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Intuition

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Crucible

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Once upon a time, no man told any story, no man practiced the written word and no man counted years. The number of years I might now name commenced generations before my lifetime and though the stories of men may authenticate the number, no greater knowledge does it reveal than the preponderance of that it fails to authenticate.

I know not the correct time. I might count a number of years and name that number aloud but the event commemorated by that number reveals no truth of greater consequence than any other isolated event or number if it does not explain the origin, and I know that it does not. No greater truth does that number reveal than its utter irrelevance. If I know not my origin then I know not who I am, nor do I know what I am.

The longer the count of years, the more inaccurate the number - The more history we record, the more obscure our identity - The more we learn, the less we know.

For an unknown age before the counting of years, my kind in remote solitude and isolation endured an epoch in which the origin and conclusion of time represented such abstract value as to merit no measure, and no story did any find worthy of recounting more than once. The first encounter with men from the other world commenced the series of events that inspired our first count of years and our first story traditions.

From the void of lost history and uncounted years, no story establishes motive or cause, so my story is the story of effect and consequence. This is the age of counted years, the age of technology, economics, politics and war. This is the story of men. In the dawn of civilization without an identity, this accounts as our only known origin.

I know not the correct time, and no greater lie can I ever tell than the accurate account of my history. The correct time to count will never commence, until we know the truth.

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Once he might have thought that over the mountain lay only the vast darkness of the great beyond with field of star and cloud but when unfamiliar men appeared and slew woman and child, he knew from somewhere else upon his earth they had come, and descending the mountain, Edyn discovered another world below. Observed there Edyn a humanity of great multitude lost in an age bleak and dark, humanity upon the same earth yet living not upon the earth, they moved in orchestration like swarm of insect, plowed over natural surface and erected a contrived earth of arrogant and wasteful contemptuous symbol and edifice. In wave upon successive wave of bloodshed men of the other world raged and burned, and for every effort from which one might raise up symbolic edifice, more effort still might another commit to tear down so much then redouble effort to build up yet again symbolic edifice in even greater proportion.

Once he might have thought his clans the sum total of all humanity and the extent of the mountain ridge the edge of the very cosmos but discovery of the other world below occurred for Edyn as harsh revelation. Ascending the mountain to return to his home, Edyn there spoke in secrecy of those things below he observed only with those he considered most resolute and with those he confided they vowed no man from the other world ought ever again set foot over the mountain without challenge of contest but even more than this, they vowed no element of the life of men below should ever torment their world and in the narrow chasms of mountain passes where men from below might ascend, Edyn and his band of hunters sent down cast stone and rain of arrow, and thrust into the necks and faces of travelers from distant places, sharp instruments of forged metal. In a mountain pass lay a narrow chasm of such vulnerability and defenselessness in which Edyn and his band of hunters slaughtered with reckless hatred such a number of distant travelers, the passage grew so choked with bone artifact, dangerous men of the other world called it a name which foretold what horror might there they observe and even still, they ascended the pass in hushed whisper while underfoot crackled the pale rubble of the Bone Stairway.

So commenced the age of the warrior hero, and great warlord of dangerous men ascending the pass seeking vengeance for past reckless slaughter, hailed out for those they named Highlander and in particular he they named Two Blade, with challenge of duel and satisfaction. Upon desolate rocky heights and in dark places deep within wilderness frontiers, Edyn dismantled challenger upon challenger and his band hunted down and massacred all present, intent none that wander near should ever depart breathing to tell so much as one tale of Highland or Highlander.

Borne of such events spread rumor throughout the other world of reward and treasure zealously guarded beyond the Bone Stair in high places from which so many failed to return, in great vaults host to vast mounds of precious metal and priceless gem lay objects of unimaginable power great and terrible, cursed by spell of witch. In the other world, men spoke in whisper of great riches and of trial by warrior, witch and wraith through which only he most worthy might some day pass to claim the articles of the great Highland treasure and ascend to position of god upon the mortal earth for all time, and the torment of haunted dreams and grandiose visions so possessed men of the other world that on the Highland frontier occurred ruthless carnage no different from that which forever consumed the realm of all men below.

For ages, warlords gathered legions of ambitious men and marched proud and defiant upon mountain passes in quest of blood sport and riches, and there found most only death anonymous and ignominious. Although some might yet on occasion forsake established path and seek pathless places over the mountain, find the Highland undetected, run amuck and murder some number then escape yet breathing to return home triumphant with ordinary household object in hand in proof of courage great and deed daring, neither success empty and valueless nor slaughter of mountain pass great and terrible ever fulfilled the haunted dreams of men from the other world, and no reward did they ever capture but wasteful death void of reason.

Those that traveled with Edyn and all those thereafter that carried sharp instruments and hunted on the frontier, spoke not openly of those things that there occurred, and within the Highland interior, passive and pastoral innocence yet delicately endured. This accounts for the end of the age before the written word and time unmeasured. The lifetime of Edyn, the first written name, convened upon the establishment of the first count of years. Whether the events of his lifetime serve as the impetus for written names and counted years or constitute the incidental product of the convergence thereof is of little consequence for in any event, the lifetime of Edyn accounts as the origin of the recorded history of the Highland clans and the stories of men, and the previous epochs fade into the obscurity of mythology and oral tradition.

This is the story of Edyn 1st Martial of the Highland Militia. This is the crucible.

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When the age of plunder and treasure concludes, let those tormented by haunted dreams and grandiose visions realize the futility of their mortal actions, and finally capture the prize possession of those treasures so jealously concealed from plain sight.

Would each provide only for all others first and only that which all others might need, so would each know in abundance without effort, all riches for which they might ever wish, and this constitutes the only treasure upon all the earth.

In the quest for material value lurks only the torment of wish and dream unfulfilled, and so stands to reason the greater the accumulation of material value, the greater the torment of wish and dream unfulfilled.

And if those who dream only of opportunity, freewill, ambition and accomplishment, hunted their treasure in the hearts of humankind, they would know the limitless abundance of modesty. They would know sanctuary.

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