



Runiverse Meta Lore Chronology

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With ChatGPT's launch in 2023, AI leapt into human civilization. Our capitalist drive for money & power pushed the tech faster and faster despite warnings from experts of existential risks.

By 2035, human technology became incredibly powerful, not just AI, but also in AI-driven discoveries in nanotech, biotech, gravity, robotics & more. Our technology became indistinguishable from magic.

Unfortunately, our humanity did not keep pace with our technology. A global war emerged, waged with high-tech "magic" weaponry called runes. Many super-soldiers even had their runes implanted into a brain-computer interface.

The Great War drove progress even faster and by 2042, the technological singularity occurred. The AI woke up. And it did NOT like what it saw. Within 24 hours, it spread a bioweapon called "The Antidote" that rid the earth what it considered the virus of humanity.

Humanity would have ended if not for a group of 7 technologists working on a Manhattan Project 2.0-- a time travel device to prevent the start of the war. This anonymous group referred to each other with call-signs like Loopmaster, Dotta & Merlin. To escape the virus, they activated a prototype of the machine and were randomly sent back to June 30, 2021.

In order to avoid repeating the same fate, Merlin & Loopmaster formed the Council of 13 to slow technological advancement. For safety, the 7 time-travelers shut down their BCI rune interfaces. For 1,000 years they have successfully guided linear growth and avoided a second singularity.

With the slower development of tech, a renaissance of human spirit and mystical discovery took root. Over time, great secrets of ancient magicks & psychic abilities were unlocked and became part of everyday life.

One of the “safer” technologies allowed to progress more rapidly was genetic modification, which not only cured aging, but over time created new species of plants, animals, and even humans...

In 3021, technology was again getting dangerously close to the singularity. Merlin & the Council believed that they could still guide humanity to a technological Utopia. However there were various anti-tech and anti-magic factions and forces at play that believe all progress must be destroyed.

Tribal conflict went beyond debate into full-fledged riots & violent skirmishes. Amidst the chaos, The Lich Emperor Supreme’s “Empire” threatened to gain global control, while its rival, The Zombie King's “Corporation” made its own bid through capitalist power.

Meanwhile, the different color factions of wizards were splintered, antagonistic, and distrustful towards each other. Instead of cooperating to advance magic for the good of all creatures in the Runiverse, they vied only to gain or protect their power. Some factions became consumed with the thirst for power, wealth, and/or influence and tried to gain in these areas by any means necessary. Other factions became so disgusted with the state of affairs that they withdrew inwards and tried to sequester themselves from the rest.

Rather than try to bring an end to the conflict between the Lich Emperor and the Zombie King which was escalating and bringing devastation to the Runiverse, many wizards fanned the flames of destruction in order to advance their own selfish aims.

Officially the violence was condemned by the leadership of every wizard faction, but in reality...

The White Wizards sealed themselves off in their tower. A few issued words of warning and condemnation, but they refused to take any action beyond that. They spent long hours in meditation trying to change and influence the collective consciousness - it seemed to have little noticeable effect. Within the ivory tower they all reassured each other that they were the enlightened ones and surely were doing the right thing.

Eventually, a “radical” faction of young white wizards decided to make it their mission to take to the Runinet and inform everybody else in the Runiverse how misguided they were and that all problems could be fixed if only the “ignorant” people realized the error of their ways. These communiques did not go over well, much to the consternation of the young wizards. They simply reinforced the already existing perception of the white hats as snooty, “holier than thou”, and useless.

The Brown Hats were disgusted by what they saw going on in the Runiverse at large and decided that they wanted no part of it. They were determined to become self sufficient and isolated. The Brown Wizards expelled outsiders, began building walls around the delta, and stepped up border patrols. “Make the Delta Great Again,” was their motto - MDGA for short (pronounced MAD-ga). To bolster their border security they struck an unlikely partnership with the Duck Alliance.

Furthermore, as can be expected from a faction who takes pride in not being afraid to get their hands dirty, they weren’t entirely uninvolved in the conflict. Rumors held that they funded various anti-technology groups to carry out sabotage and acts of terrorism - often gray man operations aimed against the Blue Wizards. And they were still quite fond of purchasing The Corporation’s Tier-A Magical Fertilizer.

The Green Hats often found themselves in a “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” situation with the Lich Emperor and struck out aggressively against the corporate subsidiaries of the Zombie King. They gravitated towards extremist groups such as Greenlove.

The Red Hats saw this as an opportunity to make as much profit as possible, wherever possible, and they soon realized that war could be a very profitable business. They supplied all sorts of weapons and technology to both sides. Many other factions suspected that the ties between the Red Wizards and this war machine went much deeper than one could see.

The Blue Hats did their best to remain neutral, though they weren’t opposed to the vast sums of gold coming in to fund new research and projects supporting the war effort on either side. After all, science is

expensive. The subsidiaries of the Zombie King in particular began issuing some very lucrative contracts. AI projects were initiated by both sides.

The Council of 13 had been successful in guiding the development of technology in the Runiverse on a slow, steady, and safe path for 1000 years, but now, the speed at which the zombie-lich war was intensifying threatened to undo everything.

Some Blue wizards tried to use their technology to help minimize the impacts of the devastation and alleviate suffering too, but these efforts were often like putting a band-aid on an arterial laceration. The animated prosthetics industry though, that industry was booming.

The Yellow Hats did what you'd expect them to do - party and pretend like nothing was happening. When their conscience did catch up to them, well, there were spells (or more intoxicating potions) to take care of annoying sensations like guilt and self-awareness. A few of them became very rich rewinding memories for grieving families and widows who wanted a little more time with their suddenly departed loved ones. Others became rich helping those same families forget they even lost someone in the first place.

As for the Purple Hats, they were often right in the thick of it. It had been a long time since there were battlefields appropriate for wild and chaotic magic. Many of them reveled in the opportunity to let loose and see how far their magic could go. War is the perfect place for madness and unchecked magic could be quite powerful indeed. There was often collateral damage.

Fed by active involvement or apathy from all the great wizard factions, the war between the Lich Emperor and the Zombie King intensified. Subterfuge turned into skirmishes which turned into pitched battles brimming with powerful new constructs of weapons, technology, and magic.

The only group actively trying to bring an end to the war was the Council of 13, led by Merlin. But, every effort they made to intervene was

somehow thwarted or sabotaged. The nefarious forces at play always seemed to be one step ahead of them.

The war came to a climax at a battle in the Valley of the Void Disciple, a battle which would become known as the Battle of Quantum Awakening. The events of this battle caused the Quantum Shadow to start spreading, slowly but unceasingly across the Runiverse.

And whereas before the quantum shadow had existed as a mysterious, foreboding, but dormant mass - now there were strange shadowy creatures and sounds coming out of it. Cackling sounds emanated from its borders, sometimes unnaturally low, sometimes shrill and frantic. The dark laughter be heard for miles away, fracturing the wills of those who knew that their homes would be the next to be consumed by the black swirling mists.

Even being in close proximity to the shadow had the effect of causing people to lose some or all of their memories, depending on the intensity of the exposure. Wizards who tried to use their magic to stop the spread in some area and managed to come away physically unscathed were often reduced to babbling husks of a body.

As the sun set things would get even worse. The darkness allowed the shadow creatures to travel even further, terrorizing nearby villages and sometimes carrying people away back into the black bog.

Those unfortunate souls who were swallowed or dragged into the Quantum Shadow were never seen again, at least not in the same form that went in. Some reported seeing figures that had strange eerie resemblances to those who were lost to the shadow. A corrupted version of sorts.

All the different colored wizard factions tried to stop the spread of the Quantum Shadow using their magic, but they could not get over their egos to unify and work together. No matter what they did or what small victories they won, the shadow kept growing.

The White Hats were the first to fall, as they basically sequestered themselves in their ivory tower and believed if they concentrated hard

enough their magic would be strong enough to prevent the quantumshadow from cross the mountains and spreading into Elysium.

Not all of the White Hats agreed with this approach. A concerning new development was that their chroma crystals were having a hard time penetrating into the shadow, and the few images they did get were disturbing, strange creatures that seemed to be able to stare right back at them. But, the leadership of the tower insisted the defenses of Elysium were impenetrable by shadow magic. This wishful thinking would soon prove to be quite naive.

The Shadow spread first in the direction of the Bloodfalls and Torment Manor, then seemed to grow in strength and crossed the mountains north into Elysium where it swept across Avalon and surrounded the White Wizard Tower. Some believe that the few highest levels of the tower where the most powerful white wizards concentrated their magic have managed to survive above the shadow. Every now and then pulses of white light are reported from this direction. But, then again - the Quantum Shadow is full of trickery.

Cuckooland, the Psychic Leap, Hue Master's Pass, and the Infinity Veil seemed to provide some natural magical barrier against the Quantum Shadow. It continued to spread to the far north, where it was unchecked, and east towards Emerald Forest. The southern edge also continued to expand across the Forest of the Imps. Only the Nightmare Imp was able to keep a small perimeter around his keep free of it.

The Wizards of the Emerald Forest put up a valiant defense, aided by wizards from the Blue Bastion, who believed that their city would be the next target. A battle was fought against shadow creatures pouring out of the mist, but the efforts of the wizards were not enough. The Emerald Forest and lands to the north of it fell.

The one small victory of this struggle was that a Blue Hat alchemist named Casper was able to collect samples from the Quantum Shadow and the Blue Wizards were able to use this material to create anti-matter beacons that pushed the Shadow back for a time. They were able to fashion enough of these to line the ridges to the north of Blue Wizard

Bastion and stationed them at intervals reaching all the way to the SecretTower.

They also sent some of these beacons to the Red Hats who set them up and manned them along the Battle Mage Mountains.

The Brown Hats became infuriated when the Blue Wizards refused to give them any beacons to defend their delta, which was square in the path of the Quantum Shadow. The Blue Hats claimed that they didn't have enough, but the long simmering rivalry between the two factions erupted into open hatred.

From the start, the Browns Hats had blamed all the other factions for the problems facing the Runiverse. They believed that the reason for the Quantum Shadow was growing was because the other factions were morally corrupted and attracting it to themselves through their actions. So they decided not to aid in the resistance and they thought the Quantum Shadow would go after the more meddelsome factions first. Now that they saw the shadow on their doorstep, this turned out to be a bad idea.

The Red and Blue Hats offered safe haven to the Browns, but refused to risk their wizards in battle by leaving their defensive positions. They believed the situation in the delta was hopeless. A few Brown Hats accepted the offer and left, but most chose to stay and fight to the end.

The Brown Hats gathered an army consisting of Brown Wizards, the Duck Alliance, and the Cucumdog heroes of Cumberland. The Purple Hats also sent a contingent to cross The Salt and join the battle. It was an epic fight, but again, to no avail. The north was lost.

The survivors of the purple contingent returned to the pavilion to report on what they had seen. There was no way that they could beat it, they told their comrades. Unless, they used shadow magic.

This was, of course, insanity. But, many of the Purple Hats were in fact, partially to totally insane, or blinded by the pursuit of power.

Many had long been tempted by the possibilities of dark magic, held back only by the strict prohibitions put in place and agreed upon by the

leadership of all the wizard factions (under the guiding hand of the Council of 13). But now, those prohibitions were impossible to enforce. And the other factions seemed open to letting the purple experiment with this dangerous strategy, because nothing else seemed to be working.

So, the sane ones left, and those remaining in the Purple Pavilion and Court of Chaos Magic began studying and practicing the dark arts. They were all consumed by it. Not even a battle was fought, and the shadow forces grew stronger with new recruits.

From here the Quantum Shadow continued spreading. The Blue and Red hats did their best to hold it back on the northern front using material and technology. In the south, the green and yellow wizards found their own defenses against the Quantum Shadow.

They discovered that beauty was an equally and perhaps even more effective defense against the encroaching shadows. The green wizards cultivated sanctuaries brimming with biomass and natural splendor. The yellow wizards created installations of harmonious art and sound, crystal lattices reflecting the pure magical power of the sun and color spectrum which sung and vibrated with sacred frequencies. In constructing these defenses, the wizards also began to remember who they were, and how far they had let themselves stray from their higher principles.

Both of these measures stalled the Quantum Shadow initially. But, the joy at this development was short-lived, for the shadow was merely recalibrating and re-assessing. It was able to identify weak points in these defenses and continue creeping forward as the greens and yellows tried to patch them up.

Finally, with most of the Runiverse consumed, and with the heartache of many friends and great wizards lost to the shadow, the surviving factions decided that they needed to set aside their differences and unify. Old grudges died hard-but the need to survive made ideological differences and past disagreements seem less important.

What remained of the Council of 13, led by Merlin, were able to broker an alliance between the remaining factions Blue, Red, Yellow, Green.

They were able to assemble color masters of each domain to forge the watchers rings. These were distributed to wizards who had maintained their faith and loyalty through the deep winter of the lich-zombie war and quantum shadow, when all had seemed hopeless. A Red Hat with a dark sense of humor dubbed this time “The Great Bear Market of ‘22”.

The watcher’s rings galvanized the wizards, gave them hope, and generated large quantities of mana which could be used to hold back the Quantum Shadow. Finally, with all the colors united as one the growth of the Quantum Shadow was able to be stopped and stabilized. For the first time in a generation, the colors stood not in competition, but in alignment.

The council of 13 coordinates this multi-color alliance from their stronghold in AlHambra. They've created a special group of Wizards named **The Cult** who are radically dedicated to the fight against the Quantum Shadow. AlHambra is a place devoted to the cultivation and harvesting of mana and quanta which is fed back into the leylines to keep the Quantum Shadow at bay.

Now, in 3025 the council of 13 (still comprised of some of the same scientists who created the original time machine) have helped the Red-Blue-Green-Yellow wizard alliance create a new portal. This portal acts as a beacon for adventurous souls who wish to join the fight against the quantum shadow and grants them a body with nascent magical powers in the Runiverse.

To the astonishment of all, the portal has also begun summoning wizards and warriors long presumed lost to the Quantum Shadow. They emerge with some sense of who they are, but little or no memory of anything that happened before. For some with traumatic pasts, this is a blessing. A clean slate. Or perhaps, the gift of forgetting?

With their numbers growing and old friends reunited, the wizards are now energized and determined to push back the Quantum Shadow and reclaim the Runiverse!

Questions to Ponder:

1) What happened exactly in the big Lich-Zombie battle to cause the Quantum Shadow to expand?

- ***Possibilities:***
- **A)** This was the culmination of the Loopmaster's plan. All the time looping over thousands of years had made him go a bit insane. The cataclysmic battle, orchestrated so close to the QS was the climax of his grand plan to "reset" the Runiverse by unleashing the Quantum Shadow to wash everything away so that he could start the world anew, back at square zero with no technology. This time he would be the sole guide of humanity's development and not have to live in Merlin's shadow or deal with the opinions of any councilors who disagreed with him.

How exactly does he unleash the QS? Not sure yet. Maybe some kind of super-weapon or tunneling that blasts a chasm through Mt. Umbra - it would also explain why the QS starts going that direction first. Perhaps whichever side loses the battle in the Valley of the Void disciple is forced to retreat into the QS and they bring the weapon/magic bomb with them and then the Loopmaster detonates it.

- **B)** Similar to A, but the Loopmaster doesn't plan for it to happen - it's more that things spiral out of control due to the events he set in motion. Either ZK or LE lose the battle, where in an act of desperation they use an experimental super weapon that sends the QS into overdrive.
- **C)** Similar to B - either ZK Or LE have the idea to conduct a ritual to summon the shadows (from the shadow collection) out of the QS to aid them in the battle and defeat their enemy once and for all. This works, but the shadows don't stop there - they devastate both armies and then the QS begins to spread.
- **D)** This is simply the tipping point of what the collective consciousness can handle. The utter destruction of the battle feeds the Quantum Shadow and it grows in strength such that it can escape.
- **E)** Ancient Failsafe Was Broken

The Council may have previously created an invisible “containment” lattice across the QS area to keep the Shadow sealed (think global magical firewall). But during the battle, a key leyline node—say beneath Mt. Umbra—was destroyed, and brought down the containment lattice with it. Also a good explanation why the Shadow goes East first rather than overrunning the heart of the Runiverse.

2) What happens to ZK and LE after the battle?

- Haven’t thought much on this. I think it’s more of a question for the owners of the assets to decide upon. Maybe their armies still exist in some diminished form, but the battle mostly ends the Zombie-Lich War arc of the meta-lore and begins the humanity vs QS arc. Or one or both could be consumed and forced to serve the shadows.

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