

TRIBES

Vimary Setting



Vimary

It is here, on the island of Vimary, that we have built our settlements with sweat and blood, from the rubble of the past. A bastion, some call it. I say it is our final stand against the Z'bri and their kind. This is a fallen nation, isolated from the darkness beyond by the waters of the Great River, cowering in fear of what the future may hold. But you know this already. Let me now tell you about the place we call home — about the island called Vimary.

Whatever city existed here in the times before the End, only fragments of it remain; most of the ancient buildings that once rose above the Great River are no longer standing, some only skeletal husks, silent and vacant. Raw, savage nature has replaced concrete and steel, and dark forests now engulf the island. Places like Duskfall in the west have cracked the foundations of ancient homes and filled the rooms with shrubs and other vegetation. Outside, the blackened roads lie broken and unused, lost under a canopy of green. To the east, beyond Bazaar, the Rust Wastes and their occasional dust storms stretch for leagues. Lost within this hellish place are enormous steel structures of pipes and huge drums, a graveyard for machines and structures now forgotten.

And yet, it is on this island that we have made our home. It is the first step in reclaiming our place in the world around us — where once nothing stood but death and ruins, now stands the tribal homesteads. Under the shadow of the Great Hill, the Council Ruins and Bazaar can be seen for miles around, the center of tribal life. During the summer months, Bazaar bustles with activity, and even in the frigid winters can the tribes be seen scurrying for warmth and worshipping the Seven Deaths while horrors lurk in the shadows.

To the north, beyond the Great Hill, looms the Z'bri Ziggurat, its presence twisting the northern shore of the island into a labyrinth of death and fear. One thing is sure, of the city that once stood here, the homeland of our ancestors, only vague echoes remain, silent and still, slowly fading away forever.

Welcome to my home...

— Deus, Fallen poet



Overall Geography

From the travelogue of Alta Vorh, Keeper and archeologist:

According to records from before The End, the city that once stood on the island now called Vimary was home to millions of people. Unfortunately, very little of the city remains intact: age, weather, the Z'bri and even the careless tribes have done much to destroy what little precious clues we have about its origins or even its name. Adding to the difficulties of any archeological attempts to date or name the city is the fact that most of the ruins are hidden within verdant forests and impregnable wastelands or flooded by the river.



The Great Hill

The Great Hill marks the last real line of defense between the Z'bri lands to the north and the tribal lands to the south. At its very summit a chain of Joanite towers keep vigil over the surrounding lands. Characterized by thick woods and narrow trails, the Hill is one of the primary hunting grounds for the tribes, though rumors of Z'bri monstrosities make hunting here a dangerous proposition. Within the southwestern, western and northwestern slopes of the Hill one can find a number of tribal settlements, including the homestead of Magdalite herself, Xstasis, and the dark Mortuary and ancient graveyards of Baba Yaga. Bazaar, the main tribal homeland, lies to the south, while a large forest strewn with ruins runs north and east from the Hill.

The Hunting Paths

Although the tribes rely mostly on subsistence farming and some scavenging, they are also well skilled in the art of hunting. Portions of the Hill and Duskfall are hunting grounds; these are specially blessed areas where Eva herself allegedly commanded the animals living there to surrender their lives for the tribes. These grounds, known as the Hunting Paths, are extremely sacred for the tribes for obvious reasons, and are maintained by both the Evans and Joanites. The tribes condemn to death any Squat, Keeper or Fallen caught near a Hunting Path for corrupting the grounds.

The Seven Fingers

The northernmost outposts of the tribes are seven towers known as the Seven Fingers. These towers are manned by the hardest and most experienced Joanites. Found along an elevated black-top, these towers offer an ideal vantage point into the Z'bri lands and are extremely defensible. Each Finger is equipped with a bell that is sounded in case of Z'bri attack.

Duskfall

The far western portion of the island, known simply as Duskfall to the tribes, is the largest forested area on Vimary. Duskfall is an imposing forest; though not as dangerous as those from the Z'bri lands, both natural and unnatural predators roam its shadowy trails and paths. At root level, it is possible to find ruins of homes and other pre-End dwellings. The darkness and dampness of Duskfall has caused a great deal of damage, however, destroying foundations and roads.

At its westernmost tip stands the West Bridge, one of only two bridges that span the chilling waters of the Great River. Protected by warriors of Joan, the bridge has recently spawned a small community, made of mostly Dahlians and Evans, called Westholm.

Large fields and groves, all tended by Evans, dominate the easternmost boundary of Duskfall. At their center, near the Evan settlement of Griffentowne, rests an immense network of black-tops and huge wrecks of flying machines used as greenhouses and granaries by the tribes.

For reasons of distance and travel time, Griffentowne is the westernmost tribal settlement that has frequent contact with Bazaar. Of late, however, Z'bri and Squat raids have made the trip dangerous.

Westholm and Griffentowne

Although both these settlements are relatively young and small, they have grown rapidly. It is my contention that within a few seasons they will stand, at best, as satellites of Bazaar, at worst as rivals. I have already noted, especially in the case of Westholm, a strong sense of community arising from their isolation from the center of tribal activity. The question remains to see how the Grand Council of the Seven Tribes will deal with these fledging communities.

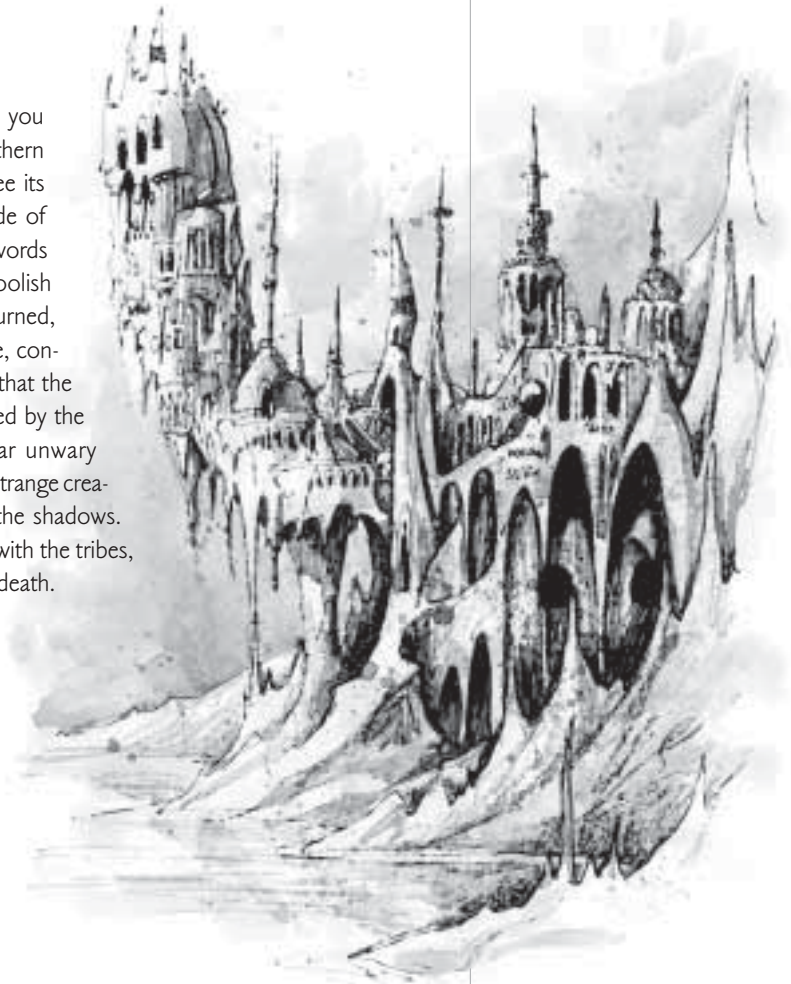
The Northern Shore — The H'I Kar

The northern shore of the island, including the smaller island of Ya'sue, is home to the Z'bri and their presence has warped the area beyond recognition. Originally, these sections housed much of the pre-End population of the island, of which only demolished homes and twisted hamlets remain, home to the Z'bri Serfs. During the camps, this area was the location for hundreds of mass graves. Even now, when walking through here, one can see the half-buried remains of thousands — providing the Z'bri with ample building material for their structures and monsters. The Z'bri themselves call this land the H'I Kar.

The Ziggurat

From the journals of Deus, Fallen poet:

No matter where you stand on the Hill, you can see the Ziggurat rising from the Northern Shore. Even from a distance you can see its twisted form, pillars and buttresses made of bone, tiles made of flesh — there are few words to describe it. A few Jackers have been foolish enough to venture near it. None have returned, but there are tales that the walls are alive, constantly fed by the Z'bri Serfs. Some tell that the trees near it are alive, twisted and gnarled by the black magic of the Z'bri, ready to tear unwary passers-by to bits. They also whisper that strange creatures and aberrations of nature lurk in the shadows. There is only one thing in which I agree with the tribes, and that's that the Ziggurat is a place of death.



AZ'bri Hamlet

From the travelogue of Alta Vorh, Keeper and archeologist:

From afar, a Serf hamlet looks much like a tribal homestead, made of a dozen or so structures surrounded by fields, but appearances can be deceptive. Here, the animals are sick or twisted by the Z'bri into indescribable shapes. Day and night the Serfs toil in the fields, though only a few are cultivated. Most Serfs are merely uncovering the mass graves that dot the northern portion of the island. Although the Z'bri burnt or consumed many of the bodies, their sheer number meant that most were buried in mass graves. As a solution, the northern homes and warehouses became huge warehouses for the dead, their rotting bodies leading to disease and sickness. Today, the Serfs, wanting to appease their masters, harvest the bones and other remains unearthed from the many graves. The Serfs must slave to uncover the ghastly horrors surrounded all the time by the stench of death.

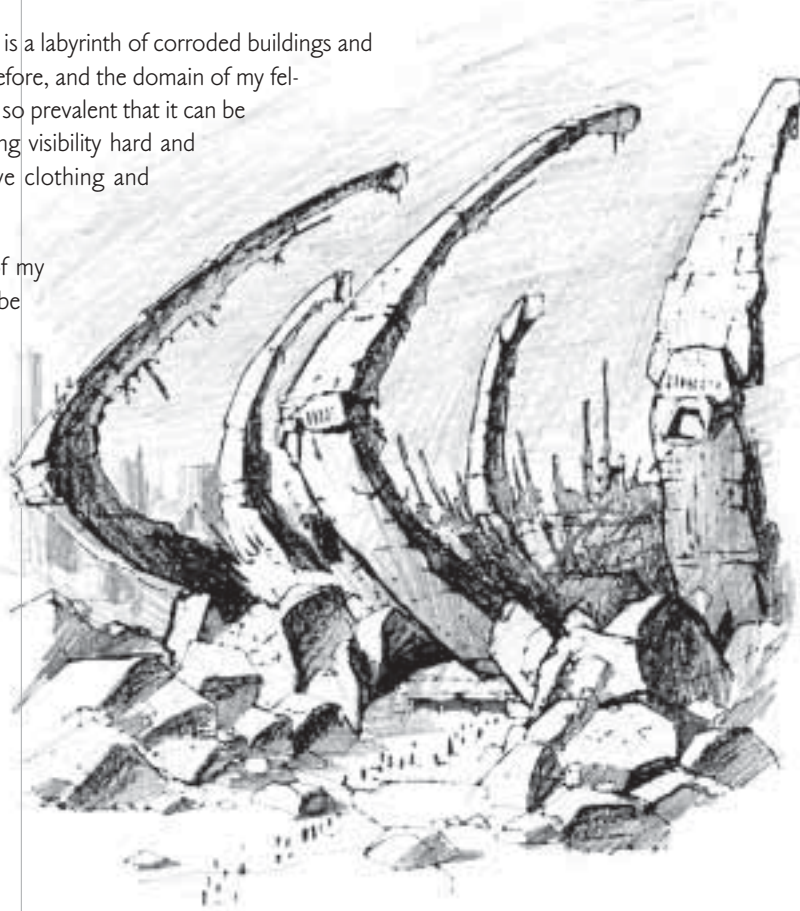
Other Serfs are not so lucky. Some live in huge breeding farms, where it is they that are bred for their inhuman masters. Those who are too old to breed are killed and skinned by their fellow Serfs. If the tribes need any excuse to wage war upon the Z'bri, they should open their eyes and see for themselves the horrors they allow despite their supposed victory.

The Rust Wastes

A relative bastion from the tribes, the Rust Wastes is an area dominated by lumbering structures of steel and machinery. Nothing grows here, for kilometers around a fine layer of rusts coats everything, occasionally blown into the air by strong winds giving rise to fierce Rust or Blood Storms (when the rain mixes in with the rust) that can blot out whole sections for days.

The core of the Rusts Wastes is a labyrinth of corroded buildings and complexes from the World Before, and the domain of my fellow Keepers. Here, the rust is so prevalent that it can be seen floating in the air, making visibility hard and forcing us to wear protective clothing and masks.

The Wastes are the home of my people, the Keepers, if we can be said to have a home at all.



The Port

The vacant structures of a port dominate the southern shores of Vimary. The Rust Wastes have claimed some of the port, especially those structures found farther east, while those just south of Bazaar are home to some of the oldest sections of the city that once stood here. The one thing these areas have in common is that they have been flooded since the Ending Times. Here, beneath the waters of the Great River, lie what must be the most ancient of ruins. On a clear day, when the Great River's current is not too strong, one can still see the ancient stone buildings, cobble streets and bronze statues beneath the waters. Here too, one can see the hulks of derelict and sunken ships rising from the waters of the ancient port like sentinels of a forgotten age.

In the more habitable areas of the Port, the tribes have moved in, living on the roofs and upper floors of the sunken buildings. Of note, Tera Sheba's tribe lives here in what they call the Sunken City, surrounded by the somber and dour facade of the past.



Mek

A Jacker of some repute — some even call him their leader — Mek hangs around Junks (see p.107). He is always looking for more brave fools to join him on hunting parties into the northern lands. He is a strong individual, both mentally and physically, and there is far more to him than mere bloodlust. He has enemies among the Joanites and the Watch has arrested him twice, and tortured him both times. Just what Mek's crime was remains hidden from others. Earning his respect is hard, but once someone does, she has a friend for life, even if philosophy separates them.

Highlights: Determined, stoic, honorable

Attributes: APP -1, BLD +1, FIT +1, WIL +1

Eminences: Fury and Bravery

Skills: Archery 1/0, Athletics 2/+1, Combat Sense 2/0, Dodge 2/0, Hand-to-Hand 2/0, Intimidate 2/+1, Leadership 2/0, Melee 3/0, Navigation (land) 1/0, Notice 1/0, Riding 1/0, Sneak 1/0, Survival 2/0, Tactics 1/0, Throwing 1/0

A Kingdom of Shadows

From the journals of Deus, Fallen poet:

So what lies beneath the waters of the port? Treasures, relics, who knows? Its quiet and serene canals, the flooded interior of refineries and the lure of derelict ships draw people there. Some come when they want to be alone, when they want to steal a glimpse of how things were in the past, to roam the silent warehouses, or swim through old offices and homes. Though there are many treasures down in the depths, most leave them — they belong to the ghosts of the Sunken City. It's a hallowing experience to see the vacant skull of one's ancestors, its eyes dark but speaking silent volumes of what may have happened. Some say that if you stay down there long enough you will hear their haunting voices, like sirens of old luring you deeper and deeper until you drown.

There are always those greedy enough to steal from the dead.

The South Tier Bridge

From the travelogue of Alta Vorh, Keeper and archeologist:

Located within the flooded streets of the Sunken City lie the ramps that lead to the colossal ruin of the South Tier Bridge. This immense steel bridge spans the length of the Great River and connects Vimary to the Outlands beyond. Although heavily rusted and missing a few sections, the South Tier bridge is in relatively good shape. At its apex rests a small market where the tribes trade with those Squats that live off the island. A Joanite tower protects the bridge and keeps an eye on the settlement of Hom found on a small island directly below the bridge. Even so, the outcasts of Hom have built a series of pulleys and elevators that allow them to use the under section of the bridge, unbeknownst to the tribes.



The Tribes

Although the tribes call Vimary their home, in truth it is the settlement of Bazaar that is the hub of tribal activity. The majority of the tribal population lives within this settlement, located in the ruins of the ancient's city's core, nestled in abandoned buildings, makeshift grottos and villages. The tribes have essentially built a new settlement on top of the ruins of the pre-End city. It is from here that the other tribal settlements span like spokes from a wheel, slowly spreading across the southern and western portions of the island of Vimary.

In the last few years, a number of tribal outcasts — those known as the Fallen — have begun to make their homes on two small islands just a few hundred meters from the Sunken City under the looming South Tier Bridge. Originally barren islands, the Eighth Tribe has transformed them into a thriving settlement known as Hom.

Troy Fenys

Herites can be terrifying, and none more than the silent Fenys. She wears the marks of a Herite crusader and carries on her a number of tribal trinkets, things she's found, according to her. In truth she's a brutal assassin and her trinkets are trophies, belonging to those she's killed. Most are priests and lackeys of the Seven Deaths. Both before and after she seeks out a kill, Fenys spends her time at Ile Perdue, using sado-masochistic pleasures to literally whip herself into a frenzy of hatred. She has forgotten the Herite mandate of freedom and seeks only the death of the tribes.

Highlights: Sexual, fearsome, deadly, silent

Attributes: APP+1, AGI+1, PER+1, PSY-1

Eminences: Sensuality, Recognition

Skills: Acrobatics 1/+1, Camouflage 2/0, Combat Sense 2/+1, Disguise 1/0, Dodge 2/+1, Hand-to-Hand 2/+1, Herbalism (poisons) 1/0, Melee 2/+1, Notice 2/+1, Seduction 2/+1, Sleight-of-Hand 1/+1, Sneak 2/+1, Throwing 2/+1



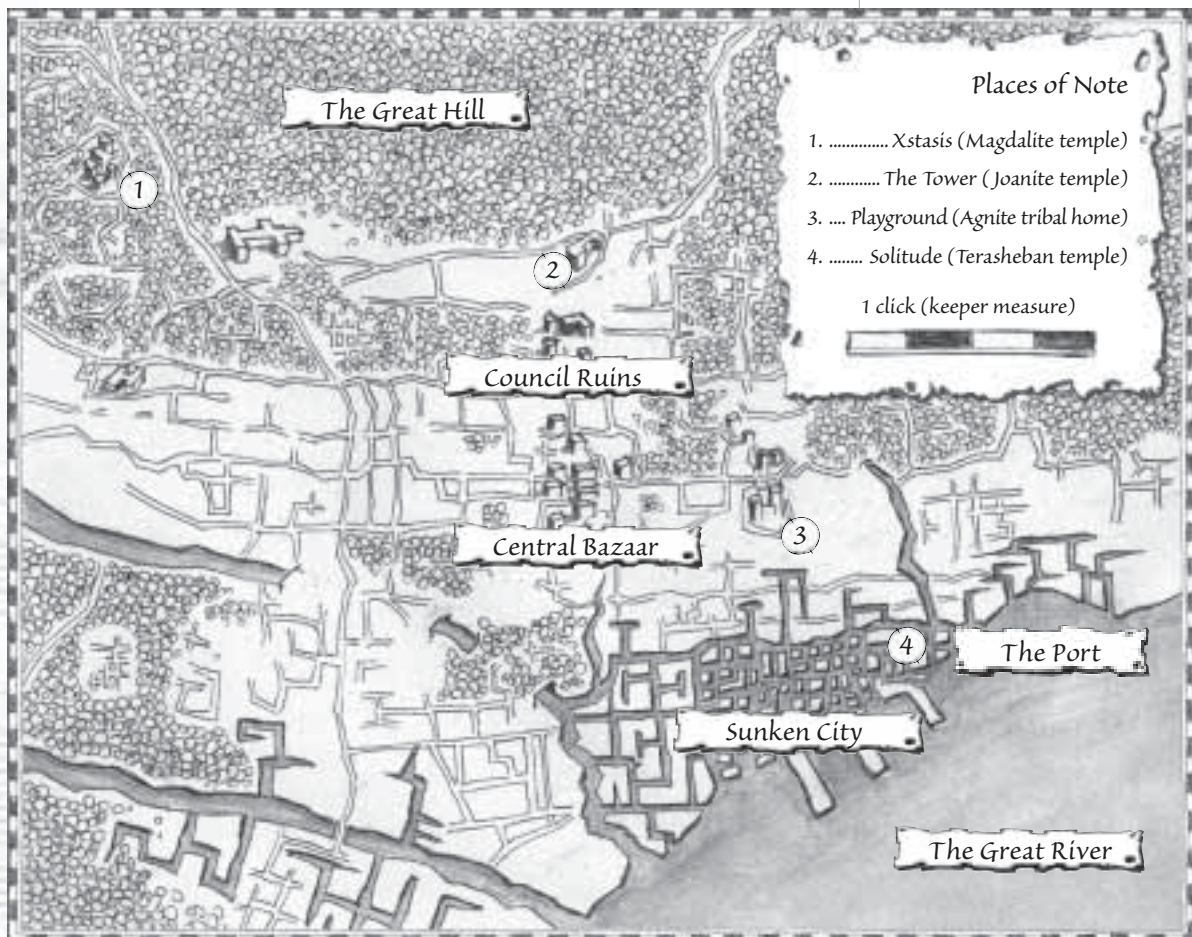
Bazaar

Anna Sera, Fallen Dahlian, speaks to Ural, a newly banished Yagan:

So, Ural, I can tell that you've spent most of your days near Mortuary, home of the Yagans. It's written all over your pale skin. Toiling day in and out in murky graves and crypts, it's time to see the light of day! Don't be insulted, it's just that you are one of us now, one of the Eighth Tribe, and there is much to learn. Now, come with me, there are a few places I want to show you before we leave for Hom. Let's start with Bazaar.

What you already know is that Bazaar is the largest market and gathering place for the Seven Tribes: its many stalls, tents, shrines and homes practically define tribal life. Yet Bazaar is really nothing more than a ghost town. True, the tribes have given it a facelift, but underneath you can still see the skeletal frames of the ancient buildings, the wind howling through their vacant rooms. Architecturally, it is a mishmash of scavenged parts and rubble. Buildings from before the End — those still standing that is — have been cannibalized, their interiors gutted into small markets or temples while their exteriors are decorated with a few scavenged lights, leather tarps and runes.

Wood and steel bridges span the chasms between buildings on the lower levels. These, combined with the chaotic shacks and stalls of the market, have turned the street level into a maze. During the winter, huge leather, rubber and canvas tarps are draped over central areas of Bazaar, shielding it from the snow, but most of the business during the cold months is done indoors in the Emporiums.





**Yasmin Luther'on
(Watch Commander)**

Once one of Joan's mightiest warriors, Yasmin was born in the first decade after liberation and the weariness of age is beginning to take its toll. She has served as a Blade of Joan for all her life and risen to prominence in her clan and tribe, but has never been approached to join the Templars, the priestesses of Joan. She feels slighted by this and distrusts the Templars who serve in the Watch. Bitterness makes her a stern commander and she is directly responsible for the Watch's brutal methods with outsiders. Verra Thiam'on, a Terasheban High Judge (see p. 64), has taken advantage of Yasmin's resentment to make the Joanite her lackey. She gives Yasmin the validation Joan will not, and in return gets unfaltering loyalty and zeal.

Highlights: Bitter, stern, powerful

*Attributes: FIT +1, PER +1, PSY -1,
WIL +2*

*Skills: Archery 2/0, Athletics 2/0,
Combat Sense 3/+1, Dodge 2/0,
Hand-to-Hand 3/0, Intimidation 3/
0, Investigation 1/+1, Leadership 3/
0, Melee (sword) 3/0, Notice 2/0,
Tactics 2/0*

Theren's Den

They are other places of interest around Bazaar for us Fallen, like Theren's Den, just east of the main market. Now Theren himself is a Dahlian, as I once was, but he is fairly open minded about the Eighth Tribe. Being more of a business man, he knows that banishment would hurt his profits, and besides, he always lets us in if we agree to pay. I guess if there was ever any sort of neutral ground between us and the tribes, it would have to be Theren's Den; most are willing to accept you as long as you keep your distance.

Now, what is interesting about Theren is what he's done to the place. Theren's Den is many things: it is a tavern, a brothel, an inn. However, it is the working image machine that Khronos owns — he's a Keeper — that lures people in. With this relic, he continually plays clips he has salvaged. Most are silent and fragmented, not to mention scratchy, but they still hold a bit of magic. It always get me a bit depressed; I mean, some of the images are so beautiful they make me long for the way life used to be. And then there the are violent ones. Sometimes I wonder if our ancestors did not deserve what happened to them.

The Emporiums

The Emporiums are essentially indoor markets, built within huge multilevel amphitheaters from the World Before. The ground levels are essentially extensions of the outdoor market while the upper levels serve more social purposes, housing taverns and inns. The subterranean levels, however, are connected to the other emporiums by a treacherous and dimly lit network of tunnels. These passages are home to a number of 'domesticated' Squats and a few Keepers. Here, if you don't mind the smell, you can find things the tribes would rather you didn't, including Keeper stuff and the occasional secret. Rumors persist that some tunnels lead Below, into the bowels of the island, but only the Keepers know for sure.

The Council Ruins

Just to the north of Bazaar, in a secluded lot, lies the largest puppet house ever created. Don't look so forlorn Ural, the Grand Council of the Seven Tribes, though they surely mean well, are nothing put pawns to the Fatimas. Surrounded by crumbling walls and weather-beaten columns, the Council Ruins are the remnants of some ancient building. Their interior is full of dimly lit hallways and small rooms, all covered with ivy. The ceiling is a patchwork of canvass and leather that fails to keep the rain out. As you can guess, its atmosphere is utterly suffocating; everyone walks about silently, softly whispering and plotting without being aware of the manipulations of the Fatimas. A place to avoid, more out of boredom than anything else, though Joan and her lackeys make a point of keeping a visible presence.

The Watch

Most Joanites are fanatical, but the Watch is an interesting case, where they are more like Shebans than pure Joanites. You can see them patrolling the streets of Bazaar and the Council Ruins ready to judge, try and punish those they see committing crimes. Understanding what they define as crime, now that's not so easy. I have seen a Watch patrol stand idly by while some tribals beat a Keeper to death, or seen them publicly sever a shoplifter's hand for stealing. Their leader, Yasmin Luther'on, has no patience for us of the Eighth Tribe. This is a sentiment she shares with a majority of the Watch, and a reason they have been given such leeway by Tera Sheba and Joan.

Tribal Lands

I would be lying to you if I just told you the tribes lived only in Bazaar, but you already know this, as most tribals spread their time equally among Bazaar, their tribe's homelands and their homesteads. Follow me, don't be worried, this building looks like it will collapse any minute, but the view from the roof is unbelievable. There I will show you what I mean, and tell you a thing or two about the tribes which you did not know, including secrets about the Yagans.

The Sunken City and Solitude

Look to the south, past Bazaar, all the way to the shore of the Great River, where you can see the Sunken City, home to Tera Sheba and her cronies. There, see that tall cold stone building, the tallest rising from the waters of the Great River that have tuned cobbled streets into canals, that's Tera Sheba's temple, Solitude. Most members of her tribe have made their home on the roofs of the ancient stone buildings and warehouses of the Sunken City, well above the waters of the Great River and the flooded streets. It's fitting that the Fatima of traditions and laws has made Her home amidst the oldest ruins of the World Before. Of all the tribes, the Shebans are most reliant on other tribes for their survival. Although they have transformed a few rooftops into gardens and plots, the Shebans have to trade with the Evans for most of their food.

The many Sheban homesteads that surround Solitude all abide by strict curfew laws, and are permeated by an atmosphere of paranoia as neighbors continually spy on each other trying to root out dissidents and deviants.





Den-Hades

Den-Hades, like Helios, calls herself a Guide. She lives in Hom, spending most of her time in the Temple among Doomsayers. When not there, she roams the settlement, speaking prophecy to those who would listen. It is her habit to seek out those newly Fallen and take them in hand, teaching them the ways of Dream. She is very rough on her students and berates them constantly, her voice tinged with anger. Helios, her lover, says that she bears great guilt and teaches as retribution — but he will not say what her crime was; it is possible that even he does not know. Despite her difficult ways, she has made allies among the Fallen, including Deus and Kymber.

Highlights: Deformed, haunted, nasty

Attributes: AGI -1, APP -2, BLD -1, INF +1, KNO +2, PSY +2

Emineces: Fate, Mystery

Skills: Craft (jewels) 2/0, Dreaming 3/+2, Herbalism 2/+2, Human Perception 2/+2, Lore (River of Dream) 2/+2, Lore (Synthesis) 3/+2, Mythology 2/+2, Ritual 3/+2, Teaching 2/0, Synthesis 3

Xstasis

Just North of Sanctuary on the western slopes of the Great Hill, lost in a maze of crumbling walls, mansions and large willow trees, lies Xstasis, temple of desire, secrets and deadly passions. Magdalen's temple and tribal lands are both welcoming and unsettling. Walking into a Magdalite homestead or Her temple is an experience not quickly forgotten. There, nothing is sacred or safe — including your body and your deepest secrets. Magdalen, herself, has a thing for roses. Everywhere you go you can see them, silent, tempting, beckoning you to touch their velvety petals, only to have your finger pricked by their thorns. To Her, pain is just as enjoyable as pleasure.

Magdalite homesteads are luxurious homes and pleasure palaces; complete with winding hallways, secret passages, secluded gardens and opulent rooms for Her whores to ply their trade. Never — and I mean never — trust a Magdalite. You just never know what they really want from you...

Sanctuary

To the West of Solitude and the Sunken City, within the rich fields and irrigation ditches of Lai, you can find the home of the Evans. Of all the tribes, Eva's tribal lands are the largest, with many small farming hamlets dotting the Lain canal. By raft, one can get to Griffentowne with little difficulty, either using the canals or the river. Most of these farming hamlets are usually far apart from each other, each home to one family, though larger ones could house as many as two or three. It is this sense of isolation, both from other Evans and the other tribes, that have made the Evans fairly open minded, and most would be willing to put up Fallen for the night. A word of advice though: some are very protective about their privacy, so don't go poking around where you shouldn't.

It's fitting that the Evans call their land Sanctuary since they've done much to reclaim it from the rubble that marks most of Vimary. Gone are the many ruins from the World Before, much to the chagrin of the Keepers. They've been replaced by large fields and small wooded glades. Eva's temple is unique. A huge flowering plant, it spreads across a large glade in Lai. The petals open with each morning, often revealing the sacred form of Eva Herself for the tribe to worship.



Mortuary

You could probably tell me more of the Yagan home than I know, but there a few things these eyes have seen that will turn your head. Remember, they are the ones who cast you out; you did nothing but believe something they did not want to hear. They're the lost ones, not you. Mortuary gives me the creeps. I am sure that at one point Mortuary was the tallest structure on the island; a huge monolithic monument crowned by a golden dome built on the slopes of the Great Hill, looming over the city. Now the dome no longer rests on top, its weight has long since brought it crashing down into the interior of a tremendous monastery. The thick stone walls are dotted with grottos and crypts, not to mention the thousands of birds that make their home here as well. How do you live with all those birds? Even on a rainy day, flocks of ravens surround the Mortuary. The "eyes of Baba Yaga," you call them; carrion and pests would be better names.

Nonetheless, the Yagans have done their best to provide for themselves, because few tribes trade with them. They tend to their fields within the cemeteries that line Mortuary. Given the abundance of bones, most Yagans harden them with special resins and use them as building materials. They use the bones to build furniture and even whole structures. Yagan bone-carving is rather beautiful but unsettling.

The Towers

Past Mortuary and along the crest of the Great Hill, you can see the towers of Joan. These towers form the first border between the tribes and the Z'bri — the greatest lie the Seven Deaths have ever spun. The Z'bri could walk into Bazaar whenever they wanted to, it's just the occasional sacrifice the Fatimas give them that keeps them quiet. Ever wondered why some out-of-the-way homestead is suddenly massacred, and the tribes blame the Squats? It's because the Fatimas allow the Z'bri to take what they want, and what do the Deaths care? Everyone believes them.

Each Tower is the Joanite equivalent of a homestead, supported by those warriors either too old or too wounded to fight. Though referred to as towers, not every one is a tower by strict definition. Some can be lookouts, others fortresses, but it's what they call them.

Joan's temple, the Watchtower, looms over the Council Ruins. At its base and in the few fields around the southern slopes of the Great Hill, her mighty tribe practices their art of war. Granted, seeing their formations is impressive, but they are fighting a losing battle. They are nothing but glorified watchdogs kept on a tight leash by Joan, and an even tighter one by Tera Sheba.



Hal Ninva

A Terasheban is always a Terasheban. There are exceptions, like Mordecai of the Seeds of Eden cell, who spends his time minding his own business.

Hal, on the other hand — he's a recent exile — has done his best to keep everyone at each other's throats. He has made promises to the Herites and Jackers while saying something different to everyone else. His is fueled by a vision of the future: he sees the Eighth Tribe rising under his leadership and gaining a seat at the Grand Council, or even pushing aside the Seven Tribes. As far as he is concerned, it is time for the Fallen to get behind a leader and claim their place in destiny. If not, he claims, they will stay in Hom forever. His methods are dangerous, but he is attracting many more followers.

Highlights: Charismatic, deceptive, iron will

Attributes: INF +2, KNO +1, WIL +1

Eminences: Conviction and Truth

Skills: Dreaming 1/0, Etiquette 2/+2, Haggling 1/+2, Human Perception 2/0, Interrogation 2/0, Investigation 2/0, Law 2/+1, Leadership 3/+2, Read/Write (tribal) 2/+2

Playground

Ah, the home of the Child, Agnes Herself. The other Fatimas seem to have a method to their madness, but Agnes, now there is a twisted one. On the outside, Playground is innocent enough. Found in and around one of the largest Emporiums, it is nothing more than that — a playground. Here, kids of all ages rule; the adults do all the work while the Agnites have fun. You can see some of the influence of Dahlia as the whole place has a carnival atmosphere, but some of the games are just downright cruel. Playground is a place where your wishes might come true, but at the same time so can your worst nightmares. If you are young, then you have nothing to fear from Playground, but once you are older, then you have to be careful.

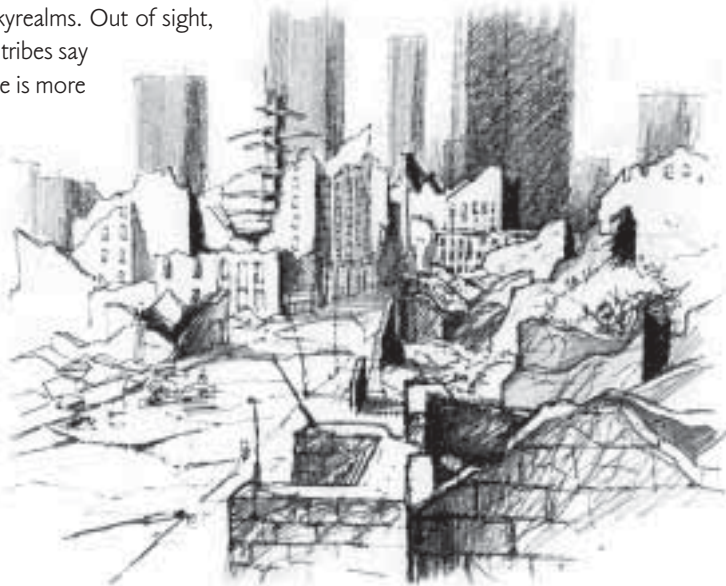
The Caravan

So where are Dahlia's lands? Well, my dear Ural, the answer, I guess, would have to be wherever you found yourself today. Yes, Dahlia has a temple, and it's anywhere She wants it to be, and within the hearts and minds of Her tribe. Most Caravans are traveling carnivals and markets, each housing a number of diversions, from plays to "fun houses." One thing is for certain, however: if you ever enters a Caravan, you may never find your way out. That's just the nature of the Trickster. Some are lucky and find their way out after undergoing a harrowing journey of self-discovery, others become enamored with Dahlia's illusions and never leave.

Given Dahlia's power of illusion, Her temple does not have a fixed location. Rather, in the deepest part of a Caravan, surrounded by concentric circles of other tents and shows, pathways to Dahlia's temple lie hidden. They say that only those who are ready or expected can ever find their way there or back. Equal parts haunted house, hall of mirrors and freak show, Her temple is a place where nothing is what it seems.

The Skyrealms

Well, it's getting late now, best not be up here once the sun goes down, one just never knows what lives in the forgotten upper floors of these buildings, especially in the Skyrealms. Out of sight, out of mind, I am sure that is what the tribes say to themselves, but a Z'bri you can't see is more deadly than the one you can. Why some Beasts leave the Ziggurat and come to Bazaar I don't know, nor do I care. Maybe it's a form of punishment, exile, or maybe they just crave fresh victims. So they come, settle into the abandoned roofs of the tallest buildings, and make their nests there. Occasionally, you can see a shape slither in or out, but the Z'bri themselves are seldom seen.



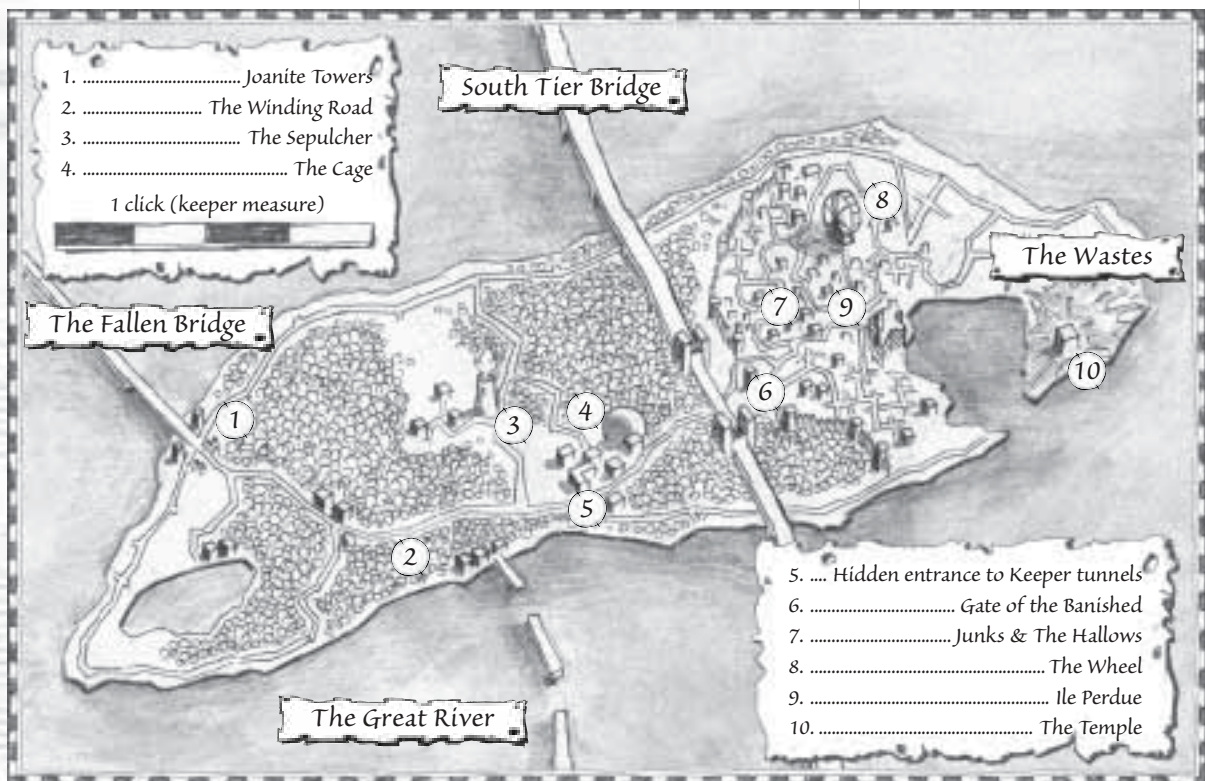
Hom

Anna Sera, Fallen Dahlian, speaks to Ural, a newly banished Yagan:

You can see Hom as you cross the Fallen Bridge, a small settlement under the looming shadow of the South Tier bridge. From afar it looks like nothing, a motley collection of shacks, patched-up buildings, tents and dives — a home for those who no longer belong. The area that surrounds Hom itself we call the Barrens. Nothing grows there, except ruins and dust. Some have made their homes there, mainly the Doomsayers. There's something about the swirling dust and rubble that attracts them. Some Squats live there as well, though they prefer the shanty towns that dot the island of Hom instead. Really depressing places, some of them, you can smell the death and excrement as you pass by. Occasionally, tribals come here in packs and kill as many of the Squats as they can, beating any Fallen who gets in their way.

This was originally a place of death — a no-man's land, a place that the tribes said was cursed. Many summers ago, the small hollow island of Hom — hollow because the Keepers believe it was man-made, and that it has tunnels running under it — was nothing but a barren rock. A place where criminals, Squats and the occasional Z'bri were sent in exile, isolated from the island by the turbulent rapids of the Great River. But that was then. Over the years, the few who survived (and the many more who were cast out) transformed the island from a desolate place into what you see now. Small fields cover the small island, though we still need to trade because we are not fully self-reliant. It makes the times when the tribes close the Fallen Bridge more bearable.

When compared to its surroundings, Hom is more lively; there are few places in Vimary that are as dynamic and vibrant. See, we have nothing except what we make for ourselves, and we see Hom as our chance to remind the tribes of who they cast out. The tribes would love to see us wallow in our misery, so instead we revel in our freedom and use every opportunity to show how lucky we are. Remember this, Ural, Hom is our Eden and bastion, a place to call home. A place to belong. Now come, it's getting late and it's not safe to be caught outside Hom after nightfall. We're almost there, just over the Fallen Bridge...





Veruka the Wraith

Once Fallen get past her looks, her skeletal face and vacant eyes, and get to know the Wraith, they see why she is so important to the Eighth Tribe. She has the ear of Kymber, Hal and a few of the other influential cells. When she speaks, a silence fills the air, and everyone listens intently. She knows everyone by name and has the uncanny knack of showing up when she is most needed. A Doomsayer, she constantly brings the Fallen back on the path of prophecy.

She quotes from Joshua and his tribe, and drives her new people towards their future. Unfortunately, she is very old and frail. Many fear she won't survive another winter.

Highlights: Wise, frail, haunting

Attributes: AGI -2, APP -2, BLD -1, CRE +1, FIT -1, KNO +1, PSY +2, WIL +1

Eminences: Mystery and Fate

Skills: Dreaming 2/+2, Healing 1/+1, Herbalism 1/+1, Human Perception 1/+2, Intimidate 2/-1, Lore (Death) 3/+1, Lore (Joshua) 2/+1, Mythology 2/+1, Read/Write (secret Yagan tongue) 2/+1, Ritual 2/+2, Synthesis (Dream Travel) 3

The Fallen Bridge

Even now we are still at the mercy of the tribes, so to speak. There is only one bridge that connects Hom to Vimary. Even though the South Tier bridge looms overhead, it is impossible to get to unless you don't mind climbing or riding in a basket. The Fallen bridge is in very poor condition. Large sections of it collapsed long ago and only our makeshift efforts keep it from falling into the river below.

Two Towers of Joan constantly guard the access to and from Hom. Usually, the guards leave the bridge open, letting one pass if she pays their toll (whatever you have that they want), but violence is not unheard of. Even so, every so often, Tera Sheba gets it in Her mind that She's had enough of us and orders the bridge closed, meaning hard times for us. The bridge can stay closed for hours, days or weeks in an attempt to starve us, but it only makes us stronger.

And besides, it's not the only way off Hom. During the winter, ice flows makes travel over them possible but hazardous, and in the summer some of us with sailboats can ferry you back to Vimary for a small price.

In a pinch, the Keepers are also willing to ferry us to and from Vimary in their tunnels. Though far from safe, it is a better alternative than being stranded. How they get you to the tunnel, that's their secret. They usually blindfold you, that's the only price they charge. Once in the partially flooded tunnels, small rafts guided by the Keepers make the long journey to Vimary. Once there, the Keepers lead you through a maze of tunnels (I guess to purposefully get you lost) and leave you in one of the lower Emporiums. It's all a matter of trust. The Keepers like their secrets to be kept secret, and besides I've heard chilling tales of what they are capable of when dealing with those who've betrayed them. There's nobody to hear you scream in their tunnels.



The Den of the Banished

Hom is many things, part fortress and part shanty town, but it's a place we can call our own. The original ruins of Hom, of which only a few stand, are nothing but twisted metal skeletons and strange structures, one of which is an enormous wheel that remains intact and serves as a watch tower. Ulysses, a Keeper, says that he's read about places like this, places where people went to ride fantastic machines in the World Before. Even now, it seems you can hear the laughter of our ancestors, laughing not knowing the horrors that waited for them.

Today, Hom is a winding collection of huts and buildings, all of them found near the Gallows. Most of them have been built from the ground up, giving it a unique atmosphere. Hom is the first step for us and something we take pride in. Unlike the tribal lands, Hom is a bit of this and a bit of that; we borrow from everywhere, from the Keepers, from the tribes. It is not uncommon to see effigies of Joshua made from colored-glass or banners commemorating a cell's accomplishment. Although Hom is rather cramped, there is still room for its few hundred inhabitants, but some are starting to move back into Vimary, or into the shanties surrounding Hom. I fear that as more Fallen arrive and we're forced to share the little space we have, tensions between us will rise to dangerous levels.

Aside from the Keepers, Halos and Den-Hades, a couple of Squats make their home here as well. Though we all respect each other, there are some sections that are more dangerous than others. Our dependence on trade means that we must occasionally deal with Squats, and every so often they come in their barges. Trading with them is difficult; we send only the best negotiators.

This does not mean that Hom is safe from Squat raids, on the contrary. During the winters, Squats often try to storm the island in small bands, driven by hunger and envy. Most attacks are acts of desperation, and usually end in their destruction. It's the Squats that live on Vimary itself that are more dangerous. Those that attack Hom are just insane.

Enough with the history lesson, let me show you around.

The Gate of the Banished

The looming Gate of the Banished is the threshold all banished cross when first entering Hom. It's nothing more than an immense freestanding arch, of the walls that once must have surrounded it only rubble remain. Etched on its intricate iron frame and wooden beams are the names of the banished. Some of the names are old and faded, others fresh and bitter, scrawled with rage and anguish. Each is unique, a testament to the pain and anger we feel when we first arrive to our new home. Even so, some cannot bear their new status as exiles. Those unlucky few spend a few days hovering around the gate, never entering and eventually head off into the unknown. For some, the mantle of the Eighth Tribe is too much to bear.



Kymber Reva

Kymber was the first to organize the rants, and in many ways settles whatever disputes she can. As a former Evan, she's been instrumental in organizing the Eighth Tribe, moving the Fallen along the way to self-reliance. She still has contacts with the Evans, and many suspect, with her children. Some chide her for this, and others are resentful that she has taken steps in trying to organize the outcasts. She is not interested in material power, however, and usually complies with the requests of Hal Ninva (see p. 101). Her gentle ways might be her undoing. She is rarely willing to take direct action against the tribes, even after one of the Fallen is beaten or killed. She is even hesitant with the Z'bri. In the end, she might not have what it takes to lead the Eighth Tribe.

Highlights: Motherly, gentle, intelligent

Attributes: APP +1, BLD -1, INF +1, PSY +1

Eminences: Unity and Empathy

Skills: Agriculture 2/0, Animal Handling 2/0, Hagglng 3/+1, Healing 3/0, Herbalism 2/0, Leadership 2/+1, Synthesis 1



Deus (Lightbringer Poet)

Deus is another one of Hom's "leaders," though he is more interested in writing and exploring than trying to bring Fallen together. He is a Magdalite outcast and people claim that he was Magdalen's lover — something he neither denies or affirms. Finding Deus is never a problem, his flamboyant nature and dress give him away every time. He does have his dark side, however. For days he will enjoy himself at Junks, and then, without warning, he will leave to roam the ruins of Vimary looking for any hint of the past. He has flirted with the idea of joining the Keepers, but he knows they would not take him. So he spends his days writing of the past, and of the future to come. He writes his poems all over the walls of Hom and Vimary, in a futile attempt to reclaim the ruins about him.

Highlights: Poetic, talkative, beautiful

Attributes: APP +2, BLD -1, PER +1,
PSY +1

Eminences: Sensuality and Conviction

Skills: Lore (Vimary) 2/0, Notice 2/
+1, Read/Write 2/0, Seduction 3/
+2, Synthesis (Passion) 2

Sinead Baal

See that name up there? Look closely, it's nearly faded, the one that says Sinead Baal. I hear she was the first, the one that took the first steps into this place, the first of the Eighth Tribe. Nobody I've talk to remembers her, but she left her imprint everywhere in Hom in the form of murals and effigies. Veruka says that when she was young (a rather long time ago), she remembered seeing a lonely shape traveling around Hom, fixing things. I guess Sinead knew we were coming.

The Winding Road

Just past the Gate, the Winding Road opens up, leading travelers into the heart of Hom. Calling the Winding Road a road, or even a path is a misnomer. In some places it is fairly wide, flanked on both sides by stalls, inns and bars, but rounding a corner, one will find cramped, narrow passages that weave through small cul-de-sacs and dingy walkways. Along the many alleyways of the Winding Road, one can find our homes, our dives and our temples, us of the Fallen. Each block or shanty town has its flavor, the cells living there taking great pride in decorating their homes. Over there, see that home there, that's Kymber's place. Kymber, no matter what people say, is as much our leader as is Veruka. Herites, Doomsayers and Jackers mill around, while Keepers hover about in the periphery. Some sections are cleaner than others. To some, the freedom of Hom means they care little for other people's comfort, but luckily they're a minority. Eventually, though, either by following the Winding Road or one of its many alleyways or tributaries, one will arrive at the center of Hom — the Hallows.

The Hallows

One would never guess that the most vibrant and festive section of Hom is really one of its most sacred and hallowed areas. Most do not remember the tales that surround the central hub of Hom, but occasionally you get your overzealous Doomsayer preaching about Joshua's return, or about the many executions that took place here. See, before Hom, before the Fallen claimed this area as our domain, the Hallows were a place of death. It was here that the tribes executed their worst traitors and heretics, whose crimes were so heinous or whose words so blasphemous that even banishment was not an option. I've heard Den-Hades say that it is the souls of those who died here that guide us along our paths, the early visionaries of the Eighth Tribe.

Today, nothing except the silent gallows poles and crosses stand as reminders of the horrors of the past. Nowadays, the Hallows is where the Eighth Tribe gathers; call it a meeting ground for us. Surrounding the Hallows are countless shops, inns and dives (what we call bars) where we flock. Some, like Junks, appeal to us all, while there are some that only the most macabre Sayer would sanely volunteer to go to.

Exodus

It is easy, Ural, to forget that even with all that is happening, all the gatherings and festive atmosphere, that all is not well in Hom. Not that long ago, right here, the Exodus occurred. A few seasons ago, a Doomsayer named Yefette claimed to have seen a vision, and many — including myself — believed him. You should have seen his face and heard his words, they sounded so true...

He gathered his followers and in one night four dozen of us died. Yefette claimed that Joshua called from beyond, that it was time to return. So he gathered his followers and they all took their lives. All except me, I didn't have the courage. Now I'll never know if I did the right thing or not...

Having Fun

Didn't mean to sour things, it's just important to remember that we still have far to go and that some will get lost along the way. I thought Dahlians knew how to party, but we have them beat by a long shot. Like it or not, we're a community; yes, a bit scattered and fragmented, but we're all exiles. We all have a story to tell. Most of the time, you'll see us gathering and talking, enjoying the company of others. During the day, we roam and explore Vimary, learn and teach, but at night, when Dahlia covers the Earth in shadows, we play. Some dance and put on plays, others enjoy a cool honey drink, some open themselves to the Great River of Dream and enjoy its potential. Yeah, Ural, we know how to have good time...

Junks

Just off the Hallows, near the Winding Road, through that weather-beaten door, lies Junks. Even from the outside its name describes it best, it is nothing more than a sprawling junk heap. Crossing the door, you enter into a meandering collection of small rooms and corridors, each decorated with knickknacks, relics and of course junk. Music fills the air, played by the Sound of Destruction, a cell of Fallen who play every night. Clouds of smoke drift through the rooms, filled with the dim light of candles. Most have mismatched chairs and tables that people use to play games on, or just share tales.

Here, at any time, day or night, you can see the myriad faces of the Eighth Tribe. Though often crowded, there is always just enough room for more. The drinks are cheap and the atmosphere is energetic. Though lately tensions have been high, some cells like the Herite Raven's Shadow and Jacker Torrents have used Junks as a place to air their grievances — and exchange blows.

Barber, Junks' owner, employs those newly exiled who have not yet found a cell to join, happy to give them a home and chance to meet their new family. His patronage does come with a slight price, however: he can call in a favor at any time. He is not vindictive about this, and most "favors" are just requests for information really. Like Veruka and Kymber are mother figures to us, Barber is a father figure. Though not as old as the Wraith, Barber — a Dahlian like myself — is always ready with a quick tale and if there's anything you need to know, he's the best place to start asking.



Altara Ven

Altara Ven is Deus' lover and companion, and she's the one responsible for turning his energies towards more concrete goals. Altara has been long at work trying to unite the Fallen, but the former Agnite's youth means that few take her seriously. Her vibrant determination often intimidates others, who see her and her lover as rivals. On two occasions, unknown assailants attacked her, blinding her in her right eye. Now, more somber, she's learnt that the greatest foe the Eighth Tribe faces is not the tribes or the Z'bri but itself.

Highlights: Vibrant, captivating

*Attributes: BLD -1, CRE +1, INF +1,
PER -1, PSY +1*

Eminences: Unity and Innocence

*Skills: Craft (leatherwork) 2/+1,
Dreaming 2/+1, Human Perception
2/+1, Leadership 1/+1, Lore
(Joshua) 1/0, Mythology 2/0, Read/
Write (tribal) 2/0, Streetwise 1/+1*



Ile Perdue

Lost along one of the many alleyways of the Winding Road, the dive of Ile Perdue is a dark place. Attracting those bitter and resentful towards the tribes, Ile Perdue allows them to vent their anger and wallow in their misery. Here, body piecing, extreme scarification and violent sex are daily occurrences. In the dimly lit rooms, filled with smoke and soft hypnotic music, anything can happen. Some chain themselves to steel bed frames and are flogged by masked individuals, while others lose themselves in flesh-pits.

I'd say only the most embittered go to Ile Perdue, but that's not entirely true. There are times when the pain of banishment is too much to bear, even for those of us who've been exiled for seasons. The torture of seeing loved ones spit at you; the humiliation of being beaten for not believing, all this eventually becomes unbearable.

Don't look so proud, you'll feel it soon as well, and in anger and confusion you'll find yourself at Ile Perdue's doors and you'll do what you have to...



The Temple

You ask what that structure is, that strange building of steel and stone. If you have to know, that is the Temple, home to a great many Doomsayers who call it The Haunt. Day and night they hold mass there, recounting to those willing to listen tales of the coming War, and the path we'll take. They speak of the paradise that awaits, that the time has come to shed light back into the world. Even though their message might be extreme at times, they are the spiritual hearts of the Eighth Tribe. That freak Den-Hades spends her time there, too. She knows a lot about the ways of Synthesis, but she leaves me with a chill.



The Cage

Whereas the Hallows is where we hang out, the Cage is where we gather to discuss important matters or hold our rants. Rants are essentially large gatherings of the Eighth Tribe. Lately, things have been more chaotic, as more and more exiles arrive and some like Hal Ninva seem to purposefully keep us bickering amongst ourselves.

The Cage is a few hundred meters east of the Hallows and is a huge steel dome enclosure. At its center is a concrete platform from where members can address the assembled Eighth Tribe gathered at the foot of the platform, or suspended along the steel framework of the dome.

The Cage is also where judgment falls on those who betray our laws. We're very open minded here, everyone is free to do as she pleases, but there are times when some of us go too far. Anyone accused of committing a crime is judged by everyone, judged by her brothers and sisters. Punishment varies; sometimes it is scarring, but in most extreme circumstances the guilty member is placed in the mercy of the assembled crowd — though this has only happened once and those present still have nightmares of that night.

The Sepulcher

The last place I have to show you is the Sepulcher, home to Veruka. The Wraith, as she calls herself, lives in an old tower; at the top of which burns a flame so powerful that it is visible even during the day. I've heard it said that when we finally leave Vimary and venture out, we must bring the flame with us to light our path. And when we do, when we take the flame, darkness will engulf Vimary, and we'll forget the place where we were born. We'll forget the Z'bri and eventually the Fatimas as well. It's sad. I mean, I see the Seven Deaths for who they are, but for them to fade from memory; it just makes me wonder if all of this is worth it in the end, are we all going to be forgotten as well...

Calling it a Night...

As you can see, Hom is a vibrant place. It never sleeps; even in the coldest winter night, you can hear the sounds of the Eighth Tribe gathering. Though we all claim the inheritance of Joshua's Prophecy, reality is much, much different. We are divided and disparate. Each cell has its own version of what it means to be the Eighth Tribe. Though we call each other brothers and sisters, rivals would better describe the way some cells view each other. For all our strength and purpose, we still have much to learn.

