

Listen, you can deny it all you want. Live in your haze of delusion if it makes you feel comfortable, but I'm here to tell you, we are not living in some AI construct. This isn't a movie. The world is not flat.

It's all real.

What you call *monsters* and creatures of myth and legend have been around since the dawn of time. Deny the science if you must, but all of the racial bloodlines have been genetically mapped, and there are numerous archeological finds dating back hundreds of thousands of years showing various stages of evolution that provide insight as to how their cultures lived, what they believed, and how they eventually came to interact with other races. It's a fact.

The history books are not fiction, though they may have been whitewashed to a certain extent. The fact remains that Ancient Rome did conquer much of the known world, and they had mountain trolls and orcs from Gaul in their ranks. Their armies fought against Jinn, Efreeti, Elven and Dragonkin cultures of Assyria, Persia, and Babylon. Dwarven mages advised Charlemagne The Great in his efforts to unite Western and Central Europe. The fey of the Seelie Court emerged from Alfheim to battle the fearsome Jotunn-blooded Vikings of Finland, Scandinavia and Norway. Genghis Khan was an Orc Chieftain who unified the Mongol nation, conquered China, and extended his empire as far west as the Adriatic sea. I could go on and on, but most of you probably won't believe me.

Vampires, werewolves, ghosts, wraiths, even demons and celestial beings thought to be angels; these and many, many more walk the face of the earth, inspiring writers and artists of all stripes throughout known history. Their tales, songs and illustrations have been used both in stories, movies and television series' to entertain others and as warnings to those who would seek them out. Indeed, many such tales have been used as templates for organizations devoted to wiping them from existence. Get your head out of The Deep and take a walk through your neighborhood sometime. You might run into one of these creatures. I hope not, but if that's what it takes to wake you up, then so be it.

Magic is a force of nature harnessed by those willing to study it's mysteries and bend it to their will or others who are born with the "gift" to use it as effortlessly as they speak or breathe. Countless cultures have woven magic into the fabric of their daily lives, even going so far as to build spiritual hierarchies and systems governing their myriad power structures and social ethics. Others eschew political and spiritual trappings, choosing instead to embrace this force of nature on a more personal level, and still others view magic as a tool they can use, some for the benefit of **Meta humanity**, others to stack the cryptos as high as they can.

Numerous megacorporations have risen to prominence by creating Arcana Technology—Arcanatek for short—blending science and magic to create wondrous devices that have thrust the people of Earth into a new age. Of course, megacorporations have also built fearsome weapons of war and sold them to the highest bidder, more often than not world governments or other less scrupulous entities.

Speaking of "*entities*," I'd be remiss if I didn't mention those beings some call "Gods." Are they real, or a myth? It depends on who you ask. Of all the things I've mentioned regarding myths and legends being real, tales of the Gods—both old and new—are still topics of debate. One thing is certain, though. If they are real, they aren't exactly advertising...at least not on the TAPstream. Sure, we hear about miracles and "Acts of God" all the time, but more often than not they are just the products of spell work, most of which can be traced back to some huckster or hedge witch looking to scam a sprawler out of their cryptos.

You may not like it, but that's the flavor of the milkshake these days. We got rogue AI's with cult followers, the Tendril Access Plague, a war between Russia and China that's threatening to spill out

into the rest of the world, a deteriorating climate, and so many other problems that don't have easy fixes. But hey, that's life in 2095, nakama. There's absolutely no evidence that the world we live in is a VRMMO.

`Billy_Black_Eyes, speaking on the nature of reality to members of the Awakened Initiative.