

Lords of Gossamer & Shadow

Gossamer Worlds: Brokeworld



by Matt Banach





Rite Publishing Presents:

Gossamer Worlds: Brokeworld

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Based on Lords of Gossamer & Shadow by Jason Durall

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"I descended a series of rickety catwalks into a cavernous tomb of corroded steel and filthy concrete, appointed like the basement of some dilapidated industrial complex. The boxy orifices of several hundred garbage chutes pocked the darkened ceiling, and occasionally some scrap of junk from the unknowable infinity above would clatter down to add to the shifting mounds of rubbish. If the Grand Stair had an ass-end, this was it. In the center of the sloping floor, the rusted metal Door dropped open like a trap, loosing another load of detritus into the howling wasteland below."

- Travelogue

Brokeworld is a dump. The polluted, wind-blasted landscape is made up entirely of junk stretching out as far as the eye can see – scrap-littered plains, treacherously shifting hills, and gaping pits formed by sinkholes and seismic tremors. I reckon that Brokeworld probably once supported its own misfortunate civilization, but anything original to the world hasn't been seen in millennia, buried under a miles-thick crust of compacted rubbish. Somewhere far below the tunnel-riddled upper strata of refuse might be the tops of crystal skyscrapers and mountains made of solid electrum, but I don't think there's a sane soul alive willing to dig through all that crap to find them.

Either by the Grand Stair's unfathomable design or some tragic cosmic happenstance, the place long ago became a dumping ground for other Gossamer worlds, and in rare instances

the Grand Stair itself. Hence, the variety of detritus coating the place is staggeringly diverse, and nearly any imaginable scrap of technology that is defective, corrupted, or damaged can be found amongst the seemingly infinite piles. I once tripped into a pile of a dozen broken syringes, a shattered pinball machine, and a fusion pistol with a breached reactor housing. Most of the stuff comes through Doors that function as garbage chutes, depositing fresh batches of the rotten at irregular intervals, but it is obvious that some things on Brokeworld are just too big to have come through that way. Somewhere there's an entire coastal city that got wiped from the face of a Gossamer world during a mysterious typhoon, only to end up stranded in Brokeworld. The entirety of the city's inhabitants – those who had survived the typhoon, that is – were eaten by gremlins within a fortnight.

Gremlins are the worst. If any group claims dominion over Brokeworld, it's them, though individually they're nothing more than pests. As a phenomenon, however, they're an apocalyptic contagion. The little misshapen bastards can change their size, getting into *anything* and *everything*. The clever ones can even infest electronics, becoming contagious computer viruses of the most destructive variety. In addition to sabotaging any technology they can get their scrabbling claws on, gremlins defecate on everything, which is both utterly disgusting and genuinely dangerous. Their acidic fecal matter contains spores



primed to bloom into crops of gremlin offspring, and more than one Gossamer Lord has committed the vile faux pas of tracking an infestation of gremlins into someone else's Domain because he neglected to wipe his boots.

The Unmade haunt the fresher scrapheaps, scrounging and hunting. These wretched souls were once constructs or practitioners of the Eidolon who fell from grace, lost themselves, or otherwise succumbed to Brokeworld's corrupting influence. Irreparably shattered but not quite dead, they're cursed with the obsessive hope that they

can restore the perfect pattern they once knew by harvesting it from still-working material. They're wrong. What results are twisted, cannibalistic junk-golems who merely perpetuate the cycle of decay. Lesser Unmade are pathetic cyborgs and misfit toys begging for circuits and rusty gears, but the Greater Unmade can rival a Gossamer Lord – some might've been one.

Doors into or out of Brokeworld are notoriously unreliable, often shrouded or one-way, and it always seems easier to enter than to leave. Doors diverted from other locations sometimes

divert to Brokeworld, either by the Grand Stair's inscrutable intent or a Master of the Grand Stair's sloppy or malicious tampering. New Doors to Brokeworld have a tendency to appear in areas where something's been broken, whether it be a Gossamer Lord shattered in a duel or one of those rare instances when something destructive actually befalls the décor of the Grand Stair itself. Once, after a tragically ill-advised battle in a parlor-like hallway of the Grand Stair, I watched a Door appear and open on its own, taking a ruptured suit of armor, a few broken vases, and one of my shoes with it. All too often, Doors out of Brokeworld malfunction or sever themselves unless one makes a specific, deliberate effort to secure them for a return trip. However, holding a Door to Brokeworld open is also treacherous – while they do not possess the powers of a Warden or Master of the Grand Stair, gremlins have an inherent ability to pierce the veil that normally prevents inhabitants of Gossamer worlds from noticing Doors, along with the ability to pass through such Doors. Gremlins crave the opportunity to wreak havoc in bright, shiny new worlds, and some Masters of the Grand Stair make it a policy to sever any Door to Brokeworld on principle immediately, just to keep the gremlin pestilence contained.

The current primary Door to Brokeworld empties downward out of a metal trapdoor hanging from the underside of the rusty remains of an oil-drilling platform. The platform perches unsteadily on its remaining pylons atop a

large hill of junk overlooking the vast expanse of Brokeworld's heaps and a nearby field of relatively fresh scrap pits prowled by the Unmade. The Gossamer Lord's name this region "The Pits" because of the common and dangerous sinkholes. One idiot once thought he'd avoid the terrain's pitfalls by bringing along a jetpack – which worked great until the gremlins got into it and he plunged screaming into a chasm, after exploding.

Beneath the pit-fields, the gremlin warrens stretch for countless miles, riddling the crust of the entire world like the tunnels of an insane anthill. Practically designed to collapse, the warrens are a ludicrously treacherous place to tread. The gremlins know this, and make it a point to drag newly arrived treasures and potential valuables down deep, all the better to lure brave explorers into suicidal spelunking. There's a nasty rumor going around that the current embodiment of gremlin horde-chief Splintertooth has some plum Dwimmerlaik battle-engines down there with hardly a scratch on them.

Brokeworld doesn't have oceans or seas, but it does have a big wet spot. Choked with snarling shoals of rusted junk and dense patches of flotsam, the shallow cesspool is completely unnavigable but nevertheless teems with activity. Tentacled mutant monstrosities lurk in the foul fluid and amphibious gremlins prowl the jagged beaches, making cruel sport of the hapless Lesser Unmade who go there sifting for batteries

and spare parts. In a rare showing of willpower and organization, a particularly powerful Greater Unmade calling himself Lord Black Saturday has recently assembled a small pirate fleet of ramshackle hovercraft and patrols the junk-shoals robbing visitors of their precious technology and spreading false hope of deliverance from their curse amongst the Unmade. I can only presume that his inevitable ruin will be spectacularly tragic.

Brokeworld is dangerous because people underestimate the pervasive power of the Umbra there. Like I said, superficially, it is a dump, and hence it is all too easy to dismiss it as a hapless garbage planet and yet brave the wasteland anyway because you need to pursue a holed-up Umbra Master or

search for an artifact lost on the Grand Stair. I did finally find my lost shoe, by the way. But, Brokeworld is insidious, relentless, and utterly exemplary of the cosmic principle that everything will break down, and all designs, no matter how perfect, will crumble into chaos. Most of the examples are physical – defective technology, ruined buildings, corrupting grime – but some of the overwhelming entropic effect is intangible. Plans have a tendency to go awry there, so on any trip to Brokeworld you can bet that intelligence will be skewed, loyalties will fray, and exit strategies will fail. It's an incredibly unlucky place, and has an uncanny knack for breaking down even the most untouchable explorers.

~ Yaeger Zane

Brokeworld Domain Table

Technology Level:	Primitive/Other (the broken junk of infinite worlds)
Magic Level:	Magic is Known and Believed (though very few denizens practice with any skill)
Security:	Restricted Access [2 Points] (Doors malfunction and are notoriously unreliable)
Type:	Personal Domain [1 Point] (presently unclaimed by any Gossamer Lord)
Control:	Control of Contents [1 Point] (only an Umbra Master can claim Brokeworld)
Influence on the Powers:	<i>Eidolon</i> – Weak <i>Umbra</i> – Powerful <i>Wrighting</i> – Blocked
Special:	Unlucky. Every day a character spends in Brokeworld, they lose one point of Good Stuff (if they have any), or gain one point of Bad Stuff (if they have Zero Stuff or Bad Stuff). This effect is temporary for Gossamer Lords, and characters revert to their “normal” quantity and quality of Stuff immediately upon leaving Brokeworld.