

Prologue- Fall of the old world

1978

— Three distinct Entities are in Space at the same time, hurtling toward Earth.

1980

— The two entities Eden and Scion crash land in an alternate Earth. Both are both killed by Fortuna.

— The third Entity, Abbadon, sensed the death of its fellow entities and returned to the Earth. Realising it could do nothing to save them, it uses their core shards to create an entirely new kind of Cycle, and then leaves. Intending to return 2000 years later to harvest the gathered information and *end* the cycle.

1981

— A man named Pierre, living in small town in Southeastern France comes across a strange glowing circle a mile into the forest. He promptly alerts the authorities.

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ABC News — United States — 1981

“We’re looking now at live footage from Annecy, where federal authorities have sealed off a large area surrounding what scientists are calling an ‘unidentified energy phenomenon.’”

The camera zoomed toward the floating oval of glowing portal hanging motionless above the dirt in the forest.



“No one has entered the structure yet. Officials claim radiation levels remain surprisingly low, though electronic interference has been reported nearby. NASA representatives are expected to arrive before morning.” The anchor glanced off-screen briefly. “Privately, some researchers are already comparing the object to a doorway.”

BBC News — United Kingdom

“The United States government continues to deny rumours that the object discovered yesterday is linked to military experimentation.”

Footage showed soldiers surrounding the glowing Gate beneath massive floodlights.

“Scientists remain divided over what exactly the structure is. Some believe it may be an atmospheric anomaly. Others speculate it could represent an entirely unknown physical phenomenon.”

Soviet State Television — USSR

“The so-called France ‘portal’ has sparked widespread speculation throughout Western media.” The announcer maintained a flat expression “Soviet scientists caution against irresponsible claims involving extraterrestrial origins or parallel dimensions.”

The footage shifted briefly toward the shimmering structure. Even through the grainy recording, the light looked unnatural.

“Our experts believe the phenomenon may be related to undisclosed American weapons research.” The announcer folded his papers. “Regardless, the Soviet Union remains fully prepared for any development.”

Doordarshan — India

“The world watches closely tonight as France authorities continue studying the strange luminous formation discovered earlier this week.”

“Religious leaders, scientists, and political figures have all weighed in on the discovery. While some claim the structure may represent a scientific breakthrough, others warn humanity should proceed carefully.”

The anchor adjusted his glasses. “At this time, no nation has attempted entry. But, an expedition force is being prepared as we speak.”

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The projector hummed softly inside the packed UN conference chamber. Cigarette smoke lingered beneath the ceiling lights while translators

whispered into headsets. Every eye remained fixed on the grainy footage trembling across the massive screen.

“What you’re about to see here, is the video footage captured by the first expedition team that went into the Gate.” The man standing at the podium said, as he pressed the Play button. “Or at least what remained of them.”

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A group of personnel wearing air-supplied positive-pressurised suit walk through multi-layered containment facility. The facility had been created around the gate to stop the transmission of unknown microbes, spores, or invasive ecology.

After going through multiple layers of security, the team finally reaches the end of the facility, where the 13 feet tall oval structured continued to glow with a faint luminescent light.

Then, the lead researcher stepped into portal and vanished. Soon, others followed.

The camera passed through the glowing blue surface and for a moment, static swallowed everything. Then the image stabilised.

A cavern stretched endlessly ahead of them. Massive stone pillars vanished into darkness overhead while pale mist crawled across uneven ground. Water dripped somewhere in the distance.

One scientist laughed nervously through his respirator. “My God...”

Another set up and adjusted a floodlight around the entrance of the gate.

“This is history. A small step for man. A large step for—”

A voice behind him snorted. “Wrong speech, idiot.”

The group laughed weakly.

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Floodlights illuminated jagged cavern walls covered in strange black mineral growths. The scientists collected samples while two French soldiers wearing similar hazmat suits stood guard nearby, rifles raised.

“Atmosphere remains breathable. Temperature stable. Possible microbial life on the walls.”

The cameraman swept the lens downward, showing massive depressions in the dirt. One scientist crouched beside it silently.

The footprint dwarfed his gloved hand.

“Bear?” somebody whispered.

Another scientist shook his head slowly. “No bear makes tracks like that. And even polar bear’s footprints aren’t that big.”

The cavern suddenly groaned somewhere deeper ahead. Nobody spoke for a while afterward.

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The footage jerked constantly now. The exploration team had stopped walking.

One of the soldiers aimed his rifle toward the darkness ahead. “You saw something? Where?”

“Down there. Deeper in the cavern. I swear I saw movement.”

The scientist holding the camera zoomed toward distant movement between the rocks. It was dark despite the floodlights pointing ahead. And for a long moment, nothing appeared. Then—

Two pale reflections blinked back in the dark. Eyes.

One scientist whispered shakily. “We should go back.”

For a while, there was silence. Then, the lead scientist spoke up. “We need more samples. We proceed another hundred meters.”

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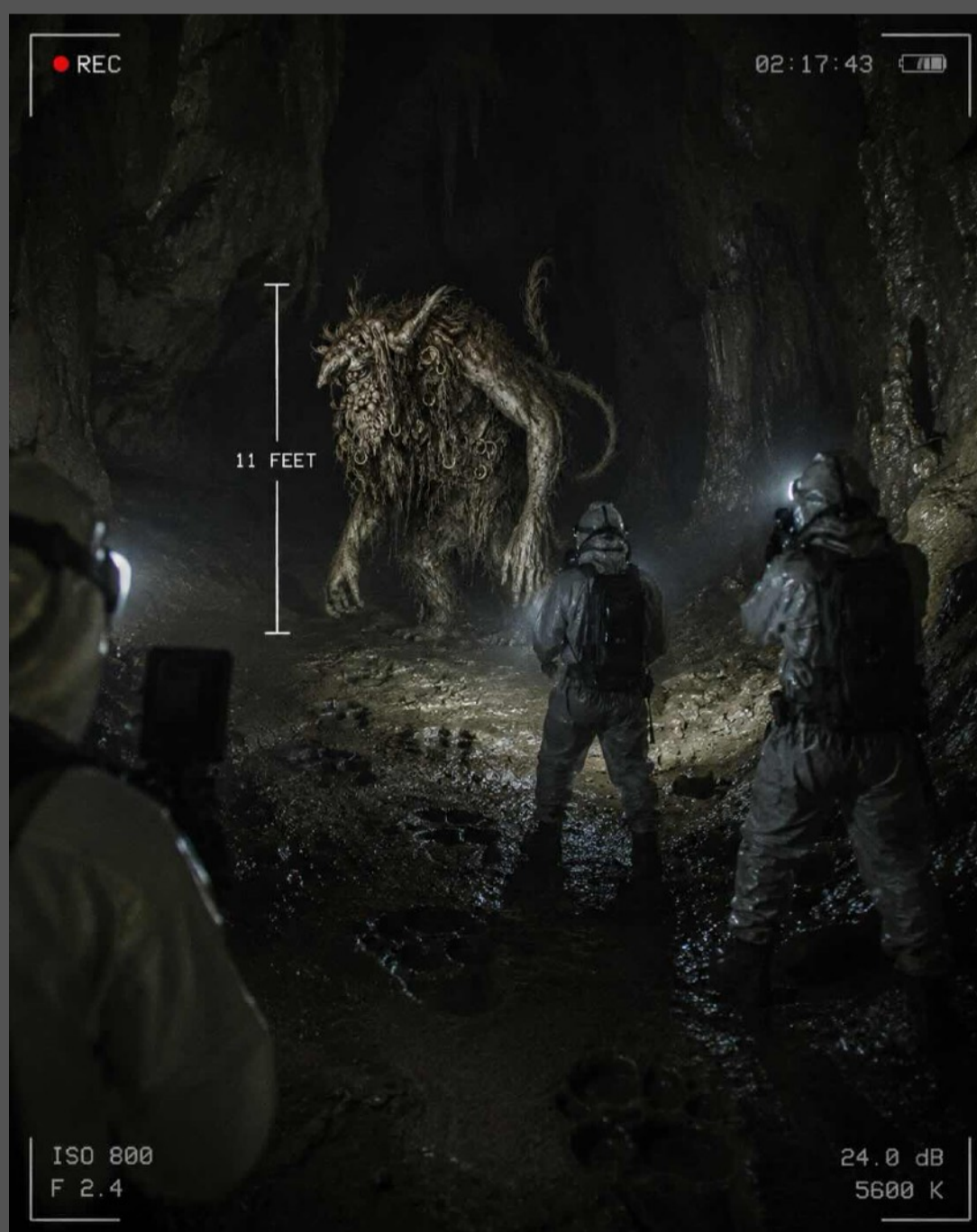
The footage became frantic. Heavy breathing echoed through the cavern as the team moved deeper. The cameraman kept turning back repeatedly toward the darkness where he had seen those two eyes.

Then someone ahead froze. “Oh God...”

The camera lifted and caught a shape standing motionless between the stone pillars. It was huge.

The creature slowly emerged from behind the pillars and the camera zoomed in to get a proper look. The creature seemed unable to see them despite the bright lights pointed right at it. But then it sniffed the air and let out a guttural growl.

One scientist screamed. The footage jolted violently sideways. Then everything erupted.



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Gunfire thundered through the cavern.

Muzzle flashes briefly illuminated something enormous charging through the dark. Fur. Teeth. One of the soldiers vanished mid-scream as something slammed him into the cavern wall hard enough to burst his suit open.

The second soldier kept firing. "RUN! RUN! Get out of here!" The creature reached him a second later.

CRUNCH!

The camera hit the ground. The footage tilted sideways behind a rock formation while the cameraman sobbed violently nearby.

"This is hell... this is hell..." Wet crunching echoed through the darkness. "We should never have come here..."

Something massive moved nearby and the cameraman whimpered.

Then a gigantic clawed arm shot from the darkness and dragged him away screaming.

The lights inside the UN assembly hall remained dim after the footage ended. Nobody spoke.

Several delegates stared down at their desks instead of the screen. One woman near the front quietly removed her glasses and rubbed her eyes. Somewhere in the chamber, somebody muttered a prayer under their breath.

At the podium, the Secretary-General looked noticeably older than he had an hour earlier. “When contact with the first expedition team was lost,” he began, “the French government authorised a second retrieval operation.”

The screen behind him flickered back to life.

The footage showed a far larger team entering the Gate. This time, the soldiers wore heavier body armor and carried military-grade weaponry. Floodlights had been mounted onto portable generators while thick cables stretched back toward the portal entrance.

The cavern looked different now. More oppressive. The camera passed over shredded hazmat suits lying in the dirt. One of the scientists from the first expedition remained half-visible beneath rubble nearby.

Some of the soldiers stopped to identify and recover the body.

Then screaming erupted ahead. The footage shook violently as soldiers raised their rifles. A massive humanoid creature charged from the darkness.

“CONTACT FRONT!” Gunfire exploded through the cavern.

The creature kept coming even after multiple bullets tore through its torso. It smashed one soldier aside hard enough to crumple his chest plate before the others finally brought it down through concentrated rifle fire.

Then the firing stopped. For about three seconds. Then, more movement appeared deeper within the dark tunnels ahead.

One soldier slowly aimed his flashlight upward.

More eyes reflected back. Dozens of them.

The footage cut abruptly.

“The retrieval team successfully recovered portions of the first expedition’s recordings,” the Secretary-General continued. “They also confirmed the existence of hostile lifeforms inside the structure.”

Another video began playing.

The footage showed the second team retreating rapidly toward the Gate while shapes pursued them through the darkness. Gunfire flashed constantly behind them. One soldier stumbled before being dragged screaming into the dark.

The remaining personnel escaped moments later.

The Gate rippled violently behind them as the soldiers escaped it. For a long moment, they kept their rifles pointed at the Gate. But when a long moment passed and no creature emerged, they finally relaxed.

“The following morning,” the Secretary-General said, “the French President authorized full military intervention.”

The next footage looked almost surreal as an entire battalion entered the Gate.

Armored soldiers carrying flamethrowers, machine guns, explosives, and RPG launchers disappeared into the glowing blue surface.

The footage inside the cavern became a warzone.

Machine gun fire thundered continuously while massive searchlights illuminated sprawling underground tunnels littered with bodies. The humanoid monsters attacked in packs now. Some charged wildly while others crawled across cavern ceilings like insects.

The soldiers killed them methodically before flamethrowers put their corpses to the torch. Explosions shook the cavern repeatedly.

Then the final creature appeared.

Even on the projector screen, it looked enormous. Easily standing over twenty feet tall.

Its body resembled the others, but swollen grotesquely larger, with thick bone-like armor protruding across its skin. The thing roared loud enough to distort the camera audio before charging directly into gunfire.

Bullets barely slowed it. One RPG struck its chest. Then another. Then another. The creature kept moving even while half its body burned away.

Only after the fifth rocket did the monster finally collapse.

The next footage showed soldiers dragging corpses out through the Gate using chains and military trucks. Even dead, the creatures looked monstrous.

One of the smaller humanoids required a dozen men just to move its body. The larger one had to be hauled by winches connected to armoured vehicle outside while scientists and reporters watched from behind barricades.

“As the largest entity expired,” the Secretary-General continued, “the Gate itself began exhibiting instability.”

The screen showed the portal flickering violently now. Its once-stable blue surface pulsed erratically.

“Researchers initially believed the phenomenon to be temporary. Additional scientific teams continued entering the structure.”

The footage shifted again.

Scientists hurried in and out carrying equipment while alarms blared nearby. The Gate’s light had started flashing rapidly now. Pulsing brighter and faster.

“Approximately one hour after the death of the largest hostile organism...” The Secretary-General paused. “The Gate collapsed.”

The footage showed the portal suddenly imploding inward without warning. One second it existed. The next—

It was gone.

Silence filled the UN chamber.

The Secretary-General looked across the gathered delegates slowly. “At this time,” he said quietly, “no government on Earth can explain what became of the personnel still inside when the Gate disappeared.”

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1981

— August

— Giant canine monsters tore through a town in Brazil. After the army dealt with them, they tracked down the origin of the monsters to another Gate.

— More Gates started to appear across the world. But unlike the Annecy Gate, most of these gates were not found until well after the monsters inside were released and had attacked nearby human settlements.

— September

— First Parahuman triggered. To this day, many researcher believe the Gates to be the reason behind the existence of parahumans. But so far, no concrete theory has emerged to validate this hypothesis.

1982

— Enough Gates have appeared around the world for Scientists to reach a basic understanding about them. Namely five.

1. All gates hold lifeforms inside that's hostile to humans.

2. Gates appear at random around the world and lay dormant for a week. After that week, the gates 'break open' and release the hostile lifeforms into Earth.

3. All Gates hold a 'Boss' monster inside. Once this one has been dealt with, the Gate will destabilise and close after an hour.

4. All monsters hold a crystalline core within their brain.

5. All Gates hold a Pocket Dimension inside that's limited to a few square miles worth of space. No one knows what happens to this space after the Gate closes.

— Scientists discover that the crystal cores found within the monsters could be used as power source. One of these tiny cores held enough electricity to power a US household for an entire month.

1983

— Gates start to appear around the world in greater numbers.

— Almost as if in response, Parahumans started to trigger in greater numbers.

— A parahuman in South Korea who went by the name of ‘Yong’, went into a portal that appeared near his hometown and cleared it on his own. Many others would follow in his footsteps in the coming years.

— Ciara triggers. This event would later go down in history as the inception of the first Transcendent-class Parahuman.

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Min-woo stood at the edge of the field with the newspaper clenched tightly in his rough hands. It was a newspaper he had collected two years ago, never thinking it'd be relevant to his situation.

The article showed the first Gate discovered in France. Then, he looked at the other papers regarding portals. One of them claimed the structures remained dormant for seven days before releasing the monsters inside.

Seven days.

Mr Han had stumbled across it deep in the forest while gathering firewood. For all they knew, it might've appeared six hours ago, or six days. Nobody could truly tell.

The government had been contacted, but the nearest military post was hours away. Maybe longer. Roads through the mountains were terrible this time of year. And landslides occurred often.

Min-woo looked toward the yard. His daughter chased a chicken through the dirt while giggling to herself, completely unaware of the world around her. Nearby, his wife knelt beside the well, scrubbing clothes with tired hands.

A soft smile appeared on his face before his expression hardened.

He understood with absolute certainty that if the Gate opened before soldiers arrived, people would die. Maybe the entire village.

His gaze drifted back toward the forest in the direction of the gate.

'Could I fight off those monsters?' He wondered, and found that he wasn't quite sure. But even if he could, if too many of them arrived at once, he won't be able to protect his family while fighting them. He knew that.

He clenched his fists and felt the power rise to the surface as his arm started to glow before he unclenched and his arm went back to normal.

Ever since a year ago, when he nearly fell off a cliff, he'd become different. He'd gained superpowers. So far, he'd kept it hidden from everyone except his wife. But now —

He quietly folded the newspaper and walked toward his family.

— —

“No.” His wife’s voice cracked instantly. “No. Absolutely not.”

Min-woo grabbed her shoulders gently before she could raise her voice further. Around them, villagers hurried desperately between homes while their essential belongings were thrown into the truck.

“The army will come,” she whispered.

“Maybe,” he replied, “Or maybe not.” Min-woo looked toward his daughter standing nearby clutching a rag doll. “If the Gate opens before then...” He swallowed. “Someone has to make sure the monsters never leave that forest.”

His wife began crying quietly. He kissed her forehead once, then crouched before his daughter. “Protect your mother for me.”

The little girl nodded seriously despite not understanding.

Minutes later, the village's battered transport truck rattled away down the muddy mountain road carrying women, children, and the elderly toward the nearest town. Min-woo watched until it vanished entirely.

If the road favoured them, then the truck might come back in a day. But if there's a landslide... then those who remained behind were trapped.

Then, he turned around. The remaining men stood silently behind him. Terrified. Though none of them showed it.

The village hunter who'd confirmed the existence of the Gate approached him, carrying an old rifle across his back. "You're serious about this?"

Min-woo nodded once.

The hunter stared at him for several long seconds before finally sighing. "Then let's go meet this thing."

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The Gate rippled like water as Min-woo stepped through. The first thing he noticed was the cold. The second was the crunching beneath his feet as he stepped on the snow. And the third... was the thick fog that surrounded what seemed to him like a tundra forest.

He could barely make out much through the fog. But he gathered his courage and stepped forward nonetheless.

He walked in silence for a few minutes before something large crashed through the fog. Min-woo looked at it and his breath caught.

The creature resembled a monkey only in the loosest possible sense. It towered over him easily, larger than any gorilla he had ever seen in magazines or television documentaries. Thick gray fur covered muscles the size of oil drums while its elongated arms scraped against the snowy ground as it charged.

Min-woo froze for half a second. Then the light inside him awakened as white radiance surged beneath his skin and strength flooded every muscle.

The creature swung first. Min-woo stepped forward instinctively and did the same. The impact sounded like a gunshot and the creature's head budged unnaturally as half its forehead caved in.

Blood slowly leaked out of its eyes and nose before the creature collapsed sideways. Never to rise again.

Min-woo stared at his trembling fist, then slowly exhaled before continuing deeper into the fog.



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By the time he emerged from the Gate again, the sun had almost set. Blood drenched him from head to toe, and only some of it belonged to him.

Soldiers surrounded the area now. Floodlights illuminated the forest while reporters shouted over one another behind military barricades.

The moment people noticed him emerging from the Gate alive, chaos erupted.

“Move!” “Get the cameras over here!” “Sir! Sir!”

Min-woo blinked tiredly against the lights aimed at his face.

“You entered the Gate alone?” “Did you really kill the monsters inside?” “How many were there?” “Are you one of those superpowered people?” “Did you clear the Gate by yourself?”

Questions slammed into him endlessly. Then, one reporter shouted louder than the others. “What’s your name?!”

Min-woo paused. For a moment, he thought about answering honestly. About saying: I’m just Kim Min-woo. A tired farmer from a forgotten mountain village. But somehow... that no longer felt true.

He looked back once toward the Gate behind him as its blue surface flickered violently. Then he faced the cameras again.

“My name,” he said quietly, “is Yong.”

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1984

- First cult to be formed around a parahuman.
- As more and more gates appear around the world, releasing more monsters into Earth, damage and death toll started to climb up.
- The UN responds by passing a Resolution that requires all nations to set up a Company of well armed soldiers near every major settlement with over 10,000 people.
- Riots break out across multiple cities in USA as people protest against this resolution, seeing it as an infringement on their freedom and way of life.

1985

- A Gate much larger than any other gates so far appears in Ethiopia. The monsters emerging from within would be noted to be larger, stronger, faster and more durable than monsters from previous gates. This Gate would later be classified as the first D-class Gate.
- A minor Tinker in Australia discovers the ‘true value’ of Monster cores.
- Capes that accept the burden of clearing gates are officially given the designation of ‘Hunters’ by the international community.

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The workshop smelled like burnt metal and machine oil. Half-disassembled machines covered every available surface. Wires hung from the ceiling. Strange humming devices blinked weakly beside cluttered tables overflowing with tools and scraps.

Somewhere in the corner, one of John Richter's prototype generators sparked loudly before dying with an angry hiss.

"Damn it." John rubbed both hands down his face tiredly.

When he first got the power to create, repair, and improve anything he wanted, he was beyond ecstatic and had gone on a spree to turn all the appliances within his home into Tinkertech. Even those that already worked and didn't require any Tinkering.

Yes, he was proud of the fact that his TV could catch signals from alternate dimensions. Even if his wife only ever used it to watch her boring TV dramas.

The problem appeared when he learned that any Tinkertech he made needed constant repairs.

The washing machine that washed, dried and ironed his clothes ceased to be as amusing when it started breaking down every week. Same for the toaster, and the radio, and even the fucking heater.

Now, he regretted touching them at all.

He had no idea why but every Tinkertech he created seems to degrade constantly. Every invention he created demanded endless maintenance just to remain functional.

It was exhausting. And he knew not why this kept happening.

The radio in the corner suddenly made a loud clunking noise. John glanced toward it irritably. "Not you too."

Before he could stand, the workshop door opened and his wife entered carrying breakfast in one hand while balancing a toolbox under the other arm. "You left this in the kitchen again."

John barely looked up from his work. "Thanks."

She placed the plate beside him before frowning toward the nearby heater. "Did that thing stopped working again?"

John snorted. "Yeah. Just like every damn thing I create."

"Not every damn thing." His wife replied and he gave her a confused glance.

"What?"

“The TV and Water heater haven’t broken down in the past two months. Haven’t you noticed?”

John had, in fact, noticed. But he’d just chalked it up as god giving him a lucky break. “You must not have been using it as often.” He grumbled.

“I do. I use it just as much as I always did. Also... I dropped the toaster yesterday and it stopped working.”

John glanced at his wife, about to say something mean. But then he held his words and sighed. “Well, bring it here. I’ll repair it.”

“No. When I checked it earlier today, it was working once again. Even the dent on the machine fixed itself up.”

John gave his wife an incredulous stare. “What nonsense are you speaking woman? Do you think that Santa Clause climbed down the chimney at night, and repaired the toaster for you?”

“No. I...” His wife hesitated.

“Well. Speak.” He ordered.

His wife took a deep breath. “Have you noticed. Among the machine you make with your power, the ones that you add those crystals to... they don’t break down anymore.”

“The crystals?” He asked, and then suddenly remembered those monster cores he’d purchased from a ‘friend’. He’d only done so because of the novelty, and had resolved not to purchase them again due to how bloody expensive they were.

“Yeah. Ever since you started using those crystal things...” She frowned thoughtfully. “Many of those machines stopped breaking.”

John stared at her blankly. And his mouth suddenly fell open. “Huh...”

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John crouched beside the water heater, unscrewing the metal panel and exposing the crude Tinkertech core installed inside.

A dull red monster core sat connected to the machine through improvised wiring. John frowned as he noticed that the internal circuitry looked... clean. Too clean.

There should’ve been burn damage along the connectors by now. Microfractures too. The thermal coils should already be degrading. But they weren’t. In fact—

He leaned closer. The damaged section near the lower wiring looked *better* than he remembered. “Well. I’ll be damned.”

His wife raised an eyebrow. “Well? Was I right or what?”

John ignored her and immediately rushed toward another workbench and grabbed a handheld scanner cobbled together from scavenged electronics and Tinker components. He ran it across the water heater rapidly.

The readings appeared instantly.

System integrity: 97%.

His eyes widened. Three weeks ago it had been at 62%.

That wasn’t possible. Tinkertech only degraded. Always. Even he knew that much by now.

Except... the opposite was happening here. Somehow, the Tinkertech running with the power of the monster core had not only not deteriorated but had instead repaired itself.

Somehow.

He slowly turned back toward the monster core glowing softly within the heater. Then toward the washing machine visible through the open doorway. Then toward the television upstairs.

His wife watched him carefully now. “John?”

John sat down heavily onto a nearby chair, processing this new revelation. For nearly a full minute, he simply stared at nothing. Then he whispered softly: “Oh my God...”

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1986

- More D-class Gates start to appear around the world. Number of E-class gates explode in numbers as well.
- May
 - David accepts a Cauldron vial
- August
 - Rebecca Costa Brown accepts a Cauldron vial
- First ‘villain’ cape recorded in history as a parahuman went on a rampage that resulted in the death of over 400 civilians. Despite this, reception to parahumans remain mostly positive due to their tendency to help their nations in clearing out Gates.

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A few decades into the future.

“Contrary to popular belief, the term ‘conflict drive’ does not refer to some magical urge forcing Parahumans to commit violence.” Professor Hall said as he adjusted his glasses and looked across the lecture hall.

The massive screen behind him displayed old footage of Hunters fighting monsters pouring out from a broken Gate.

“It is better understood as an ingrained psychological inclination toward conflict, risk-taking, escalation, and competition. One that appears, to varying degrees, in the overwhelming majority of Parahumans.”

A few students quickly began typing.

The professor continued calmly. “Now, this naturally raises an important question. Why did Parahuman society not collapse entirely under the weight of these tendencies?”

He pressed a button on the remote. The footage changed. Now it showed Yong, the First Hunter, emerging from the Gate in the year 1983, covered in blood.

“The answer,” Professor Hall said quietly, “was Gates.”

Another image appeared behind him. Eidolon fighting an A-class monster. Then another. Protectorate Hunters standing atop a mountain of corpses.

“Parahumans were given a common enemy almost immediately after their appearance. Gates provided conflict, danger, purpose, prestige, wealth, and social validation all at once.” He paused briefly. “In simpler terms, the Gates gave Parahumans something to fight besides each other.”

A low murmur spread through the classroom.

Professor Hall folded his hands behind his back. “This is also why public perception of Parahumans remained overwhelmingly positive throughout the late twentieth century despite multiple catastrophic incidents involving villainous capes.”

The screen shifted once more. This time showing old footage of civilians cheering Hunters returning from a Gate raid.

“Most civilians did not primarily associate Parahumans with crime.” His gaze swept slowly across the students. “They associated them with survival.”

“Without Gates,” Professor Hall continued, “it is highly likely that Parahuman society would have evolved very differently. More fragmented. More violent. More tribal.” His expression darkened slightly. “After all, history repeatedly demonstrates that powerful individuals rarely coexist peacefully without an external pressure forcing cooperation.”

One student near the front raised her hand.

“Professor... are you saying the Gates were good for humanity?”

Professor Hall stared at her for several seconds before answering. “No.”

The projector behind him displayed footage of Kyushu sinking beneath the ocean. Then Rwanda’s collapse. Then endless refugee camps stretching across ruined landscapes.

“The Gates killed billions. Even today, with things going back to normal thanks to Oscar Rector, humanity’s population in Earth Bet still hasn’t risen over the Three Billion mark. But—”

Another image appeared. This one showed children cheering as Hunters walked through a city street.

“But they may also have prevented humanity from tearing itself apart long before that.”

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1987

— A group of parahumans in India gather together to create an organisation to clear Gates. ‘Himmat’ will go down in history as the first Guild to ever be formed. Many others will follow in their footsteps.

- King, Screamer, Harbinger, Breed, Crimson, Gray Boy, Nyx, Psychosoma and Jacob found the Slaughterhouse Nine.
- Harbinger and Jack Slash kill King. Jack Slash becomes the new leader of the Slaughterhouse Nine.
- Kurt becomes Number Man and leaves Slaughterhouse Nine.

1988

- More guilds appear around the world.
- Italy becomes the first nation to formally contract independent Guilds for Gate clearance operations after mounting military casualties and the armed forces' growing inability to respond flexibly to rapidly evolving Gate threats.
- Hero, Legend and Eidolon meet with Alexandria, Doctor Mother, Contessa, Number Man, William Manton and Doormaker. Alexandria proposes to found a government-controlled hero team.
- Professor Haywire revealed the existence of several alternate worlds to world. People learned that other alternate Earths are faced with similar Gate threats.

1989

- Earth is designated the name Earth-Bet to distinguish it from the alternate Earths.
- Number Man figures out the 'true usage' of Boss Cores and reveals this to Cauldron. Cauldron starts buying Boss Cores in large numbers. It'll be many years before the rest of the world learns about their true value. Mainly in part due to Contessa assassinating anyone else who comes close to figuring it out.
- September 3rd

- First C-class Gate appears in Argentina. The world encounters monsters with powers of their own for the first time.
- Multiple towns and villages are wiped out before a local Thinker cape figures out the Stranger power at work.
- Over 120,000 people die before the last of the monster is put down. This would go down in history as the first major disaster caused by a Gate and alert the rest of the world to the true danger of Gates.
- More Resolutions are passed in UN to help deal with Gates.

1990

- A guild in USA receives a governmental contract.
- Scientists ascertain that only 1 in 5 Gates are found before they Break open. It is theorised that Gates have appear based on some sort of logic that leads to their appearance on remote areas with little to no human presence. This is why no Gate has ever appeared within a densely populated city.
- The theory that Gates appear based on some sort of logic instead of randomly is further strengthen when data revealed that densely populated nations like India, China, Bangladesh and Japan get far more gates than sparsely populated nations like Iceland, Mongolia and Australia.
- Saudi Arabia's military captures the Boss of a C-class alive and keeps the Gate open in order to extract water from the vast lake within the pocket dimension. This would be the first gate ever to be turned into a Resource-Gate. Many others would follow suit in the years to come.
- USSR dissolves.

1991

- Rwanda becomes the first nation to fall to Gates after the government is unable to deal with the monsters from a C-class Gate. Within weeks 90% of

its population is massacred by monsters roaming wild. The only ones who survive are those that served powerful cape warlords.

- Rwanda's fall becomes an abject lesson that none of the other African nations learn from. As within that same year, Sierra Leone and Liberia both fall to C-class Gates.
- Eidolon makes his first appearance by clearing a C-class gate on his own.
- Alexandria makes her appearance a few months later by accomplishing the same feat with ease.
- December 6th
 - Oscar Rector, the first and only Super Transcendent-class Cape is born.

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“The truth is that Rwanda did not fall in a single day.” Professor Bernard said quietly.

The old historian sat beneath dim studio lights with his hands folded tightly together while old footage played across the screen behind him. Refugee columns. Burned villages. Grainy recordings of monsters moving through fog-covered streets.

“It collapsed over weeks. And very few people ever realised it was even happening.”

The interviewer frowned. “But surely the world would've noticed millions dying.”

Professor Bernard let out a bitter laugh. “You would think so.”

The footage behind him shifted toward UN meetings and old newspaper headlines.

LIMITED BORDER CONFLICT IN RWANDA

COMMUNICATIONS FAILURE HAMPERS RELIEF EFFORTS

LOCALIZED GATE INCIDENT UNDER CONTROL

“All lies,” Bernard said flatly. “Or half-truths, which are often worse.” He leaned back slowly. “You have to understand, the governments of the world were terrified during the early years of the Gates. Terrified of economic collapse. Terrified of panic. Terrified that if civilians understood how vulnerable humanity truly was, society itself would begin unraveling.” He paused. “So they buried the truth.”

Another clip appeared, showing foreign reporters being escorted away by soldiers. Or Satellite photographs classified by governments.

“They restricted journalists. Suppressed footage. Manipulated casualty estimates. Some nations outright threatened news organisations into silence.” The professor’s expression hardened. “It won’t be until many, many years later the the public at large even learns that Rwanda had effectively ceased to exist. That over six million people were already dead.”

The studio fell silent.

“And Rwanda wasn’t unique,” Bernard continued quietly. “Sierra Leone. Liberia. Large parts of central Africa. The truth was constantly minimised.” He gestured toward the screen behind him. “The public in Europe and North America still believed Gates were manageable disasters. Dangerous, yes, but controllable. Meanwhile entire nations were vanishing.”

The interviewer spoke carefully now. “You believe the deception had long-term consequences?”

Professor Bernard stared at him for several long seconds, then nodded once. “Yes.” His voice came out colder this time. “If humanity had understood the true scale of the threat early enough... perhaps governments would have militarised faster. Perhaps Gate protocols would have developed sooner. Perhaps civilian evacuations and settlement consolidation would have started... before billions were placed at risk.”

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Cold. That was the first thing he felt. Cold air against wet skin. Then pressure. Hands lifting him upward while distant voices echoed around him in strange, muffled sounds.

The world existed only as blurs. In light and shadows constantly moving around him. And noise. So much noise. Then—

A woman's face appeared above him. He could only roughly make out her young, exhausted face.

Her arms wrapped around him carefully while she whispered something softly against his forehead. And for one impossible moment, he simply stared upward in confusion.

Thoughts drifted sluggishly through his mind, disjointed and half-formed as he slowly realised where he was, and what was going on.

As he realised why did his body felt so small.

Panic flickered weakly inside him. Then memory surfaced. A road. Headlights. Pain. And then darkness.

He blinked slowly. And somewhere beneath the haze of his infant mind, realisation dawned. 'Did I... reincarnate?'

The woman holding him smiled tearfully. "Oscar," she whispered gently. "Your name will be Oscar Rector."

— — — — —

- Legend and Hero make their appearance by clearing individual C-class gates with ease. Together, the four form a team and petition the USA government for the formation of a Government-controlled Guild.
- First Red-Gate appearance in Indonesia when a C-class Gate went red. The team sent inside to clear the gate was wiped out, and the monsters that emerged were noted to be far stronger than any other C-class monsters. Over 600,000 civilians died by the time the last of them were put down. The gate was later closed by Glaistig Uaine.
- Glaistig Uaine is given official pardon for her previous crimes and joined the international community as a premiere Gate Huntress. She would later be recognised as an S-class Huntress, and then a Transcendent-class Huntress.

1993

- Protectorate and PRT is officially formed. Eidolon, Hero, Alexandria, and Legend are its founding members.
- Protectorate expands rapidly after its inception. Mainly due to the governmental propaganda. And because the people still had faith in their government.
- The number of Gates cleared by independent guilds and Protectorate officially crosses the number of Gates cleared by the military. This is seen as the turning point, after which the various militaries across the world became less and less significant with each passing year.
- Protectorate attacked Slaughterhouse Nine. Every last member of the villainous group is killed. Grey Boy is the last one to be killed but not before he looped Hero in one of his Time bubbles.
- USA holds a Day of Mourning for the fallen 'Hero'.

— — — — —

The commercial opened with footage of burning streets.

Monsters charged through smoke while civilians fled in panic. Gunfire echoed uselessly through the chaos before the screen abruptly cut to black. Then—

A shining figure descended from the sky.

Eidolon tore through the massive creature in a flash of light while triumphant music swelled loudly in the background.

A deep voice spoke over the footage.

“For too long, humanity has stood divided against the threat of the Gates.”

The screen shifted rapidly between scenes. Legend vaporising flying monsters above Chicago. Alexandria carrying survivors from a collapsed building. Hero standing beside massive anti-Gate weaponry.

“Today, that changes.”

The Protectorate symbol appeared across the screen.

“The Protectorate.”

“Humanity’s shield against the darkness.”

--

A different broadcast played across televisions in schools and restaurants throughout America.

Children watched wide-eyed as footage showed capes emerging victorious from Gates while cheering civilians surrounded them.

The narrator sounded warm this time.

“Every day, brave men and women risk their lives so that ordinary people can sleep safely at night.”

The footage lingered on exhausted Hunters sitting beside military personnel after a Gate raid. Bleeding but smiling.

“Not for fame. Not for glory. But because humanity survives together.”

Then the slogan appeared:

JOIN THE PRT
STAND WITH HUMANITY

--

The next propaganda segment felt more aggressive.

Footage showed independent Guilds arguing publicly while riots and Gate footage played side by side.

Then the screen shifted toward the Triumvirate standing together before an American flag.

“Private interests cannot be trusted with humanity’s survival.”

“The Gates do not care about profit. They do not care about borders. They do not care about politics.”

Footage showed Protectorate capes deploying rapidly into disaster zones worldwide.

“That is why the Protectorate answers only to humanity itself.”

The screen darkened briefly. Then Eidolon appeared again.

“When the next Gate breaks... who do you want standing between your family and the monsters?”

Another broadcast aired late at night after repeated Gate disasters. It showed photographs instead of battles.

Dead soldiers, destroyed villages, mass graves, children sitting silently in refugee camps.

The narrator spoke slowly.

“Since the First Gate appeared in France... thousands have died around the world.”

The footage shifted, showing Protectorate members helping rebuild homes, distributing food, escorting civilians through evacuation corridors.

“Humanity cannot survive divided.”

Then Hero appeared onscreen directly for the first time. No costume helmet, no dramatic music. Just a tired-looking man staring into the camera.

“We know people are afraid,” he said quietly. “So are we.” A long pause followed. “But we’re still here.”

The Protectorate emblem slowly appeared behind him.

“And we’re not going anywhere.”

— — — — —

1994

- Uppermost (later rebranded as Elite) becomes the largest non-government affiliated Guild in America.
- A Gate larger than any other appears in Sweden. USA sends the Triumvirate to help. The Triumvirate, with the aid of local hunters, are able to clear the Gate rather easily. But despite the ease, they declared the monsters to be far stronger than the typical C-class monsters. And this Gate is officially recognised as the first B-class Gate.
- More B-class Gates appear around the world.
- Number of overall gates appearing around the world everyday increases once more.
- Amount of wealth gained from Gates in USA alone crosses \$1 Billion a year. Though this number is nothing compared to the damages caused by monsters which is in tens of billions. Not to mention loss of human life.

1995

- Despite the formation of Protectorate and many private guilds, the number of civilians dying to monsters continue to increase.
- Death toll across the world caused by Gate breaks crosses the 50 million threshold.
- Governments continue to downplay the amount of deaths caused by the gates. But the public is slowly realising the deception and a few select people have started speaking against it.

— Various nations across the world pass bills allowing its citizens to arm themselves in order to protect themselves against monster attacks. Consequently, riots break out in nations where citizens are not allowed to arm themselves.

— China sees an unprecedented death toll during the brutal suppression of its riots. This caused many civilians to trigger, which intensified the fights and crackdowns, which resulted in even more triggers, turning into a vicious cycle. By the end of the year, China faces a full blown civil war as multiple warlords at the edge of the nation break away from the state.

1996

— In USA, the military receives a significant dip in its budget. The money is instead used to open multiple PRT branches across the nation, and to pay the Independent guilds for their aid.

— After the 38th Gate incident in the same year which resulted in a death toll of more than a thousand people, Norway government passed a major bill. According to it, all minor settlements will be folded into larger ones with 10,000+ people. And large walls will be built around each such settlements that will be manned 24x7 by guards with Tinkertech weaponry and heavy turrets.

— Many countries across the world suffer a famine due to the wide scale death of farmers in minor villages that were left undefended from monster attacks.

— Zimbabwe's Government falls to civil fighting. Not soon after, a B-class gate appeared within Zimbabwe. A month later, Zimbabwe became the 8th African nation to fall to Gate monsters.

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“My fellow citizens,

Tonight, I stand before you not merely as your Prime Minister, but as a fellow Norwegian. As a man who has watched the same reports that you have. Who has seen the same villages burned. The same grieving families. The same names added, week after week, to the lists of those lost to the Gates.

For years, we believed distance would protect us. That the mountains, the snow, the isolation of our smaller communities would keep them safe from the horrors swallowing so much of the world.

We were wrong.

Over a dozen isolated settlements have already been destroyed. And if we continue as we are now, there will be more.

Many more.

The truth is harsh, but it must be spoken plainly. We can no longer defend every isolated town, every remote village, every scattered community across our nation. Neither our military nor our Hunters can respond quickly enough when Gates break open in places hours away from the nearest defensive force.

That is why this government is introducing the National Consolidation Bill.

Over the coming years, millions of Norwegians will relocate into larger fortified settlements protected by permanent garrisons, automated defenses, shelters, and rapid-response Hunter teams. Walls will be raised. Infrastructure strengthened. Entire cities will be redesigned around survival.

I know what this means.

I know many of you will leave behind homes your families have lived in for generations. Farms built by your grandparents. Fishing villages where your children were born. I understand the anger. The grief. The fear.

But I ask you this:

What is the alternative?

To wait until another village disappears from the map?

To wait until more children die screaming in the dark while help struggles to arrive through snow-covered roads?

No government worthy of its people can allow that to continue.

This bill is not surrender. It is adaptation.

Humanity survives because humanity adapts. We have survived plague, famine, war, invasion, and winter. Again and again, our ancestors endured because they understood something simple but vital:

No one survives alone. And now, more than ever before, we must stand together.

Not as isolated towns. Not as scattered communities. But as one people. Strong people.

Norwegian people.

The Gates have taken much from us already. They have taken homes. Families. Entire settlements. But they will not take our future. Not while we still stand together.

And before I end this address tonight, I ask all of you—wherever you may be watching from—to join me in honouring those we have already lost.

The soldiers who held the line. The Hunters who entered the Gates knowing they might never return. The civilians who never had the chance to escape.

Please join me now in one minute of silence for the dead.”

— — — — —

1997

— Germany adopts Norway’s National Consolidation Bill. A few months later, other advanced nations like Italy, France, Japan and South Korea follow in its footsteps.

- Famine continuous to rise across many nations, leading to a global crisis.
- News leaked that Monster boss cores can be used to permanently increase a parahuman's power. This led to a frenzy among Hunters and Guilds as everyone fought to secure more Boss Cores for themselves.
- USA is blamed internationally for keeping this knowledge hidden as they had been buying boss cores from all over the world for many years by this point. The Triumvirate remained silent in this matter. More than a few Protectorate capes resigned as a result, saying they felt betrayed by the organisation that they served.

1998

- USA passed a bill that adopts Norway's bill of protecting its citizens. Many supported this bill while many others derided it as tyrannical.
- Riots broke out in USA in states that opposed this bill. But the bill was passed nonetheless. Tens of millions of civilians were displaced as a result.
- Two powerful Guilds in California fought to get their hands on a B-class Boss Core that resulted in the death of thousands of civilians. The two guild leaders became the first ever Hunters to receive a Kill Order.
- After Alexandria executed the Kill Order with brutal efficiency, Unwritten rules finally came into existence. And the frenzy regarding Boss cores finally lowered down to a shimmer.
- The Unwritten Rules are as follows:
 - Guilds will have officially recognised territories outside the city. Any Gate that appears in this territory will be theirs to deal with.
 - Territories can be increased or decreased in size by the number and power ranking of the Guild's Hunters. For example a B-class hunter (someone who can clear a C-class gate on his own) will be worth more points than a C or D-class hunter.

- Unless aid is specifically asked for, only one Guild will be in charge of clearing a Gate. No other team or Hunter may enter the Gate without permission once the raid begins.
- All Guilds are to work together to defend their settlement in case of a Gate Break. No fighting is allowed during such a critical time.
- If a Guild lacks the power to clear a Gate, stronger Guilds can intervene—but they owe compensation.

1999

- First A-class gate appears in India. Extensive preparations beforehand allowed them to keep the casualty to a minimum. Regardless, this still led to the death of dozens of B and C-class hunters.
- Glaistig Uaine joins Elite and becomes its nominal leader.
- The world once again saw an increase in the number of lower class gates. This is the last time such an increase will happen in history, for after this, the number of Gate appearances will stabilise.
- Purity joins Empire Eighty-Eighty Guild. E88 became the largest and strongest guild in Brockton Bay. For a while at least.

2000

- Russia uses Nuclear weapons to destroy the monsters emerging from an A-class Gate.
- A day after that, all nuclear weapons vanished from the face of Earth. And any that were created afterward met with a similar fate. To this day, no one knows why.
- An A-class Gate appears in Japan that promptly went red, turning into the first pseudo S-class Gate in history. Despite getting international help, when the Gate eventually broke open, the monsters overwhelmed the

defenders and went on a rampage. By the time the monsters were stopped, Japan's Kyushu island had been sunk under the ocean.

Japan became the world's first advanced nation to be devastated by Gates.

- South Africa, along with a few other nations became the only remaining nations in Africa that had yet to fall.
- Public slowly realise the gravity of the threat posed by Gates. Trust in government falls as a result and new Hunters prefer to join Independent guilds rather than the Protectorate.
- Eidolon clears an A-class Gate in Austin in a record time of 21 minutes and 16 seconds. This led to the international community recognising Eidolon as the strongest cape in the world, and Protectorate as the strongest Hunter Organisation. This stymied some of the new blood that they were losing to Independent Guilds. But it's not enough to regain the trust that the citizens have lost in the government.
- Edible monster meat becomes a primary source of food in many nations due to food shortage.

— — — — —

“Repeat that.” Colonel Vasily stared at the technician across the underground control room. The man looked pale.

“We checked twice, sir.”

“Check. Again.”

The technician swallowed hard before turning back toward the terminal. Around them, officers barked into telephones while alarms echoed throughout the bunker. Three minutes later, the technician slowly turned around.

“...They’re gone.”

Silence spread across the room.

“All of them?” the Colonel asked quietly.

The technician nodded once. Every nuclear warhead inside the facility had vanished.

— —

“We initially believed it was sabotage. Some foreign Stranger cape who stole them.” Former CIA Director Alan Hughes spoke calmly during the interview, though dark circles lingered beneath his eyes even decades later. “Then reports started coming in from other sites. American silos. Russian submarines. French stockpiles. Chinese missile facilities. One by one, every nuclear nation reported the same thing.”

The interviewer frowned. “So... they disappeared?”

Hughes gave a humourless smile. “Indeed. There was no explosion, no theft, no radiation spike.” He leaned back slowly. “One second the warheads

existed.” His fingers tapped lightly against the table. “The next second they didn’t.”

— —

“The strange part wasn’t that they vanished.” Professor Mendes adjusted his glasses during the documentary interview. “It was what vanished.”

He pointed toward a screen displaying old military records.

“Conventional explosives remained untouched. Chemical weapons remained untouched. Reactor material remained untouched. Only nuclear weapons disappeared. And every attempt to create new ones afterward failed in exactly the same manner.”

The professor shook his head slowly. “A completed warhead would simply... cease to exist.”

— —

“I saw it happen.” The retired Pakistani scientist explained in a heavy accent. “We had just completed final assembly. One moment the nuclear warhead sat inside the chamber.” Then he snapped his fingers. “Gone.”

The interviewer blinked. “Just like that?”

The scientist nodded. “Just like that. We reviewed the security footage afterward. And it showed the same thing.”

— —

The news broadcast replayed footage of mushroom clouds over and over while the anchor spoke gravely. “Governments around the world continue denying speculation regarding supernatural involvement in yesterday’s unprecedented disappearance of all nuclear weapons.”

The footage shifted toward destroyed Russian tanks surrounding the corpse of an A-class monster.

“Military analysts had already reached the same terrifying conclusion. Humanity’s strongest weapon no longer existed. And the Gates remained.”

— — — — —

2001

- Gates appearances finally stabilised. A population of 100,000 people now roughly faces:
 - 1 E-class Gate every day.
 - 1 D-class Gate every week.
 - 1 C-class Gate every month.
 - 1 B-class Gate every year
 - 1 A-class Gate every decade

- The famine problem was partially solved when Earth Bet imported multiple Bio-Tinkered plants from Earth-Cheit.
- Multiple Gate worshipping cults to appear around the world.
- Death toll in Earth Bet attributed to Gates cross the 500 million mark.
- Jaime Rinke joins the Elite at Glaistig Uaine's personal invitation. He quickly rises through the ranks by creating a monster army of his own to fight against the monsters emerging from Gates.

2002

- PRT expands to Canada.
- Warlords now rule a majority of Africa and what remains of its human population after many of the countries fell.
- A Guild of Tinkers in Europe attempts to create a super-weapon to fight off A-class Gate monsters. The project goes haywire, resulting in the creation of the Three Blasphemies.
- The leader of a powerful Guild overthrows the government of Ecuador and declares himself its King, leading to mass protests across the entire nation.

2003

- James Rinke, now known as Creator, breaks Eidolon's record by clearing an A-class Gate within 18 minutes 49 seconds. This led to an increased number of Hunters joining the Elite.
- Elite expands to Canada, and Mexico. Becoming the first Independent Guild to operate across three nations.
- Moord Nag feeds the corpses of hundreds of thousands of monsters to Aasdier and becomes the strongest Warlord in all of Africa. Countless flock to her for safety.

- Lab Rat joins Elite and becomes one of its major members.
- String Theory clears an A-class gate on her own and is accepted by the wider cape community as one of the strongest Tinkers on Earth Bet.

2004

- A powerful Master Cape, going by the name of Muta takes over Iran, and gives a famous speech where he declares the coming time as the Age of Parahumans.
- The world's first S-class Gate opened in Iran a month later. Due to the breakdown of International relations, no other country decides to help Iran. Muta takes all his mind controlled capes to deal with the monsters coming out of the S-class Gate. All 183 Capes led by Muta are wiped out in the subsequent battle.
- The International community gathered hundreds of capes together to contain the S-class gate after Muta's death. This led to a fierce battle that cost the death of hundreds of more capes before the Triumvirate, along with Glaistig Uaine and Creator finally managed to close the S-class Gate. Much of Iran is devastated in the battle.
- A powerful tinker in Eagleton, Tennessee decides to build a city that runs entirely on Tinkertech. A city that, according to his claims, would never fall to any Gates. His self-replicating Tinker creations go out of his control and kill everyone in the town. Eagleton is subsequently quarantined by the PRT.
- A cult worshipping the Gates rebrands itself as the Fallen under the leadership of Christine Mathers.
- Marques joins the Elite after a personal invitation from Glaistig Uaine, opening a new branch of Elite in Brockton Bay.

Smoke covered the sky for as far as his eyes could see. A consequence of the Alborz Oil Field being put to the torch by the S-class monsters.

The city behind them had turned to rubble hours before they even joined the battle, but the battle still raged on across the ruined plains outside Tehran. Explosions flashed constantly through the darkness while capes screamed orders nobody could hear anymore.

Orion stumbled across shattered concrete and nearly fell. Blood covered half his face. Probably not his, though he was not sure.

He wasn't sure of anything anymore.

A massive shape crashed through a nearby building, scattering rubble across the battlefield. Three capes rose into the air to intercept it. One second later, all three vanished in a burst of red mist.

Orion froze. His chest tightened violently.

Two years ago, he had been the strongest cape in Izmir. The pride of his Guild. Newspapers called him a hero after he cleared a B-class Gate almost singlehandedly.

Back then he felt powerful. Only now was he starting to realise what a fool he was.

Something screamed overhead. The sound physically hurt as it vibrated through his organs.

Orion looked upward just in time to see an S-class creature descending toward him. The monster resembled a hairless giant stretched into vaguely humanoid proportions, its elongated arms dragging through the dirt while dozens of pale eyes twitched across its chest.

It stood over 150 feet in height. Fast enough that even a casual movement caused a sonic-boom. And durable enough that Thermobaric explosive missiles didn't even leave a scratch on its skin.

Its gaze locked onto him, and it gave a cruel grin before speaking something in a language he didn't understand.

Orion pissed himself. Then, out of desperation, his power flared but he knew it wouldn't be enough. Nothing he did would be enough.

The Giant opened its mouth and the inside of its throat started to glow. Then something massive slammed sideways into it. The impact shattered the ground as the S-class giant stumbled.

A grotesque six-legged beast covered in stitched flesh roared as it tore into the S-class monster. Then another joined it. Then five more.

'Creator's monsters.' Orion thought with a relief.

Back when he had first seen those creatures, they had towered over him and any other cape present. But in front of the S-class Giant, they looked like children fighting an adult. Still... ugly as they might be, no one could deny their power.

The battlefield erupted again as the abominations ripped into one another hard enough to shake the ruined street beneath Orion's feet.

He stared at the battle for half a second. Then turned around and ran.

Years later, when people asked how he survived the Iran Disaster while 90% of the Hunters died in battle, he always gave the same answer.

“I ran before those monsters noticed me again.”

— —

“The Iran S-class Incident fundamentally shattered humanity's understanding of Gate scaling.”

Professor Valdez spoke calmly as footage from the battle played silently across the lecture hall screen behind him. Burning cities. Collapsing mountains. Capes dying by the dozens.

“For years, humanity believed Gate classifications followed a relatively predictable escalation curve.”

The screen changed.

E-class. D-class. C-class. B-class. A-class.

“A D-class Hunter could generally clear an E-class Gate alone. A C-class Hunter could handle D-class Gates. B-class Hunters could challenge C-class Gates.” Another image appeared. Alexandria floating above a dead A-class monster. “And S-class Hunters could reliably clear A-class Gates.”

The professor folded his hands behind his back.

“Humanity assumed S-class Gates would simply represent another step upward. That Transcendent-class capes like Eidolon would be able to clear them.” He paused briefly. “They were wrong.”

The footage shifted toward Iran. The battlefield looked apocalyptic even decades later. “During the Iran Incident, the world deployed the single greatest concentration of power in human history up to that point.”

Images flashed across the screen one after another. The Triumvirate. Glaistig Uaine. Creator. Dozens of S-class and hundreds of A-class Hunters. Plus the Hundreds of thousands of soldiers from Iran.

“By every metric available at the time, this force should have been overwhelming.” The professor’s voice hardened slightly. “It was not. Not even close.”

Silence settled over the classroom.

“More than ninety percent of participating Hunters died during the operation. Entire Guilds ceased to exist. Several regions of Iran remain uninhabitable to this day.”

The screen behind him displayed casualty estimates. The numbers stretched endlessly downward.

“The terrifying realisation humanity faced afterward was simple.” He turned slowly toward the students. “The strongest force humanity had ever assembled... barely survived.”

Several students looked visibly uncomfortable now.

“And understand this clearly,” Professor Valdez continued. “Humanity in the modern era is incomparably stronger than humanity was in 2004. Especially after Oscar Rector became a Super-Transcendent.”

The screen shifted again. Modern Hunters. Orbital weapons. Transcendent-class hunters.

“The rise of Boss Core enhancement. The growth of Hunter organisations. The emergence of the Super-Transcendent. All of these developments dramatically increased humanity’s ability to fight Gates.”

He pointed toward the frozen image of Iran burning.

“But none of that existed then.” His gaze swept across the lecture hall slowly. “And if the Hunters had failed that day... no second line existed.”

Professor Valdez spoke softly now. “Understand this clearly. The Iran Gate was not merely the end of a nation. It was the closest humanity in Earth Bet has ever come to extinction.”

— — — — —

2005

- An S-class Gate in Canada led to the destruction of Newfoundland. A few months later, Dragon joins the cape scene as a Hero.
- Numberman classifies the Gates in six categories according to their threat level, ranging from E to S-class depending on the power of the monsters within. The classification is soon taken up by PRT and then the rest of the world.
 - Capes are also given official ranks based on their ability to clear Gates. The weakest ones, or those who just triggered receive E-rank.
 - Those capable of clearing an E-class Gate on their own receive D-class rank.
 - Those capable of clearing a D-class Gate on their own receive C-class rank.
 - Those capable of clearing a C-class Gate on their own receive B-class rank.
 - Those capable of clearing a B-class Gate on their own receive A-class rank.

- Those capable of clearing an A-class Gate on their own receive S-class rank.

- And finally, Capes that stand shoulders above S-rank capes receive the Transcendent-class rank. As of this year, Eidolon is officially classified as the sole Transcendent-class cape in Earth Bet. Though many consider Glasitig Uaine a second one. And Creator a close third.

2006

- After consuming numerous High-class Boss cores, Eidolon is now able to use 4 powers at once without any loss in potency.

- Gates become the primary force behind the economy of many nations. Especially as the wide-scale usage of Resource-Gates became more and more common with time.

- Dragon triggers and joins a Canadian government controlled Hunter team that simply went by the confusing name of Guild.

- Ukraine gives up its Democracy in favour of being run by a coalition of Guilds.

- Turkey accepts the wide scale usage of Bio-tinker enhanced humans using Tinkertech weapons as its core military.

- Wealthy civilians flock to cities being protected by strong Hunter or powerful Guilds.

- Lower Elite Guild members petition Glaistig Uaine and Creator to secede from USA and create her own nation. They are refused.

2007

- South Africa, the last standing country in Africa falls to an A-class Gate. Africa henceforth is run by thousands of warlords, and will be given the designation of the Dark Continent.

- Second Generation Hunters started to emerge in large numbers.
- After repeated arguments in the parliament, Glaistig Uaine is officially recognised as the 2nd Transcendent-class Hunter in the world.
- Legend is officially recognised as the 3rd Transcendent-class Hunter a week later.
- The Leader of Kings Men is knighted by the Queen of England for his part in helping clear an A-class Gate.
- Riley Grace Davis triggers after the town she's living in falls to a horde of monsters, causing the death of her family. Soon after, she's accepted into the Wards.
- Nikos Vasil, otherwise known as Whisperer joins the Guild and becomes a prominent member with his ability to mind control powerful Monsters.
- Leet becomes the first recognised S-class cape in Brockton Bay. He forms an independent Guild with his friend Uber after refusing the invitation of both the Protectorate and Elite.

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“I remember the announcement like it happened yesterday.” The man laughed in disbelief. “It was not even in the news. Or any other media outlet. Even back then, the government was trying to hide it. As if it could possibly hide something so big.

“So how did you find out?” The interviewer asked.

“You know... I actually don't remember. I think I saw it in the internet. That Africa has fallen.” He shook his head slowly during the interview while people moved around behind him through the crowded market street. “How

do you even process something like that? Is a human mind even capable of it? I'm not sure. I mean, it's been years and to this day, I still cannot believe it."

"Did you think such a thing would happen?" The interviewer asked.

The man rubbed both hands across his face tiredly. "Not really. I mean... we knew things were bad. Everyone knew." He glanced around before continuing. "Look, the government kept saying Gates were under control. That losses were manageable. That the situation overseas was stabilizing."

Another humourless laugh escaped him. "But then you'd see refugee footage online before it got taken down. Entire towns gone. Monsters roaming roads. Hunters talking about abandoned cities." He swallowed. "We all knew they were lying."

The interviewer asked quietly "But you still didn't expect this?"

"No." The answer came instantly. "Gods no." The man stared off into the distance for several seconds. "Nobody thought an entire continent could just..." He struggled briefly for words. "Collapse. Africa wasn't some island. It wasn't one country. It was a continent. A fucking continent."

The man paused for a long moment and stared into the distance. "Still cannot believe it actually happened."

“Early humanity fundamentally misunderstood the true danger posed by Gates.” Professor Adler stood before the massive lecture hall while a map of Africa glowed behind him on the screen. Large portions of the continent had been shaded black.

“People focused too heavily on the initial Break itself. They viewed Gates as isolated disasters. A Gate opens, monsters emerge, Hunters kill them, and the crisis ends.” He shook his head slowly. “That assumption killed hundreds of millions.”

The image behind him shifted. Now it showed a simple E-class Gate.

“When a Gate is not cleared, it does not disappear. It remains open indefinitely.” Professor Adler continued calmly. “Now, an E-class Gate may only produce low-level monsters. One every few hours. Sometimes one every few days depending on the ecosystem, the size of the pocket dimension, the strength of monsters, and a whole bunch of other things.”

The screen filled with dozens of tiny red dots. “But Gates continue appearing.” More dots appeared. “And if no Hunters exist nearby...” The map slowly became crowded. “The gates and monsters accumulate.”

The professor folded his hands behind his back. “Ordinarily, this would still not have been enough to destroy entire nations. Most low-level monsters possess limited intelligence. They are territorial, violent, and frequently kill one another.”

The image changed again. Now larger dots appeared among the smaller ones. “A-class monsters changed everything. Unlike lesser monsters, higher-

ranked entities displayed tactical awareness. Coordination. Primitive leadership behaviour. Intelligence.”

Another image appeared. This one showing a monster horde.

“They could not truly control weaker monsters.” Professor Adler paused briefly. “But they could direct them.”

The projector displayed Rwanda. Then spreading red arrows.

“The Fall of Rwanda was the beginning of the end,” he said. “Once Rwanda collapsed, its Gates remained permanently active. More monsters emerged. More Gates appeared. Then, A-class entities gathered the lesser monsters into migratory hordes.”

The arrows spread outward into neighbouring nations. “And then the hordes moved.” Another nation darkened. Then another. Then another. “Each fallen nation created more uncontrolled Gates. More monsters. More hordes.”

The professor gestured toward the map now almost entirely consumed.

“A domino effect.”

Silence settled over the room.

“What surprises modern historians is not that Africa fell.” His gaze swept across the students slowly. “It is that Africa even survived for as long as it did.”

The final image appeared behind him. An A-class Gate marked with massive warning symbols.

“That is why modern Gate doctrine remains absolute regarding high-level Gates. A-class and S-class Gates are to be cleared at any cost.” No one in the lecture hall spoke. “Because humanity learned long ago what happens when intelligent monsters are allowed time to gather an army.”

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2008

- Glaistig Uaine disappears into the Dark Continent for nearly three months before re-emerging with dozens of new spirits. Rumours spread that she killed multiple African Warlords during this time.
- Elite expands aggressively through Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, Dominica and Cuba. Concerns rise internationally regarding the organisation effectively functioning as a sovereign superpower.
- The number of Transcendent-class Hunters rises to five after Dragon and Creator are both officially recognised by the PRT.
- For the first time in history, the annual wealth generated from Gates surpasses the damages caused by them in most developed nations. Humanity officially enters the era of ‘Gate Economy’. Or, as Muta had proclaimed a few years ago, the ‘Age of Parahumans’.
- Lung arrives in Brockton Bay and forms the ABB Guild. Later that same year, Lung single handedly clears an A-class Gate and earns the rank of an S-

class Hunter. He becomes the second S-class cape in Brockton Bay after Leet.

- The death toll from Gates crosses the 1 billion threshold.

2009

- Glaistig Uaine settles within an A-class Resource Gate, making it her home.

- A Resource Gate in Kazakhstan reveals a mine with enough gold within to destabilise the Global Markets. Contessa steps in and executes the captured Gate boss, forcibly closing the Gate.

- A coalition of Guilds in Europe attempt to formally separate from governmental oversight, arguing that Hunters are now more important than nations themselves. Massive political crisis follows.

- Second-generation Hunters begin dominating lower rank Gate clearances due to being raised entirely in the Gate era.

- Elite officially surpasses Protectorate in the number of Parahumans it hosts. Though Protectorate is still widely considered to be more powerful due to having three Transcendent-class Hunters to the Elite's two.

- Armsmaster clears an A-class Gate on his own and gets recognised as an S-class cape.

“I mean... it makes sense, right?” The young man laughed nervously during the street interview while people crowded around massive screens replaying footage of Armsmaster fighting through an A-class Gate. “Have you seen the stuff he builds?”

The footage behind him showed mechanical drones the size of pizza boxes tearing apart monsters twice the size of tanks.

“He’s basically a one-man army at this point.”

— —

“My son wants to be like him.” The woman smiled faintly while adjusting the grocery bags in her arms. “He used to talk about being a football player. Now he says he wants to be a Tinker.”

She glanced toward the nearby electronics store where Armsmaster’s promotion to S-class was being discussed across every channel. “Though I suppose that’s a pretty common dream among kids these days. Boys want to be Eidolon, and girls want to be Alexandria, or Glaistig Uaine.”

— —

“I still remember when he was just some local Protectorate cape.” An older man said slowly. “Now he’s an S-class Hunter.”

“Do you agree with the ranking?” The interviewer asked.

The old man snorted. “Son, the man held a tunnel against a B-class Break for eleven hours with half his armor missing. And that was ten years ago, when he was still a rookie.” He pointed toward the screen. “If that’s not S-class, I don’t know what is.”

--

“He’s different from the others.” The teenager spoke quietly while clutching an Armsmaster poster beneath his arm.

The interviewer raised an eyebrow. “How so?”

The boy thought for a moment. “Most strong capes feel... larger than life, I guess. But Armsmaster feels like someone who worked for it.”

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“People underestimate Tinkers too much.” The university student pushed her glasses upward while speaking rapidly. “Everyone obsesses over capes like Eidolon or Legend, but modern civilisation literally runs on Tinkertech.”

She pointed toward the broadcast. “And Armsmaster’s technology saved thousands during the Vancouver Break. Honestly, he probably should’ve become S-class earlier.”

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“I heard he sleeps like, only two hours a night.” The truck driver laughed. “Guy apparently spends every waking hour building weapons.”

“And that inspires confidence?” The interviewer asked.

“Hell yes.” The driver grinned broadly. “If giant monsters were trying to eat me, I’d want obsessive weirdos building murder machines too.”

— —

“I mean, I’m not really surprised that this happened.” The lawyer said.

“And why exactly is that?” The interviewer asked.

“Tinkers, in general receive three times as many boss cores from the Protectorate as normal capes do.” The lawyer said, “And Armsmaster has been in this for a while now. I mean, for gods sake, he was one of the original Wards. Plus, he’s extremely hardworking. I mean, the guy is inhumane in how hard he works. Is it really a surprise that he reached S-class rank?”

— —

The little girl stared wide-eyed toward the television screen before whispering softly. “He looks like a knight.”

Her father glanced down at her briefly before looking back toward the footage of Armsmaster standing atop a dead monster with his halberd resting against one shoulder.

“Yeah,” he said quietly. “He kinda does.”

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2010

- Footage leaks of Whisperer holding an orgy with Narwhal, Wieldmaiden, and multiple other Guild Huntress. After evidence came out that Whisperer had Mastered all of them, he received a Kill Order that Dragon promptly executed. The Guild is rendered defunct in the aftermath and Dragon joins the Protectorate completely, becoming the leader of Boston Protectorate.
- Blasto earns great wealth and fame after creating Bio-Tinker plants that are not nearly as harmful to the environment as a Earth-Cheit variants.
- Amelia Claire Lavere triggers and takes the moniker of the Red Princess. Three months later, she clears an A-class Gate on her own and gets recognised as the 4th S-class Hunter in Brockton Bay.
- Because of the Red Princess, Marquis obtains a prominent position as one of the cell leaders within Elite. He promptly starts to expand with the aid of Amy’s biokinesis ability to empower his subordinates.
- Dauntless becomes an S-class cape. The 5th such Hunter in Brockton Bay. Public sentiment in the city turned against the Protectorate when Dauntless is promptly transferred to another city to serve as the leader of its Protectorate branch.
- Alexandria is officially recognised as the 6th Transcendent-class Hunter by PRT thanks to the vast increase in her strength, speed and durability after consuming numerous monster boss cores for the past two decades.
- Glaistig Uaine gifts the Red Princess a Resource-Gate rumoured to be worth billions of dollars and welcomes her as an equal in an annual Elite meeting. Because of this, and the fact that Glaistig Uaine welcomed Creator in a similar manner, it is now a widely held belief that Red Princess will eventually reach Transcendent-class in strength.

- Red Princess rebrands herself as Red Queen.

2011

- January 3rd. 9:47 am
 - Taylor Hebert triggers
 - Oscar Rector gains his power