

(The following is the beginning of a novel by Ernest V. Glover, Sr. begun 4 - 16 - 06)

ACE: Changes

PROLOGUE

The World is different. Planet Erith, formerly known as Earth, is different. It is safe to say that, indeed, The Universe is different. Much, much different. It has been more than 1,000 Old World years since The Change on planet Erith. Places, lands, that existed then, exist no longer. Some that did not exist, now do exist. And, some lands that previously existed, but were hidden, have re-appeared. Change.

The people of the lands had been so busy fighting each other that they did not see The Change coming. Canarca against Yucper for dominance in the west; Chee versus Kambia for claims to the New Land in the East. Civil wars within Briland and AUSA in the East, and in Yucper in the West even as it fought against Canarca.. Eropia was the dominant political and economic force in the east, while Canarca held that title in the west.. Affami became the cultural center of both east and west. But The Change was coming.

The year is 2214 Old World; 918 by the New Calendar (NC). With the changes in the axis and rotation of the Earth, the length of a year has changed such that there are 480 days. That gives a total of 12 months, each 40 days long. Change.

Although many changes to Erith have stabilized, for some people, The Change is just beginning.

Chapter 1: The Beginning

Chief Viclan du-Foren is in his office at the Affami Cultural Expedition Service (ACES) base revising the Patrol Schedule for his Anti-Crime Engineers (ACE) crew when a messenger arrives. She carries two tubes in her hand. Viclan is pleasantly surprised at who the messenger is.

"Greetings Chief du-Foren from Director Elvers. She has sent me with these scrolls and wishes you to give them your immediate attention," says the messenger as she places them into Viclan's hand.

"If Director Elvers thinks these are that important, I shall open them immediately," he says as he breaks the seal at the top of the first scroll tube. It is from Historian El Elvers, Director of the Erith Library in the land of Affami. In it, the Director expresses her concern about a book that is missing from the Old World Department of the library. It was discovered missing during the every-six-months inventory that recently concluded. The

missing book relates to the use of Magik during the Old World period. The fact that someone was interested enough, and sneaky enough, to steal it was good reason to show concern; the subject matter raises that concern to a higher level. Director Elvers asks that the investigative group of the Affami Cultural Expedition be tasked with finding those books as well as one missing from the library on the island of AUSA, which is the subject of the second tube's scroll. That book pertains to the legends surrounding a man known as Akari, and a woman called Shenari. The legends say they were twins who, at The Beginning, divided the world between them; Akari having the West, while Shenari had the East. Each of them had mystical powers that were similar, and each sometimes used Magik along with the powers they were born with. Around 1,206 as measured using the Old World (OW) calendar, a dispute arose between them about who would have control of a newly discovered land. A war broke out between East and West. At some point during the fighting, both Akari and Shenari disappeared. No one seems to know what happened to them. Some say they killed each other, others that they were taken captive by a powerful group known as the Visionaries who still hold them captive. Either way, the war ended with no side having control of the new land. It is unclaimed to this day. The legend goes on to say that someday Akari and Shenari will return to fight again.

Turning his attention to the messenger, Viclan says "Well, Kala, you may tell Historian Elvers that we will certainly look into this matter. Her concern is justified."

"I am sure she will be relieved to know that ACE is investigating. She is very upset that such a thing could have happened considering the security around the libraries. By the way, are you and your crew still coming to the birth party for my mother?"

"Surely we intend to be there, Kala. Mother Mam means much to us. If the weather stays good, maybe you and I will take a nice, stressless horse ride afterwards. I know our horses could use some exercise"

"That would be good," Kala said with a little smile on her face as she turned to leave. She and Viclan grew-up together and recently became more than basic friends but less than lovers. They simply truly enjoyed being with each other.

After Kala left, Viclan summoned two members of his ACE crew, Lieutenant Makle and Lieutenant Yanor, his two Investigations Supervisors, and briefed them on the thefts. He assigned Makle to investigate the Erith Library theft here in Affami, and Yanor to the theft on the island of AUSA. Each would choose an Investigations Assistant to work with them. Makle's first task was to interview Historian Elvers. Yanor's task was to make preparations for her trip to AUSA.