnight. The last time the Conduit was opened was 100 years ago when the first elementals were brought over.

**The Suppressor Field:** As a general rule, elementals do not like to be near the Conduit because it has a damper field of some kind. For reasons unclear, even the strongest elementals on this plane cannot wield their powers with impunity in the field. Powers are so dampened in fact, that an elemental and a human might be nearly equally matched in fighting prowess.

*The suppressor field extends over all of game space.*

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