

WEIRD ADVENTURES

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**DOWN THESE
WEIRD STREETS**

A Guide to the City

ON THE ROAD

A Travelogue of a
Strange New World

**IT LURKS
IN DARKNESS**

A Guide to
Monsters & Menaces

**DOORWAYS
TO DANGER**

Pulse-Pounding
Portals to
Adventure



AN EXCITING NEW RPG SETTING *by* TREY CAUSEY

WELCOME TO THE CITY



The streets are mean—and what lurks beneath then is even meaner, but there's fame and fortune to be had. Grab your guns or your grimoire and join the ranks of the City's adventurers!

Monster killing and treasure hunting meet the Pulp era in a complete rpg setting.

WEIRD ADVENTURES

VOL. 1, No. 1

A ROLE-PLAYING GAME SETTING

2011

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All Features Complete in this Volume

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WEIRD ADVENTURES

CREATED & WRITTEN *by*

Trey Causey

LAYOUT & DESIGN *by*

Jim Shelley

COVER ILLUSTRATION *by*

Doug Stambaugh

BACK COVER ILLUSTRATION *by*

Shipeng Lee

CARTOGRAPHY *by*

Anthony Hunter

INTERIOR ART *by*

Reno Maniquis (p. 4, 38, 76, 145), Dave Felton (p. 6, 14), Daniel Kopalek (p. 16, 23, 104, 107, 131, 151), Seth Frail (p. 28, 96), Chris Huth (p. 41, 48, 150), Johnathan Bingham (p. 43, 74, 119, 146, 149), Adauto Silva (p. 47, 142), Diego Candia (p. 52, 117), Doug Stambaugh (p. 68, 139, 143), Stefan Poag (p. 85, 153), Adam Moore (p. 110, 133) and Alex Garcia (p. 158).

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PROOFREADING *by*

Jim and Jody Garrison, Rob Hewlett, Scott Simmons, Sean Holland and Steve Collington.

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INTRODUCTION

This book details a setting that places traditional fantasy role-playing game tropes in an era reminiscent of our world between the two world wars. More specifically, it's reminiscent of our world in that era as it has been portrayed in fiction, particularly fiction published in pulp magazines.

As with any setting book, there are two primary ways *Weird Adventures* can be used. One could play in the world as presented or simply borrow as many (or as few) of the ideas here as one likes. Some of the material is presented as short essays on particularly game-relevant points of interest, while other portions are presented like selections from a travel guidebook within the world itself. *Weird Adventures* provides numerous examples of how the disparate setting elements fit together but not necessarily a thorough explanation. This is by design. In addition to being a place of adventure, the City and its world can be a place of whimsy, horror, weirdness, or some combination of these. It's up to individual gamemasters to decide which elements to emphasize and which to throw away.

There are interesting tidbits that got left out, of course. The free pdf *Strange Trails* and my blog, *From the Sorcerer's Skull*, cover topics not covered here and provide some additional material on topics that are. If you're curious about the dangers of air travel in the Strange New World or how magical schooling works, or you need a monster that stalks subway and train stations, you can go to the above places to find what you're looking for.

Weird Adventures is the product of a myriad of influences. There's a list of many of these in *Strange Trails*, but a comprehensive catalog would be impossible. I can say that without the works of Fritz Leiber, James Branch Cabell, Dashiell Hammett, China Mieville, Raymond Chandler, Gary Gygax, and Dave Arneson, the City would never have been built.

I'm also indebted to the *WPA Guide to New York* (1939) written by the Federal Writer's Project. Its presentation of the "New York City that was" greatly informed this City that never was.

Trey Causey
2011





INFORMATION PLEASE

*Some Pertinent Background
on the Strange New World*

A Brief History Lesson

The Ealderdish in the New World

The modern political bodies of the New World arose from colonization by the nations of Ealderde, the Old World, across the Meropic Ocean. After centuries taming (or attempting to tame) the New World, Ealderdish attentions were drawn back to wars on their own continent; their distant colonies took the opportunity to assert their independence. The states of the Union were first, nearly two centuries ago now. In the decades that followed, they were joined by others.

Since independence, the nations of the New World have struggled to gain the respect of their colonial parents. They alternately engaged with the Old World and shunned it. Twenty-four years ago, Ealderde

plunged into its latest and largest war—the largest ever in history.

The Great War

With the eruption of the so-called Great War, a number of new technologies were brought to bear. Thaumaturgical and alchemical weapons were utilized on a scale never seen before—with long-lasting and terrible consequences. Acid fog was released from sprayers to discourage attackers or to soften defenders. Amorphing solutions delivered via artillery shells sowed terror by making flesh malleable, dissolving limbs, or even melting soldiers together. Thaumaturgical explosives and blights laid waste to cities and farmlands. Rays of searing light or jets of intense cold fired from zeppelins cut swaths of destruction across enemy trenches.

THE PREHISTORY OF THE NEW WORLD

THE NEW WORLD ISN'T REALLY **NEW**, BUT WHAT'S KNOWN OF ITS PRE-COLONIAL PAST IS A MIXTURE OF ARCHEOLOGY, LEGEND--AND **SPECULATION**.



THE FIRST GREAT CIVILIZATION WAS **MEROPIS**--THOUGH WHEN EXACTLY IT FLOURISHED HAS BEEN LOST IN THE MISTS OF TIME! MEROPIS WAS **DESTROYED** IN A **GREAT CATAclySM**, AND THE ISLAND CONTINENT SANK BENEATH **THE OCEAN** THAT BEARS ITS NAME.

UNGUCESSABLE AGES PASSED, THEN THE NEW WORLD SAW THE RISE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED **THE**

ANCIENTS. MAYBE THEY WERE **REFUGEES** FROM MEROPIS--OR MAYBE THEY WERE FROM **ANOTHER WORLD!** WHATEVER THEIR ORIGINS, THE ANCIENTS WERE A RACE OF **SEMI-GIANTS**, AND THEIR DESCENDANTS--**THE HILLYBILLY GIANTS**--ARE TALLER STILL.



THEY RIDDLED THE CONTINENT WITH **UNDERGROUND COMPLEXES** AND BURIED THEIR DEAD WITH **TREASURES** IN GREAT EARTHEN MOUNDS.



THE ANCIENTS BROUGHT THE **BLACK FOLK** FROM THE CONTINENT OF EBON-LAND IN THE EAST **TO TOIL AS SLAVES** IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR FUNERARY MOUNDS AND SUBTERRANEAN STRUCTURES.

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There were also weapons calculated to cause more terror than direct damage. Fear rays lead to mass panic in population centers. The battlefield fallen were briefly reanimated to turn on their grieving comrades. Squads of murderous constructs with the appearance of children's toys were sent into unsuspecting villages in the dead of night.

After four years, the war officially ended. Whatever the treaties say, there were no real victors, only once-proud nations in varying degrees of devastation. Economies were broken and cities left in ruins. Little wars—and the settling of accounts—continued in some areas for years. Manhunting kill-machines still roamed the blasted former battlefields and depopulated wastes. Two decades later, refugees still come to the New World seeking to escape the post-war horror.

Hard Times

Who cares about the Old World? Things are tough right here.

Drought and over-farming have combined with the taint left in the elemental fields by the Great War to create the Dustlands. Civil War still wages in Zingaro. The economic collapse of Ealderde has dragged down its New World trading partners. "Hard Times," people say with a sigh.



New World Calendar

The Days of the Week:

Godsday
Loonsday
Pyresday
Wyrdsday
Stormday
Lovesday
Mournday

The Months of the Year:

Shiver
Gelid
Bluster
Vernal
Floral
Midsummer
Swelter
Ripened
Harvest
Redfall
Erefrost
Aforeyule

Holidays:

Hearts' Day: In the month of Gelid, romance (and sex) is celebrated by the exchange of heart-shaped cards and gifts among sweethearts. The powers of the *eikone* Doll are at their strongest, and her manifestations walk the earth, manipulating the lives of humans to induce love—or at least lust or passion.

Revenant Night: The 31st of Redfall, known in some places as the Night of Misrule or the Eve of Madness.

On this night, the walls between the material plane and the realm of the dead are said to be thin. Many adults may go masked and avoid using their real names—though in more of a playful than fearful spirit, today. Children dress in more elaborate costumes and engage in ritual begging, door-to-door.

Winter Solstice: On the 21st of Aforeyule, some folk of Northern Ealderdish descent wear masks to pass as goblins and evil spirits, hiding in plain view from *Bertha*, Queen of the White Women, the witches of the North. Today, it's mostly a time of drinking and bonfires, though some hold the witch queen still stalks the world on this night.

Yule: Twelve days (running from the end of Aforeyule through the beginning of Shiver) where the forces of light and dark, law and disorder, do symbolic (and sometimes actual) battle. Two supernatural entities roam the night: jovial *Old Father Yule* brings gifts to children (and sometimes adults in dire need), while the horned and goat-legged *Grumpf* spreads mayhem and chaos, occasionally snatching up children (and sometimes young ladies) and them beating them with switches.

Peoples of the New World

Ealderdish

The people of the northern Old World continent of Ealderde view themselves as the most enlightened people of the world and its rightful masters. While their achievements are many (as are their conquests), their rise is relatively recent (given the whole sweep of history) and has come at a high price. Besides the oppression of native peoples in the New World and Ebon-Land, competition among the Ealderdish nations has led to a series of conflicts, the last and most serious of which was the Great War. Among the Ealderdish there are numerous nationalities and ethnicities given to distrust and prejudice; only in comparison to the people of other lands do they see themselves as a unified group at all.

The Natives

The name (mis)applied by the Ealderdish to the dominant peoples of the New World at the time of their arrival. The Natives were primitive tribes, living in a somewhat depopulated land. Evidence suggests this was not always so. When they first arrived

in the New World, the Natives quickly populated both continents, pushing the declining Ancients to ever smaller areas. Today, the descendants of the Ealderdish have, in turn, put the Natives on reservations or driven them into the few remaining places of less hospitable wilderness.

The Black Folk

The Black folk also beat the Ealderdish to the New World, though not by choice. The Ancients transported the Black folk from the continent of Ebon-Land in the east to toil as slaves in the construction of their funerary mounds and subterranean habitations. Like the Natives, the Ealderdish (even in the Old World) have only known the Black folk as primitives—albeit possessed of powerful magics—but the Black folk's own legends tell a different story. They were once possessed of a great civilization, destroyed in a devastating magical war with Meropis. The Meropian deathblow wiped most of the works of the Black folk from history; only a few now-anomalous ruins remain to perplex Ealderdish explorers.

The Black folk are more integrated with Ealderdish society than

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the Natives and exist in greater numbers. However, they are second class citizens, suffering from discrimination and distrust—and even sporadic pogroms over the centuries. The Ealderdish-descended majority stereotype them as lazy, ignorant, and superstitious. Ironically, the legends of the Black folk identify the Ealderdish as the results of Meropian sorcerer-scientists crossbreeding humans with subhuman stock. For these reasons, the Black folk remain something of a people apart, tending to settle in their own enclaves—in no small part because doing so provides them some degree of protection from wider society.

Yianese

Not all peoples of the Far East are ethnically Yianese, but distinctions between different groups are lost on wider New World society, and the Empire of Yian *does* control much of that region. The people of Yian are generally considered a mysterious and alien presence in the New World. Much of this prejudice and fear is borne of misunderstanding, but this much is true: The Yianese are an ancient people with ancient secrets.

Yian is not actually the name of this empire of the ancient East in its own tongue. It's actually the name of the mystical, secluded city—only sometimes accessible on this plane—where the dread (and perhaps inhuman) rulers of the empire dwell. These are the *Ku'en-Yuinn*, “the Deathless”—undying sorcerers thought to be lichens abiding from prehistoric Lemuria.

The common folk of Yian and the Far East are humans like any other: Despite the stereotypes in the West, they are not yellow-skinned. The “high folk” of the *city* of Yian, however, do have skin-tones ranging from lemon to saffron. These folk also tend to be tall, whereas the common Yianese are shorter than most westerners. Also, the high folk of the purest ancient bloodlines often have a slightly inhuman—sometimes even bestial—cast to their features.

The common folk of Yian began immigrating to the New World in the last century. They crossed the Tranquil Ocean looking for economic opportunity and freedom from the yolk of the often oppressive rule of the Deathless lords and the high folk. Like other ethnic

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minorities, they've unfortunately met with distrust and oppression from the Ealderdish majority in the New World. Despite this, large and thriving "Yiantowns" have grown up in several of the metropolises of New World.

Religion

The dominant faiths of the New World came from Ealderde with the colonists. The Natives had their own religions, of course, as did the Black folk, but their belief systems have either been persecuted out of existence (like some of the Native faiths) or forced to syncretize with the predominant religion (in the case of the Black folk).

The Ealderdish colonists practiced a variety of faiths, but all were variations of a monotheistic religion centered on a holy writ called the Good Book. There are numerous faiths or creeds based on competing interpretations of this work. Many fall under the rubric of so-called **Old-Time Religion**. These faiths have little church hierarchy and a strong emphasis on good works and personal study of the Good Book. Variant Old-Time ecstasies may experience *glossolalia* or

other mystical manifestations. Such practices are seen as unsophisticated and rustic by urban folk, but this sort of thing is common in the villages of the Smaragdines.

On the other end of the spectrum is the **Oecumenical Hierarchate**. This church is older than the misnamed Old-Time Religion and has more elaborate ritual and church structure. Its practitioners venerate a number of saints and keep a full calendar of ritual observances. Being less common among the Ealderdish who came to the northern continent of Septentrion, Oecumenicals are stereotyped as superstitious and foreign there. In Asciana and Zingaro, however, Oecumenicalism is the predominant faith.

Religion in the New World isn't strictly a matter of faith: There's clear evidence of the existence of a god or gods. After all, numerous adventurers have encountered angels from the Armies of Salvation or devils from the Hell Syndicate. A few have made actual physical journeys to Heaven or Hell. Confusingly, the Heavens visited and the monotheistic Gods encountered are not identical. In

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other words, multiple, competing sole creators seem to exist!

Some scholars believe there are as many heavens as there are faiths—each with a God that fits their particular belief. The devout are, of course, skeptical of this idea and tend to view all gods but their own as false. If the scholars are correct, how this arrangement came into being and what it says about the nature of the universe is the subject of much debate, but with no clear answer.

“Pagan” gods and goddesses are also known to exist, but these beings typically seem weaker and closer to human scale in terms of power—though wielding magics well beyond those available mortals. They’re sometimes referred to as “small” gods by thaumaturgical practitioners who are more accepting of their existence than the faithful.

There are also concepts personified (called *eikones* by scholars), seemingly existing on a level equivalent to the greatest small gods, or between the small gods and the singular [*sic*] God. One theory holds that the *eikones* are

powerful spirits created by God to help in the day-to-day management of the world, while another holds they are the product of the human mind and its inherent tendency to anthropomorphization. The general populace is mostly unaware of their existence, despite often invoking them in a variety of ways. Some mages, however, are aware and treat with these entities to gain their aid.

Eikones

The exact number of *eikones* is unknown, mainly because there’s no consensus on where the line between these beings and lesser spirits or thoughtforms should be drawn, if at all. The most commonly recognized—and recognizably powerful—are:

Management: The personification of government, bureaucracy, order, law, and the status quo. It’s his acolytes people unknowingly condemn when they disparage “city hall” or complain about “pencil-pushers.” Management can be called upon to lend false authority to a request and thus cut through red-tape or bureaucratic

continued on next page...

Eikones

delay or invoked for spells that lend the power of doublespeak for obfuscation. Unwanted attention from Management can lead one to bureaucratic entanglements, imprisonment, or even execution in extreme cases.

Phile: The spirit of solidarity and fraternalism. He's invoked when people unite in common cause and (more darkly) when they turn on outsiders. Invoking Phile can help create a feeling of solidarity in a group, bolstering morale. His influence can also be used to sway mobs and move them to or from a particular course of action.

Doll: The spirit of sex, sexual attraction, and, to a lesser extent, feminine beauty. Doll is invoked by those looking to impress, seduce, or in any way gain power over another through the use of sexual attraction.

Maker: The embodiment of technology, progress, science and industry. Maker is invoked by those involved in any task of engineering or industry. His influence can be used to solve mechanical or engineering problems. His power can coax "a little extra" from engines or get a machine working at a critical moment.

The Practice of Magic

The variety of magical practice is diverse, but can be placed in broad categories. The categories employed, however, depend on the philosophical perspective of the person doing the categorizing.

The division made by thaumatologists (those involved in the study of magic as a "natural" force) is between *thaumaturgy* and *mysticism*. Thaumaturgy is the applied science of magic: The exploitation of forces and principles as real as physics or chemistry. There are many competing models as to the "hows" and "whys" of magic, but whatever their differences, they typically involve spells/formulae, magical aides/tools, and experimentation. Mysticism, on the other hand, is less rational and more intuitive. It relies on idiosyncratic (or even a lack of) explanations. Its tools are things like meditation, physical conditioning, and/or the use of drugs to create altered states of consciousness to achieve sudden insight.

THE PLANES BEYOND



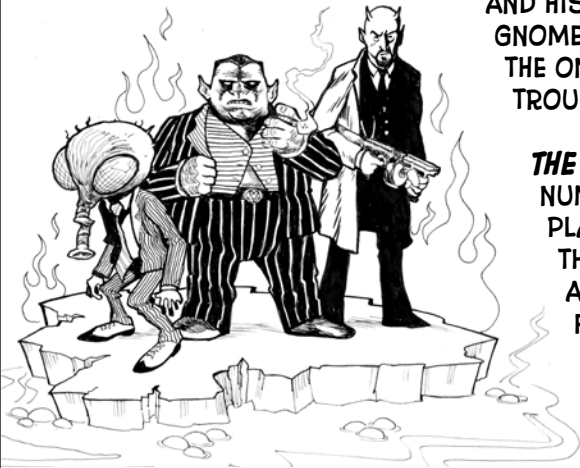
THE HEAVENS: TRADITION PUTS THEIR NUMBER AT **SEVEN**, BUT SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THERE MAY BE AS MANY **HEAVENS** AS THERE ARE PERMUTATIONS ON THE FAITH OF **THE GOOD BOOK!** THIS IS THE REALM OF GOD, THE ANGELS, AND THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD.

THE ASTRAL PLANE: THE "SEA" SURROUNDING THE MATERIAL PLANE AND EXTENDING TO THE WORLDS OF THE AFTERLIFE.

HERE, THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS ARE GIVEN **PROTEAN FORM**. NEAR THE EARTH, TWO RELATIVELY STABLE **SUBREALMS** HAVE COALESCED FROM THE ASTRAL SUBSTANCE. SOULS OF THE DEAD WAIT IN THE GRAY AND DREARY CITY OF THE **UNDERWORLD**, HOPING TO GET **TRANSIT PAPERS** TO AN AFTERLIFE FROM THE BLAND FUNCTIONAIRES CALLED **GRAY MEN**.



DREAMS RISE INTO THE ASTRAL LIKE BUBBLES AND MERGE WITH ANOTHER ASTRAL SUBREALM, **DREAMLAND** OR **SLUMBERLAND**. HERE, THE MIRROR-MASKED **DREAM LORD** AND HIS SUBORDINATES, THE GNOME-LIKE **SANDMEN**, MONITOR THE ONIRIC FLOWS FOR SIGNS OF TROUBLE.



THE HELLS: USUALLY NUMBERED **NINE**. THESE ARE PLACES OF **TORMENT** FOR THE SOULS OF THE **WICKED** AND THE ABODE OF THE FALLEN **DEVILS** SEEKING TO **OVERTURN** THE ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE.

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Mainstream religious organizations tend to partition magic differently. Most Oecumenical priests and monks and Old-Time Religion preachers and evangelists have no magical powers whatsoever. The Good Book cautions against sorcery and witchcraft, and, at various times and places throughout history, its adherents have persecuted magical practitioners. Given the demonstrable reality of magic and its obvious utility, this prohibition has had about as much success as similar condemnation of prostitution or sexual promiscuity.

In fact, people have continued to practice minor magic to ward off evil throughout history. Even churches have been built with such workings placed on them. Folk grimoires of Good Book-inspired magic have been used by rural magical practitioners and wise folk for centuries. This has only sporadically been seen as “sorcery”—and seldom persecuted. The spells and rituals found in these grimoires address mundane concerns: the protection of humans or livestock from malign magics or other harms, aide in the success of everyday activities like agriculture or cooking, or simply the provision

of luck. Many pious followers of the Old-Time Religion, particularly in rural areas, are practitioners of this type of magic to this day.

The more centralized Oecumenical Hierarchate discourages this folk use (with only the mildest success) but has established certain religious orders whose goal has been the acquisition and mastery of magic for the greater glory of the Church and God. They tend to prefer the term *theurgy* (“divine-working”), and disparage the godless (and potentially soul-imperiling) *thaumaturgy* (“wonder-working”). These orders (both priestly and monastic) wield magics as powerful as any thaumaturgist, though their spells and rituals are somewhat different, having arisen by parallel development.

Despite the philosophical differences between these religious magic-users and their more secular rivals, there is no real functional difference between the two styles of magical practice from the scientific perspective.

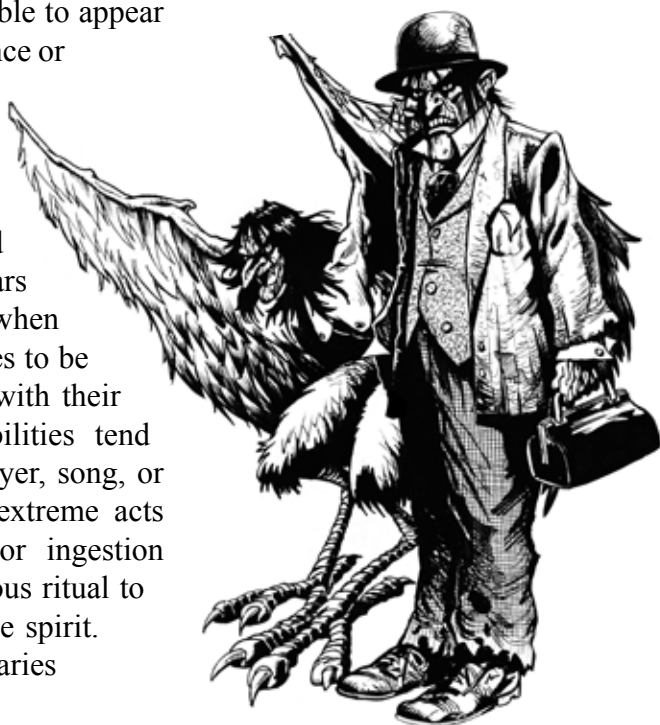
There is another class of religious magic-wielders who *do* appear to be fundamentally different. There are

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many names for such individuals but they're often called "the gifted" or "miracle-workers." Some thaumatological scholars have suggested that these individuals are actually mystics of some sort, but the gifted themselves believe their powers are granted by their deity or by their faith.

The gifted manifest powers like speaking in tongues, healing, turning/destroying the undead, protection from evil, or supernatural strength or vitality. Some gifted have even been said to be able to appear in multiple places at once or to fly. The gifted only have these powers when they act in congruence with the dictates of their god or, as some scholars have pointed out, when they *believe* themselves to be acting in accordance with their god's will. These abilities tend to be activated by prayer, song, or in some cases more extreme acts like self-flagellation or ingestion of poison—any religious ritual to focus the mind and the spirit. The exact ritual varies from person to person.

Gifts of faith are more common in rural areas than in urban ones and more common among followers of more ecstatic sects than mainstream ones. Such gifts are in no way confined to those who actually have religious ordination or authority.



THE STRANGE NEW WORLD





A STRANGE NEW WORLD

An Adventurer's Gazeteer to the Lands Beyond the Union

CHAPTER I: *The Lay of the Land*

IT'S officially named Zephyria, this Western hemispheric landmass of two continents and a scattering of islands, but mostly it's known as the New World. The northern continent, Septentrion, is the more populous of the two, and home to the City and a lot of lesser cities. The southern continent of Asciana is wilder; it's a place of tractless, green jungle hell and barren mountain peaks, jagged as a vampire's grin. The two continents are close, but keep a coy distance, separated by a narrow strait strewn with rock outcroppings, and made

even more treacherous by geologic peculiarities that cause the rocks to periodically rise and fall.

Oceans separate the New World from the rest. East across the Meropic we find the Old World. In the north is Ealderde—the continent usually meant when one says “the Old World.” In the south is Ebon-Land, another place colonized (and exploited) by the Ealderdish powers. West across the Tranquil Ocean are exotic isles strung in archipelagos, the meager ghosts of drowned continents, until eventually we circle back ‘round the globe to the Orient, the continent of Eura, and the mysterious land of Yian.

A STRANGE NEW WORLD

North and south we find frigid seas and the polar regions. In the Arctic, there's a Polar Continent quartered by torrential channels and mapped only by legend. At its center is the Pole itself, and the magnetic, magic-disrupting Black Peak, around which swirls a vortex of sea water falling down into...The Hollow Earth? The Elemental Planes? Primal chaos? No one knows.

And from those mysteries, we retreat southward...

CHAPTER II: *Borea: The Wild North*

BOREA is the sprawling land north of the Union. It's more sparsely populated than its southern neighbor, owing to a more frigid climate. Most of its cities and towns are clustered around either the Inland Sea, or the West Sea and the Strait of Anian. The latter two form the Northwest Passage allowing westward travel from Ealderde to the Far East.

There *are* those who choose to live in the Borean wilderness or its more isolated towns. Not the least among these are the prospectors and various folk looking to profit

off them, who flocked to the North in a series of gold rushes earlier this century and the end of the last. The rushes are over, but miners continue to work claims, and dreamers still cling to the hope of a big strike.

The miners are relative newcomers. Hunters and trappers still eke out livings as they have for over two hundred years; there's still a market for the meat of the dwindling mammoth herds, or for the golden pelts of the *aurumvorax*. The vast northern forests still support a thriving timber industry. Then there are the aboriginal peoples who follow the ways of their ancestors, some of them living in the ice-bound wastes where few "civilized" folk ever care to go.

Borea's cold owes to more than its latitude. Some strong northern winds are actually born from the confluence of elemental water and air, forming elemental ice. The preternatural cold of these winds can freeze unprotected animals or people in their tracks, cause trees to explode with quick-frozen sap, or even coat whole villages in ice. Boreans try their best to avoid these **death-frost winds**, and experienced

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woodsfolk know the signs that mean such a wind is coming.

Over the vast wilds of Borea, the Boreal Mounted Police are responsible for keeping the peace and enforcing justice. These intrepid lawmen contend with human criminals and monstrous menaces (like werewolves, or the dread wendigo), as well.

Like the Freedomian Rangers far to the south, the mounted police are a special breed, inured to life on the fringe of civilization. As such, they're figures romanticized in fiction and film in Borea, and famed even in more southern lands.



Icy Winds of Death

The death-frost winds do 2d6 cold damage (half damage with a successful saving throw), and any exposed metal is affected as per *chill metal*. In the wake of the blast severe cold conditions remain (for games for which that would be meaningful) for d100 minutes.

"THE WOLF PACK OF THE WINDIGO VALLEY"

Black Jacques DuMarais has cut a swath across the frontier, committing brutal murder for robbery and sometimes just for sadistic pleasure. The Boreal Mounted Police are after him, and there's a sizable bounty on his head as well.

DuMarais has taken a mining camp hostage in isolated and snowbound Windigo Valley. There, he plans to amuse himself while waiting out the winter. He commands at least five loup-garous (werewolves) he created through the use of Native magic, and has other spells at his disposal.

DuMarais' ability to create and control werewolves comes from the tattoos (a stylized wolf's head encircled by a geometric pattern) decorating the back of his left hand. Severing this hand will break his control over the beasts and destroy his ability to create new ones.

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The North has its share of mysteries, too. Shimmering, phantom cities are sometimes seen in its skies, which may be ghostly glimpses of the distant past, psychic projections of the fabled paradise of *Hyper-borea*, or something else. Then there are legends of an Arctic island warmed by volcanoes or hot springs, which may be the ancestral home of all the native peoples of the New World. Other legends, or sea tales, speak of ancient longships from the Old World emerging from the icy mists, manned by undead raiders, and laden with centuries of plunder.

CHAPTER III: Zingaro: Death & Revolution

ZINGARO is a mostly desert land to the south of the Union territories and Freedonia. Despite an ancient and proud history, modern Zingaro is a place of poverty and strife. What began as a populist revolution over twenty years ago has become a bloody civil war with no end in sight. Various contenders for the presidency have bases of power in different parts of the country. They commit atrocities

against other factions in the name of strategic advantage and bleed their own people to fund their campaigns—which often require foreign mercenaries.



The people of Zingaro practice a heretical version of the Oecumenical faith that venerates the Barren Madonna, Our Lady of the Grave, “Sainted Mother Death,” as its patron saint. This saint isn’t recognized officially by the Church outside of Zingaro, and theological scholars speculate that she is either a syncretized pagan death goddess or an *eikone* of death dressed in an Oecumenical nun’s habit—or perhaps both. Her festival is the “Day of the Dead,” when the people of Zingaro pay homage to the ghosts of their ancestors and offer gifts of skull-shaped sweets to any undead they encounter—an occurrence more common there

than in most of the New World, and nowhere so common as in the town of Cujiatepec (q.v.).

Skulls are an important symbol in Zingaro beyond sweets for the undead. The most powerful of the items connected with the veneration of Mother Death are the **crystal skulls**. Seven are known to exist, but some thaumatological archaeologists believe there may be as many as thirteen in existence. These mysterious items predate the modern land of Zingaro, perhaps being artifacts of prehistoric New World civilization, or of drowned Meropis. Whatever their origin, the Lady of the Grave has claimed them as her own. Folklore holds they are the transformed skulls of men who so loved the Lady that she preserved a part of them forever — while taking their souls into her eternal embrace as God wills.

The skulls exhibit a variety of supernatural powers. For this reason, the various former generals, bandit chieftains, and populist leaders who vie for control of Zingaro also vie for control of the crystal skulls. They're more than willing to pay adventurers to plunder Native ruins or old tombs in search of them, but probably just as willing to double-

The Strange Power of the Crystal Skulls

Each of the seven crystal skulls may exhibit different powers, but the following are common to all:

strike dead — once per day, a bearer may kill a foe instantly by pointing the skull at them;

animate zombie — once per day, the bearer may cause a corpse to rise as a zombie subject to his or her bidding by holding the skull over the body and concentrating;

foretelling — holding the skull and staring into its eyeless sockets sometimes gives confusing (and perhaps incomplete) visions of the bearer's future.



Fig. 112.

REPRESENTATION OF A HUMAN
SKULL IN ROCK CRYSTAL.
Zingaro.

A STRANGE NEW WORLD

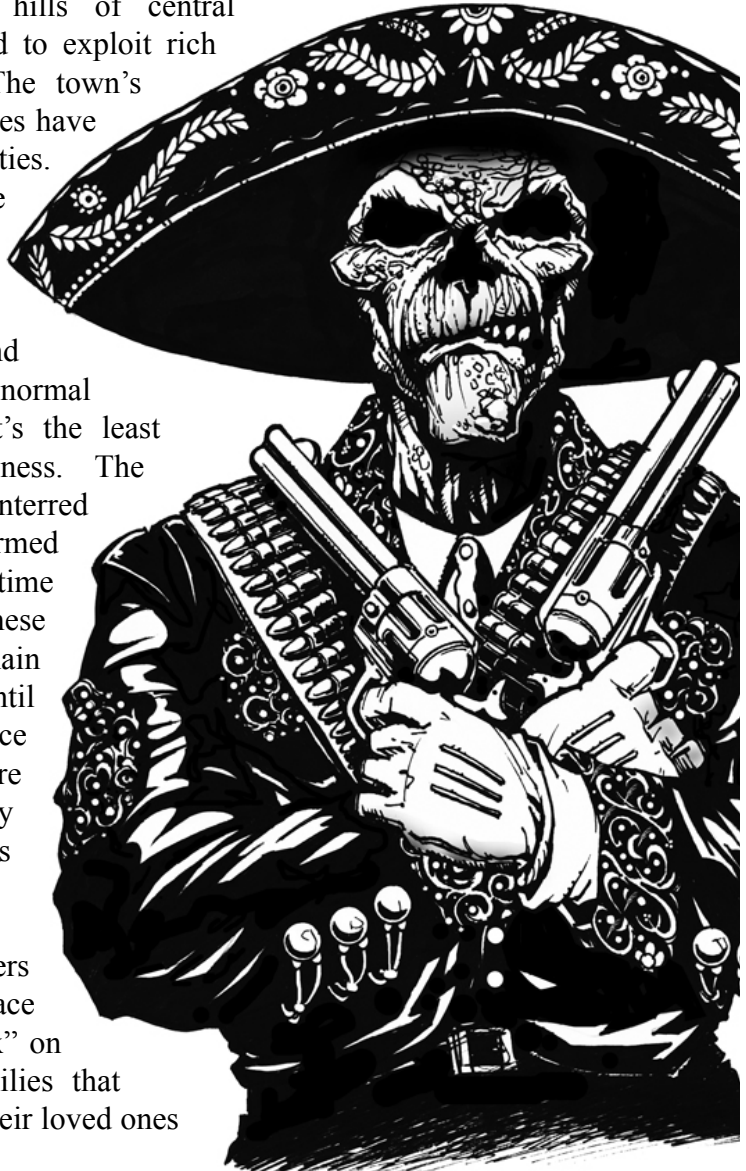
cross said adventurers when they have what they want.

Cujiatepec

Cujiatepec is an old settlement nestled in the hills of central Zingaro, founded to exploit rich silver veins. The town's western cemeteries have eldritch properties. Most of the bodies buried in them are somehow mummified and don't decay at a normal rate — but that's the least of the strangeness. The corpses there interred are transformed in a month's time into undead. These creatures remain in torpor until exhumed, but once this is done they're as active as any zombie, and as intelligent.

The town fathers of Cujiatepec place a stiff "grave tax" on all burials. Families that can't pay have their loved ones

dug up and sold as undead slave labor. The same is done to vagrants or strangers that die in town, and to criminals. The local church supports this practice



by suggesting that those dead thus employed are serving penance for sins in life, and earning their soul's way into heaven by the labor of their soulless bodies. At any given time, a hundred undead may be working in the city as laborers or auxiliary police.

CHAPTER IV:

Asciana: The Pathless Trail to Danger

THE southern continent of the New World is less settled than its northern neighbor. This is largely attributable to it being a land of geographical extremes: In the west, only a sliver of coast separates the ocean from the lofty and jagged peaks of the Dragon's Backbone Mountains; in the east, the wine-dark tendrils of the Grand Cinnamon River system snake through dense jungle; and in the south, there are cold steppes where giants dwell.

Asciana was once home to an advanced civilization, perhaps a culture related to either Mu or Meropis, depending on which scholar opines. Impressive as the Native culture was when the Ealderdish conquerors arrived, it

was merely a ghost of what had come before. Already, great cities had been lost in the jungle, and legend. Still, stories persist of lost Akakor, cloaked by jungle in some high mountain valley, where one may find the entrance to the last redoubt of the ancients: a chain of subterranean cities beneath the Dragon's Backbone.

The jungles of the Grand Cinnamon basin are a popular setting in adventure stories. In addition to primitive (sometimes headhunting) human tribes, there are also the reptilian caimen, somewhat smaller and more nimble relatives of the northern gatormen. Other natural dangers include giant snakes, river sharks, piranhas, and even carnivorous plants.



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Despite its portrayal in popular fiction, Asciana is far from unspoiled wilderness. There *are* large cities here, and industry. The abundant natural resources in the form of rubber trees and other timber, precious metals, and petroleum attract corporate and governmental interests from all over the world. Meddling by foreign powers serves to exacerbate political instabilities in this post-colonial region. Communalitarianism and anarchism have their adherents, and there are concerns that the Reds may have already infiltrated the underground networks left by the land's ancient inhabitants.



Asciana is carved up into several squabbling nations, though the land's volatile politics mean their governments — and borders — are subject to change.



Rio do Papagaio

Rio do Papagaio, commonly referred to simply as Papagaio, is the capital of Amazona, the largest nation in Asciana. Papagaio is famous for its beautiful beaches and its luxurious resort hotels, particularly the Palmeira de Ouro. These hotels, and the city's night spots infused with unique Amazonan music melded with jazz, are commonly filled with foreigners of every sort—vacationing tycoons, dissipated Ealderdish nobles, swaggering adventurers, and spies.

All this glamour contrasts with the city's crowded slums and shantytowns built haphazardly and

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precariously up and along the hills that flank the seaside playgrounds of the wealthy. It's here one might find agents of the Reds fomenting revolution, a witch from the hinterlands working secret curses, or a lycanthrope dining on easy and abundant prey.



Ten Ways to Die in Asciana

1 – **Beheaded** by headhunters in the jungles of Thermidor.

2 – **Exsanguinated** by the giant mosquito minions of the vampiric Mosquito Goddess on the San Zancudo/Costaguanan border.

3 – **Poisoned** by a psychedelic toxin on dart fired from the blowgun of a plant-pygmy in the Grand Cinammon Basin.

4 – **Eaten** by a prehistoric monster on a remote jungle plateau.

5 – **Executed** by firing squad after being suckered and betrayed by a dame in Papagaio.

6 – **Dragged down** into a pit by a tentacled monstrosity in a jungle-shrouded ruined city.

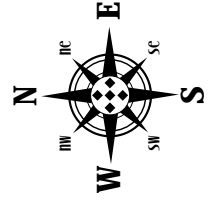
7 – **Devoured** by a carnivorous plant cultivated in the secret garden of a wealthy madman.

8 – **Swallowed** by a giant constrictor snake in the Rio Perditio.

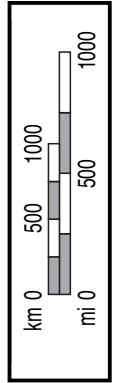
9 – **Frozen** in the high Dragon's Backbone Mountains.

10 – **Strangled** by a misshapen giant with the brain of a missing railroad engineer driven insane by the sadistic experiments he endured at the hands of the Reds.

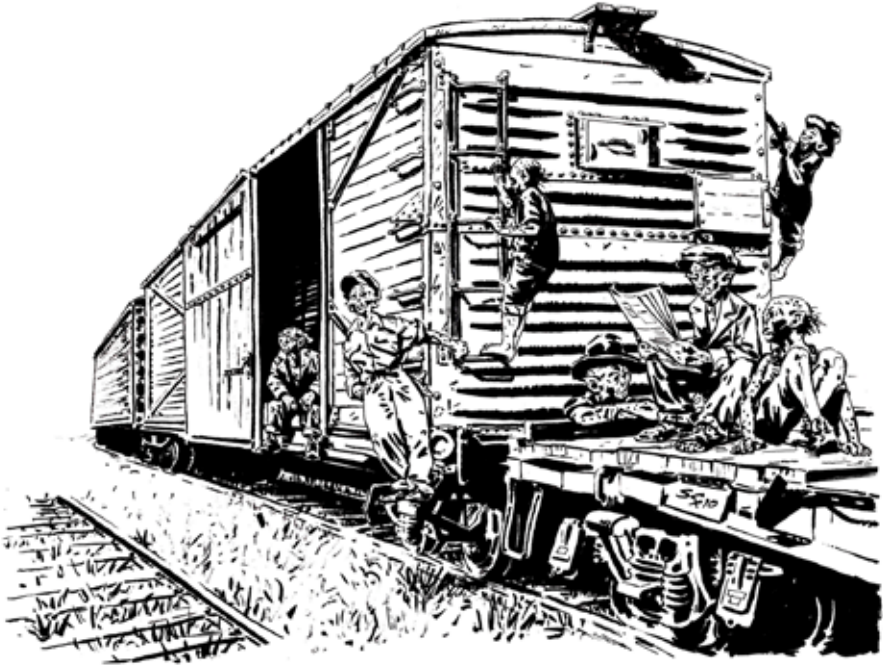
A STRANGE NEW WORLD



THE UNION



- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The City | 8. Great Pahapokee Marshes |
| 2. Piratropolis | 9. New Vourque |
| 3. Vronburg | 10. Stony Mountains |
| 4. Moton | 11. The Grand Chasm |
| 5. Lake City | 12. Dona Fortuna |
| 6. Smaragline Mountains | 13. San Tiburon |
| 7. Mirkwater Swamp | 14. Illetropic |



ON THE WEIRD ROAD

...With Adventure as a Traveling Companion

CHAPTER I: *The Union*

THE Union is a confederation of states formed by several disparate Ealderdish colonies on the continent of Septentrion. With a population of around 105 million, it's the most populous political entity in the Western hemisphere. Its current members include the New Lludd Counties, the City of Empire,

the Steel League, the Inland Sea Combine, Freedomia, Hesperia, the Southern Shires, and the territories of the West, Smaragdine, and the Vast Plains.

The withdrawal of Ealderdish forces for yet another of their interminable wars left the colonies to their own devices, and they soon bound together for mutual protection. In 5727, the Union was

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established. Some colonies (or at least their leaders) saw the Union as a chance to build an empire, or at least establish their hegemony over the New World, but ultimately a decentralized Union prevailed. The Union was designed to have no strong executive, instead vesting its power in a bicameral Union Congress.

The larger house, known as the General Assembly, has three representatives from each member state, who are elected by popular vote, though the means by which the slate of candidates is arrived at varies from state to state. The

General Assembly is presided over by a speaker elected by the assembly members. The speaker still holds the ceremonial “speaking stick” (in appearance, something like a fraternity paddle or cricket bat inscribed with runes), but trials by combat are now a rarely invoked parliamentary tool.

The smaller house (the Executive Council) is more of a committee empowered to make urgent decisions at critical times—originally defined as when the Assembly was not in session, but now with a wider application. The committee has one representative

Currency

The Union has a unified currency, overseen by the Union Central Bank. Every member state issues notes and coins so designs vary, though sizes are uniform for ease of recognition. The value of the Union dollar is pegged to gold, so that 1 troy ounce=\$35.

Typical denominations of currency, their common names, and relative values are as follows:

Notes: 1 Union = 5 “double sawbucks” = 10 “sawbucks” = 20 “fins” = 100 dollars (\$)

Coins: 1 dollar = 2 half-dollars = 4 quarters = 10 dimes = 20 nickels = 100 cents (“pennies” or “coppers”)

Notes of larger denomination are sometimes issued, but these are used only between banks and aren’t in general circulation.

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from each state, but the number of “votes” they command is based on the population of the state. Each is appointed by his or her respective state government but must be approved by acclamation of the Assembly. The chairman of the committee is not officially a representative of any state and is instead appointed by the Assembly. Decisions of the committee must ultimately be approved by the Assembly, but details need not be publicly debated, meaning that the business of the committee is inherently more secretive.

The Union has authorized the settlement of new territories which have courtesy representation in the Assembly but no actual vote. The Vast Plains Territories seemed close to applying for full membership in the Union, but the misfortunes that resulted in it becoming better known as the Dustlands has set that back by decades. The citizens of the Smaragdine Mountains seem completely uninterested in ever becoming full members.

The seat of the Union government is Phratropolis, a planned city located between the territories of the City’s influence and the South. Viewed from the air, the city’s layout

resembles a magic sigil writ large, which is exactly what it is. The thaumaturgic planners made the entire city a ward against sorcerous influence on government—though, like all wards, there are ways it can be breached. And the larger the ward the larger the holes are, comparatively. There are powerful *genius loci* known as *poliphylaxes* who visit retribution on any who would try to harm the structures or monuments of the Union to contend with, as well.

CHAPTER II: *New Lludd*

LYING north of the hegemony of the City, New Lludd boasts some of the oldest permanent Ealderdish settlements in Septentrion. The earliest colonists were religious separatists from Grand Lludd, who were derisively called “Stickers” in their native country but called themselves “the Lawful.”

The Lawful believed that existence was a struggle between the forces of Law (the living spirit of the commandments of God) and Chaos (everything else). They opposed what they believed to be the

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excesses and superstitious ritual of the Oecumenical Church, and also rejected the worldliness of their homeland—the imbibing of strong drink, dancing, and merriment in general. Queen Gloriana’s patronizing of the thaumaturgical arts was bad enough, but a widely held rumor that she was fae-blooded—a race inherently aligned with Chaos and thus, the devils—made the Lawful determined to form a more godly society in the New World. Lead by their greatest holy warriors—their paladins—they set sail to bring the dominion of Law to the Chaos of the wilderness.

Things didn’t go exactly as they planned. They built settlements, slayed monsters and cleared ancient ruins, but successive generations have largely rejected the fanatical beliefs of their forefathers. Today, the Lawful and their tireless witchhunting are mostly seen as just a colorful part of New Lludd’s past. The region now contains the oldest and most prestigious universities in the New World—many of which boast libraries with impressive collections of esoteric lore. Its largest cities are bustling ports, bolstered by immigrants from all over Ealderde. Though it’s been

eclipsed now by other regions, New Lludd long had a reputation for forward-thinking: It was here that the idea of the Union was born.

The back-country, in contrast, remains stubbornly insular. Mostly these independent folk are just mundane farmers and craftspeople, though not entirely. Ironically, many fae-blooded came to the New World to escape persecution at home. They established communities in rural areas where they could be left alone. Witches and sorcerers hid among the Lawful as well, and they found the relative isolation and numerous pre-Ealderdish sites of power conducive to continued study of their arts. Both of these groups have descendents in the farmlands and the quaint but decaying hamlets, hiding their true natures behind a bucolic façade.

Their hunters haven’t disappeared entirely, either. There are rumors of some families (and perhaps even whole villages) that keep to the old ways—stern folk living almost monastic lives, who still wage a holy war against Chaos and train their children generation after generation to take up arms against monsters and magic.

The Sword of My Fathers

The surviving families of monster-hunting paladins cherish magic weapons that have been passed down through generations. Most of these are enchanted to slay one particular class of supernatural creature or another. A rare few are so-called holy avengers: Steel imbued with the power of good—or perhaps just the Lawfuls’ fanatical faith.

Tremont

Largest city and capital of New Ludd, Tremont is home to over 750,000 people. While still a prominent port, it’s seen its importance as an industrial center decline over the past half century. Wealthy “True Bloods”—scions of old money families—still cling to their city’s former glories, while preferring to ignore the plight of the immigrant masses, the greatest portion of whom are Little People from the Isle of Ibernia (though not so little now, thanks to interbreeding and a New World diet).

Tremont’s run-down North End is not only home to many immigrants

but also riddled with subterranean passages that are home to a colony of ghouls. Their predations sometimes become bold enough to get the authorities involved, but no efforts have as yet been successful in wiping them out.

A distance north of Tremont lies the town of Arkham, home to a small but well-regarded university and a famous (or infamous) asylum.

CHAPTER III: *The City’s Hegemony*

THE area of the City’s influence and suzerainty extends far beyond the boundaries of the Five Baronies. Most of these client cities and towns are members of the Meropic Municipal League, but the whole group is most often referred to by others as the City’s Hegemony. Here are a couple of interesting locales from that group:

Hoborxen

On a moonless night in the City, you can look across the Eldritch River and see on the other bank a shining, alien city with buildings that look as if they’re made of blown glass infused with a pale, fluorescent glow. In the morning, you might

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look again at the same place on the far bank, wondering if the strange city had been just a dream, and you'd see the gray smokestacks and worn docks of humdrum Hoborxen, and be sure that it *had* been.

And you'd be wrong.

Since the earliest days of Ealderdish settlement, strange things have been seen in the area that would eventually become the city of Hoborxen. These irruptions from elsewhere have only increased over the centuries. Now nightly, the working class neighborhoods and decaying waterfront of daytime Hoborxen are intruded upon, and sometimes replaced, by an otherworldly city of tall spires, all its buildings made of something resembling glass and warm to the touch like the mantle of a recently lit lantern.

Sometimes only a single building is replaced; other times, an entire neighborhood. On nights of the new moon, Hoborxen is entirely gone. The city begins to appear at dusk, as if emerging from an unseen but evaporating fog or coalescing from the dying light. The strange glow of its structures rises slowly; it's brightest at midnight and wanes toward dawn.

No human inhabitants of the alien city are ever seen, but it's not completely deserted. Fairy-like creatures—foul-mouthed, cinereous, and moth-winged—sometimes buzz about its streets or lewdly call from high perches. A low growl, a sound as much felt in the bones as heard, periodically reverberates through the streets, and some explorers have claimed to have heard a woman crying or laughing softly.

Exploration of the glassy structures usually turns up everyday detritus from Hoborxen, most of which is of little value. Sometimes, things lost elsewhere in the world turn up here, but again seldom anything of real value except perhaps to the one who lost it. It's a common tale among adventurers that there's a great treasure haul somewhere in the city, but no one has retrieved anything more than a few enigmatic, otherworldly trinkets.

Would-be treasure-hunters should weigh the likely gain against the potential dangers. A number of people entering the areas of the alien city are never seen again.

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The people of Hoborxen are inured to these nocturnal visitations and rarely remark on them, though addiction, violence, and suicide are more common here than in neighboring towns. None seem to know where they go on the nights they're elsewhere.

Some thaumaturgists muse darkly that there may come a time when Hoborxen will be gone entirely, every night. And after that, will the incursion spread?



Faro City

Faro City is a beach resort on a barrier island in the Meropic Ocean. It's famous for the hotels and attractions along its boardwalk. It's *infamous* for its gambling and

Ten Things Found in the Alien City

- 1 - A gold fang from an unknown animal.
- 2 - A tobacco pouch made from a gallbladder containing 2d4 gems (glass).
- 3 - A subway token.
- 4 - A sepia-toned photo of a family where all their faces (and only their faces) are blurred.
- 5 - An engraved invitation to an underground gambling joint in the City.
- 6 - A page from a spell book with 2d2 spells on it, some of which are corrupted and will misfire.
- 7 - A moleskin journal containing a dictionary of hobogoblin cant.
- 8 - Paper currency from some unknown place.
- 9 - A sea-shell in which one can hear a whispered voice cajole in a foreign tongue.
- 10 - An illustrated children's book where a little girl and sinister looking stuffed toy discuss the murder of the book's finder. The last two pages are missing.

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its means of government—it's an *aleatocracy* whose rulers are chosen by outcomes in its gambling establishments.

Win at the tables, and you're unknowingly entered in a secret game. Win in *that* game, and you'll find yourself congratulated by the smiling men of the Gaming Commission and given expensive accommodations, the run of the town—and a silver chip. Winners are expected to officiate at certain civic events and to make public appearances. So long as they don't seriously disrupt the peace, silver-level high rollers live like royalty until their winnings dry up or another high roller is chosen. Typically, this about a week—sometimes a little more, other times a little less. Departing high rollers get a draw from an ancient and mysterious card deck. The smiling men insist upon it. Those who refuse disappear. Those who draw—well, you hear stories both fantastic and macabre.

Some high rollers have long winning streaks, and at some point the smiling men of the Gaming Commission return and give them a gold chip. Gold-level

high rollers keep living the high life and can make decrees with the force of law—so long as they don't disrupt the prosperity or customs of Faro City. They're obligated to act as magistrates, resolving minor disputes brought to them by citizens and visitors alike. Most stay at the gold-level for a lunar month. Then, they're offered their choice of abdication (and a draw from the ancient and mysterious deck) or a chance at an exclusive high stakes game.

About this last game, there are only rumors. Some say it's stud poker—on a demi-plane where time doesn't pass, at a table with cardsharps representing Heaven, Hell, and lesser outer planar concerns. Others say the game is a simple one-card draw from a deck held by a veiled woman. The exact stakes are never specified, even in rumor, though everyone's sure it's an unimaginably big score.

CHAPTER IV: *The South*

THE region between the hegemony of the City, the Smaragdine Mountains, and the eastern coast of the New World

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is known generally as the South. The terrain of the South is varied, going from the foothills of the Smaragdines to coastal salt marshes and running through croplands, tangled forests, and dark swamps in between. Almost all of it is hot, and most of it oppressively humid for over half the year.

In large part, the South has rejected the industrialization and engagement in the wider world that mark its neighbors like the City and the Steel League. Its people are often tenaciously rural and agrarian—and mistrustful of outsiders and their new-fangled ideas; or else they're fallen would-be aristocrats, clinging to the dream of a more genteel age.

There are some cities, of course. Most are old and located near the coast—the notorious canal-city of New Ylourgne is a prime example. The cities engage in trade with Ealderde, though this is not the business it once was. The South has its own steel or mill towns, too, though these pale in comparison to the production of their Steel League rivals. Nexus, a railroad hub, represents these new Southron cities.

There *is* one industry the South is held to excel at—bootlegging. Though the South's tradition of fire and brimstone Old-Time Religion ensures that most counties are “dry”—and even more liberal localities prohibit alcohol sales on Godsdays—this has not stopped the manufacture and smuggling of alcohol. Southron bootleggers are famous for their skill behind the wheels of their suped-up (sometimes even magically enhanced) automobiles used to outrun authorities on rural highways and backroads. The lowland moonshiner is less likely than his Smaragdine brethren to also be involved in bootleg alchemicals, though it may only be a matter of time.

Racial tensions in the South are perhaps greater than in other parts of the New World. The Black folk, who have historically been found in greater numbers in the South, have become a legally disenfranchised underclass. Laws in some places restrict their movements and keep them from voting. The murderous Knights-Templar of Purity are more common in the South than in other places, having their origin here, and in some communities they

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operate openly and with impunity. Some aristocratic Southrons take a paternalistic view of the Black-folk and seek to help them improve their lot through charity and education, but few even of these philanthropists see them as other than inferior.

New Ylourgne

This sultry canal city near the mouth of the Big River on the Zingaran Gulf was founded as a magocracy by adventurers from the Ealderdish land of Averoigne. As the port grew and immigrants flooded in, the power of thaumaturgists waned, but

to this day the shops of its Sorcerers Quarter remain perhaps the best place in the New World to acquire exotic material components—and perhaps to sell illegal components on the black market.

The thaumaturgical traditions of the Black folk are also more strongly represented here than elsewhere, and the city boasts a number of secret, Black-only magical fraternal orders which parade through the streets on sacred days in elaborate costumes. These orders vie for dominance in ceremonial contests that have been known to turn violent.

"BLASPHEMOUS BILL"

Bill Whatley, that goat-faced giant of a man, has up and kidnapped that pretty young school teacher.

That Bill was a bad one had been clear from his birth. Such was expected, given he was the bastard son of that soft-headed albino, Lavinny, and grandson of Old Man Whatley — widely held to have been a witch. He's only proved it with twenty years of destroying property, killing livestock, and crippling men in barroom brawls. Still, kidnapping is a step too far, and it's high time he was stopped.

Bill's taken her out to his shack in the swamps where he lives with his crazy mother. It's a place people mostly stay away from: A lot of animals are found mutilated in those parts (even gators!) and no one can say what sort of beast might've done it. Folks recall old man Whatley's mad cackling about *two* grandsons before his death—and hadn't Bill been known to sometimes mumble something about a brother when he'd had too much stump-whiskey?

CHAPTER V: *The Smaragdine Mountains*

THE old and worn Smaragdines run like a spine down the east coast of the Septentrion. The rugged terrain and dense forests have mostly isolated the people of the region from the rest of the world. In many ways, going into the Smaragdines is like stepping into the past.

These forested hills were the last redoubt of the Ancients. Already diminished, these once mighty people fell even further, degenerating into the hill-billy

giants of today. They took refuge here because of the natural protection provided, but also because they found untapped places of magical power—"soft places" where the other planes are closer than elsewhere. These same soft places have drawn conjure-folk looking to make bargains for inhuman power in the ages since.

The Ancients weren't the only ones to retreat into the Smaragdines. Magical beasts wiped out by colonists in the lowlands can still be found here. These creatures occasionally menace mining and timber operations, at times leading companies to hire adventurers for protection—or hunting expeditions.



Bootleg Alchemicals

Though alcohol is legal across the New World continent, smuggling still exists to avoid taxation. The most prevalent illicit smuggling of intoxicants, however, involves alchemical substances of various sorts, illegal in most of the member states of the Union thanks to the efforts of church-driven abstinence movements.

This has done little to stem the tide of these substances, which are available in speakeasies and drug dens throughout most major cities. “Bathtub alchemicals” are made in small laboratories within cities or rural areas. Larger-scale operations smuggle in alchemicals from foreign countries. Some may even come from other planes of existence.

Alchemical intoxicants come in many varieties, having effects similar to mundane drugs (alcohol, cocaine, opiates, cannabis, etc.) or mixtures thereof. There are also “exotics,” which produce magical effects similar to many potions in traditional fantasy worlds. Cheaply made alchemicals may be dangerous, in ways beyond the intended effects, and cheaply made exotics often strangely so.

Here’s an example exotic:

Purpureal ether: Also called *mauve emanation*, this alien substance is difficult to describe in earthly terms: It’s purplish, has a slight glow, and can be “poured” or contained—something like dry ice fog, though it doesn’t dissipate like any fog and is, in fact, a radiation from somewhere in the Outer Dark. It can be collected on moonless nights with little cloud cover on alchemically prepared cloth screens. These are pressed or squeezed to yield the substance, which is then bottled in opaque receptacles. (Sunlight will degrade it within hours.) After 24 hours, it becomes more volatile and is inhaled from bottles or from cloths on which some of the substance has been poured. Its use deadens pain, increases strength (+1 with commensurate damage bonus) and heightens the mind (making the user immune to illusions and the like) for 1d4 hours. It also reduces coordination (reducing anything reliant on dexterity by -1). Longterm use (daily use for a period of 1-4 months), causes degeneration first of the nerves (further dexterity loss, though this time permanent), then of the flesh (charisma and, finally, constitution loss).

The human (and near-human) inhabitants of the mountains are a clannish folk, inhospitable to outsiders. Moonshining is a common activity, as is alchemical bootlegging. The latter, in particular, is all but monopolized by the misshapen ogres. Besides moonshining, the activity most associated with the hill folk is feuding. Grudges are cherished things, and extended families continue to spill blood over old insults for generations—sometimes long after the original offense has faded from memory.

CHAPTER VI: *The Steel League*

THE industrial heartland of the Union is an area west of the coastal cities, north of the coal mines of the Smaragdines, and extending to the shores of the Inland Sea. The preeminent political power over most of the regions is a confederation of cities and towns known as the Steel League. Here, the majority of the continent's raw materials are refined and the lion's share of its goods manufactured.

The earliest cities of the League to come to prominence dominate

the mass production of steel from pig iron, due to their control of the supply of salamanders. The League's salamander-wrangers—immigrants from the Old World steel centers, decimated by war and economic hardship—jealously guard the secrets of coaxing the shy creatures from hibernation in coal and of their care and feeding. The steel produced in League salamander furnaces feeds the industrial production of the area and of the entire continent.

Much of that steel is used in the western League where automobile production predominates in the cities on the rise. All of the major automotive manufacturers have their corporate headquarters in the League. Some of the smaller cities are essentially company fiefdoms, where the corporation is employer and law.

The abundance of metal that gives the Steel League its name draws the attention of pests. Rust beetles—or sometimes “rust roaches”—are insects which are able to digest some metals by use of magical enzymes that hasten corrosion. They can grow over a foot long, and sometimes swarm like locusts.

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And their favorite meal is iron. Factory owners sometimes hire adventurers to find and eradicate rust beetle nests, or to help defend against swarms.

Motorton

Motorton (pop. about 1.5 million) is the largest city in the Steel League and representative of the “new” industrial cities. As its name would imply, it’s the center of the Union’s automotive industry. It’s come a long way in the two centuries since the location of its city center was the site of a plague pit for Fort Narrows, located on the nearby river linking Lake Raccoon to the Inland Sea.



Since those earliest days, Motorton has been the home of a magical being called the **Red Dwarf** in the earliest records. This entity is

recorded as a harbinger of calamity. He once appeared as a redcap—a gnome-like being with a cap dyed by blood. Now, he’s more often seen as a dwarf dressed dapperly in a crimson suit. Rumor holds that those unlucky enough to have an audience with the dwarf are brought to a Room with Red Velvet Curtains (sometimes just “The Red Room”). Visitors—survivors—describe the room as located in the basement of a ritzy old hotel—but no one has been able to locate the building or provide directions to it later.

What comes from a meeting with the Dwarf can’t be predicted.

Sometimes, he’ll tell his visitor’s future. Other times, he’ll ask him for a favor, or tell him how he can get his heart’s desire. However it starts, it always plays out badly. A meeting with the dwarf is an ill-

omen nevermind how sharply he’s dressed.

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It's worth noting that the infernal criminal organization known as the Hell Syndicate stays out of Motorton. It's the Dwarf's city.

Yronburg

The steel town of Yronburg represents the old industrial cities of the League. Yronburg has a population of around 670,000 people, but its growth has essentially come to a halt in the current decade. Like most of the older League cities, its most vibrant years are past, but it goes on.

Yronburg, like Motorton, is home to an unusual being. A giant lives at the heart of the city. Inhabiting the largest steel mill is a man over ten feet tall and apparently made of steel. This giant came from the Old World—though whether he is some fallen god or titan, or just a member of a lost race is unknown, perhaps even to the giant himself.

Svarozic, as he's called, works tirelessly and seems impervious to heat. He doesn't seem to sleep, but at times goes still and appears to be at some sort of rest—sometimes for as much as weeks at the time. Luckily for Yronburg, Svarozic accomplishes enough

Ten Red Dwarf Rumors

- 1 - He can only be hurt by magical weapons.
- 2 - The tea he sometimes offers visitors can bring strange visions and cause madness.
- 3 - He carries a pocket watch whose hands only move when someone dies—or maybe when someone particular dies.
- 4 - Bones excavated from the old, mass plague graves can be used to ward against him.
- 5 - He's only dangerous because Motorton's sick. If the city could be healed, the dwarf would be benevolent.
- 6 - The dwarf is only a midget human sorcerer cashing in on an old legend. It's all smoke and mirrors.
- 7 - There's a red leather journal of a young girl who died in an asylum that contains (in its ramblings) the Red Dwarf's true name—and the ritual to bind him to service.
- 8 - The dwarf is always accompanied by the same gang—a black-haired moll in a red dress with a silky voice, and twin bruisers with the same first name.
- 9 - The Red Room is actually the lowest level of Hell. The dwarf is actually Morningstar in disguise.
- 10 - The dwarf isn't a real entity at all, just the physical representation of the death curse of a Native shaman on the Ealderdish invaders. Treating it like a real being only increases its power.

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THE SALAMANDER (Making Steel in Yronburg) - 5886

when at work to keep them ahead in the manufacture of steel. The other steelworkers—many fellow immigrants from Ealderde—see “their” giant as a source of civic and professional pride, and tell tall tales about his exploits.

CHAPTER VII: *Lake City*

LAKE CITY is foremost among the municipalities of the Inland Sea Combine and the second largest city in the Union with a population of around 3.4 million. It’s an important transportation hub, linking the eastern and western New World by rail and water, but that proximity to transport has also made it an industrial center in its own right. It’s also completely controlled by organized crime.

Lake City’s traditional government broke down toward the end of the last century in the wake of vicious gang warfare. Chaos in the streets was bad for business, so the boss of the Strillo crime family decided to do something about it. He summoned a devil and

cut a Faustian deal with the Hell Syndicate. Granted hellish powers and infernal soldiers to swell his ranks, he quickly overwhelmed the other gangs and took control of the city. Since then, a succession of gang bosses has controlled, through use of patronage and influence-peddling, a city that, if not exactly peaceful, has at least been stable. Of course, the gangs are certainly not above the application of violence and intimidation when the need arises.

There are still an elected mayor and city council, but all are indebted to the gangs. The city is divided up into territories doled out to underbosses who not only oversee criminal enterprises but also control voting precincts and act as unofficial magistrates, in a sort of *de facto* feudal system. The percentage they extort from the city’s industries



from the docks to the stockyards they see as their rightful due.

The “knights” of this system are the enforcers of the gangs. These top soldiers are sometimes bestowed inhuman powers by the forces of Hell, in the same way that the pious sometimes manifest supernatural powers of faith. As with godly gifted, their investments are conditional. They must serve the interests of Hell on the earthly plane, knowing all too well the caprice of their masters.

Poor youth look up to the gangsters, and hope to join their ranks one day. Every neighborhood has stories of a local kid who rose up through the ranks to get his or her own piece of the action through judicious application of street smarts and gunplay.

What only a few of the wide-eyed youth ever live to see—an unlucky few—is the Boss of Bosses. Most will never have to take part in the ritual visitations of “made men” to pay fearful homage and offer sacrifice to Ziacomo “Big Jim” Mostruoso, imprisoned behind strong thaumaturgic wards in the sub-basement of an old prison, his

A Touch of Brimstone

The “blessings” of Hell give fearsome powers to its dark champions—its anti-paladins—but at a cost to their bodies. At first, these are relatively minor, but with time, more profound changes occur. Here’s a sampling:

1 – Skin periodically ripples, as if the flesh underneath was only a human-shaped mass of snakes or giant worms.

2 – Breath has a sulfurous stench, and whiffs of black smoke emerge with belches or coughs.

3 – Skeleton has a dull, red glow visible through the skin and flesh in darkness.

4 – Skin weeps a viscous fluid which causes localized numbness for 2d4 minutes if it touches another person’s bare skin.

5 – Produces a chemical attractant that causes cockroaches to follow, shy and adoring.

6 – Shadow is deep red and causes plants to wither and animals to feel vague discomfort if it lingers on them.

immortal body and devious mind ravaged and mutated by a lifetime's exposure to the raw energies of Hell.

The Combine

The members of the Inland Sea Combine are manufacturing cities skirting the Inland Sea and the farm communities that support them. Several of these have gangs of their own, though they all now owe fealty to the Lake City Boss of Bosses, and all of them, whether led by more conventional governments or mob strongmen, pay tribute to Lake City for "protection."

The Combine's territory borders that of the Steel League. The gang bosses would like to extend their influence over the League's rich factory towns, while the League would love to expand its manufacturing support base and ultimately weaken the criminal element on its borders. Membership in the Union makes it difficult for the two to make war on each other openly, but hired guns often clash in more covert exchanges.

CHAPTER VIII: *The Dustlands*

THE past decade has seen the Western prairies between the cities of the Steel League and the Stoney Mountains choked by dust. Over-farming and relentless drought have left the topsoil with nothing to hold it in place so it blows across the land in large, dark clouds, giving the area its nickname, the Dustlands. Millions of acres of farmland have become useless; the population has dropped by more than half and continues to decline.

The blighted land has given rise to twisted and wrathful elementals—malign spirits in the form of dust devils and even cyclones. They criss-cross the land, warring with each other; the strong consume the weak and add the substance of the vanquished to their own, growing larger and more powerful in the process.

The big storms terrorize the isolated dirt farmers and small communities that remain. They demand tribute or sacrifices—and sometimes even worship—as if they were ancient gods. Would-be adventurers and

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opportunistic grifters roam the Dustlands offering to free the oppressed folk from the thrall of the tornado tyrants. Sometimes these champions meet their deaths in the howling winds that scour flesh and choke lungs. When they succeed, the farmer-folk often just exchange one overlord for another.

Even the cyclone bosses go to ground when the *black blizzards* come. These are elementals, too, but tainted. The thaumaturgic horrors unleashed in the Great War had an unexpected backlash. The

primal elements were partially corrupted by entropic energies. The birth-trauma of the creation of these black-dust elementals has driven them hopelessly insane. They exist only to destroy, descending on living things and blinding, then suffocating, them—but only after a period of terror. Because their unnatural energies are inherently unstable, the black blizzards don't survive long on this plane—usually only a matter of hours; at most, days—but that's more than long enough to bring death to the unwary.



Eliza Gunn

She's only nineteen years-old, but she's been making her own way in the bleakness of the Dustlands for several years. Gunn is an ace mechanic—and handy in a scrap. She's been with a gang of adventurers for a couple of years, defending refugees and isolated towns from road agents, black-dust zombies, and violent cyclone bosses. Amid all this do-gooding, the gang raids old Native mounds for treasure—artifacts, magical materials, and maybe a little gold and silver. There are trains to be guarded, too—a few days riding the rails from Lake City to the Stoneys, looking out for thunderbirds and as always, malevolent elemental storms.

Though quiet and not much for conversation, Gunn is given to almost berserker rages when she gets riled. Her favorite weapon is an oversized wrench (rumored to be imbued with magic by a Native shaman or perhaps forged from adamantine scavenged from the sword of an ancient Old World king—stories differ). She's used it to crack more than one skull of a would-be hardcase who's underestimated her.

After the black blizzard itself dissipates, its evil lives on in the form of black-dust “undead.” Sometimes when a black-dust elemental suffocates a person, its substance is imprinted with the dying person’s soul. This sad and tormented **black-**



dust ghost believes itself to be the spirit of the person slain. Those the storms don’t kill outright, who nevertheless succumb to the choking dust in the days that follow, may rise as **black-dust zombies**. The dead bodies of these unfortunates are animated by the particulate malevolence spread through them. They shamble across the Dustlands with a hunger that can never be satiated. But they try—with the flesh of the living.

CHAPTER IX: *Fredonia*

FREEDONIA has always drawn folk with a notion that others ought not to be able to tell them

what to do. At various times, would-be rebels have raised the banner of this utopian state—called originally “Fredonia,” but altered over the years to more closely reflect the elusive ideal it represents. Freedonians have had to compromise their independence in political fact by joining the Union, though one wouldn’t always know it from their sweeping rhetoric. The other member states of the Union tolerate this quirk of Freedonian character with either amusement or irritation.

Originally part of the Zingaro, the land that would become Fredonia was held by fierce Native tribes. The Zingaran government began to recruit colonists from the East

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of Septentrion to form a buffer against these marauders. The ideals of Freedonia soon blossomed (no doubt abetted by cheap whiskey) in an adobe trading post, leading to a series of rebellions that worried Zingaro for decades before at last Freedonia was realized.

In the meantime, after bitter struggle, the Native tribes were mostly pacified and driven to reservations—though to this day young braves sometimes test the strength of these restrictions and stage brief revivals of their ancestral ways. Former Native hunting grounds became homes to vast herds of cattle and the cowboys who tended them—the essential elements of Freedonia in the popular imagination.

From the vast distances, rough and tumble cow towns, Native raids, and the odd wandering monster was born a special breed of lawman—the Freedonia Ranger. Though they have never been numerous, the Rangers have made up for that lack with their toughness and their reputation for the same. A ranger (it's said) always gets his man—but whether he brings that man in dead

or alive is an open question.

In the past decade, this world of cattle trails and fast guns has begun to give way. The discovery of a large oil field under eastern Freedonia at previously unreachable depths has caused rigs to sprout like weeds and drawn drillers, wildcatters, and speculators in droves. Freedonia is in the grips of a new passion—oil fever.

CHAPTER X: *The West*

THE largest and least populated of the territories of the Union, the West stretches from the Dustlands to Hesperia and from Borea to Zingaro. It's dominated by the rugged peaks of the Stoney Mountains—beside which the Smaragdines look like mere hills—but its terrain encompasses mesa-strewn hardpan deserts and windswept high plains.

The West in many ways retains its frontier character; it refuses to be fully civilized. Cowboys (and rustlers) still ride the plains. Native tribes keep to their old ways on their reservations—and they're still known to stray at times from their assigned lands. Thunderbirds

Black Gold and Death

Oil drilling is a risky proposition for a number of reasons, not the least of which are the para-elementals that dwell in the oil. The exact mixing of the primal elements that leads to the creation of the **petroleum** (or **crude oil**) **elementals** is unknown, but it seems to occur only under intense heat and pressure and in the presence of copious fossilized remains of algae and other microscopic sea life. Having their origins in mass death may play a role in the petroleum elementals' hostile disposition: They're infused with malign, anti-life energies from the Negative Energy Plane.



When roused, petroleum elementals can break drills or destroy rigging and sometimes rise from the wells to kill. Some large oil operations hire thaumaturgists to protect their wells and hopefully prevent such events. Smaller operations rely on the dubious accumulated wisdom of roughneck superstition—simple charms, crude sigils, and unthinking ritual—for what protection they can give.

Some thaumaturgical scholars worry about the sheer amount of negative energy present in oil. The undead hatred of life from so many organisms, no matter how lowly, has power. Will there be a price to pay one day for drawing it from the depths and releasing it into the air?

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still harbinger storms in gray skies. Badmen and lawmen settle accounts in dusty streets and on lonely trails.

Perhaps the ghosts of the past hold civilization at bay? Abandoned mines and ghost towns are reminders of the recent past. The ancient ruins that rim canyon walls and the strange artifacts that emerge from the desert point to an ill-defined, but no less real, ancient history.

This is not to say it's completely stuck in the past. Cow towns and trading posts have grown into bona fide cities in places. Auto trails and rail lines get more use than wagon trails. Though it still lags

behind the rest of the Union in development, the open spaces of the West are slowly giving way to creeping civilization. Perhaps one day a trip to the gambler's haven of Doña Fortuna or the gateway to the Stoneys, Mountain City, will be as easy as vacationing on the Meropic shore?

Perhaps. But today, there's frontier yet to be tamed.

Grand Chasm

The Grand Chasm—also known as the Monster Canyon—is around 500 miles long, up to 20 miles wide, and reaches a depth of nearly a mile and a half. The Red River runs

"NIGHTMARE TOWN"

Strange things are happening at a secretive excavation on the outskirts of a small, isolated desert town. The locals are tight-lipped and scared, but what they do say is interesting. They tell how the town has been taken over by the urbane but menacing Llewellyn Wail—the enormous, hairless, and almost albino overseer of the dig—and his hired guns. They're looking for a meteor that fell near the town about a hundred years back—in a place animals avoid and old-timers call haunted. Townsfolk have seen weird burns on injured diggers and heard them discuss the need for welding torches—maybe even thaumaturgic ones. Then there's the odd glow, and unnerving hum, coming from the site that makes folks want to close their shutters and cover their windows at night.

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through its depths, cutting deeper into rock in a timeframe of eons, though some thaumaturgists believe the scale of the chasm indicates something more than natural forces were involved in its making.

The canyon has smaller, branching “lost valleys” boasting flora and fauna long extinct in other parts of the world. Procurers for circuses and zoos scout these for beasts for their shows, as do alchemists in search of exotic botanical materials. Scientists point to the unlikelihood of viable animal populations surviving in such small places and suggest that vast cave complexes must underlie the entire region,

providing a wider habitat.

Other places in the canyon attract adventurers and other treasure-seekers. There are ruins and entrances to caves, some of them previously inhabited and some of them man-made. Tombs of the Ancients or some allied culture promise treasure and ancient magics.

Treasure found there is never easy to acquire. Getting into the canyon is difficult: The easiest way is to come downriver, though there are a few precarious trails that wind down from the rim. However, guides can be pricey and may not be completely trustworthy.



Once a way in is found, things only get more dangerous. Stray flying reptiles from the lost valleys pluck travellers from boats or trails. Cavern crawlers and other strange creatures (the results of ancient magical experiments gone awry?) crawl out of hidden recesses when they sense a meal. And there are primitive, degenerate human tribes descended from Natives or lost expeditions and often

fallen to superstitious worship of the canyon's monstrous inhabitants and sometimes to cannibalism.

Still, adventure and treasure call, and there are always those brave or greedy enough to make the descent.

CHAPTER XI: *Hesperia*

People from all over the New World are drawn to Hesperia, the westernmost territory of the Union on the shores of the Tranquil Ocean. The promise of work in its fertile valleys and bustling ports draws many refugees from Zingaro and the Dustlands, but what really captures the collective imagination of the people of the New World are the celluloid dreams conjured there.

There is real magic to Hesperia, beyond people's hopes for a better life. Hesperia was once an island separated from the mainland of the New World by a strait. Maps and accounts of early Ealderdish explorers over two centuries are quite clear on this point. It's described as populated by statuesque, black-skinned amazons, without a man among them, who wielded weapons made of gold.

Legend holds the Black Amazons had a queen and high priestess named Kalifia, a demi-goddess, daughter of their sun god, who was renowned for her magical prowess. What became of the Amazons and their queen is a mystery; by the time Ealderdish colonists had reached the long-rumored island, they were no more. There was no civilization of warrior women. There wasn't even an island!

These historic peculiarities might have been forgotten if it weren't for the persistent strangeness of the land. This is manifest in its two largest cities: Heliotrope and San Tiburon.

Heliotrope

The City may be the unofficial commercial capital of the New World, but Heliotrope, in southern Hesperia, is the center of its entertainment industry. This city of nearly 1.5 million is home to all the major movie studios, and most of their stars, but the Heliotrope of the gossip rags and glitzy film premieres is only part of the story. Old and powerful magics lurk behind its sun-blinded streets and beneath the banner of the famous "HELIOTROPELAND" sign.

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There's a continued presence of what the media has dubbed the "Heliotrope Witch Coven." Sensationalistic, confessional accounts by supposed defectors from the cult describe a secret society, dominated by women, who

practice ancient rites and worship a "Black Mother" goddess with orgiastic rituals—and sometimes blood sacrifices. The goal of this cult is said to be a gynocratic sorcerous revolution and an overthrow of the Ealderdish god. To this end, they

"Big Jim" Trane

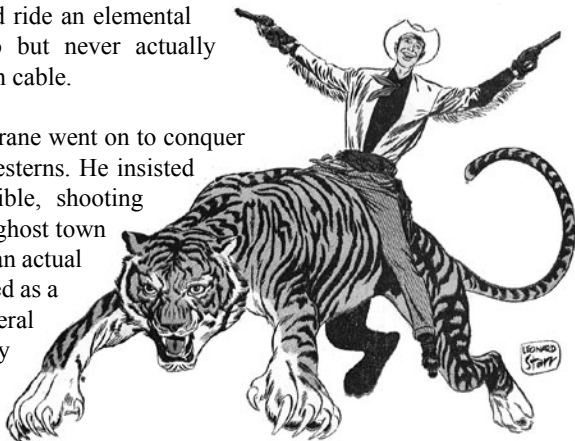
Heroes in the Strange New World don't come much bigger than Jaymes "Big Jim" Trane, the nearly eight foot tall star of numerous Heliotrope Westerns, starting in the silent era—and a real Freedonian lawman.

Trane was the son of a half-giant woman and her minister husband. As a young man, he dreamed of running off and joining the circus, a notion looked upon unfavorably by his parents—particularly when actually he ran off and joined one. After years with the circus, performing for the crowned heads of Ealderde and the potentates of the Orient, he wound up in Freedonia.

Trane became a Ranger. He brought down outlaws like Heck Thorn and his Roaring Boys, exotic menaces like mummies of the Ancients (taller than he), and the urbane Zingaran vampire lord, Don Sangre.

A series of dime novels caused Trane's fame to grow to a point where it was unclear where truth ended and tall tale began. Trane did, in fact, train a giant prehistoric cat to serve as a mount, but generally, he preferred horses and kept the cat on his ranch. He did ride an elemental tornado like a bucking bronco but never actually lassoed lightning with a telegraph cable.

His legend made in Freedonia, Trane went on to conquer Heliotrope in over a hundred Westerns. He insisted on authenticity whenever possible, shooting *Guns in the Ghost City* in a real ghost town and *Beast of Shudder Flats* with an actual desert landshark. He also appeared as a matinee "singing cowboy" in several pictures, displaying a surprisingly good baritone.



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conspire to gain wealth and political influence, aided by potent magic. These accounts always suggest that prominent citizens are involved in the cult and that the prime movers of the film industry are either cult acolytes or else under the *glamour* of the witches.

Hesperian government officials take these stories seriously, and have sought to ferret out the cult. Blacklisting of suspected cult members has occurred. This cast doubt on the idea that they actually control Heliotrope—unless it's all an attempt at misdirection?

It has been suggested that the Black Mother of the witch cult is none other than Queen Kalifia. The cunning queen (it's supposed) chose not to fight the invading Ealderish directly, but instead to remove her people to *elsewhere*, there to begin an occult guerrilla war to regain a continent.

True or not, the theory would probably make a good movie.

San Tiburon

Hilly San Tiburon, overlooking Tiburon Bay in northern Hesperia, is the region's second largest

city (pop. ca. 630,000). Where Heliotrope is sun-drenched and warm, San Tiburon is often fog-enshrouded and chilly.



The city gets its name from an attempt by Oecumenical missionaries to co-opt the deity of the aboriginal inhabitants. The Native tribes venerated the shark god of the sea devils, who—despite Hesperia's best efforts—still congregate on rock islets off its coast to this day. There were even tales of Natives interbreeding with the sea devils, and folklore holds this was the reason for their distinct facial features.

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The city's current inhabitants give deference to a peculiar character—a vagrant who claims to be a king. This self-styled King of the Union, Protector of Borea, and Suzerain of Zingaro is Josiah Pellam, a man of uncertain background. No one knows for certain how long he has occupied his fog-cloaked capital; it's been at least thirty years, but old-timers have difficulty recalling a time when they were without his shabby yet regal presence. Many recollect some small, strange miracle associated with a chance meeting or an off-hand but profound bit of wisdom he offered in passing, which they've carried with them since.

Despite his current humble circumstances, Pellam appears to be a man of some erudition, as evidenced by his flowery and somewhat archaic manner of speech. He dresses in cast-off clothing but somehow manages to find well-decorated second-hand uniforms of various armies from past decades, and styles his beard like an Ealderdish aristocrat from the same era. He walks with a pronounced limp, which he attributes to an old wound or “a dolorous stroke.” When he talks

about his past, it's only in oblique references to the weightiness of crowns upon heads, and the trials of destiny.

Even King Pellam's admirers must admit that he's quite mad. Sometimes he raves wild-eyed like a man in delirium tremens about a beast (which sometimes he hunts and sometimes is hunted by) that only he can see—though some have claimed to hear its weird, yelping cries in the distance. He knights people seemingly at random, charging them with perilous and important quests. Especially important to him is the securing of a particular grail, that he asserts can heal his wound and, in so doing, his kingdom.

Despite his wound, King Pellam is far from defenseless. Hardened killers have come for him and in the end turned their guns on themselves instead. Magic cast directly against him seems to dissipate. The city itself seems to accommodate and protect him. Distances shorten at his royal whim, and those who irritate him or wish him harm find themselves lost on unfamiliar streets.

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The people of San Tiburon provide for their resident lord's needs by allowing him and his honor guard (two mongrel dogs of unusual intelligence) free meals from any restaurant in the city, free passage on city cable cars, and purchase of small goods and sundries with his royal scrip. They don't burden him unduly with the problems of day-to-day governance, although

each newly elected mayor and city council visits him to ask his leave to take up their elected roles.

The King sometimes disparages the old shark god, still said to hunt the cold waters outside the city's harbor, but he seldom ventures out on the wharves, and never onto watercraft, perhaps out of grudging respect for his rival.

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CITY CONFIDENTIAL

From The Mundy Guide to the City: A Comprehensive Guide to the Five Baronies of the Metropolis (5888)

CHAPTER I: *General Information*

THE City of Empire, most commonly known as simply “the City,” is the largest in the Western Hemisphere and perhaps the world with a population of approximately 7.5 million. The metropolitan area of the City, known as the near Hegemony, has a population of nearly 10 million.

It may be that the City is one in a long line of cities to occupy this location. The Natives might have only built villages, but beneath them were the subterranean complexes of the Ancients. Certain Ancient hieroglyphs suggest that they believed prehuman civilizations had risen and fallen in this land in the uncounted ages before their ascendance.

The City as it's known today is composed of five baronies: **Empire Island**, **Shancks**, **Rookend**, **Marquesa**, and **Lichmond**. Most of these were formerly domains

granted to adventurers by Ealderdish powers. Forty years ago, they were consolidated by the machinations of the political bosses of Sun in Splendor Hall and the salesmanship of their public face Archambaud Wychwire.

Wychwire became the expanded City of Empire's first mayor. He was so charismatic that people seldom noticed that his left foot ended in a cloven hoof on first meeting him. There was a great deal of opposition to this consolidation, but Archambaud was also the candidate of the Thaumaturgist Society; it has long been rumored that their arts helped the deal go through when mundane bribery and blackmail failed. Those early days were tumultuous, marked by scandal and political intrigues, but the deed was done. The modern City was born.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The daily rate for an average hotel with private bath in the City is \$2. Cheap hotels might be less than a dollar, while nicer accommodations

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will run \$4-6 and top hotels as much as \$7-8. Some average or lower end hotels will have rooms without private baths available at lower rates.

TRANSPORTATION

There are three types of publicly operated transportation in the City: subways, elevated railways (els), and buses/trolleys. The fare is 5 cents on all lines save a few in the outer baronies.

Subways

There are two municipally owned and operated subway systems: the Interbarony Rapid Transit Company (IRT) and the Rookend-Empire Transit Corporation (RET). The IRT runs the length of Empire Island and has branches in Rookend, Shancks, and Marquesa. It has two main divisions: the Eld Side line and the Wyrd Side line. Its stations are marked by blue lights. The RET is primarily in Rookend and goes no farther north than 59th Avenue. Its stations are marked with green lights. There is no subway service to Lichmond. Subways operate 24 hours a day with express service except between the hours of 1-6 AM.

Elevated Trains

The Empire Island el is operated by the IRT and extends into Shancks. It has a Seventh Avenue line and Third Avenue line in operation. The five Rookend els also serve part of Marquesa and are operated by the RET. All els run 24 hours a day.

Surface Lines

The principal streets of all the baronies are served by lines of buses, trolleys, or both. On Empire Island, bus routes run on all north-south avenues, and many cross-streets, where they are the chief means of public transit.

Ferries

Fares are generally 4 cents for passengers and at least 25 cents for vehicles. On Empire Island, the South End Ferry serves Lichmond, and various ferries in Eldside serve destinations across the Eldritch River in the Hegemony. Lichmond has service to destinations in the Hegemony and Rookend.

The Eldritch and Empire Railway (The Eldritch Tubes)

Stations on Church St. and at several points along Sixth Avenue serve Moth and Venture in the Hegemony and Lichmond for a 10 cent fare.

Taxicabs

Meters start at 20 cents and charge 5 cents for every ¼ mile after the first. Taxis are not allowed to carry more than five passengers nor passengers with obvious weaponry. An extra 50 cent fee is charged for carrying trunks or similar large luggage.

Hired Cars

For those looking to travel in higher style, rates for cars with uniformed chauffeurs are from \$3 per hour. For cars without chauffeurs, rates start at 12 cent per mile.

Railroads

Passenger railroad terminals on Empire Island are Grand Terminus and Fane Station. Besides the terminal offices, tickets may be purchased at three other City Ticket Offices.

Airlines

All the major airlines have ticket offices on Empire Island. The Union Aero-Travel terminal within Grand Terminus is the central ticket office and information center for all companies. Few flights are offered to cross-Union destinations due to the hazard of air travel over the Dustlands, but more eastern points are served. Airship travel

to Ealderde can be booked, but there are fewer flights than before the Great War. Some airships dock at Grand Terminus, but the plane terminals are Hogan Field in Rookend or Narwall Airport in Marquesa.

THE UNDERGROUND

Since the first Ealderdish explorations, one of the biggest attractions of the City and its environs has been the subterranean structures of the Ancients and the wealth that can occasionally be won from them. These have been made accessible (and often more dangerous) by the development of the city above: waterways were driven underground, tunnels were dug for sewers, subways, utilities, and criminal uses; and substructures were made to support above ground construction. All these bored and broke into places sealed for centuries, mixing worlds long separated.

The underground structures pose a hazard to the above ground City, sometimes for structural reasons, but more often due to the monsters and magics that rise from them. Visitors imperil not only themselves but the public as well.

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For this reason, unsanctioned access is legally prohibited and punishable by a fine of no less than \$10. The enrichment to the City's economy provided by the illicit explorations has insured that sanctions have never been made more severe.

Entrances are closed by the authorities as soon as they are found, but secret entrances exist, accessible through basements, sewers, and subways. Cheap maps of dubious value can be purchased from street vendors ("for novelty purposes only") in tourist districts, and more expensive ones drawn from adventurers' explorations can sometimes be acquired from outfitters.

These days, there are few rich hauls brought up from beneath Empire Island. Too many delves have picked the depths clean. Conventional wisdom among adventurers holds that any truly big scores left in the metropolitan area are in the near Hegemony or Lichmond.

CHAPTER II: *Empire Island*

EMPIRE ISLAND is the center of the City, its most important

barony, and the second most populous. When City-dwellers speak of "the city," Empire Island is the place they refer to.

The first known people from Ealderde to arrive in the environs of what is now the City were the Dwerg-folk of Gulden. Though of human stock, the Dwergen are pygmies. Perhaps because of their unimposing stature, they devoted themselves to becoming wealthy through trade, and became a far-ranging mercantile culture.

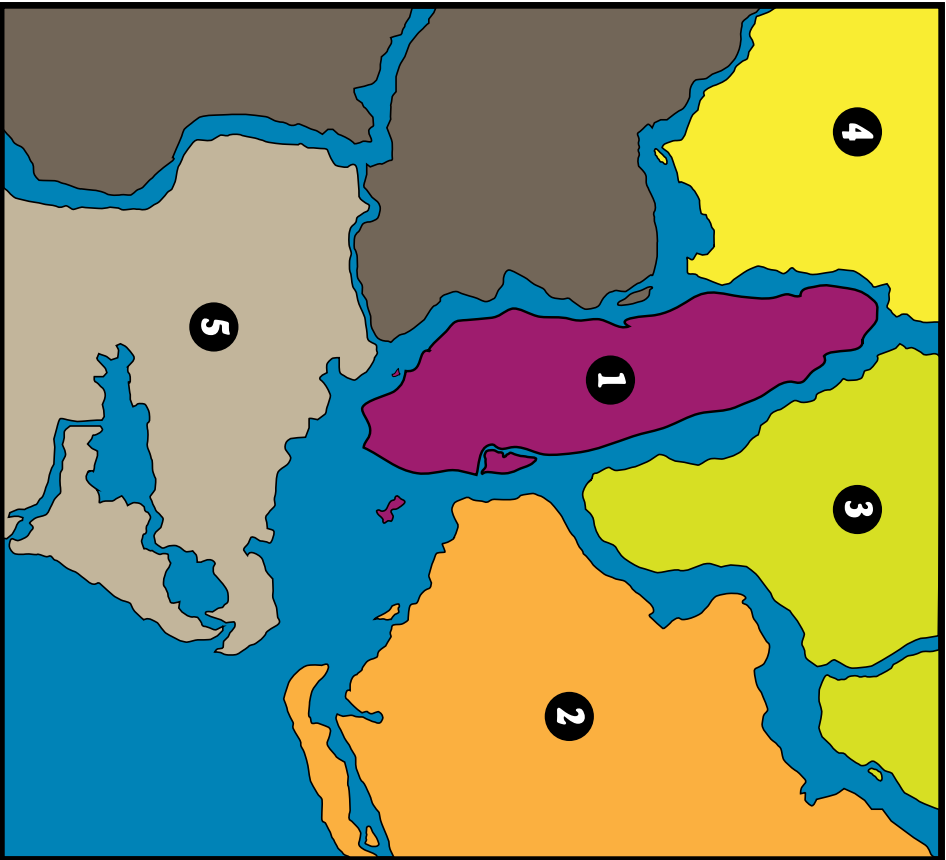
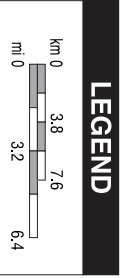
Over three hundred years ago, the Dwergen adventurer known to history as Piter Middennight struck a shrewd deal with the Natives, exchanging treasures worth 60 silver pieces for Empire Island. He and his band build a fort and trading post that would one day grow into the City.

First, he had to defeat the Wurm—a dragon-like serpent that dwelled in the streams and fens of the island, receiving the fearful deference of the Natives. Middennight and other adventurers fought the creature, but it was immortal and could only be beaten back, never killed. Only by draining the wetlands and diverting

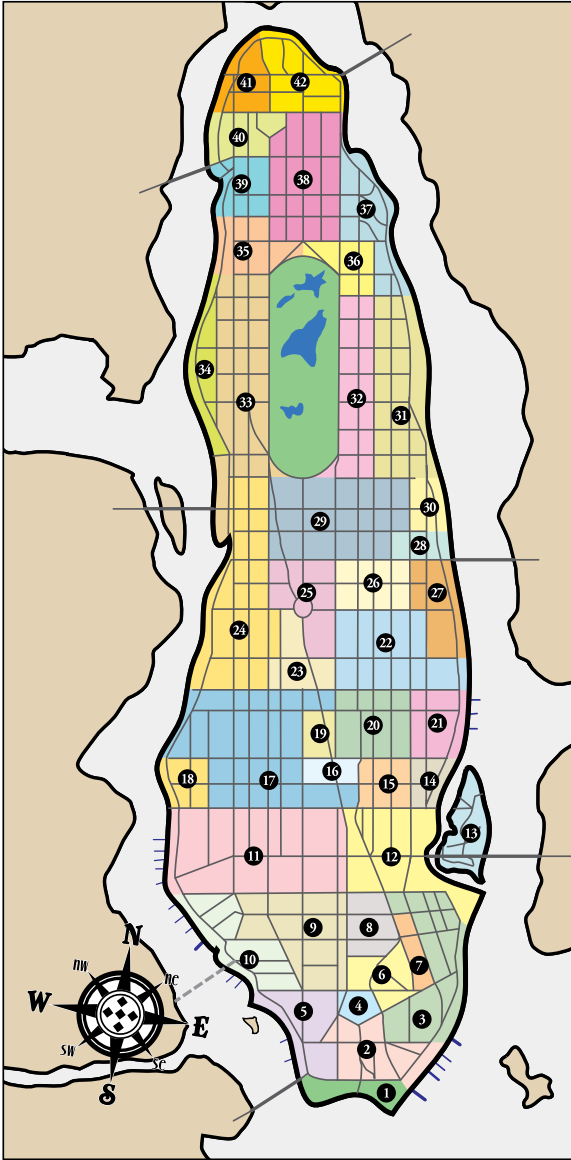
The City

THE FIVE BARONIES

1. EMPIRE ISLAND
2. ROOKEND
3. MARQUESA
4. SHANCKS
5. LICHMOND



EMPIRE ISLAND



- 1 Castle Park (p. 65)
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- 42 Gryphon Hill (p. 129)

LEGEND

km 0 1.07 2.14



mi 0 2.0 4.0

CITY CONFIDENTIAL

many of the streams underground did the Dwerger sap the strength of the creature and drive it from the surface. Urban legend holds that the Wurm still lives and nurses a grudge against the City that prospered in the wake of its defeat.



LOWER EMPIRE ISLAND

1. CASTLE PARK

Area: South of Castle St. between Lichmond Bridge and Mire Slip.

The southernmost tip of Empire Island is where the first Dwerger colonists built their huts and wooden stockade. Later, this was the site of a sturdier Lluddish fortification: the eponymous Castle Glanton. Most of the area is now taken up by historic Castle Park itself, surrounded by a sea wall. From the park, the visitor can get a good view of the **Twin Colossi** in the harbor, torches held high, welcoming ships to the City and the New World.

Besides a view of the upper bay, the park boasts several attractions. A **cannon**, inscribed with runes and cast from a gleaming bronze material, untarnished despite the centuries, is preserved from the earliest Dwerger colonization. A **Statue of Commodore Horatio Bullroar Stormalong** commemorates his victory over the gill-men and his lifelong struggle with the one-eyed, albino kraken Old Gall. The biggest draw is the **City Aquarium** (occupying three floors of the converted Castle Glanton), exhibiting hundreds of species of invertebrates, reptiles, and of course, fish from all over the world.

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Besides the park proper, the area is home to several governmental agencies. The **Barge Office** is the disembarkation point for immigrants and houses branch offices of the Coastal Guard and the Departments of Immigration and Customs. The **South End Ferry Terminal** offers transport to harbor islands (including the Colossi islands), Lichmond, and Rookend. On the border with the Financial District is the oldest pier on the island and home to the **Fireboat Station** (berth of the fireboats) and the ticket office for steamboats headed to Lapin Isle and on other day excursions.

2. FINANCIAL DISTRICT

Area: Castle St. north to Bailey St. (Broad Blvd. to Wharf St.) and Park Row and Gulden (Park Place to Pearl St.); from Wharf St. west to Broad Blvd. (Castle St. to Bailey St.) and Park Place (Bailey St. to Park Row and Gulden St.).

The area between Pearl and Broad and centered on Bailey Street is the financial heart of the New World and provides a name for the entire district. The most famous institution located here is the **City Stock Exchange**. The columned façade of the main building resembles an ancient temple, which

is probably appropriate given its role in finance. The exchange is owned and administered by the member brokers, each occupying a “seat.” A gold medallion marked with the image of the exchange and a number identifies a seat owner. Medallions can only be bought or freely given; if stolen they turn to lead. It’s rumored that the medallions also protect their bearers from magical coercion.

A number of other exchanges are found nearby: the Cotton Exchange, the Maritime Exchange, and the Commodities Exchange, among others. There’s even rumored to be a **Fate Exchange** that employs thaumaturgic brokers who buy and sell incremental manipulation of the future, quanta of luck embezzled from the universe, for wealthy clients. The exact location of the Fate Exchange is a secret, and it’s likely protected by powerful wards against intrusion.

Other finance-related institutions in the area include several banks, among them the **Empire National Bank**, largest in the Union, and the **City of Empire Bank and Trust Company**, the city’s oldest, rumored to incorporate

subterranean vaults older still, perhaps still holding treasures, magical and mundane, of the Old Money Dwergen families. There are also offices of several regulatory agencies of both the City and Union governments. Just north of Castle Park is the **Customs House**, home to departments charged with the collection and cataloging of customs for the City port and other ports in the City's hegemony.

Amid all these temples to wealth is a genuine religious institution. The spire of the **Cathedral of Saint Bernward** contends with skyscrapers. The largest of its three bell towers was once haunted by a spirit that manifested as a hunchbacked dwarf with the head of a crow and glowing eyes, but no one has seen the spirit in decades. The cathedral was designed by the "mad architect" Jostan Geoffry, who also designed the Church of Our Ladies of Sorrows.

The district's greatest tourist attraction is likely **Posterity Plaza**. At its center is the **Colossi of Industry** sculpture—two towering bronze atlantes supporting a bowl containing a map of the world (centered on the City) and

an eternal flame. Every year, the "Champions of Innovation" competition is held here. It draws inventors of both technologic and thaumaturgic bents, all eager for a chance to showcase their genius to prospective investors—and to win the not inconsiderable monetary prize. It also draws spies eager to steal ideas or simply to see what the competition is buying.

Close to the river, the district takes on a different character. Wharf Street, along the Wyrd River, was once known as the "Street o' Ships" when its bustling waterfront first made the City a great port. Modern ocean-going vessels must harbor in deeper water, but barges and other smaller vessels still dock here, and the warehouses now serve land shipping.

Other buildings in the area serve the workforce involved in the movement of goods. Itinerant workers and drifters find a place to sleep in the **Municipal Lodging House, Annex No. 3**, a converted ferry shed that can accommodate over a thousand nightly. The distinctive **Seaman's Redeemer Church Institute** has no steeple but instead is topped by a lighthouse. Over the main entrance

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is a carving of a muscular God, armed and attired as a harpooner, raising his weapon to stab a wide-jawed leviathan attempting to swallow him and his boat whole. In addition to religious services, the institute offers lodging and meals for sailors and amenities such as a library, club, and game rooms.

Of interest to adventurers is the **City Assay Building** on Ald Slip, a five-story stone structure with a massive chimney. Here, scrap gold and silver are refined to bullion. The building is closed to the public, and lest anyone get any larcenous ideas, the edifice of the **First Precinct Police Station** looms just across the street.

3. HARDLUCK

Area: Bailey St. on the south to Park Row (Pearl St. east to the Wyrd River) and Howl St. (Grimm St. to the river and Wharf St.) on the north; from the Wyrd River west to Pearl St. (Bailey St. to Park Row) and Grimm St. (Bailey St. to Howl St.), excluding Triangle Park.

The sprawling slums of Hardluck are packed with the mostly immigrant poor of the City. Despite the poverty, vibrant ethnic communities have sprung up in its crowded streets and tenements. Neighborhood newspapers and political pamphlets

and periodicals—Anarchist and Communalitarianist among them—appear in a variety of languages. Local theaters perform the works of Ealderdish dramatists little known in the wider City.



Still, it's the district's street gangs that have captured the public imagination. Boys (and some girls) form bands and roam the streets looking for mischief and money. Some of these groups are just gangsters in training and potent recruitment tools for the Hell Syndicate. Others are perhaps more community-oriented and provide a chance for kids to escape a life in the sweatshops. Among the

Random Immigrant Encounter Table

01 Doppelkinnian Butcher – Heavy set with an outrageously over-sized moustache (waxed at the ends) and thinning hair. For some reason, his artificial left eye is bright blue. His real one is brown. His large, heavy-knuckled hands always have the faint stain of blood. All he sees and hears gets reported to the mob and from there, to Hell Syndicate *capo* Dis Pater.

02 Graustarkian Police Man – Ruddy-faced with a bulbous nose like ground-beef. Pay him well, and he'll look the other way. Don't pay him, and he'll look for a reason to crack your head. Despite his accent, don't *ever* mistake him for a Dawsbergener.

03 Ixanian Dissident Scientist – Thin, bespectacled, and chain-smoking, with a twitchy mouth and nervous eyes. His fastidious suit is hopelessly out of date. He's a bit paranoid—anyone could be a Red agent or an Anarchist fanatic trying to get the secret. What secret? Well, how does he know he can trust *you*? At some point in the near future, his dead body will be found in the Eldritch River.

04 Karlovan Laundress – Aged, stooped, and bundled in a shawl. She sings to herself constantly in the old tongue—songs bawdy and profane, if anyone understood them. She has a chronic, wet cough, which should worry her employers but doesn't. She knows a few hexes that can make things difficult for those who cross her.

05 Uqbarish Taxi Driver – Oh, the stories he could tell—and will. He'll regale you with fascinating tales of the old country, if you can pick the “gold” from the dross of his broken Common. Don't listen! His homeland doesn't exist in this world (at least not yet), but the more people who come to believe in it through his enchanting anecdotes, the more likely it is to manifest in reality—and, like a cancer, begin remaking the world around it.

06 Trysteran Pimp – Sleepy-eyed and perpetually smelling of alcohol but a sharp dresser. He always carries a stiletto (since the incident that gave him the still-visible scar on his left cheek) and knows how to use it. He's also got a pistol (a souvenir from the War) in his sock drawer. He has a strange fear of mirrors and a habit of stroking a rather sinister looking icon of a saint no one is able to recognize.

07 Scirieli Prostitute – Works for the Trysteran Pimp. Beautiful and brunette with green eyes that might hold centuries' worth of boredom. In the old country she was chosen as a young girl to serve the cult of the old and dread goddess the church fathers have tried hard to stamp out, but the peasants stubbornly cling to in secret. She's got a knife, too—an ornate, ancient blade you will not see unless you too are chosen. And by then it's too late.

08 Servian Newsboy – Born in the City and sounds like it, though his parents know not a word of Common. He manages to hear a lot without ever being noticed, and shows up almost like magic at pivotal moments, often to complicate matters. He wields a mean slingshot.

09 Luthan Anarchist – Tall and thin with long, spider-like fingers. He carries a Cerberus-headed cane he fondles like a lover. His accent is thick, and he tends to mumble, so listeners can never be sure they heard him correctly. He has enough explosive secreted on his person to whip up at least a small bomb on very short notice. No one in this decadent city is sufficiently dedicated to the revolutionary cause. He'd see it all go up in flames, if he could.

10 Poitêmien Occultist – Once handsome but now bald and growing paunchy. His penetrating gaze is half his mystique. The other half is the shabby, libertine air he tries to cultivate. He does seances for old money and looks for magical artifacts in the markets of poorer parts of town. He seems to be seeking something specific....

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most famous of the latter type are the Hardluck Hooligans. Previous generations of the Hooligans have produced actors, adventurers, and political leaders. A series of film shorts (entirely fictionalized) has made the gang famous Union-wide, if not any of its actual members.

Where Hardluck meets Yiantown and Dead End stands **City Police Headquarters**. This is the command center for the police precincts and patrol officers scattered throughout the five baronies. The building houses the offices of the Police Commissioner and his deputies, the headquarters of the division of detectives, the criminal identification file center, and the forensic, necromantic, and thaumaturgic laboratories.

4. PENTACLE PARK

Area: Park Row and Civic Place on the south to Chambers St. on the north; from West Broad St. east to Pearl St.

Pentacle Park is officially named Civic Park but gets its unofficial title from the arrangement of the paved walks that separate its green areas into a five-pointed star. Since the oldest days of the City, it has been rumored that the whole park is part of a great seal, binding the

Wurm and limiting its power. If the stories are true, this bit of history is hidden in the depths of the City archives.

There are two buildings within the park, both near the north end. The **City Court Building** on Chambers Street is known for its caryatids in the form of angular and stylized ladies justice, bearing downward pointing swords. Folklore holds these figures sometimes hear the pleas of wronged women and intercede. **City Hall** houses the offices of the mayor and his staff; the City Council and its various subcommittees; the Metropolitan Unusual Activities Commission, which monitors thaumaturgists and extraplanar entities; and the Art Commission, which clears designs for all public buildings and artworks. The central tower is 52 stories tall and has an observation deck open to the public on the 47th floor. City Hall is protected from magical assault by bound *genius loci* that cause spells to fail or backfire.

In the park nearby is the entrance to **City Hall Station** of the Interbarony Rapid Transit subway. The station boasts unusually

elegant design with skylights, tiled arches, colored glass tile-work, and brass chandeliers.

The park area in front of City Hall is home to a recently erected bronze **Statue of the Titan**, the heroic orichalcum automaton who has saved the City more than once. In years past, this area functioned as the City's town square and has been the site of public gatherings—and, occasionally, civil unrest. In 5807, it was the scene of a battle between two rival police organizations. The combatants stormed City Hall, and, in an ironic turn, the insurrection was only quashed by the intervention of adventurers and criminal elements.

Formerly, the section of Park Row just across from Pentacle Park was home to the majority of the City's daily newspapers and so was known as "Ink Row." The industry has moved on, but the **Guardian Newsboys' House**, which provides food and shelter at low cost for homeless boys, still remains. More than a few adventurers got there start there.

East from Park Row one finds the center of the City's printing

industry, whose presses once served Ink Row. In the same vicinity was the City's leather tanning industry. The growing population pushed the tanneries away, but the leather merchants remain, and it's the best place in the City to get a cuirass or buff coat.

North of Chambers, where Yianese restaurants and groceries have begun to encroach on the old city center, there are still more government offices. Foremost among these is the imposing **Municipal Office Building**. The City's public radio station (CTY1) can be found here, as can the marriage license bureau and a single-room marriage chapel. On the 23rd floor, the Municipal Reference Library is a public library branch holding maps, reports, and documents related to all the cities of the Meropic League and beyond.

Further north, an entire block is occupied by the building housing the offices, clinics and laboratories of the **Municipal Departments of Health, Hospitals, and Sanitation**. Here one finds the small offices allotted to the **Municipal Department of Animal and Pest Control**, the highly-trained specialists known as the Exterminators.

Taxmen

After surviving the deadly hazards of the underground, loot-laden adventurers in the City must face another foe as cunning as he is rapacious: The taxman.

Legally, treasure uncovered in the City or its hegemony belongs to the people. For their efforts, the adventurers who uncover it are entitled to 70% of its value. This is, of course, minus the various fees and penalties for destruction of public property, hazardous carcass removal, etc. Adventurers are allowed an extra percentage for equipment and provisioning costs, but only if the appropriate forms are submitted in the appropriate manner.

Melting down artifacts of precious metal to render them unrecognizable doesn't help as the ownership of gold by private individuals (except in jewelry or coins of numismatic interest) is illegal. An adventurer's best option is to fence his loot and launder the proceeds. Of course, this may draw him into the web of the Hell Syndicate.

The bland, gray-suited men of the Municipal Department of Taxation and Finance are charged

with collecting the City's due. Higher-level agents carry wooden coins that writhe in the vicinity of gold. Some are able to *detect lies*.

The Municipal Building (where their offices are housed) is a veritable temple to the *eikone* Management. The place is so aligned with Law that all nonlawful beings suffer confusion and demoralization (-2 to all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma checks) inside its walls, if seeking to act against its bureaucracy.

Those who damage (or attempt to damage) the Municipal Building or harm its agents while flaunting its rules run the risk of calling down one of the entities known as *inevitables* upon them. These powerful constructs punish transgressions against bureaucracy and law. They're believed to be summoned by a teletype machine in a sub-basement office beneath the building. Some rumors suggest the summoning of an inevitable requires a civil servant to burn his employment record in a waste bin, surrendering his identity—and his pension.

5. LOWER ELDSIDE

Area: Castle St. on the south to Chambers St. on the north; from the Eldritch River east to West Broad St. excluding the area from Park Place to West Broad St.

As the location of the docks for the ferry traffic from Hoborxen and other parts of the near Hegemony, the Eldritch railway terminal, and the Lichmond Bridge, Lower Eldside is a transit hub. Much of the area is literally in the rumbling shadow of the **7th Avenue El**. With all the travelers passing through, it's natural that it has become a retail district.

Few large streets cut through this district, but narrow, short streets crisscross it, forming the ideal space for the markets and small shops. **Whitsun Market** technically refers only to the wholesale produce market, but the name is used commonly to refer to the adjacent retail market for foodstuffs from all over the world. Fish is a particular specialty—though the selection isn't what it was before the War. Thaumaturgists in the know patronize certain vendors who provide exotic animal parts for use as spell components.

South and east of the markets, the shopping is even more eclectic. There's a street of radio dealers, blocks devoted to pet shops and seed stores, and a small run of ecclesiastical supply shops that do a brisk side business providing holy water and other consecrated items to adventurers.

The **Aramite Quarter** is a few blocks off the markets. In addition to the saturnine folk of Aram, a smattering of other peoples of the Empire of Korambeck can be found here. Fezzes can be seen in the streets and alchemical hookah pipes are smoked in cafes and restaurants.

In the northern part of the district is the **Long Distance Building** of the Union Telephone and Telegraph Company. It's the largest communication center in the world and a junction of many telephone trunk routes. All private wire communications from the City to the outside—whether telephone, telegraph, or teletype—pass through this building. It has direct lines to many important cities and connects via radio telephone to points all over the world. The company takes special precautions to protect the important circuitry

Exterminators

The Exterminators—the highly trained and perhaps a little crazy men (and a few women) working for the Municipal Department of Animal and Pest Control—are a special breed, as hard-bitten and courageous as any adventurer.

Escaped familiars or the occasional wandering monster from out of the wilderness are the sort of calls that will bring out the men of the MDAPC, but their workaday grind is the monitoring and clearing of the various subterranean areas beneath the City. The City was built on swampy land crisscrossed by creeks and streams. These swamps were drained and many of the waters directed underground through tunnels. Add to these waterways the sewers, steam tunnels, and subway stations that support the modern city—to say nothing of the occasional underground structure built by the Ancients. All these subterranean environments support life.

In the upper levels, one mostly encounters creatures which may have wandered down from the surface or vermin swarms—or larger-than-normal specimens of such. Dangerous fungi are not unknown. Here the exterminators must also be careful to respect the ghouls and give them wide berth.

In the mid-levels or in wetter places, various slimes, oozes, and molds are found. These strange life forms are born of the effluvia of industrial alchemy, the sludge of botched thaumaturgy, the strangest flourishes of nature, or possibly all three. Control of these lifeforms requires special preparation and often protective garb.

The lowest levels present the strangest challenges. There are prehistoric holdouts evolved (or devolved) to hideous, blind forms in the eternal darkness. There are chimerical creatures produced by the decadent sorceries of the Ancients. There are even extraplanar visitors summoned by prehuman wizards and trapped for millennia behind now-eroding wards.

In other words, the officers of the MDAPC face most of the challenges faced by your average professional adventurer. The only real difference is they have a city pension to look forward to instead of a big treasure haul. Is it any wonder many give up civil service in favor of putting their skills to use elsewhere?



from electrical para-elementals called gremlins. Sometimes these creatures directly destroy lines or equipment; other times they cross connections or make prank calls—anything to cause chaos.

At the end of Church Street is the **Eldritch Terminal** and the office skyscraper atop it. Through the “Eldritch Tubes” under the river, railways connect to Moth and Lichmond, but the connection to Hoborxen was plagued by strange accidents and never completed. A block north is the **Chapel of Saint Vault**. Across the street is its **graveyard**, which had a significant ghoulish problem last century. It’s been quiet for years—though its likely tunnels to Undertown remain beneath it.

The **first location of the City Hospital** was between Church St. and West Broad. A century and a half ago, it was the site of one of the City’s most unusual riots when a mob stormed the hospital in an attempt to attack doctors and medical students who it claimed were doing indecent things to the corpses of respectable folk, particularly young women, by dissecting them. There were fevered allegations of body-snatching, as well. Ultimately, the

siege was only ended by the militia, who killed scores of rioters. It’s believed that opportunistic ghouls made off with nearly a hundred of the dead and dying in the chaos.

The firearms dealership and arms museum **Cuthbert Bannerman and Sons** has occupied a spot on West Broad for nearly 75 years. It was founded by a former adventurer and contains an impressive collection of military weaponry and adventuring relics (*Open Loonsday to Lovesday, all day; Mourndays until noon; admission free*). The collection is well-protected by an armed and proficient staff and magic wards on the most prized items.

6. YIANTOWN

Area: Park Row on the south between Pearl St. and Grimm St., and Chambers St. north to Castaigne St. from Broad Blvd. east to Pearl St.

Yiantown is home to over 4,000 Yianese and the center of culture for the Yianese of the entire metropolitan area. Outside of its ethnic community it has a quite different reputation; despite the fact that Yiantown is statistically one of the safer neighborhoods in the City, cheap sightseeing tours trade on tales of mystery and exotic crime.

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This isn't to say the stories are without some basis in fact. **Underground tunnels** run beneath the area where illegal goods are transported and stored and where rival fraternal societies do battle out of the public eye. The most feared and powerful of these groups is the Five-Headed Dragon Society, based out of San Tiburon and ruled by the sinister sorcerer **Tsan Chan**.

Beyond the lurid tales, visitors flock to Yiantown to sample its exotic culture. There are numerous Yianese restaurants and markets in the area. A local ten-cent movie house shows Yianese pictures made in Yian or San Tiburon in the evenings. The **Apothecary of Doctor Lao** offers traditional Yianese medicines and an assortment of magical materials: desiccated sea horses, bottled minor elementals, preserved bear testicles, and sliced unicorn horn. The **Establishment of Madame Kan** is the premier club of the district, serving traditional Yianese wines and liquors. It's sometimes patronized by a criminal element, so visitors should use caution.

On Castaigne Street, at the border of Yiantown and Little Carcosa, is the grim edifice of **the Dungeon**, connected by the famous "Bridge

of Sighs" to the **Criminal Courts Building**. The Dungeon is the colloquial name for the City Detention Center, where men are held awaiting trial or serving short sentences. The name comes from the rumor (untrue—for the general population) that those in detention are held underground, a rumor, no doubt, abetted by the structure's resemblance to a gloomy medieval fortress.



7. DEAD END

Area: Park Row on the south to Canal St. on the north; from Grimm St. east to Meagre St.

This narrow strip of Hardluck was once a sleepy hamlet, and then the City's first theater district (where one might have seen the famous ghoul thespian Abaddon Blanchefleur in *Thyrammus and Phaesbe*) but in the past century it's fallen far. Now it's a strip of seedy pawn shops, beer parlors, and cheap retail shops. Its flophouses offer a bug-infested bed in a closet-sized room for 5 cents a night, counter restaurants serve up thin ham and greasy eggs for 10 cents, and students from various barber colleges butcher hair and shave the daring for 15 cents. The down-and-outs of the Union drift to these streets and wind up sleeping in all night diners, in doorways, or on loading docks, begging, drinking, or just waiting for some free lodging house or bread line to open. Various missions operate here, providing what food, shelter, and clothing they can while trying to save souls and promote temperance.

8. LITTLE CARCOSA

Area: Castaigne St. on the south to Howl St. on the north; from Broad Blvd. east to Pearl St. (Castaigne St. to Moon St.) and Grimm St. (Moon St. to Howl St.).

Little Carcosa is one of the City's most mysterious ethnic enclaves. Its narrow, cobblestone streets, exotically dressed residents, and unusual scents give the feeling of stepping into the Old World—though *where* in the Old World is part of the mystery. The Carcosan homeland doesn't appear on any known map.

The people of Little Carcosa are as enigmatic as their homeland's location. Their swarthy complexions and the cadences of their speech recall the Near East, perhaps some place in the Empire of Korambeck. Their clothing, manner, and ever present smiles, make one think instead of the Far East and Yian.

Besides its general ambience, Little Carcosa holds other delights for the visitor. Its markets are small but often have unusual items imported from all over the globe. The primary local crafts are hand carved masks, both fanciful and grotesque, which are sought by a small but dedicated group of collectors. Their spicy cuisine is an acquired taste, but some City gourmets extol its exotic charms.

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A rare treat is Little Carcosa's street festival. Its occurrence is hard to predict, based as it is on their arcane sidereal calendar, but the Carcosans must plan for it well in advance—despite no visible outward preparation. Young and old alike take to the streets in masks, forming a raucous procession following a group of clowns. These clowns are master contortionists (and possibly even illusionists of some sort), performing feats that scarcely seem humanly possible and sometimes border on grotesque.

Outsiders are urged to leave after the main body of the procession has passed for their own safety. A final performer sometimes follows the parade, wearing a pale mask and dressed in yellow, tattered robes; his appearance tends to whip the already excited crowd into an ecstatic frenzy. While there have been no verified cases of violence—and rumors of disappearances or mental breakdowns are certainly simply that—the intensity of the proceedings may be beyond the comfort of the casual visitor.

9. SCHOLO (Magetown)

Area: Chambers St. (Grimalkin St. to Broad Blvd.) and DeMontour St. (Carnacki

St. to Grimalkin St.) on the south to Howl St. on the north; from Broad Blvd. west to Grimalkin St. (Chambers St. to Howl St.) and Carnacki St. (DeMontour St. to Howl St.).

When the City was only a village crowding a fort at the south end of Empire Island, there were rumors of a sprawling house, beyond the glow of the village lights, built in a single night by devils at the command of a cabal of evil Ealderdish sorcerers. The sorcerers came to this wild land to open a **Black School** (a *Scholomance*) to tutor what students would come in the dark arts.

Some stories say a natural disaster (“an act of God”) destroyed the school, while others say a group of righteous adventurers razed it; a few hold it just disappeared, as if hell reclaimed it. No one really knows for certain.

What is known is that the place where the Black School once stood was eventually engulfed by the growing City and became known as Scholo. Whatever industries have tried to take hold there—from farms to brothels to sweatshops—never lasted for long. The area is strangely prone to fires and unusual accidents.

The only thing that lasts in Scholo is magic. As other enterprises have dwindled, magic book shops, alchemical supply stores, and the offices of cut-rate thaumaturgists for hire have thrived and grown to crowd Scholo's streets. Thaumaturgists live here, too— young would-be up-and-comers and old has-beens and never-wases of any age. They practice their arts in small, shabby apartments and congregate to trade secrets (and lies) in a few cafes and bars.

Bar talk often turns to the Black School. It appears some nights of the new moon, they say, in that old park where nothing has ever been built and nothing but twisted and blighted trees grow. Some brave souls have gone in (the story goes) and found it bigger on the inside— and growing larger all the time with creaks and groans. Amid its many rooms are libraries full of occult lore, including some texts thought lost.

It's a tempting destination for those young up-and-comers, but the old timers remind them that most who go in never come out again; those that do have emerged haunted, shattered men prone to suicide

and unable to remember any but the barest details of what they experienced there. What fragments can be gleaned from them suggest malign, ever-shifting architecture, sadistic traps, strange hauntings, and halls stalked by a half-real creature—never fully manifest on this plane—that pursues intruders.

10. ELDSIDE

Area: Chambers St. on the south to Howl St. on the north along the Eldritch River; from the river east to Grimalkin St. (Chambers St. to DeMontour St.) and to Carnacki St. (DeMontour St. to Howl St.)

This area is the busiest portion of the City's commercial waterfront. Along the river are bustling bulkhead sheds and dockhouses. Across Eld Street are luncheonettes, saloons, and clothing stores catering to sailors who swarm the waterfront. Many longshoremen live in slums near Eld Street, and line up every morning along the docks in the hopes of being chosen for the daily work crews.

On Eld Street, one finds the **ferry terminal** of the Central Meropic Railroad. Here, ten ferry services provide passage for people and vehicles to Hoborxen, Moth, and Weemawkish Cove. A couple of

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blocks south is the office building of the *City Chronicle*, the venerable daily newspaper.

A little north on Eld is the **Timepiece Museum** of J.A. Gambol and Associates. This collection contains a myriad of timepieces, from watches to standing clocks—some of these of strange, perhaps unearthly design. Indeed, not all the museum's clocks seem to measure time in the same way or progress at the same rate. The elderly curator, dressed like something of a dandy and always possessed of an enigmatic grin, will answer questions elaborately, but never satisfyingly. Visitors have noted upon leaving that the amount of time they actually spent in the museum doesn't seem congruent with their subjective experience, though the direction of the discrepancy varies.

The **Corund Tunnel** begins at the end of Brandoch Street and passes under the Eldritch River to 12th Street in Moth (*50-cent toll for passenger cars*). East and west bound tubes are separated, each with two lanes. Catwalks in each tube are patrolled by officers who enforce the speed limit and watch

for any other trouble. Like most places in the City, the tunnel has its urban legends. Commonly heard tales report thick fog in the dead of night in which a short procession of bipedal but vaguely batrachian figures are seen, carrying crackling, weirdly glowing orbs. The fogs are said to dissipate as quickly and mysteriously as they are alleged to appear and leave no trace.

The **City Telephone Company Skyscraper**, only a few blocks further north, rises ziggurat-like and is topped with a spire resembling a Tesla coil. Whether this spire serves any purpose other than decoration is apparently a trade secret. This facility is the headquarters for the subsidiaries of Reade Telephone Systems, serving most of the City's hegemony. A little ways up Eld, in the **Research Laboratories of Reade Telephone**, scientists and a few thaumaturgists work to advance telephony and allied communications technologies including telectroscopy, etheric image transmission, and even trans-mortem communication. Rumors that a secret laboratory holds a strange artifact—a mummified yet animate and vocal head kept in a vacuum inside a

glass sphere festooned with wires and surrounded by thaumaturgic wards—are unsubstantiated.

THE VILLAGE AND THE ISLAND

11. GRIMALKIN VILLAGE

Area: Howl St. on the south to 14th St. on the north; from the Eldritch River east to Broad Blvd.

Once a rural hamlet, “the Village” became a haven of artiness and free thought as the City grew up around it. Its unconventional spirit was bolstered even further by the arrival of thaumaturgical dilettantes drifting over from Scholo. Of course, the Village is home to a cross-section of urban life, not just bohemians, but in the public mind it’s a place of long-haired artistic men, short-haired radical women, libertinism—and cats.

Visitors are told that custom in Grimalkin Village prohibits anyone from killing or harming a cat within its boundaries. This is really just a joke to account for the large number of felines residing in its boundaries. They’re generally treated well but not offered any special protection. Historians believe the affinity the animals have for the district is due to an interest the *eikone* known as



the Lord of Cats took in a young maiden of the early hamlet. His eldritch blood may run in some of the old families still. This totemic link is commemorated in the name of the **Ostensible Cat**, one of the Village’s oldest and most popular coffee houses.

Wilmarth Square—once a potter’s field, now a tree-shaded park—is considered by many to be the center of the district. Still standing from the old days is a sprawling oak that served as a gallows. It’s now known by locals as “**The Unkindness**” due to the unusual number of ravens that often congregate in its branches. Police records indicate an inordinate number of murderers are finally

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caught beneath the boughs of that tree. The streets surrounding the park are lined by stately homes, apartments, and a few mansions, the exception being in the east, where one finds the main buildings of **City of Empire University**.

South of the square are converted studios and a string of bars and nightclubs, patronized mostly by outsiders looking to soak up the bohemian atmosphere. Emerging from this area is the narrow, blind, pedestrian street **Black Dougal Alley**, where old mews have been turned into studios and at least one experimental theater specializing in grisly horror. The alley is lit by the City's only remaining gas street lamps—strangely so, since the fuel lines were supposedly turned off decades ago.

Along Grimalkin Street, there are numerous art galleries, hosting everything from the traditional to the *avant-garde*. **The Yellow Door** is a popular new gallery of the latter type. Somewhat out of place is the more prosaic **Women's House of Detention** and its associated court building located on 7th Avenue. The famous (and glamorous) air-pirate queen Mab (Cora Mabelle

Wellborn) was held here awaiting trial for the "Great Gold Train Robbery." A couple of blocks north, **St. Valiant's Hospital** is the City's oldest charity hospital, relying on voluntary contributions—and a favorite of injured, short-on-funds adventurers.

12. EAST GRIMALKIN

Area: Howl St. and Triangle Park on the south to 14th St. on the north; from the Wyrd River west to Broad Blvd.

Once the rural outskirts of Grimalkin Village, the march of the poor and mostly immigrant masses made this area part of Hardluck. A trickle of free-thinkers and bohemians who couldn't afford Village rents eventually turned it into a mixed neighborhood with a character of its own.

The immigrants are predominantly of southern and eastern Ealderdish stock: Scierili, Luthans, Servians, and Karlovans are common, but there are representatives of numerous tiny states. They worship at churches that practice a rite as old as the Oecumenical Heirarchate, but distinct from it, under the guidance of long-bearded priests. The old faith is sometimes at odds with the modern philosophies of

Open All Night

Philmon's is a well-known all-night diner on Grimalkin Avenue. It's seen its share of unusual late-night visitors. Here are a few possibilities:

1. Well-known loan shark Arman "the Brain" Rothwald looks none too happy—and neither do his two outsized friends. Someone owes him dough and hasn't kicked it back, and the Brain's outsized friends tend to resent that sort of thing.
2. A beautiful, dark-haired dame in a blood red evening dress walks by, and everybody takes notice. There's a whiff of brimstone as she passes.
3. A police prowler car creeps by outside the window. No one's inside.
4. Two dirty hobogoblins try to take a seat but are tossed out by the staff. One shakes his fist and warns that the King is coming to deal with all the swells.
5. A torch singer is trying to look inconspicuous as she seems to be waiting for someone. The cloth-wrapped parcel sitting on the counter next to her may have just moved.
6. Professor Quire, a prominent inventor recognizable from the papers, sits nervously at a booth with two strangely-accented bruisers in trenchcoats and fedoras.
7. A wizened hermit from Yian proclaims loudly that he is looking for the student to whom he is fated to teach all his secrets. The signs say he is to meet that student tonight.
8. A pale, blank-expressed little girl carrying a teddy bear walks up and silently holds out a black envelope.
9. A shabby, Vaudevillian ventriloquist and his dummy have an argument that gets increasingly heated—until the ventriloquist lies stabbed and bleeding and the dummy is nowhere to be seen.
10. A hill-billy giantess (eight-feet tall) in a gingham dress sits crying, a battered suitcase hugged tightly to her.
11. A disheveled tough guy with nervous eyes holds his right hand in his left, like he's protecting it. He keeps whispering conspiratorially into a large, antique ring he's wearing.
12. In the street outside, a procession of ten or so showgirls in full costume bop along glassy-eyed behind a satyr blowing a crazy tune on a set of bone pipes.
13. A stage magician in tux and tails takes a seat. He's amnesic. And he has a fist-sized hole in the center of his chest to—*elsewhere*. There's no blood, but tendrils of smoke rise from it, and raspy, malevolent whispers can be heard from within the darkness.
14. For a minute and a half, a static-y (but intelligible) firebrand sermon from a radio evangelist can be heard. There is no radio.
15. A blonde in a khaki explorer's outfit, carrying an oversized rifle, sticks her head in the door and asks breathlessly if anyone's got 50-feet of rope.
16. A police detective named Faulke, flanked by five uniforms, comes in and arrests someone.

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communalitarianism and anarchism that also infuse public discourse.

The district has a strong history of the free exchange of ideas. Small stone platforms at the corners of **Triangle Park** are places set aside for public speechifying and debate. At the park's center, a broken statue—merely a stone base with boots snapped off unevenly at the ankles—is popularly held to be all that remains of a **Monument to John Prester**. Prester is honored every Swelter with fireworks, brass bands, and parades of oversized puppets with motley clothes, scraggly goatees, and stovepipe hats, called “Mugwumps.” Strangely, no one remembers who John Prester was or what he did to merit such commemoration.

On the southwest side of the park, there's a bronze **Statue of Enok Bludgett**, famous adventurer of the '40s. Known as “the Axe,” this son of the Hardluck slums defeated the leader of a band of undead raiders who emerged from a longship thawed in the harbor in 3842.

East of Meagre Street, between Tenth Avenue (and the Wychwire Bridge) and Howl, the short avenues with

single letter names and narrow cross streets form a maze-like pattern. This is the neighborhood known as **Troy Town**. Dedalus Troy planned the streets and designed the narrow townhouses that line them for some purpose fully understood only in his likely syphilis-deranged mind. Those who make their homes here adapt to its strangeness, but visitors often have the uncanny feeling that the streets are shifting behind them.

13. BARROW ISLAND

In the Wyrd River, accessible via ferry from 14th Street, during public visiting hours.

Barrow Island is the location of the City's sprawling potter's field, but its association with the dead goes back much further. There are stately Dwerger cemeteries dating from the earliest days of colonization and even unmarked Native burial grounds.

The only living inhabitants on the island are those who tend the graveyards. Over a hundred and fifty years ago, the entire population of the island's only village (some 700 souls) was found dead—and subsequently buried in a mass grave nearby. No further attempts at settlement were made. Still, the

size of grounds to be maintained and protected, and the large number of interments, necessitates a fairly large staff.

The graveyard staff—the *barrow men*—are a clan of several interrelated families: “Keeper,” “Graves,” and “Digger” are among the most common surnames. They’re usually a people of unique (one might say hideous) appearance, though there are exceptions, particularly among the women. Whether this is from inbreeding; intermixing with their bitter enemies, the ghouls; or the dark influence of the island itself is

uncertain. Whatever the reason for their appearance, the barrow men are unperturbed by it—in fact, they seem to delight in the revulsion it sometimes causes in others.

The barrow men love a good tale, the more macabre the better—especially if injected with a bit of gallows humor. They collect them, and swap them; the number known and their novelty are a measure of status among them. Any visitor to the island will almost surely be regaled with one or more, depending on the length of his stay.



Barrow Men

Ability Modifiers: CON +1, CHA -1

Classes: All

Languages: Ghoulish

Racial Traits:

+2 to saving throws vs. poison, disease, or contagion.

horrify: If given time and opportunity (i.e. not in combat or other extremely active situation) a barrow man may enrapt listeners with a tale of horror. This works similar to the bardic *fascinate* ability. After the tale is complete, a failed saving throw leaves the listener shaken with a -2 to all attack rolls and other checks for 1d4 rounds.

Down in Undertown

The ghouls of the City are a subspecies of humanity whose origins are lost in history. If they live in the Old World, their presence is well hidden, perhaps obscured by legends of vampires and the like. In the New World, after centuries of mistrust and antagonism, the ghoulish community of the City has struck an uneasy truce with its human neighbors.

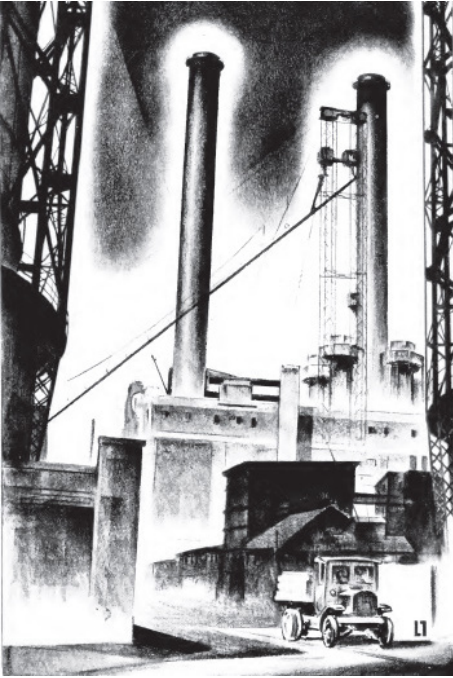
The bone of contention between the ghouls and humanity is their dietary habits. The ghouls are eaters of carrion and have a taste for human flesh. They don't (as often portrayed in pulp stories) eat live humans or attack them like predatory beasts. The truth, though, is perhaps equally lurid: In addition to human flesh, they periodically consume human brains. They seem to require some essential nutrients present in human gray matter. Those who don't consume at least a small amount every 14-28 days (depending on the individual) begin to suffer from a degenerative neurological malady.

Ghouls have always lived underground and come out to scavenge at night. In the City, the underground construction that produced waterworks, steam tunnels, and subways provided spaces for ghouls to inhabit. They connected these more modern structures with older, labyrinthine tunnels built by the Ancients for some forgotten purpose. This ramshackle area of ghoulish communities is known as "Undertown."

Undertown is a sovereign city, but it has survived by making connections with the human city above. Ghouls relay grave goods and valuables hauled from the underground to policemen, criminals, and low-level bureaucrats—and, in return, no one notes the bodies that disappear from potter's field or even the City morgue.

Ghouls produce no physical works of art or literature, as far as is known. Their only material culture is scavenged from the upper world, or looted from graves. They do however produce strange music, which many find unsettling, but others, strangely appealing. They've also been known to put on plays—perhaps unsurprisingly, mostly comedies filled with gallows humor.

Occasionally, ghouls get hopped up on fungus from abandoned subways or drunk on brains soaked in the bootleg liquor from their stills, and they go on a bit of a tear, scaring upper-folk and generally making a nuisance of themselves. Then, police and deputized civilians are sent down to crack a few ghoulish skulls, and some ealdormen make noise about the "ghoul menace." Mostly though, the two peoples remain segregated and mistrustful, but willing to live and let live.



THE MIDDLE EAST SIDE

14. THE GASWORKS

Area: 14th St. on the south to 23rd St. on the north; from 1st Ave. east to the Wyrd River.

The reason for this district's name may soon pass into obscurity, but today the three giant gas storage tanks that still rise near the Wyrd River are visual reminders of the area's former importance in the production and storage of gaseous fuel. It will likely be some time, however, before the poverty and blight brought about by the gasworks' noxious presence is alleviated.

Only one of the original gasworks, the **Milcote Plant**, still remains. Today, the district's air is less tainted with fumes from leaking tanks, and the populace is seldom menaced by para-elementals of smoke (*mephiti*) released (or spawned) by the distillation of coal.

Immigrants from Eastern Ealderde have largely replaced the primarily Staarkish and Ibernian folk of earlier days. Although old, decaying tenements still remain (and the public baths on 23rd street are still the only facilities available to many), older buildings are being renovated and newer ones are being built.

This district, like the eastern portion of neighboring Amaranth, contains several hospitals. **Willard Rattenvanger Hospital** specializes in infectious diseases, and has produced important research in the treatment of contagions. **City University Medical School and Hospital** on 20th Street trains physicians-to-be. The **Tillinghast Institute for Parapsychiatric Research** is small but works to further understand and develop treatments for magically induced disorders of the mind.

15. AMARANTH

Area: 14th St. on the south to 23rd St. on the north; from 4th Ave. east to 1st Ave.

The district takes its name from Amaranth Park, presumably named for the love-lies-bleeding that once flowered within its boundaries. The park is shaded by skyscrapers on nearby streets and a few modern apartment buildings on the north and east, but most of the square's homes (most inwardly remodeled into apartments) are stately affairs, dating back fifty years or more. The largest privately owned park in the City, its two block area is surrounded by an eight foot tall iron fence. The well-known "silver keys" of Amaranth Park are not only symbols of its exclusivity but literally the only way to gain entrance through its gates.

Owners and tenants of the homes surrounding the park are granted silver keys under the close supervision of the park's trustees. Keys are sometimes granted to others, usually for a brief time, by the park's mysterious Lady. All others must satisfy themselves with a glimpse between the gates' bars. Interestingly, there are stories of rascals climbing over the fence to find the park poorly tended and

overgrown—a very different place than the one encountered by passing or peering through the gates.

Only by entering appropriately can one expect to meet the Lady of Amaranth Park. Tall and raven-haired (by most accounts—a few dissenters hold she's red-haired), the Lady is of indeterminate age; she's young enough to still be beautiful, but old enough to seem wise and command respect. She dresses simply but elegantly in a gown of no definite era, only occasionally donning a fur shawl on the coldest winter days. Her name is not known for certain, but some say it's Nineve.

Most who encounter her feel like they were summoned: They often can't say what brought them to the park and say it was like they were in a dream. They always describe the park as seeming larger and its pathways more labyrinthine than on other visits. Of course, some had never been to the park before that visit; they simply found the key as if by chance and, upon touching it, knew where they should go.

The Lady is something of an oracle, though she prefers to deal in

knowledge of the past, claiming (if pressed) that trying to make sense of the tangled skein of futurity is seldom worthwhile. Her most common gift is to recall for someone a thing he or she has forgotten—even something he or she has been made to forget by magic or has lost through reincarnation.

Those summoned are usually given a task. Sometimes the tasks are innocuous, mundane; other times, they're more akin to epic quests. Like her choice of agents, the reasons for these tasks are often known only to the Lady.

16. MONOLITH SQUARE

Area: 19th St. on the south to 23rd St. on the north; from 6th Ave. east to 4th Ave.

In Monolith Square you can buy anything from artificial flowers to men's neck ties, political dailies to risqué picture postcards, and popular song sheets to dream interpretation books. In many ways, it's a working-class version of the Circus; there are shopping marts and street vendors instead of boutiques, matinee movie houses in place of glittering-marqueed theaters, and cafeterias instead of cafés.

As diverse as the salesmen and their wares are the square's beggars. Blind, handless, footless, legless or on rolling platforms, playing guitar or saxophone or reciting verse, they stake out advantageous spots or wander through the crowds. Some of them may well be urban druids communing with their city, but if so, they don't reveal themselves.

The face of a sun in bas-relief watches over the square with smiling beneficence from the pediment of **Sun in Splendor Hall** to the east. This is the headquarters of the Fair Share Party political machine that dominated City politics throughout the early part of the century—too often through graft and patronage—and continues to be an important player to this day.

At the “prow” of the square, near 19th Street, is the monument that gives it its name. A rough-hewn, black **standing stone**, some six feet tall and three feet wide, has been in that spot since before the City's founding. The stone is a magical void; it absorbs all thaumaturgic energies directed at it without any effect. This property, combined with its weak magnetism, have

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lead experts to theorize it may be composed of the same material as the polar Black Rock.

The square's beggars won't sleep in the stone's vicinity. They claim it causes strange dreams or visions of other worlds or worlds that might have been.

19. ARMIGER SQUARE

Area: 23rd St. on the south to 28th St. on the north; from 6th Ave. east to 5th Ave.

The most iconic landmark in this district is the **Arrowhead Building**, famous for its unusual, triangular shape and immortalized on postcards and souvenirs. It's a remnant of the City That Was, when brownstone mansions around Armiger Square were home to the old money aristocracy.

The tree-shaded walks of Armiger Square Park have remained largely unchanged since those days, though the park's now flanked by more skyscrapers than brownstones. The park is home to several statues and monuments. An **eternal flame** in the park honors the valor of the Union's volunteers in the Great War. A **Statue of Rothco Coglin** (former Union Assemblyman) on the corner at 23rd Street marks the spot where he collapsed from exertion and died

in the Blizzard of 5838. As Coglin walked home from his office (after refusing to pay a cab fare he thought excessive), he was set upon by an unidentified monster. He slew the monster with sword cane and pistol before stumbling another block and dying himself.

An obelisk in the west of the park is a **Memorial to the Unknown Warriors** whose bodies lie beneath. Reliefs of death masks of the four warriors are etched into the sides of the obelisk. The four are said to have been members of a band of patriots who repulsed an undead horde in the command of an Ancient lich over a century and a half ago. The legend on the memorial recounts the promise that the four will return from the grave "*when the horn is sounded in the hour of need.*"

20. GUILDHALL

Area: 23rd St. on the south to 30th St. on the north; from 5th Ave. east to 1st Ave.

The structure for which this district was named, the hall which served as a meeting place for professional organizations and fraternal orders, was replaced by Armiger Square Garden—which was itself replaced by the **Empire Life Assurance Company** skyscraper. It rises 40

stories to a gilded pyramidal roof. Urban legend holds the roof was made from looted coins paid in policy premiums by adventurers.

24th Street between Second and Hexington Avenues supported a thriving horse market in the pre-automobile days. The area is still known as **Old Horse Row**. The market is gone, but two stables still remain, as does **H. Morgenstern Saddlery Company**, which has on display a stuffed, winged horse and a diminutive coach that once belonged to animal-folk gentry from Grand Lludd's Wild Wood.

21. HOBBS BAY

Area: 23rd St. on the south to 30th St. on the north; from 1st Ave. east to the Wyrd River.

Hobbs Bay is mostly a continuation of the industrial waterfront of power plants, laundries, breweries, and slaughterhouses that begins in the Gasworks and snakes through Terrapin Marsh. It was named for a marshy bay at the mouth of a creek that was gradually filled in for development. Most of the bay was in the estate of Janus Weyer, a notorious black magician. The bay's name came from its association with Weyer's purported diabolic activities.

The disreputable Weyer has had a positive legacy, at least indirectly. His descendants, the Blackmoore family, have gradually given over their lands for the ever-expanding **Blackmoore Hospital**, the nucleus of which is the oldest general hospital in Septentrion. Today, the hospital complex is almost a city unto itself, sprawling from 26th Street to 30th Street and encompassing 102 wards.

Blackmoore's **pathology building** houses the official morgue for the City and its Medical Examiner's Office. Official autopsies are performed here, as are necromantic examinations should they be warranted. Unclaimed bodies are eventually put in plain, wooden coffins and carried by barge to Barrow Island.

Blackmoore's most famous department is its **psychiatric hospital**. It was established by a member of the Blackmoore family: Algernon Blackmoore, psychiatrist and amateur antiquarian. Like all facilities for the treatment of the mentally disturbed, the hospital has been the object of fear and rumor. The staff has consistently pioneered new treatments, some of which

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seem regrettable in hindsight. It hasn't helped that Dr. Blackmoore himself was ultimately hospitalized here—and then vanished. Former patients have suggested that somehow the old mansion of Janus Weyer “overlaps” the hospital at certain times, comingling halls and rooms, though the house was demolished long ago.

South of Blackmoore, on 25th Street, is the **Municipal Lodging House**. It can accommodate 2,500 homeless men. The House's simple amenities include a dining room serving free meals and laundry facilities.

22. PALADIN HILL

Area: 30th St. on the south to 34th St. (Riverside Dr. to Amber Ave.) and 42nd St. (1st to 5th) on the north; from 5th Ave. east to Amber Ave. (30th to 42nd) and Riverside Dr. (30th to 34th).

In the last century, Paladin Hill was the City's quiet “uptown,” and its streets were lined with the brownstone row houses of the wealthy. Today, the neighborhood is crowded by the tallest skyscrapers in the world, and only a few of the old money aristocracy remain.

One of the last holdouts on Armiger Avenue is the **Pierpont Morgana Home**, residence of the second

king of banking and finance to bear the name. The **Morgana Library and Museum**, began by the elder and expanded by the son, is on 36th Street. The museum is open to visitors (*Weekdays and Mournday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Godsdays and holidays*). The collection contains valuable *objets d'art* and rare books, incunabula, and manuscripts. Perhaps the most intriguing items in the museum are small, stone cylinders from ancient Meropis inscribed with glyphs. Their purpose is unknown, but archaeologists speculate that they may be keys of some sort.

On the corner of Park Avenue and 34th Street, there's a collection of a different sort. The City's largest **armory** also serves as the headquarters for three units of the City militia.

Many political, professional, and social clubs are found in the district. Most famous of these is the **Thaumaturgical Society**, now occupying several floors of a 22-floor skyscraper on the former site of the Valmont Hotel at 40th Street and Park Avenue. The Society's nominal goal is the promotion of magic while

protecting the public good. To this end, they have established standards of proficiency (with a ranking system) and instituted a code of conduct. Critics charge that contrary to its stated goals, the Society is at best a trust driving out competition, and at worst, a cabal seeking to gain political power.

As might be expected, the Society maintains an extensive library of grimoires and magic-related tomes. This room is open only to members, and is well warded. Rumor suggests the Society maintains a secret, underground passage from the basement of their building to the Wyrd River. Some further claim that the passageway is actually a catacomb where the honored dead of the Society are interred.

Other associations in the vicinity include: the **Union Club**, bastion of Public Weal Party conservatism for over seventy years; the **Engineers' Club** and the **Technology Club**, supporters of the yearly Champions of Innovation Competition; and the **Alchemists' Club**, a professional society for the City's practitioners.

26. GRAND TERMINUS DISTRICT

Area: 42nd St. on the south to 50th St. on the north; from 5th Ave. east to 1st Ave.

Grand Terminus, astride Park Avenue north of 42nd Street, is the confluence of two major railroad lines, several subway lines, and the few remaining airship lines from Ealderde. It has a double level railyard, part of which is underground and extends over sixteen blocks. The terminus itself is a gigantic tower, like something out of myth. It extends from 42nd to 46th Streets, from Vanderlune Avenue east to Hexington, and rises 45 stories.

Its size is not the Terminus's only impressive feature. The base of its spire is surrounded by a star-shaped platform for the docking of airships. Its main entrance opens onto a rotunda whose glass dome, decorated with a map of the world, is supported by columns bearing clocks showing the time at various global destinations. Above the main entrance are floors with circled galleries of various shops and a newsreel theater.

Above the commercial and passenger areas, the tower is devoted to offices of the railroads serving the station. There is, however, a restaurant and observation deck on the 42nd floor. East of the Terminus, on 42nd Street, is the comparatively slender

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Baldanders Building. At 77 stories, it's the second tallest skyscraper in the City. Widely praised for its distinctive architecture, its gleaming, silvery crown is decorated on each side by giant female faces with feathered headdresses in high relief. Beneath the crown, stylized eagle heads project gargoyle-like from the four corners. These were a perch for nightgaunts (descended from the moon) in years past, but thaumaturgic wards have since been installed.

In addition to being the headquarters of Baldanders Motors, the building houses advertising agencies and various aviation firms. There is an observation room at the base of its spire. (*Open daily 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; admission 50 cents.*)

Several hotels are clustered around the Grand Terminus. The largest, on 42nd and Hexington Avenue, is the **Imperator**. It's only 29 stories but boasts 2000 rooms—a size it obtained by engulfing, amoeba-like, a neighboring hotel over a period of days. No satisfactory explanation has ever been found for this event. On Flashman Avenue and 43rd Street, the **Hotel Bravura** is the Meropic League headquarters of the Fair Share party—though one

might be forgiven for thinking the party elite confined to the hotel bar. The **Fitzharlton** at 45th Street is an icon of luxury and exclusivity.

27. TERRAPIN MARSH

Area: 30th St. and 42nd St. on the south to 50th St. on the north; 1st Ave. (42nd to 50th) and Amber Ave. (30th to 42nd) east to the Wyrd River.

This portion of the Wyrd River waterfront takes its name from a gigantic, snapping turtle-like creature that made its home in the area and was worshipped with human sacrifice by superstitious Natives. Despite the fact that the creature was supposedly killed by early Dwergen colonists and its home marsh filled in, the cult resurfaces sporadically among new immigrants.

Modern Terrapin Marsh is home to industry. The **Terrapin Marsh Station of the Empire Steam Corporation** on 35th Street supplies steam to the skyscrapers of Middle Empire Island for heating purposes. The steam travels through underground pipes at high speeds. Para-elementals of steam arise spontaneously in the process, but care is taken not to pipe them into buildings. On 38th Street, **Consolidated Swift Company's**

Riverside Station generates electricity and binds it by powerful industrial thaumaturgy to the City's grid.

Two tabloid newspapers also have their publishing offices and printing plants in the district. The 36-story **Daily Inquirer Building** is on 42nd Street. It has the largest circulation of any paper in the Union and often runs stories about the exploits of adventurers. The *City Sentinel*, a competitor (and imitator), has offices on 45th Street. It tends to take a more negative stance on the activities of adventurers, painting them as a menace.

Fiftieth Street, the district's northern boundary, leads to the entrance to the **Marquesa Bridge**. The Bridge attaches to Queen City across the Wyrd.

28. DWERGENTOWN and 30. STRATTON PLACE

Area: 50th Street on the south to 59th Street on the north; 2nd Ave. (50th to 54th) and 1st Ave. (54th to 59th) east to the Wyrd River.

These neighborhoods on a bluff along the Wyrd River are named for wealthy enclaves established amidst the otherwise poor northern waterfront. Dwergentown is the

oldest. It was once one of the last "pure" Dwergeren villages on an Empire Island turned mostly Lluddish, but it's now home to apartment buildings for the wealthy, each with a river view, flanked by poor tenements. The most prestigious is the co-op **One Dwergerentown Place**. Its luxurious apartments are home to old money, entertainers—and a few retired adventurers. Despite its luxury, the building doesn't have the best of reputations. Rumor holds that it's dangerous to walk the halls alone at night, and it is true that there have been disappearances. Superstitious immigrants in surrounding tenements have pronounced the building cursed.

Stratton Place, most precisely, is the name of the stretch of Amber Avenue between 57th and 59th Streets, lined by brownstones occupied by the affluent. A similar (but less prestigious) row of dwellings between 55th and 57th Streets is an artists' enclave known as **South Stratton Place**. The rents are kept low, but the artists residing there must sometimes produce works to the specifications of their patroness, Effigenia Rose Stratton. The widow Stratton's artistic tastes



Scratch

Mr. Scratch, or sometimes “Nick Scratch,” is a figure of some mystery. Scratch makes all the right parties, and can be seen in all the tony night-spots. He might be glimpsed hobnobbing with the scions of old-money Dwerger families, rising-star city ealdormen, high-placed members of the mob, or even some of the more public supernatural denizens of the city. At the same time, more than one down-and-out junkie or death row loser will spin you a tale of having met him outside some dive in Hell’s Commot or on a smuggler’s dock obscured by night fog off the Eldritch.

Wherever he’s met, Scratch is always stylishly and impeccably dressed. His moustache and beard are always neatly trimmed and his hands well-manicured. Most people either don’t notice (or are too polite to mention) the small horns on his forehead. He’s usually flanked by “muscle” of almost preternatural quiet. The goons act more like well-dressed statues than men, unless Scratch needs them to make a point. He maintains a well-appointed office in a skyscraper downtown (on the 66th floor, naturally), though that’s seldom where people *first* meet him.

The business he conducts is as eclectic as the people with whom he conducts it. Often he gives favors — some seemingly inconsequential, others of great importance. He seldom asks for anything in return—at least, not immediately. He provides tidbits of information at a high price but is just as likely to save someone’s life *gratis*. It’s not always hard to discern *some* pattern in his actions, but his ultimate goal remains elusive — if indeed there is one. Still, more than one tale of woe in the City begins with a seemingly positive meeting with Scratch.

Scratch’s physical appearance and the deals he sometimes offers suggest a connection to the Hell Syndicate, though which of the eight infernal families he might work for is unclear. Some have suggested he might be the son of a hell *capo*, given control of the city to “make a name” for himself. Others think that for all his mysterious airs, he’s just another sap working out the terms of a Faustian contract. Still others point out that the diabolic boss of bosses hasn’t been heard from in some time. It’s been whispered (perhaps recklessly) that Scratch might be Morningstar himself, in disguise. What a being of that power would be doing in the role of middling operator in the City is a worrisome thought.

are said to run to the unusual, if not outright hazardous. (It's rumored that a couple of pieces she commissioned reside now in the Museum of Dangerous Art.) As she's something of a recluse, it's a rare honor for an artist to be invited to meet her in person.

Between the two neighborhoods are docks for the pleasure craft of the well-heeled and the most palatial of the riverfront apartment buildings, **River Manor**. The exclusive **River Club** occupies the building's lower levels and boasts tennis courts, a swimming pool, a ballroom, and a floating dock.

29. MIDTOWN

Area: 50th St. (2nd to 8th Ave.) and 54th St. (1st to 2nd Ave.) on the south to 59th St. on the north; from 8th Ave. east 2nd Ave. (50th to 54th) and 1st Ave. (54th to 59th).

The relatively small part of Middle Empire Island with no particular claim to any other sobriquet is simply known as "Midtown." Leading up to the boundaries of Empire Park, its streets are much in keeping with the Circus and Grand Terminus to the south: blocks devoted to entertainment, lodging, and shopping.

One of the most visited sites in the City is **Donander Plaza**, a

Gargoyles

Gargoyles are Old World creatures that have been roosting in human cities since ancient times. Historically, some Earlderish cities are reported to have formed pacts with gargoyle colonies for mutual protection. Not native to the New World, the creatures must have either stowed away or been purposefully transported to its shores.

Though admittedly ill-tempered and certainly capable of violence, gargoyles are generally not dangerous, if given wide berth—except to small animals, like pets. Researchers in the City have tried to make contact with the temperamental creatures, as it's hoped that an understanding of the metabolic curse, *petrifactio progressiva*, that causes them to age into stone statues might lead to an alchemical cure for petrification of various sorts.

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complex of buildings occupying 49th to 52nd Streets between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. The Plaza was conceived by wealthy inventor Mikola Donander, whose vision for the Plaza was as a model for a city center of the future.

The main entrance to the center is off of Fifth Avenue. A promenade leads to a sunken court where there is an ice-skating rink in winter. At the end of the court closest to the Union Radio Building are two tall electrothaumaturgical coils. Once an hour, arcs of electricity create the looming visage of Mikola Donander who utters some aphorism from his self-improvement manual in a sonorous tone—immediately followed by an advertisement for a sponsor, delivered in much the same manner.

The Sixth Avenue face of the Plaza is composed of its most famous buildings, devoted to entertainment and media. At its center is the **Union Radio Building**, a 70-story skyscraper with broad, relatively plain north and south faces, and a thin and tapering width. Its appearance has earned it the nicknames “the Wing” and “the Fin.” The building is home to the Union Broadcasting

Company as well as its parent, the Union Radio Corporation. UBC’s broadcasting studios are housed here, as are the primary stations of its two programming channels, UBC-1 and UBC-2 (*Studio tour: 55 cents admission, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.*). A glass-domed observation deck on top of the building offers a view of the City.

The **Museum of Science and Industry**, also located in the building, boasts models, dioramas, and demonstrations celebrating technological progress in the century. Exhibits include pieces of the giant automata used in the famous duel between Swift and Reade, a salamander (taxidermied) from the Steel League, and a working prototype mechanical man of the sort Donander had originally envisioned staffing the Plaza. (*Open daily, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; admission 25 cents for adults, 10 cents for children.*)

Across 51st Street is the **Eidolon Lux-Orpheum Building**, the 30-story home of the motion picture company of the same name. Its Sixth Avenue facade has reliefs depicting the masks of comedy and tragedy. Adjoining the building

is **Radio-Land Hall**. Its façade brings to mind the arched face of an old radio. Almost everything about the Hall is impressive: The semi-dome over its rotunda is the largest in the Western world and displays a moving night sky with twinkling stars. The theater can seat over 6,000 patrons.

A couple of blocks north of the Plaza looms a façade of steel plate and bolts with a thick, round door—all of which would be more at home gracing a foundry or boiler room than an art museum. Of course, the **Museum of Dangerous Art** doesn't house a typical collection.

The sponsorship of an anonymous group of collectors (rumored to have been the shadowy cabal of sorcerers called the Unknown) made the museum possible. These patrons appear to have had two goals: One was to encourage the appreciation and study of thaumaturgical art, and the other was to imprison these works where they can do the least harm. The collection includes paintings, sculpture, illustration, and film; the only requirements are that a work has some aesthetic purpose and that it's potentially harmful.

There are life-stealing still lifes, murderous nudes, soul-corrupting folk art, and a myriad of other aesthetically varied but uniformly hazardous works. (*Open weekdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Godsdays noon to 6 p.m.; Admission 25 cents, free on Loonsday.*)

At the northern boundary of the district, 59th Street becomes the arc of Empire Park South, and a line of expensive hotels looks out over the green expanse. Among these are the **Hotel Duardanois**, the **Eidler-Woodwose Hotel**, and the **Foliot Hotel**. The **Grand Luxuria** is said to be on the same site occupied 25 years ago by an infamous high-class brothel staffed by succubi and managed by a half-infernal sorcerer.

MIDDLE ELDSIDE

17. CHAUNCEY

Area: 14th St. (4th to 11th Ave.) and 23th St. (11th Ave. to the Eldritch River) on the south to 30th St. on the north, excluding **Monolith** and **Armiger Squares**; from the Eldritch River east to 4th Ave. (14th to 19th St.), 5th Ave. (28th to 30th St.), and 6th Ave. (19th to 28th St.), excluding **Shambles**.

Chauncey is historically a community of conservative Oecumenical descendants of the Ibernian Little People (grown to

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average height after generations in the New World) though other immigrant groups have left their mark. It's predominantly a neighborhood of residences, churches, and small businesses, but it has an industrial waterfront and the remnants of a thriving theater district from nearly a century ago.

The impressive **Starr-Legee Freight Building** occupies a whole block between 26th and 27th Streets. It contains a railyard on its ground floor, loading platforms for trucks and trailers, and multiple floors for the storage and repackaging of goods.

Looking east from the right vantage at the waterfront, it's possible to glimpse the tower of the **Oecumenical Theological Seminary**. In the seminary's collection are several priceless theurgic spellbooks dating from before the founding of the City.

At 23rd Street and 8th Avenue is a remnant of Chauncey's theatrical past. Though it's now a Lux-Orpheum cinema, the building was once **Peake's Opera House**. In its heyday, the house saw many performances by Clarise

Opal, popular actress of the day and mistress to a succession of the House's owners and other prominent socialites—many of whom met mysterious, unfortunate ends. Opal's house west of the theater was supposedly connected to it for unknown reasons by a subterranean tunnel.

Several early motion picture companies had studios in the area. Around the time of the Great War, Chauncey was the center of the Union film industry. Several of the early pictures of Morthylla, the ghoul "it" girl, were made here on the upper floors of an old armory building on 26th Street. The decadent after-parties are said to have occurred in the basement. Morthylla disappeared in 1873, though rumors suggest she continued to perform in the subterranean theater of her people for some time.

18. SHAMBLES (KNACKER'S YARD)

Area: 14th St. on the south to 23rd St. on the north; from the Eldritch River east to 11th Ave.

The Shambles is the center of the City's slaughterhouse and meatpacking industry. It's

overwhelmingly industrial and sparsely populated; even its poor, mostly immigrant workers choose to live elsewhere to escape the ever-present animal smells.

Thaumaturgists and alchemists sometimes visit the yards to purchase animal-derived material components like bezoars or alectorian stones. Occasionally, adventurers are hired to trap or kill monsters that are drawn to the offal—giant rats and the six-legged, naked devil-rats are probably the most common—though rarely something will crawl or slither from the subterranean depths.

It's long been rumored that the ghouls have an arrangement with some slaughterhouse operators to allow the use of their facilities for after hours "dinner parties" in exchange for loot from the underground. Certainly, unscrupulous owners of knacker's yards and livestock holding pens have—for a fee—been happy to oblige mobsters in the disposal of bodies.

23. THE GARMENT DISTRICT AND VICINITY

Area: 30th St. on the south to 34th (5th to 8th Ave.) and 42nd St. and the Circus (Broad Blvd. to 7th Ave.); from 8th Ave. east to 5th

Ave. (30th to 34th St.) and 7th Ave. east to Broad Blvd. (34th to 42nd St. and the Circus).

In the '30s and '40s, this area was the "Tenderloin," notorious as the wickedest place in the city. Today, it is home to the city's foremost industry, the garment trade, and related businesses.

The character of the district is influenced by the peculiarities of the garment business. The close interplay between manufacture and sales has insured that the workrooms have remained close to the design studios and showrooms. Also, the fickleness of fashion has allowed smaller operations to hold their own against larger ones.

The treatment of the predominantly female shop workers—once the subject of muckraking exposés—has greatly improved since the establishment of a Garment Workers Union. Though some sweatshops remain, one terrible practice has hopefully been stamped out entirely. In the past, destitute young girls were transformed into centaur-like, human-spider hybrids through the use of thaumaturgic arts stolen from certain pagan temples of the East. The silk produced by

The Sacred Slaughter

From time to time, snatches of lambskin or the like are found in Shambles inked with prayers or paeans honoring the Lord of the Cleaver. A full text (anthropodermically bound) honoring this obscure *eikone* is known to exist in a private collection in New Ludd. The origins and motivations of the Lord of the Cleaver are obscure; some have suggested he's a degenerate war god, while others believe he's a twisted protector of animals, exacting a horrifying vengeance. Whatever his origins, his name is associated with sporadic outbreaks of homicidal madness.



Typically one individual is affected. He or she develops a maniacal urge to kill by direct and bloody means—and gains an almost superhuman ability to do so (Str +4, Con +4, and increase hit dice to d12; see the “Maniac” template). Occasionally others become acolytes or accomplices of the maniac. The killing may go on for years—perhaps with periods of months without activity—but only truly ends when the affected individual is killed. After one maniac is destroyed, it's usually years before the Lord of the Cleaver's influence is felt again. Usually.

these creatures is valuable not only for its greater strength but also its ability to hold enchantment better than more mundane fabrics. What became of many of the unfortunate women so transformed remains a mystery.

The streets of the **fur district** are less hectic than those in the garment center, but otherwise similar. Fur dealers display stacks of pelts in their windows, purchased directly from hunters and trappers. They, in turn, sell the skins to the manufacturers. The hides of exotic or magical animals are often sold at auction.

Between 30th and 34th Street, 6th Avenue becomes a pedestrian-only thoroughfare, passing through the heart of the City's concentrated shopping center. The area is dominated by three famous department stores: Dacy's, Gymbles, and Shrack's.

Dacy's, the largest department store in the world, sits across from the 34th Street boundary of the mall. It boasts 23 acres of retail space where customers can buy everything from diamonds to dog food. Its sporting goods department carries some

items of use to adventurers, though not weapons.

At the end of the pedestrian walk and the intersections of Broad Boulevard and 34th Street stands the **Bendix Clock** monument. Beneath the clock face is a recess with bronze statues and a five-foot-tall bell. Father Time, arms outstretched, gazes down sternly on two burly, thick-bearded, and shirtless men (Gog and M'Gog) who strike the bell in unison to chime the hour. Many explanations as to the tableau's meaning have been advanced, but no one knows for certain.

Fane Station on Seventh Avenue is one of the City's two great passenger railroad terminals. It lies along the only route allowing direct rail travel from New Lludd to the South. The architecture of the structure recalls monumental temples of ancient Ealderde. The vast central hall is lined with murals depicting the destinations served. The station's massive yard is located underground, beneath it.

Across Eighth Avenue from Fane Station is the **City of Empire General Post Office**, the largest

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in the Union. The structure stands on steel and concrete stilts atop a portion of the railyard. Nearly half of the City's mail is handled here. Mail is brought up from postal trains into the station for sorting. A system of underground pneumatic tubes carries mail to branch post offices and the General Post Office of Rookend. Postal workers are familiar with "tube whippers"—the wheedling, near-verbal sounds of emergent air elementals that swirl to brief life in the constant flow of human correspondence.

24. HELL'S COMMOT

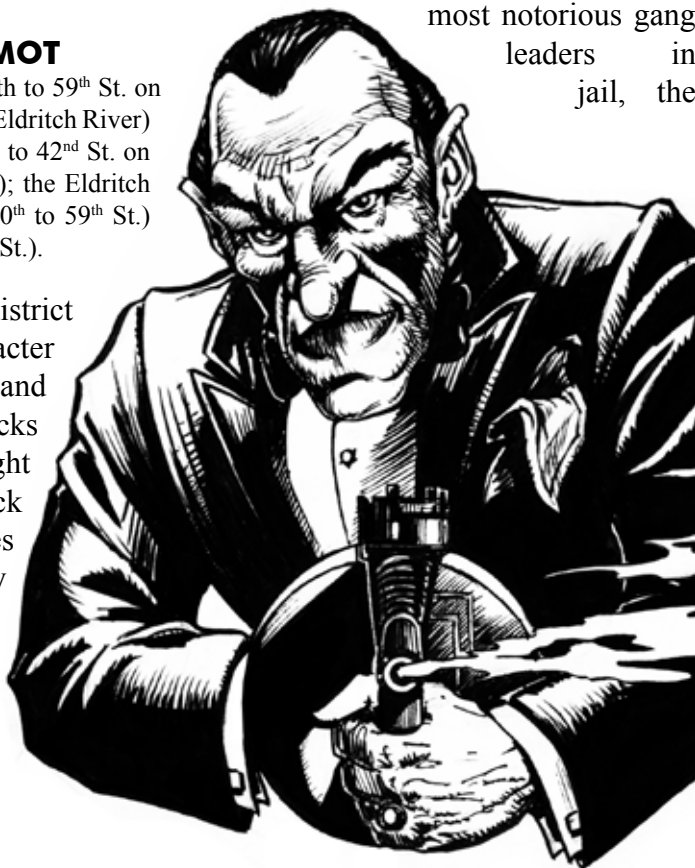
Area: 30th St. on the south to 59th St. on the north (8th Ave. to the Eldritch River) and 34th St. on the south to 42nd St. on the north (7th to 8th Ave.); the Eldritch River east to 8th Ave. (30th to 59th St.) and 7th Ave. (34th to 42nd St.).

A ride through the district suggests its character is industrial and working-class: Blocks of factories, freight yards, garages, stock pens, and warehouses are punctuated by crowded tenements. The pattern seldom varies, save at the borders where it

mixes with neighboring districts. The Hell's Commot of the public imagination, however, is decidedly more lurid, rotten with gangs and awash with violence.

Its reputation is exaggerated, but not wholly undeserved. Gangs from Hardluck moved into the area seventy years ago and their leaders reigned like bandit chieftains, committing daring and vicious crimes, until the railroad sent in a small army of hired guns and sorcerers. The offensive left the

most notorious gang
leaders in
jail, the



hospital, or the morgue, and set petty thugs to flight. Still, Hell's Commot remains a fertile recruiting ground for the gangs under the suzerainty of the Hell Syndicate to this day.

From 30th to 32nd Street, the waterfront is dominated by Empire Central Railroad's **Eld Side Yard**, which sprawls over ten city blocks. It serves as the primary receiving and departure point for the only all-rail freight line on the island. Security must remain vigilant for the inevitable congeries of hobgoblins seeking free transit.

On 42nd Street, the **Church of the Holy Saltire** ministers to theater folk and entertainers as well as factory

and shop workers. The church is popularly known as "The Church of Father Duncan," in honor of Reverend Padric Duncan, chaplain of the City's "Fighting Fifth" during the Great War, and pastor here until his death. Duncan's earthy manner and his strong fists (he was one of the gifted) helped him reform many a hardened gang member and protected his flock.

A number of film distribution companies occupy the area around 44th Street and Ninth Avenue known as **Celluloid Center**. All the major Heliotrope studios have offices here to prepare films for screening in area theaters. Newsreels are produced and edited here so that footage shot in the afternoon can

"A WALK WITH A DEAD MAN"

"Charley Rictus is a trusted lieutenant and enforcer for the Malbolge family. He's been killed and raised at least nine times on record: He's been shot, stabbed, poisoned, emasculated, and dismembered. Now it looks like he wants to cut a deal. Maybe he wants to retire to a beach somewhere and rot in peace, or maybe he thinks he can break his Faustian pact and save his soul from eternal damnation. I don't know and I don't care. I just need him at the courthouse on time—with the important parts intact."

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be on Broad Boulevard screens by evening. Bezoar's popular *Exotic Ports o' Call* travelogue series is produced here.

The unadorned, square building on Eighth Avenue between 49th and 50th Street is the greatest indoor arena in the Union: **Empire Garden**. Built in 5875, it replaced the City's previous arena near Armiger Square. Since then, it has hosted political rallies, charity benefits, championship prize fights, world renowned circuses, and Wild West shows. The arena has seating on three levels. The cheap seats at the top are in a perpetual haze due to rising tobacco smoke, but that seldom seems to faze attendees. Thaumaturgists often find a full Garden a useful place to invoke the *eikone* Phile.

The **Men's Night Court** occupies a dour gray building on 54th Street, a few blocks from the 18th Precinct Police station. From 8 p.m. until 1 a.m., the presiding magistrate passes judgement on petty offenders from Empire Island and Shancks. In days past, the sad sack parade of drunks, pickpockets, wife-beaters, hobogoblins, and vagrants drew a jeering courtroom audience, but

today the proceedings are generally more business-like.

Lenfer Bridge connects 56th Street with Weemaukish Cove (*50 cents toll for passenger automobiles*). This majestic suspension bridge is a favorite subject of photographers, and unfortunately, a favorite spot for suicides, as well. The western tower has its base on **Gorch Island**, once the site of a typhoid quarantine "pesthouse" that had to be abandoned after a strange, miasmatic fog settled on it some forty years ago. As far as is known, no living thing can survive long in the green and faintly luminescent mist, but strange sounds are sometimes heard coming from the island by passing boats.

Two hospitals are found in the district. The **Polyclinic Hospital** treats boxers, athletes and performers from Empire Garden across the street, but most of the patients occupying its 345 beds are normal people from the neighborhood. The buildings of **Wildman Hospital** are located on Ninth Avenue near the northern border of Hell's Commot. The facility has a Union-wide reputation for its surgical expertise.

25. THE CIRCUS DISTRICT

Area: 34th St. (5th Ave. to Broad Blvd.) and 42nd St. and the Circus (Broad Blvd. to 8th Ave.) on the south to 50th St. on the north; 8th Ave. east to the Circus (42nd and the Circus to 50th St.) and 5th Ave. (34th to 42nd St. and the Circus).

Standing in the center of the Circus proper, one might be forgiven for thinking its name relates to more than just the shape of its junction of streets. Carnival-crowds throng streets more brightly lit at midnight than noon. Messages spelled out in white lights crawl across the faces of buildings and colorful neon exhorts onlookers to experience the latest Heliotrope spectacular, chew a particular brand of gum, or see the world's most beautiful dancing girls.

The Circus is the heart of the theater district (though legitimate theater has ceded much ground to cinema) and home to all sorts of entertainments. On any

given night, depending what street one takes off Broad Boulevard, one may encounter millionaires or beggars, gangsters or office clerks, young starlets or aged vaudevillians.

The circle is more properly known as Herald Circus after the **City Herald Building**, which stands at 40th Street and Broad, near its entrance. The paper has

since moved, and the skyscraper is leased for offices. In a plaza at the circle's center stand three giant, stylized, gleaming bronze statues of women in dance-like poses. These are popularly known as **the Muses**, but technically they are the **Charities**—ancient goddesses associated with festivities and entertainment.



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On Broad Boulevard, just south of the Circus, the old Empire Theater building also serves as the meeting hall for the **Guild of Illusionists**, thaumaturgists who use their arts to entertain. The illusionists claim to be a part of an ancient and global Brotherhood of Illusion, but proof of these claims is elusive.

Buildings housing theaters dominate the Circus' circumference. The 35 story **Pinnacle Building** houses a palatial movie theater on its lowest levels. The **Leopold Theatre** is the only theater in the Circus regularly featuring vaudeville shows. It was infamously the site of magician Evard Kellur's last performance which resulted in the tragic deaths of three, not counting the magician himself, and many hospitalizations. Some claim it's haunted by the ghost of Kellur's head—though his body apparently rests in peace.

Just north of the Circus on Broad is **Finley's Restaurant**, famous for its celebrity clientele (and associated gossip) and its cheesecake. Catercorner to Finley's is the **Paradiso** night club whose exacting standards demand only naturally blonde and blue-eyed chorus girls—which made the dancers

particular targets for the deranged thaumaturgist Hengest Toombes. When his captives were rescued, and Toombes was in custody, the headlines quipped: "*The Sorcerer Preferred Blondes.*"

At 48th Street and Broad is a popular exhibition devoted to adventurers. **Munsen's Life of Fantastic Danger Museum** celebrates the exploits of these colorful characters of the City, both world-renown and relatively obscure.

Theaters, concert halls and night clubs follow Broad Boulevard and spill out on to side streets all the way north to the Midtown district. Fiftieth Street between Fifth and Seventh Avenues is known as "**Swing Town**" due to the abundance of jazz clubs located there, some having moved south from Solace.

On 42nd Street west of Broad, aging, once grand theaters have been converted into movie "grind" houses with continuous double feature bills, burlesque shows, or peepshows. Interspersed are cafeterias, curio shops, and a few shady dime-a-dance halls. The **Gem Theater** is representative of

the theaters gone burlesque. The platinum blonde, “Freedonian Bombshell” Belle “Bang-Bang” Starr takes the stage here when not adventuring. The **Humbert Dime Museum** (*Admission: afternoons 15 cents, evenings and all day Godsdays 20 cents, holidays 25 cents*) farther east offers more eclectic spectacle: oddities, freaks, and novelties, with Professor Haeckler’s Flea Circus occupying a portion of the basement and charging its own admission of 10 cents.

On West 44th and 45th Streets, one finds the refuge of live theater, pushed out of the Circus by movies. West 43rd is home to another business fleeing the Circus: The **publishing offices of the City Herald** have settled here.

East of the Circus are a number of hotels and social clubs. On 44th Street east of Sixth Avenue is the **Quontauka Hotel**, historically the meeting place of many clubs and social circles associated with the arts. The **City of Empire Bar Association** with its extensive law library can be found nearby.

Farther south and east, the entertainment sector gives way

to other concerns. Fifth Avenue (beginning around 34th Street and going north) is a (mostly) high-end shopping district.

Occupying 40th to 42nd Streets, the majestic **Main Branch of the City Public Library** is a notable exception. Up the broad steps flanked by couchant sphinxes and through the colonnade at the main entrance, one finds the centerpiece of a collection larger than any in the New World. Its reference section alone occupies more than 8 miles of total shelf-space. It holds many special collections, including books of thaumaturgical interest, though no actual grimoires. Behind the library is **Brant Park** which is home to a large, domed greenhouse known as the **Glasshouse**. When built for the World Exposition nearly a century ago, the Glass Palace (as it was then known) was filled with exotic plants and birds. Today, it suffers from decades of neglect. The plants are generally mundane, if overgrown. A few rare bird species have flourished in its confines, however.

The **Imperial Building** between 33rd and 34th Street is the tallest building in the City—and the world.



It has 87 floors of commercial space in its main structure, and rises another 15 floors in the glass and metal spire of an observation tower. This tower can also be used as an airship mooring, but the winds must be controlled by thaumaturgic means to moor successfully, so it's rarely used. The observation decks on the 87th and 102nd floors are open to the public (*daily 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; admission \$1 for adults, 25 cents for children under 16*). On the 86th floor, only reachable by private elevator, is the sanctum of

the City's superhuman protector, the Titan, a self-aware construct of gleaming orichalcum. He has not been seen much in recent years, since the death of his creator.

In 5883, an efreet, smuggled into the City illegally, rampaged through the Circus district where he snatched up a showgirl. Pursued by police and a few adventurers, the creature climbed to the top of the Imperial Building with showgirl in hand. A group of daring pilots and adventurers finally defeated the efreet and freed the girl.

Strange Things at the Automat



less than half of people who have been there have visited it more than once. Urban legend holds that to encounter it more than seven times is a bad omen and harbingers death.

The phantom automat of **Horvendile & Hawberk** may appear anywhere, but is less likely to be found on a busy thoroughfare or crowded street. It seems to thrive in the shadows. It's never found in the same place twice, and

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Horvendile & Hawberk's, or sometimes "Double H's" (used somewhat superstitiously), looks new, though its decor and signage are a decade or more out of date. Decorative glass fixtures around the upper walls are etched with astrological symbols. The staff is always crisply dressed and pleasant but doesn't engage in conversation. In addition to the automat staples like coffee, pie, sandwiches, and macaroni and cheese, the coin-operated, hinged, glass slots at Double H's sometimes hold apparently random and unusual items:

1. A Subway and Elevated Rail Lines map of the City, with unknown stations identified.
2. The egg of a griffin, worth a fortune—had it not been cooked sunny-side up. Eating it leads to heightened sight for 48 hours.
3. A girasol ring, worth \$200 to a fence, but evaluation by an expert reveals that it marks the bearer as the heir to a tiny city-state in Eastern Ealderde.
4. A risqué postcard of a Poitêmiennne prostitute, imbued with the power of the *eikone* Doll, so that the owner has the power of *charm* over members of the opposite sex as long as he or she carries it on his or her person.

5. A used napkin with the address of a warehouse where a Staarkish Imperial Military manhunter golem has been stored. It's battered but only needs a power source to return to operation.

6. Four-and-a-half pages of illuminated text in a magical script from a grimoire on which someone has over-written a series of bawdy limericks. It contains 1-4 spells that must be recopied to separate the formulae from the limericks.

7. A post-bill asking after a lost dog named "Jakey." The crude drawing of the dog is so vague as to be unhelpful, but it's strangely unsettling to the viewer. Anyone who touches it will have vague nightmares and unrestful sleep that night.

8. An ornately engraved antique six-gun. It's intelligent (Int 17) and will attempt to dominate any bearer to force him or her to seek out its original owner, whose taxidermied corpse is currently on display in a roadside curio and oddity museum in the Dustlands. When used, the gun confers a +2 to hit.

9. A slice of preternaturally tasty pecan pie that the consumer will talk about from time to time with some nostalgia for 1d20 years after.

10. A pocket notepad with a glossary of hobogoblin cant and sign that, if utilized, improves reactions from the tramp humanoids, and provides other helpful information for a "gentleman of the road."

UPPER EAST SIDE

31. AMBERVILLE

Area: 59th St. on the south to 106th St. on the north; 3rd Ave. east to the Wyrd River.

Amberville is popularly considered “Staarkish-town,” but today it’s a melting pot of Eastern Ealderdish immigrants: Dawsbergeners, Graustarkians, Doppelkinnians, and Karlovans, to name a few. It’s said that the Amberville Public Library on Amber Avenue near 78th Street has more books in foreign languages than in Common.

The **Amberville Casino** on 87th Street isn’t a gambling hall, but rather a public meeting place for many Staarkish organizations. Violence has erupted here between opponents and supporters the National Purity Party, whose racist message is gaining ground in their native Staark.

The **Staarkish Worker’s Temple** on 85th Street is host to groups opposed to the Purity Party, including a club for Iron-Men (*Eisenmenschen*) veterans of the Great War. These forgotten soldiers were thaumatosurgically reconstructed with mechanical parts in the Imperial bodyworks to

be implements of war. A tenement on 79th Avenue is the dwelling place of most of the City’s Iron-Men.

Scenic **East Park** extends along the riverfront from 84th to 90th Streets. On its grounds is the **Dray Mansion**, built by Theobalt Dray, a highwayman turned merchant, in 5731. The house has been restored to late 58th century style and is open to the public. Its last private owner was the sorcerer Balthazar Hacksilver, whose suicide was attributed to the rare mental derangement known as “Ackerlast’s Schism”—a result of his over-reliance on a rare spell allowing him to temporally separate his head from his body.

The blocks between 68th and 71st Streets are occupied by **City Hospital** (and its various clinics) and the **Cornelian Medical College**. The site where the hospital stands was once the landing of a notorious smuggler, Roose Creedy. Creedy is rumored to have hidden his illicit goods in a nearby cave—now called Smuggler’s Cave—whose entrance has never been found and is believed to have been magically hidden. Legend suggests the cave may yet hold treasure, if it could be found.



32. EMPIRE PARK EAST

Area: 59th St. north to 106th St.; Empire Park east to 3rd Ave.

The district East of Empire Park is a place of old mansions, spacious apartments, exclusive clubs, and palatial hotels; of tony art galleries, trendy cocktail lounges, and swank nightclubs. The stretch of 5th Avenue along the park is called “Pauper’s Row”—a name originally applied derisively to the modest dwellings here when the City elite still lived further south, but used ironically for the past thirty years as the area has become populated by millionaires, first in mansions, but increasingly in apartment buildings.

Park Avenue is even more residential and just as wealthy. Flashman Avenue is home to expensive specialty shops.

The **Borogove-Astra Hotel** is two 47-story towers between 49th and 50th Streets, Park and Hexington Avenues. It plays host to important City social functions and is the lodging of choice for visiting foreign dignitaries. The hotel sits atop the railroad, and private cars may stop at a special entrance.

Flashman Avenue is home to the **headquarters of the Zephyria Broadcasting System** and its studios. It’s the second largest network in the Union.

On 78th Street between Flashman and Park is the **Mircalla Karnstein Finishing School for Young Ladies** founded by the Staarkish Countess Karnstein. Graduates of the school have found husbands among the City’s wealthiest bachelors. All seem to follow their mentor’s unorthodox beauty regimen and are seldom seen out in the sunlight.

The **City Art Museum** is on Fifth Avenue. (*Open weekdays and Mourndays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Godsdays 1 to 6 p.m.; Admission:*

Loonsdays and Lovesdays 25 cents, other days free.) It holds the largest collection in the New World including painting, sculpture, and even Ealderdish arms and armor, with areas devoted to art from various historic cultures.

Also on Fifth Avenue, at the northern border of the district, a hospitaller's cross-shaped complex houses the **City Medical College** and the associated **Floret and Park Hospitals**. Physicians associated with the college also train at Metropolitan General Hospital on First Avenue.

36. DEGUELLO

Area: 106th St. on the south to 118th St. on the north bordering Empire Park; Park Place East and Empire Park east to 3rd Ave.

This district is home to people of many nationalities whose native lands were once colonies of the Esparian Empire. Zingarans, San Zancudans, Hidalgans, and Ascianans live side by side here, but the majority hail from Puerto Oro. They were drawn to this area for the cheap rents, but unemployment is high, as are rates of illness and malnutrition, often carryovers of their homelands.



Sikandar the Sorcerer

The so-called “Gentleman Mentalist” is a highly-paid performer and celebrity exposé of criminal mages. He dates starlets and popular songbirds, and appears in advertisements for pomade, cigarettes, and men's shirts.

This public persona doesn't tell the whole story. His real name is Alisander Welleran, and he's taken an oath before the Nine Unknown Sages of Agharthala to defend this plane against the forces of evil. Time after time, he's put the mystic powers he mastered in Agharthala to this purpose—and if he can increase his celebrity thereby, so much the better. He's thwarted Anarchists trying to poison the City's water supply with flesh-warping alchemicals and bested a murderous shade striving to re-enact its pre-death killing spree, among other exploits. And he's *always* looked good doing it.

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Fifth and Flashman Avenues are where the most prominent businesses of the district are located. Restaurants offer cuisine from the denizens' native lands, pharmacies offer traditional medicines and charms, and a number of music shops sell instruments and Esparian language records.

Entertainments tend toward the inexpensive. Small auditoriums or public meeting halls play host to wrestling matches of the Zingaran variety, where the wrestlers go masked. Less public venues host illegal cockfights. Several cheap theaters are found in the district that show Zingaran or Ascianan films and, occasionally, Esparian vaudeville.

A myriad of national celebrations sometimes turn into impromptu parades. The Zingaran Day of the Dead is a popular one, as are festivals associated with certain obscure Oecumenical Saints.

37. LITTLE TRYSTERO

Area: 106th St. (Wyrd River to 3rd Ave.) and 118th St. (3rd Ave. to 5th Ave.) on the south to Riverside Dr. and the Wyrd River on the north; 5th Ave. (118th St. to the Wyrd River) and 3rd Ave. (106th St. to 118th St.) east to the Wyrd River.

This district is the oldest of the ethnic enclaves in the north of the island and one of the City's most densely populated areas. Immigrants tended to settle near folk from their same village or province until the entire map of the Vatilian League was laid down in crazy-quilt fashion on the grid of the City's streets.

Along First Avenue, between 107th and 115th Streets, there are Old World markets where one can haggle for Bengodian cheese and pasta, Enotrian olives, or clams and squid that could have come from the Tryphemian Gulf. Interspersed with the markets are cafes and restaurants of the sort found lining the streets of Trystero or Serrantio.

On side streets one finds the unassuming parlors of the witches, or *strega*, where one may buy charms or curses. The Thaumaturgical Society looks down on these unlicensed "hedge" practitioners but (perhaps tellingly) does not move against them in any way beyond the rhetorical.

Straddling the border between Little Trystero and Amberville is **Metropolitan General Hospital**. This sixty-year old institution is one of the largest hospitals in the City.

Dark with Something More than Night

The living share the streets of the City with the unliving....

Vampires: The vampires that haunt the City's streets and prowl its night-spots must drink the blood of the living to survive. Specifically, they must consume the blood of living humans; the blood of other animals will stave off withdrawal but won't give them the "high" they crave and leaves them in a weakened state. Like vampires elsewhere, they're nocturnal hunters who can't abide the light.

Vampires are perhaps best analogized as addicts or junkies. A vampire in need of blood is afflicted by terrible physical and psychological symptoms of withdrawal. Whatever their moral or ethical feelings were in life (or even in their undeath), the crippling need drives them to harm others.

In the early stages of vampirism—perhaps the first few weeks after they rise—most enjoy the high of blood-drinking. Many only take it from semi-willing victims they have seduced, and are often careful not to kill. Some may only need to ingest blood every other week at this stage. Over time, tolerance develops and the amount of blood needed to stave off withdrawal becomes greater—as does their willingness to do almost anything to get it. Advanced-stage vampires may need to consume blood nightly.

This increased use takes its toll on a vampire's body. Nature abhors the vampire: Immune elements in the blood they ingest lead to the development of sores on their undead skin. Older vampires often lose their hair and muscle mass; their nails and teeth yellow, and the whites of their eyes turn jaundiced.



Eventually, either they are killed in their pursuit of blood, or their need develops to the point where they can no longer satisfy it. At this elder stage, their metabolism seems to shut down. They may spend months—even years—in torpor, only

rising for frenzied binges, then sleeping again. Some latter-stage vampires move to injecting blood rather than drinking it, as it takes less to produce the desired effect.

Vampires of the world of the City possess most of the usual vampiric powers when flush with blood, however within 4-5 days for young vampires and perhaps as little as a day for older ones, these powers fade to something approximating an undead version of their previous (living) capabilities. These vampires are not affected by holy symbols—unless, interestingly, the vampire was devout in life, and the symbol in question is the one of the vampire’s religion—nor running water. Sunlight burns them, as does silver. The magically sighted can see that vampires cast two shadows: one normal, and one with a hazy appearance and gauzy texture. In a mirror, the “normal” shadow (visible to everyone) can be seen to move independently of the being casting it.

Not all drained of life by a vampire become one—perhaps 25 percent. It is unclear why some develop the curse and not others. Ghouls killed by vampires never succumb.

There are said to be underground blood parlors in certain parts of the City: decadent establishments

that first appeared in the Old World where younger vampires and vampire wannabes gather to feed their mutual habits. There are also rumored to be procurers who find “fresh blood” for vampire clientele—for a price.

Other Undead: Ghosts are common in the City (and cities in general), with other incorporeal undead somewhat less so. Spectral automobiles, phantom trains, and the like are more common in cities than in rural areas. Freelance specialists do a brisk business in disposing of many sorts of hauntings. Zombies are utilized (illegally) in underground fighting competitions for the purposes of gambling or as cheap labor. Skeletons are less frequently used because they attract too much attention, but some ostentatious criminal necromancers employ them as (eh)...*muscle*—for just that reason. Barrow-wights are sometimes found haunting potter’s fields, old catacombs, and occasionally upscale cemeteries, though the dark processes that initiate a wight infestation are not understood.

38. SOLACE

Area: 118th St. on the south to Reynard Lane (John Conquer Ave. to Solace Ave.) and 155th St. (5th Ave. to John Conquer Ave.) on the north; Solace Ave. and John Conquer Ave. east to 5th Ave.

Solace is the business, cultural, and spiritual capital of the Black folk in the New World. Historically barred from many residences elsewhere in the City (and facing discrimination in housing even today) over a quarter of a million Black folk crowd into the district from the South, islands in the Meropic Ocean, and even Ebon-Land.

Solace is a place of contrasts. There are wealthy residences and fine shops and theaters, but its slums are some of the worst in the City. Like Deguello to its south, Solace suffers from a higher than average burden of disease and malnutrition.

Its two main thoroughfares illustrate this contrast. Maure Boulevard is lined with apartment houses, beauty parlors, retail stores, quaint eateries, and corner pubs. Chatelaine Avenue is somewhat shabbier, and is home mostly to dime stores, cheap conjuror shops, lunchrooms, pool halls, and gin joints.



On 125th Street near Eighth Avenue is Solace's premier entertainment venue. The **Sun Theatre** hosts all-black vaudeville revues and musical theater. Its fame is such that it draws a racially mixed audience.

On West 125th Street is the **Temple of Father Eliah Exalted**, a religious and political leader whose thousands of followers believe him to be God in the flesh. His adherents are predominantly from the black community, but not exclusively so. Eliah Exalted preaches a version of the Old Time Religion but emphasizes self-reliance (his doctrine forbids taking help

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from relief agencies or charities), preaches racial and gender equality, and exhorts chastity. The Temple owns a number of missions, groceries, gas stations, hotels, and other business. These are ostensibly held by acolytes but seem to be under the direction of Eliah Exalted.

Some believe Eliah Exalted to be of the gifted, or perhaps a theurgist or thaumaturgist. There is no clear evidence, however, that his powers are anything but oratorical and temporal.

In the vicinity of 135th Street, particularly where it crosses Maure and Chatelaine Avenues, are the offices of many public institutions. A **branch of the City Public Library** is found here, as are the offices of two black-owned newspapers. Fraternal orders and political groups hold parades and demonstrations in the area. The **Order of the Onyx**, an organization of black thaumaturgists, has a storefront office here. The corner of Chatelaine is a favorite spot for soapbox orators, who expound on a variety of topics and engage in spirited debate.

On Maure Boulevard are found the jazz clubs that have made Solace famous. Within a few blocks one finds **Sal's Paradise**, **Jump!**, and **The Blue Hound** (owned by former adventurer **Mingus Rooke**).

Also on Maure, in the vicinity of the Lafrey Theater, are the curious Solace institution known as the **Wish Men**. These three full-sized, angular statues in what appears to be mahogany seem to gods or spirits of ancient Ebon-Land. Their sculptor and the circumstances that led to their installation in Solace are mysterious. Popular superstition holds that a wish whispered into the ear of the seated central statue will come true, though not always in the way the supplicant intends.

Perhaps the best known of Solace's dance halls is the **LaVoy Ballroom** on Chatelaine Avenue. Many popular dances of the last decade debuted here. Like the clubs on Maure, the ballroom draws visitors from all over the City.

UPPER ELDSIDE & THE NORTH

33. EMPIRE PARK WEST

Area: 59th St. on the south to 110th St. on the north; West Ave. east to Empire Park, plus the area from 54th St. north to 62nd St.; the Eldritch River east to Eldside Dr.

CITY CONFIDENTIAL

Except for the waterfront area south of 54th Street (which boasts the docks of some of the world's most famous ocean liners), the area between the Eldritch River and Empire Park is crossed by thoroughfares lined with the residences of the wealthy.



The Shonokin

Empire Park West (continuous with Eighth Avenue) is home to several apartment buildings. The twin towers of the **Monarch Apartments** house the exclusive Explorers Club. While the club's wealthy members mostly look down on the mass of adventurers (whom they consider grubby tomb-robbers), a few of the latter group have managed to elevate themselves into the fellowship. The club's quarters contain a private museum filled with trophies acquired by members during their adventures.



Mingus Rooke

Though only a country boy just arrived in New Ylourgne, Rooke nevertheless impressed jazz band leader and sorcerer Salomo King. Learning both the music business and musical thaumaturgy from King, Rooke soon struck out on his own and put his skills to use with various adventuring gangs.

Arriving in the City, Rooke made a name for himself in the jazz night-spots and earned the enmity of Mr. Scratch after turning down an exclusive contract—an antipathy that would plague his adventuring career. Rooke retired from “the adventuring life” relatively young, after suffering a minor stroke. This he suffered while blowing Gabriel's trumpet to summon an angelic host to save Hardluck from processing by the alien Machineries of Night.

Rooke still plays on occasion (if not quite as well as he used to) and operates the trendy Solace night-club, The Blue Hound.

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At 72nd street, **the Shonokin** is a brown and muted yellow brick building with high gables, deep roofs, and pinnacled dormers. For all its beauty, the apartment building has had sinister associations in the past: When it was new, the spinster Pitt Sisters christened it with the blood of children they killed and ate; a few decades later, Hadrianus Marcato, diabolist, was lynched in the lobby for his infamies.

Between 76th and 77th Streets is the **City Historical Society**. The building contains a library, art galleries, and a museum of artifacts of the City's history. The collection includes the original scabbard of Middennight's vorpal sword (itself lost), original Pickman oils from his stay in ghoulish Undertown, assorted pieces of Native costume, explorers' maps of the area, and a cast of Archambaud Wychwire's hoofprint. (*Museum open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Godsdays 1 to 5 p.m.; library open daily except Godsdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.*)

Seventy-seventh to 81st Streets are occupied by the **City Museum of Natural History and Gernsback Planetarium**. This cluster of buildings on park-like grounds

houses not only exhibit halls but also research laboratories and a scientific library. The fossil collection boasts a leviathan skull big enough for visitors to stand inside; a display in the Hall of Ebon-Land Mammals allows a safe look at the face of a catoblepas. (*Museum hours: weekdays and Mournday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Godsdays 1 to 5 p.m.; admission free. Planetarium performances: weekdays at 2, 3:30, and 8:30 p.m., Mournday 11 a.m., hourly from 1 to 5 p.m., and 8:30 p.m.; Godsdays hourly from 2 to 5 p.m.; admission 50 cents for matinees, 60 cents for evenings, children 15 cents.*)

The corner of 96th Street is occupied by the **Electrovangelic Church of the Machine Messiah**. The church is part of a worldwide movement dedicated to building the perfect construct to instantiate the Messiah and usher in an age of spiritual perfection.

34. ELDSIDE DRIVE

Area: 54th St. to 137th St. bordering the Eldritch River.

Eldside Drive is a scenic thoroughfare that winds its way along the escarpment above the Eldritch River. This permits a view

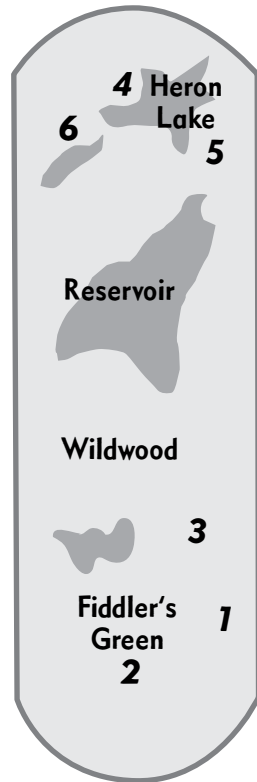
"STROLLING THROUGH THE PARK"

Empire Park is the largest park in the City and a place of recreation and relaxation for many of its citizens. It's not, however, without its dangers.

(1) Empire Park Zoo: Though small by modern standards, it nonetheless features an interesting collection of animals. At its entrance is a **Statue of Basilisk** (formerly a real animal, turned to stone by its own reflection). The zoo's collection boasts:

- A **crocutta**, a magical cousin to the hyena. (HD 5; AC 5 or 15; Atk: bite 2d6; Special: can use its ability at vocal mimicry to cast a *suggestion* spell and lure victims to it.)
- A tank of four **sea lions**. At any time, there is a 30% chance one of them is a **selkie** (a shapeshifting humanoid) visiting the City for its own purposes.
- A reptile and amphibian house. It's home to several species of snakes and lizards and a group of tiny **frog tribesmen** from Asciana. These creatures have miniature blowguns, darts tipped with a paralytic—and an escape plan.
- A monkey house with 2-12 **monkeys**.
- An aging **male lion** who knows a secret.
- A raptor cage with several **birds of prey**.
- A peacock-like **alicanto** with shining, metallic plumage. It subsists on a diet of precious metals.

Fiddler's Green: An expansive lawn just north of a playground. On a walking path at its northern border is a park bench where **Mad Mooney** (rumored to be the hierophant of the urban druids) feeds his pigeon courtiers and talks to himself. He *might* be moved to provide useful information to adventurers, if he felt the City were in sufficient danger. Also in the Green is a human-sized **chess board (2)** with equally oversized pieces.



Strolling Through The Park Continued...

(3) The Keep: An old City militia arsenal resembling a medieval fortress. It now serves as the headquarters for the Park Department.

Wildwood: An area of varying terrain designed to appear as a natural woodland and give City-dwellers the opportunity for nature walks. The **feral kid warriors** (HD 1-6 hp; AC 7 or 13; Atk: by weapon; Special: move silently, hide) in the service of Mooney can often be found here, running maneuvers and playing war games. Lurking in the woods (but only sometimes active) is a creature resembling a **shambling mound** (HD 7; AC 0 or 20; Atk: 2 fists (2d8); Special: Damage immunity to electricity, engulf and suffocate victims on successful hits with both fists.) This unfortunate creature was once a horticulturalist from the Conservatory, transformed by the magic of the twisted dryad (see below). The feral children placate it with offerings of certain flowers stolen from the gardens.

(4) The Fort: A square, stone tower, remnant of a fortification in colonial times.

(5) Empire Park Conservatory and Gardens: A large, ornate greenhouse surrounded by formal gardens. An acquisition from Ealderde a year ago brought an unusual tree to the garden. It contains a **dryad** driven insane by the Great War. She seeks to expand her control over the entire park and longs to kill any humans she finds. She has corrupted two garden tenders into being her lackeys and transformed another into a monster. (Twisted dryad: HD 2; AC 7 or 13; Atk 1 wooden claw 1d4; Special: able to charm, speak with plants, and entangle, and other spell-like abilities, including transforming humans into plant-creatures after holding them enthralled for 2d4 weeks.)

Heron Lake: This reed-surrounded body of water once served as a breeding ground for herons. Now, a few swans grace its waters.

(6). Carousel: Ninety-eight animals spin on this large carousel. Half are horses; the others are centaurs, hippogriffs, sea horses, and other unusual creatures.

of the majestic Lenfer Bridge, the imposing face of the Pale in Shancks, and the river itself. The vista is zealously guarded by a row of apartment buildings and a few old mansions on the east.

The heart of the drive is **Eldside Park**, which lies between its curve and West Avenue. At the southern end of the park stands a **Statue of Joan Darkling** in plate armor. Darkling was a former adventurer who became a prominent figure in the early labor movement. A nine-foot **Statue of Rudland J. Madlark** can be found at the park's north end. Madlark was a City mayor influential in the creation of the Meropic League.

The point of the park overlooking the Eldritch is home to the park's most unusual statue. The **Statue of the Serpent** is a fanciful work meant to depict the river monster that was a brief sensation one summer some thirty years ago. The serpent supposedly delivered a series of prophecies to City fathers that have never been made public.

35. MORNINGSTAR HILLS and 39. GOTHAMVILLE

Area: 110th St. on the south to 118th St. (North Park Plaza to 8th Ave.) and 144th St.;

the Eldritch River east to 8th Ave. (118th to 144th St.) and Park Place West (110th St. to 118th St.).

Morningstar Hills and its northern neighbor are hilly areas marked by institutions of religion and learning. The most prominent of the latter is **Septentrion University**, one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in the country. This private school was historically devoted to the liberal arts but has branched out over the decades into science, medicine, engineering, and thaumatology—though not actual sorcery. **Bellegarde College** is its sister school, located in the vicinity.

The most famous of the religious institutions is the ornate **Eldside Church**, set on a promontory overlooking the Eldritch. The church's stained glass windows were thaumaturgically enhanced so that they emit a gentle glow at night. Its bell tower is 22 stories and contains an observation tower open to the public (*10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; admission 25 cents*).

At the **Church of Saint Azederac**, sermons are delivered in Avernoignat, the native tongue of the saint himself. The reliefs decorating the church are notable for their toad motif.

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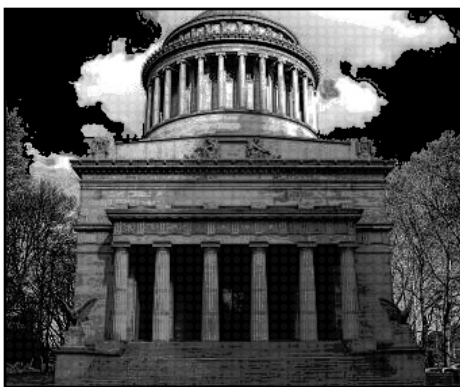
North of Bellegarde is the **Crusader Theological Seminary**. It graduates ministers, scholars, and missionaries of many Old Time Religion denominations. The seminary has an interest in theurgy, particularly as related to healing and protective magic, and has turned out a number of adventuring clergy.

Morningstar Park is located near the border with Solace. Its most distinctive feature is a short, but rugged rock cliff. In the exposed rock are fossils of bizarre lifeforms otherwise unknown to science. Strange, moving lights are sometimes seen in the vicinity at night.

On 144th Street, at the northern border of Gothamville, is the entrance to the **Shancks Bridge**. This steel suspension bridge provides a view of the Pale to the south east.

Between the intersections of Eldside Drive and Gotham Place with Gulden Avenue is a small park surrounding the General Brant Monument—better known as “**Brant’s Tomb**.” A columned and domed marble structure houses a vault wherein the famous Union

army hero has been imprisoned since his unfortunate transformation in 5815. The creature Brant has become sometimes calls out from the tomb, but visitors are urged to ignore him. (*Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; admission free.*)



40. WELLERAN HEIGHTS

Area: 144th St. on the south to 155th St. on the north; from the Eldritch River east to Solace Ave. (144th St. to 152nd St.) and John Conquer Ave. (152nd to 155th St.).

Rising from a valley in Gothamville, Empire Island reaches its highest point in Welleran Heights, named for the fortification that once stood there. Today, the area is known for its institutions of learning and culture.

City College has its main campus along Gulden Avenue, comprised of its schools of liberal arts, science, and technology. The institution is

free for residents of the City who can pass the entrance exams.

On Broad Boulevard between 145th and 146th Streets is the entrance to **Sage's Court**, where a group of museums is clustered. The **Museum of the Zephyrian Native** is dedicated to the preservation of the culture of the indigenes of the Western Hemisphere (*Open weekdays and Mournday 2 to 5 p.m.; admission free*). The **City Geographical Society** publishes books, maps, and a quarterly journal. The group maintains a library and map collection open to the public (*Open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and Mourndays except during the months of Swelter and Ripened; admission free*).

The **Auberon Society** was founded in honor of Chyrils Hoyt Auberon, paranaturalist, collector of anomalous phenomena, and illustrator. The society collects artifacts, oddities, and writings related to things unexplained by mundane or thaumaturgic science. The society keeps eccentric hours, but it allows free admission to its collection. The **Union Numismatic Society** boasts a library and exhibits related to the history of coins and

medals. The coinage of the City and the Union are emphasized, but the collection includes historic pieces from the Ancients, Meropis, and Ealderde. (*Hours: 2 to 5 p.m. daily except holidays; admission free.*)

Along the northern riverfront is the **Septentrion University Medical Center** complex. In addition to various clinics and specialty hospitals, the area is home to the Septentrion University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

South on the river, just north of Brant's Tomb, is the sprawling **Saint Bernward's Cemetery**. When the cathedral's churchyard was crowded out of downtown, it was moved to a more tranquil and expansive area. In decades past, the cemetery was a meeting place between ghouls and unscrupulous body-snatching staff of the medical center.

41. ALDWOOD

Area: 155th Ave. on the south to the Eldritch River on the north; the Eldritch River east to Aldwood Rd.

Aldwood is the most isolated of the City's districts—and not simply because of its location. Wooded,

WEIRD ADVENTURES

quiet Aldwood has been entirely overtaken by a fictional world.

Aldwood was a normal, suburban district until Midsummer's Eve some 34 years ago. Perhaps not coincidentally, this was the night of the final Broad Boulevard performance of the musical adaptation of the popular children's fantasy *The Magical Monarch of Mu*. Residents reported hearing strange music that night and laughter. By the next morning, the forest had grown thicker and wilder, and many trees had become animate—and opinionated. Stands of man-sized

mushrooms had cropped up, and fanciful creatures were encountered with regularity.

Many of Aldwood's residents chose to flee. Law enforcement was dispatched to investigate. They were naturally resistant to negotiating the cession of the district with an animate, pumpkin-headed scarecrow, but attempts to reclaim Aldwood were repulsed by a cast-iron giant, smartly-uniformed elfin pikemen, and china doll martial artists.



The next two years saw intermittent skirmishes between the City and the invaders. Reconnaissance confirmed that many were identifiable characters from *The Magical Monarch of Mu*. Attempts to locate the author, F. Marsh Loam, for questioning proved ineffective, even with thaumaturgical aid. Ultimately, pragmatism prevailed, and a peace treaty was signed, making Aldwood a reservation within the boundaries of the City.

Visiting Aldwood is allowed, though only through the checkpoints guarded by the diminutive and quaintly armored soldiers of the Monarch. Care should be taken to stay on designated roadways: The new Aldwood is somehow larger than the old, and it's easy to become lost. Politely refusing offers of food or drink from the natives is generally advisable. Most everything in Aldwood is highly magical; "naturally" occurring soda fountains, gumdrop fruit, and moonshine distilled from genuine moonlight are novel treats, but they may also carry hidden risks.

Taking items or creatures beyond the boundaries of Aldwood is illegal, but collectors and thaumaturgic researchers are often willing to pay adventurers a handsome sum for specimens. Beyond run-ins with the authorities, expeditions carry a degree of risk. While most denizens of Aldwood are benign, some are not, and many are surprisingly resistant to harm.

Some scientists worry that the annexation of the earthly plane hasn't ended with Aldwood and that the bubble of fictional reality continues to grow.

42. GRYPHON HILL

Area: 155th St. on the south to the Eldritch River on the north; Alwood Rd. east to the Wyrd River.

Prior to Aldwood's transformation, Gryphon Hill was, if anything, more of a backwater than its neighbor. Its hills contained marble, but that was mostly mined out decades ago. The neighborhood today is a quiet, hilly suburb notable for some unusual landmarks.

The area gets its name from the roughhewn monolith **statue of a griffin**, reclining or couchant upon a hill. The statue (constructed of what appears to be white, blue-veined marble) is some 40 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 11 feet tall. No one knows who constructed it; given that griffins are not native to the New World it's either a creation of pure fantasy or the product of a non-native artist. Rumor has long held that there is an entrance to an unexplored subterranean structure beneath it, but so far no one has been able to find it, if it exists. On the slopes of the hill the griffin surmounts there are other statues of marble. These are of people with individually carved faces and intricately detailed clothing and accoutrements. Their garb is in

Urban Druids

Cities (and the City is no different) aren't just haphazard agglomerations of people and buildings. They develop their own spirits—oversouls made of all the lesser spirits that make up their sprawling bodies. Some hear the call of these spirits and enter their service like pagan priests bowed to the nature spirits of old. These shamans of streets (who are generally considered more than a little crazy) are called “urban druids.”

It's an austere life they choose, living close to the rhythm of the City, eschewing wealth and comfort. They can afford few distractions lest they miss the whispered truths in the passing of a subway train, or the secrets augured in the tumbling of a scrap of newspaper in the breeze.

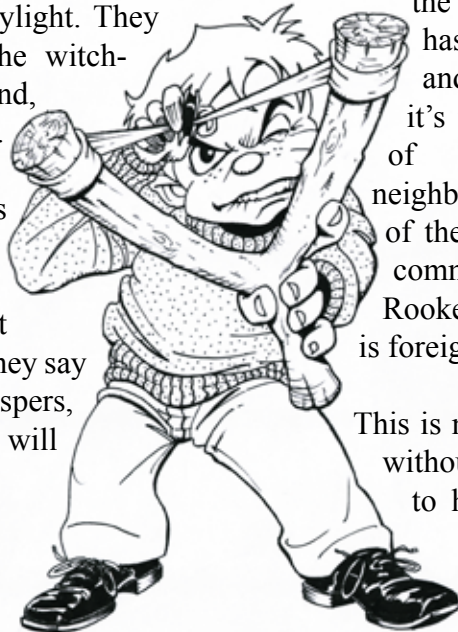
In return for their almost monastic devotion, the City gives them power. They can

transform restaurant garbage into fine meals, turn fountain water into whiskey, make their skin as hard concrete, or scale the sides of buildings like insects. They know the secret passages between streets and can summon para-elementals of smoke, steam, and electricity. Rats and pigeons pay them deference.

Rumor holds the “archdruid” of the City (if such a title really exists) is an old bum called Mad Mooney. Fonder of greenery than others of his kind, he's often found napping on a bench in Empire Park. In addition to his (likely great) powers, he's fanatically served by a gang of urban-feral children who dress like savages and paint their faces like Natives. They use shortbows and blowguns (their missiles tipped with poison from fungus that grows in subway tunnels) and can pass through the streets unseen and track quarry across concrete.

the style of Ealderdish adventurers from perhaps three centuries ago. The statues are posed as if they are fearful or even fleeing some danger atop the hill: Some have fallen, others are stumbling, and still others seem to be shielding their faces. Eight of these statues have been discovered but others may be buried or hidden by foliage.

The other enigmatic point of interest is the **Witt Bridge**. Connecting to Marquesa across the Wyrd River, it appears to be built of the same marble as the griffin and the other statues. Remarkably, its entire span and supports seem to be a single piece of stone; no seams can be detected. The Old Dwerg-folk were superstitious about the bridge and only used it during daylight. They associated it with the witch-folk of their native land, the White Women. A popular pastime among local youth is daring one of their fellows to walk to the bridge's midpoint at midnight. There, they say in conspiratorial whispers, the White Women will appear.



CHAPTER III: *Rookend*

The first settlements in Rookend were camps of hirelings, bar owners, traders, and prostitutes making a living off adventurers planning expeditions in the underground of Empire Island. As pirates and river rats drifted in, these tent-towns developed into ramshackle streets of saloons, gambling dens, whorehouses, and the shanties of the poor, derisively called “rookeries” by their neighbors across the Wyrd.

Today, Rookend is known as the City's residential quarter. In fact, it's the most populated barony of the metropolis. It has wealthy districts and poor slums, but it's mostly composed of middle-class neighborhoods. Many of these are immigrant communities: A third of Rookend's population is foreign born.

This is not to say that it's without industry. Close to half of the City's

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shipping goes through the barony's waterfront. Several shipping terminals accommodate all this traffic.

The **Meropic League Navy Yard** is also located on Rookend's riverfront. It's the home port for the ships and crews and a contingent of marines protecting League and Union interests. The site began as a favorite landing for pirates the early Empire Island fathers paid to defend their port from other pirates and sea beasts.

Hogan Field in eastern Rookend is the City's municipal airport and the terminal for many commercial flights. The field's hangars house planes owned by individuals as well as the military and the City's police department. Aircraft from this field took part in the famous battle with a rampaging efreeth atop the Imperial Building in 5883. A bronze plaque in the main terminal honors the brave pilots who took part in that encounter.

Lapin Isle, a barrier island off the southeast of Rookend, has become the playground for the City. Though its beaches have always drawn visitors, it's really the

particular strip of seaside festooned with bathhouses, amusements, and attractions connected by miles of boardwalk that have made it a summer resort. The two largest amusement parks are **Lunar Rabbit Park** and **Grin's Land of Fun**. The former sprawls over 50 acres and boasts numerous rides, a saltwater swimming pool and a ballroom. General admission is 10 cents, with most amusements charging an additional fee. The latter is smaller but still boasts thirty rides, a dancing pavilion, pool, and assorted games and funhouses. It has a 50-cent admission that includes all rides.

The *Mastodon Colossus*, or **Hotel Elephantine**, was another attraction. The eccentric architect Jamis Maguffin constructed it through consultation of certain codices of the Ancients and the use of some magical materials (probably dating to antediluvian Meropis) dredged from the harbor. The elephant was twelve stories tall and had stout legs 60 feet in diameter. It had 31 guest rooms, a gallery, tobacconist's shop, and an observation deck shaped like a gigantic howdah.



Most spectacularly, the whole thing was planned to move. Maguffin promised that, when all of the thaumaturgic glyphs and enhancements were complete, the elephant would be able to ambulate without any effect on the rooms in its interior. These enhancements, unfortunately, would take some time.

Eleven years later, when the thaumaturgical working was supposedly nearing completion, the elephant walked away one night with a complement of guests. Most

have turned up dead in various locales, all over the world and beyond, in the four decades since.

The theft and the murders were laid at the feet of **Hieronymus Gaunt**, lich and self-styled wicked sorcerer. He and a band of miscreants entered the elephant and completed the rituals to make it mobile. Since then, they've travelled the world in decadent style, taking their seemingly unending orgy of dark thaumaturgy, baroque perversity, and deadly amusements where

The Boardwalk War

A covert war is being fought along the boardwalk and in the places of amusement on Lapin Isle. The war is between two lords (or one lord and one lady) of petty crime. The stakes are the illicit earnings from all the beach's pickpockets, quick-grab artists, petty confidence tricksters, and part-time prostitutes. Neither of these would-be kingpins is human; each is, in fact, a coin-operated fortune-telling machine.

In the middle of the boardwalk, a penny arcade is the domain of **Mister Chax**, the All-Knowing Homunculus. Inside his glass case, Mister Chax appears as a ventriloquist's dummy in a natty suit with dead (yet too-knowing) eyes, and a leering, plastered grin beneath a pencil-thin moustache. His communications come on cards, neatly printed and filigreed. Chax's gang is mostly scruffy urchins who seem innocuous when encountered singularly but sinister in packs. They speak in a ridiculous child-argot, never completely intelligible to adults without magical aid. Some of them are very large for their age.

Chax also has been known to employ inky spider-things the size of wharf-rats with almost human faces and derisive, whispering voices. Their bites cause painful pustules and nightmares.

Mister Chax's rival can be found in a novelty shop near the entrance to Lunar Rabbit Park. Her glass case gives her name as **Grisselda**, but her followers—her “ducklings”—call her “Auntie” or “Great Aunt.” Grisselda appears as an old woman, like an Old World grandmother. She tells fortunes by the use of playing cards, and this is also the way she communicates with her followers. These are mostly young girls, either in their teens or early twenties, who dress like prim young ladies, perhaps on a church trip. Their dainty purses hide switchblades, and maybe pocket-pistols, and nasty, back-alley magic items. The cryptic meanings of Grisselda's cards are interpreted by an oracle. She's a girl a little older than Auntie's standard soldier, with eyes older still and porcelain skin. She typically dresses like an aspiring torch-singer and smokes a cigarette through a holder. Her name is always “Esme.”

Chax and Grisselda try to keep their war *sotto voce*. They have no wish to attract the authorities, but also no wish to draw the interest of the malign godling of Lapin Isle, the dark personification of the rabbit in the moon; the thing like a man in a bunny suit that is not a man.

they may. Sometimes, for Gaunt's amusement, they take others aboard. Survivors have reported stores of plunder, both mundane and magical.

CHAPTER IV: Marquesa

Marquesa is the largest of the baronies but, save Lichmond, the least developed. The area takes its name from the title used (erroneously, as she was actually a vicountess) by Ysabella Aetheria Theodanda d'Ambreville, an adventuress who built an estate in the area after the death of her husband. Today, it's a place of towns and villages, some of them almost rural in character, though most are suburban.

This is not to say that Marquesa is without industry. The **Auraria Plant of the Consolidated Swift Company** squats on marsh reclaimed from the Wyrd. It's the largest gas-manufacturing plant in the New World. On rare occasions, *mephiti* escape the plant and make a nuisance of themselves in the neighboring town.

Whitestone, north of Auraria, is the site of the **Witt Bridge** connecting

to Gryphon Hill. A short drive north and west is Toyffel, home of **Devil's Hollow Park**. In an area of the park, there is a stone formation resembling a table, and numerous Native artifacts have been found. Locals report ghostlights in the vicinity and strange sounds from time to time.

To the west of Auraria is Jaddsen Heights, home to two airfields. **Horst Airport** is a private airfield for small and medium planes. It has a dirigible hangar and a mooring where private airships have been tied to take on passengers for elaborate parties. **Narwall Airport** is the City's second municipal airport. Located on Yondo Sound, not far from the Wyrd River, it's the most important seaplane terminal in the region. Its associated airfield also serves several airlines.

On the sound, north of the airfields, is **Fort Troldden**. A garrison of 900 men, the fort is home to the anti-aircraft (and anti-aerial monster) batteries of the City.

The Marquesa Bridge ends in Queen City, a blighted industrial neighborhood. A remnant of a more prosperous era is **Baldrin Castle**.

It was built by a retiring knight errant, but given a more sinister reputation when it was inhabited by the necromancer Alessandro Macabra. After Macabra was forced to flee (and nubile captives in his dungeon freed) the castle became the property of the local government.

East City Studios, in the vicinity, is used for the production of shorts—mostly comedies and educational subjects. A few feature films have been shot here, as well.

The eastern island of Marquesa is separated from the west by the Narwall River. It's more rural than its neighbor but also home to resort areas located on Yondo Sound. Among the amusements in the area is **Marduke Race Track** (*General admission \$2.50, women \$1.75; clubhouse \$5.00, women \$4.00*). The stands seat 12,000, though attendance may be much higher when a famous horse is racing.

CHAPTER V: *Shancks*

Shancks is the only City barony on the mainland. Historically something of a rural backwater, its

fate was tied to the City's (rather than that of the wider Hegemony) due to collusion between its leaders and those of Empire Island to control travel along the Eldritch River at its narrowest point, across from what is now Eldside Park.

Shancks is named for Jarus Shanck, a former adventurer and assassin who built a fortress atop **the Pale**—a line of steep cliffs rising almost vertically along the west bank of the Eldritch. The rock face bears runic-like markings in places (the vertical lines of which climb as high as 300 feet) that have so far resisted translation. Jarus Shanck's treasure hold was said to extend into tunnels behind the cliff wall itself, and if it ever existed, it remains hidden to this day.

Shancks was, for generations, an area of rural farmland supplying City markets, but eventually developed into a railroad suburb as it was the closest point on the mainland. Today, its communities are mostly working-class, but the territory's rulers planned well to preserve green space, and it boasts large parks and a few colleges with expansive campuses.

Besides the Pale, Shancks is perhaps best known for **Shancks Park**. Its nearly 800 acres of forest and green lawn along the Shancks River are home to the **City Botanical Gardens** and the **City Zoological Park**.

The zoo (*Open daily 9 a.m. to a half-hour before sunset, Vernal 15 to Redfall 15, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Redfall 16 to Vernal 14; admission 25 cents for adults, 15 cents for children under 12, free weekends and holidays*) is the largest in the New World. Its over 2000 specimens reside in habitats that resemble their natural environments as much as possible; the zoo sprawls over more than 250 acres.

Its animals tend to be of the more mundane variety (or at least, typically appear so), though in decades past there were small dinosaurs, captured in the Grand Chasm vicinity. Those were ill-suited to the City's winters and were removed to warmer climes. Occasionally, predatory monsters wander up from some subterranean layer, drawn by so many potential meals in a limited area. For this reason, former adventurers number among the zoo's staff.

The City Zoological Society, which supports the park, also maintains a research facility on its grounds and publishes bulletins and periodicals on related topics.

The Botanical Gardens (*Open daily; admission free*) were established in 5841. They are separated from the zoo by Pellehan Parkway. The huge glass building that is the Main Conservatory is divided into "houses" devoted to different environments or divisions of the plant kingdom. Around the conservatory are pools for aquatic plants and garden beds.

The Gardens contain a few exotic or parabotanical specimens. Dried and preserved specimens of Plant Pygmies (*Vegepygmeus anthrophagi*) are displayed in a diorama. A glass-enclosed grotto allows visitors a safe glimpse of various subterranean fungi.

The Garden's museum contains a herbarium with tens of thousands of seeds and desiccated specimens and research laboratories. The Botanical Society funds expeditions to far-flung areas of the globe to bring back exotic specimens for study.

City Coliseum is located in the vicinity of Shancks Park. It seats 15,000 and is used for everything from political rallies to midget auto races.

An interesting business in the southwestern Shancks community of Herne's Point is the **Union Bank Note Company**. The company is a major engraver and printer of paper currency and stamps for foreign governments, and of securities for corporate and financial institutions. The building has thaumaturgical wards as part of its security measures.

Also in the south, **Thraug's Neck** is a strip of land jutting into the mouth of the Shancks River. The area is named for an aquatic giant, or merrow, who dwelled there until slain by Jarus Shanck. It's now home to a strip of public bathing places and the occasional tavern or beer garden. Thraug's head long outlasted the rest of him and resided in a pickle jar in one or another of the local drinking establishments into the early part of this century. Somehow, his head remained alive, and he was said to speak prophecy—usually the ultimate

Out of the River

A lot of unusual things get pulled out of the rivers that run through the City. Here are a few examples:

1. **A crate** packed with soggy straw and 1-4 large blue-gray eggs.
2. **A chained box** containing a frog, normal-appearing but for its knowing eyes.
3. **A doll**, crudely made, but nevertheless bearing an uncanny resemblance to one of the PCs.
4. **A metal hand** that, when placed on a hard surface and unrestricted, will scuttle and orient itself to point west.
5. **A metal box resembling a hat box**, difficult to open due to a magic lock. In darkness, a glow emanates from its seams. Particularly sensitive individuals may hear soft moans periodically from inside.
6. **A shabby coat** that is utterly dry, and in fact, can never be made wet.
7. **A bottle of bootleg whiskey** that allows an imbiber to perceive the astral plane for 1-2 hours, and then be sick for 2-4 more on a failed save.
8. **A figurine** of a snake-like creature with human arms. Anyone who touches it will have a nightmare about a basalt ziggurat beneath a blood-red sun in a distant jungle.
9. **A book of matches** from "The Spider's Web" night club.
10. **A wax phonograph cylinder** containing a third of a potent magical incantation.

fate of the person listening. Other times, his utterances were pained observations on the fickleness of fate and the ephemeralness of life, which more than one listener would later describe as strangely insightful and moving.

CHAPTER VI: *Lichmond*

The barony of Lichmond is actually two islands: the larger, Old Barrow, and the smaller, Klaw. It's the most remote barony, seldom visited by the people who live in other parts of the City. Unlike the crowded streets of Empire Island, it's mostly a place of single-family homes.

It was difficult for the Ealderdish to colonize Lichmond. Before the first permanent settlement in 4227, three attempts were made to colonize the area, but each camp was wiped out: the first by Natives, the second by an

unidentified “pack of fell beasts,” and the third by undead (perhaps the risen Natives of the first massacre).

Saint Gorgan is the business, civic, and transit center of the island and has been since the days of the construction of the Lichmond Bridge. The entrance to the **Eldritch Tubes**, the **Municipal Ferry Shed**, and the **terminals of Islands Rapid Transit** and buses are found here. It's also the seat of barony government.



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Splatterton is the home of the **Mariners Hospital**, open to all members and veterans of the City merchant marine and Coastal Guard. On a well-controlled installation, the **City Quarantine Station** examines persons arriving on vessels from foreign ports for contagious diseases.

Further inland are the communities of Lichmond and Ghostlight Hill. A **mound complex** of the Ancients, overlying a complex of tunnels, only partially explored, is located in the area. There are seven mounds: Lich Mound, Ghost Mound, Hunchback Hill, Crook Spine, the Paps, and Barge's Hill. Adventurers are drawn to the area looking for "big haul," and the locals are only happy to feed, shelter, and supply these visitors—in return for their money. Smaller mounds are scattered throughout central Old Barrow Island, some of which have vaguely animal or human shapes.

On a peninsula on the eastern tip of Old Barrow is the industrial community of Brume Harbor. It's a place of shipyards and oil refineries; less than fragrant native smells mingle with the winds wafting off Klaw Island.

Low-lying Klaw Island is separated from Old Barrow by the two lagoons: Yugakett Bay and Lake Zathoggua. Klaw is the site of the City's expansive **landfill**. Sprawling over much the island, the mounds of refuse have drawn hobogoblins and other monsters. Usually, hobogoblin chieftains are content to claim any refuse dumped by the City's garbage barges, but occasionally they demand a larger tribute. In the past, the poor families living near the landfill were rife with wereratism, but periodic campaigns over the past fifty years have hopefully eradicated the curse.

Hobogoblin legends tell of the first and greatest of the landfill kingdoms, Wastenot, now sunk beneath the waters of Lake Zathoggua. The hubris of the muckety-mucks of Wastenot led them to neglect tribute to the beast of the lake, and all of Wastenot's "grandeur" was pulled down by pale and vengeful tentacles in a single night.

Enemies & Allies

You can't tell the players without a scorecard. Here are some of the City's factions that might cross adventurers' paths:

Lawful:

The Exterminators: The hardworking men and women of the Municipal Department of Animal and Pest Control clean up messes left behind by adventurers and protect the City from wandering monsters coming up from the depths.

The Police: The Municipal Police Department has the unenviable task of dealing with mundane crime as well as the more supernatural menaces that sometimes threaten the City.

Thaumaturgical Society: The professional organization for the City's sorcerers. It establishes standards of proficiency and rankings for magical practitioners. The society also publishes a journal of thaumaturgic inquiry.

Neutral:

The Druids: The City's acolytes tend to stay out of the affairs of man. So long as the City abides, they remain aloof. (*See page 130.*)

The Illusionists Guild: Allegedly a lodge of the international Brotherhood of Illusion (if such a group isn't just more smoke and mirrors). Generally, this is a law-abiding organization of those who use thaumaturgic arts for entertainment, but its secrecy and the inherent ambiguity of the arts of illusion make it somewhat suspect.

The Unknown: Also called the Inconnu or the Unseen Lodge. A

shadowy organization of powerful sorcerers with unclear goals, they tend to appear in carnival masks (and sometimes costumes) with occult significance. Powerful mages are believed to become members by invitation but are only admitted after performing some incredible feat of magical prowess.

Undertown: The parallel city of the ghouls beneath the City. (*see page 86.*) Relations are generally cordial—but the ghouls' dietary habits make people wary.

Criminal:

Anarchists: Terrorist madmen in the service of extraplanar god-monsters of chaos. They're warped in mind and body by their communion with these entities, but in the learning of the alien code *aklo*, develop magical powers.

The Five-Headed Dragon Society: A fanatical criminal cult among the Yianese led by the sorcerer Tsan Chan. They're based in San Tiburon, but their tendrils reach to the City's Yiantown, as well.

The Hell Syndicate: The premier criminal organization in the City controlled by the infernal lords.

The Reds: Subterranean subversives and their human dupes dedicated to overturning the governments of the world and replacing them with their tyranny. (*See page 158.*)



WEIRD MENACES

FEARSOME CREATURES AND STRANGE ENCOUNTERS



BLACK-DUST MONSTERS

The Dustlands are plagued by horrors unleashed indirectly by the Great War. The primal elements were tainted by entropic energy, creating twisted and homicidal para-elementals.

BLACK BLIZZARD (PARA-ELEMENTAL)

No. Encountered: 1

Hit Dice: 20

Armor Class: 2 or 18

Speed: Fast flyer

Attacks: blinding dust (-2 to all rolls for those caught in its area, drastically reduced visibility), choking dust (failed save results as per drowning)

Defense: Can only be harmed by magical weapons

Black blizzards are giant para-elemental duststorms existing but briefly (hours to days)—long enough to pose a deadly threat to any living thing they encounter.

GHOST

No. Encountered: 1

Hit Dice: 4

Armor Class: 3 or 17

Speed: Fast flyer

Attacks: 1 dust blast (1d8 damage, save for half, possible incapacitating by choking for round if second save fails)

Defense: only harmed by magical weapons

When a person is suffocated by a black blizzard, there is a 20% chance that a remnant of the elemental's substance will absorb an imprint of the dying person's soul, becoming a black-dust ghost—

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essentially a small elemental that believes itself to be the spirit of the person slain. It has the knowledge, skills, and personality of the person emulated, albeit distorted by unreasoning, homicidal anger. Despite its name, it's not a ghost and has none of the traits of the undead.

ZOMBIE

No. Encountered: 2d20

Hit Dice: 2

Armor Class: 8 or 12

Speed: Very Slow to Slow

Attack: 1 claw or contagious bite (1d6), bites do not heal naturally and anyone who dies after receiving a bite wound will become a black-dust zombie

Special: Immune to *sleep* and *charm*

Those that eventually die from inhaling the choking black-dust have a 30% chance of becoming black-dust zombies. These unfortunates are indeed dead, but their bodies are animated by the particulate malevolence of the storm. Black-dust zombies aren't actually undead and don't possess the associated traits.

BRAIN INVADER

No. Encountered: 1d4

Hit Dice: 2 (5 attached to slave body)

Armor Class: 5 or 15

Speed: Medium

Attacks: 2 tentacles (1d4), 1 weapon or mental attack

The horrors known as brain invaders first came to earth seeking raw materials and rare elements for the repair and fueling of their star-faring saucercraft, but these beings of cold

intellect—evolved even beyond the need for speech—began to change unexpectedly upon exposure to humanity. After millennia, they experienced *appetite*.

The psychic flavors of human emotions (particularly the various permutations of fear) are like nectar to their once utterly logical minds. The greatest delicacy, beside which the purely mental morsels pale, is the visceral pleasure of consuming raw human brains—preferably fresh from the skull of a still-living victim.

Brain invaders typically descend on rural areas. Acquisition parties go forth and use their mental abilities to *dominate* the minds of victims, summoning them from their homes. The brain invaders lead their



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prey back to their saucer-ship where they may consume them at their leisure. Should some prove resistant to their psychic command, they use their ray-pistols to *stun* (on a failed save) for 2d4 turns, or to kill, searing for 5d6 radiation damage. Beyond their ability to dominate minds, brain invaders possess other mental abilities that mimic spells: *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *ESP*, *levitate*, and *suggestion*.

What few (besides their hapless victims) ever learn is that the true brain invader is a squid-like creature, composed almost entirely of pulsating brain and tentacles. The humanoid bodies they appear to have are actually a slave species, bred to give their masters greater mobility. Brain invaders can, on a successful hit with two tentacles, begin to dissolve a human skull and consume the brain within (a process taking 2-6 rounds). They can then “ride” the victim’s body by controlling its nervous system in the same way they control their slave bodies.

Brain invaders can’t be reasoned with or appealed to for mercy. Humans are no more than cattle to them. It has been theorized that only magic, a force that seems beyond their understanding, limits their predations on man.



BUGBEAR

No. Encountered: 1d4

Hit Dice: 3+1

Armor Class: 5 or 15

Speed: Medium

Attacks: claw (1-3) or by weapon type; can cause *fear* once per encounter and *sleep* once a day

Bugbears are creatures of condensed nightmare with hunched ape or bear-like bodies and heads like deep sea diver helmets with antennae and chillingly empty face-plates. They emerge from dark, foreboding places (like derelict houses, abandoned subway tunnels, ancient ruins—or even children’s closets) to feed off human fear. They also use strange electronic machinery to siphon oneiric energy from the minds of their victims to incubate their young. The presence of a bugbear nest within a 5 mile radius causes poor sleep. Individuals suffer a subsequent -1 to rolls until restful sleep is restored after spending any more than one night in the area of effect. Bugbears can hide in spaces that appear too small for their physical forms (in closets, beneath beds) and move with uncanny silence, giving them a heightened ability to take others by surprise.

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CRABMAN

No. Encountered: 2d6

Hit Dice: 3

Armor Class: 4 or 16

Speed: Slow

Attacks: 2 claws (1d4)

Crabmen are belligerent, amphibious humanoids found throughout the islands of the South Seas. Their primitive material culture suggests intelligence, but they never attempt communication with

humans and tend to attack on sight. No one has ever seen a *crabwoman*, though neighboring human tribes sometimes carve wooden idols in the form of voluptuous human females with crustacean claws for hands. In contrast to the almost obscene detail lavished on the bodies of these fetishes, the faces are carved smooth and featureless. Scholarly consensus is that these idols are images of the goddess of the crabmen—brood mother to them all—held in superstitious dread by the natives.

DEVIL, HIT FIEND

No. Encountered: 1-3

Hit Dice: 13

Armor Class: -3 or 23

Speed: Medium (Fast flyer)

Attacks: by weapon, claws (1d6x2), bite (2d6),

or tail (2d4, and constrict for 2d4/round)

Defense: can only be hit by magic weapons

The lowest plane of Hell is home to the Syndicate's dreaded hired killers, the hit fiends. They're rumored to be under contract to Asmodeus himself, but aren't above taking side jobs from other bosses—or even human sorcerers. In their "natural" form they're horned, red-skinned giants with bat wings and forked tails, but on the material plane they hide in a human guise.

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The rules that bind them dictate that they never assume their true form in front of “civilians,” and most will only violate this law under extreme duress.

Hit fiends pride themselves on their professionalism. Some even self-impose additional rules about the conduct of their jobs to add an extra challenge and stave off boredom. Whatever veneer of honor they may cloak themselves with they remain sadistic, inhuman, and born for murder.



GATORMEN

No. Encountered: 1d10

Hit Dice: 2

Armor Class: 5 or 15

Speed: Slow (Average swimmer)

Attacks: 1 bite (1d6) or tail slap (1d6), or by weapon

Special: hold breath for up to 30 minutes

Gatormen (or gatorfolk) are a species of reptilian primitives currently confined to the remote swamps and wetlands of the South, like the Mirkwater Swamp and the Great Pahayokee Marshes. These areas serve as reservations for them, though constant vigilance is required to keep them in line.

Gatormen live in small tribes and eke out a marginal living trapping and fishing. Lurid pulp stories credit them with a taste for human flesh (and sometimes, a perverse lust for human women), but they’re more likely to steal and eat human pets—and there are no verifiable accounts of amorous extra-species advances. They do have a love of alcoholic beverages, amply provided to them by unscrupulous traders. This only increases their natural surliness and propensity for violence.

GHOST TOWN

No. Encountered: 1

Hit Dice: 12

Armor Class: n/a

Attacks: generate multiple ghosts (total hit die 12), *telekinesis* every 1d4 rounds

Defense: see below

It’s not a rare thing to encounter a ghost; most human habitations of any size have their share of them. What makes the true ghost towns of the West unusual is that visitors have recounted tales of almost entire (if small) populations of ghosts.

This is a misperception. There are no ghosts in these towns. The towns *themselves* are the ghost.

For reasons unknown to modern thaumaturgical science, the West was fertile ground for the development of deranged *genius loci*—spirits of place. Maybe these lonely places grow mad with isolation, or maybe they’re born bad—a final curse of the Native shamans driven from their ancestral lands. Whatever the case, the spirits of these towns—either in madness or as an attempt to ease their

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loneliness—populate their streets and structures with the semblances of people from their memory. Essentially, they put on a phantasmagorical puppet show.

Some ghost towns are homicidal and seek to lure in living humans then kill them in fiendish ways. Others are simply lonely and will attempt to beguile humans into staying with them. Whatever their desires, they sit quietly in the high desert, lonely prairie, or snow-bound mountainside, forlorn and waiting.

Ghost towns can be destroyed (or at least weakened to the point where they can no longer manifest significantly on the prime material plane) only by destruction of most of the structures making up the town—so traditional hit points don't apply. Eidolons created by the town act as ghosts of lower hit die, as the number of its manifestations can have no more than 12 hit dice, total. The ghost town may produce more phantasms than this, but the rest are simply illusions with no substance. None of these sub-ghosts automatically cause aging or *fear*, but they can display a horrifying countenance which will do so. Ghost towns may also use *telekinesis* as per the spell, but must wait 1d4 rounds to do so again.



GHOUL

No. Encountered:

1d6

Hit Dice: 2

Armor Class: 8

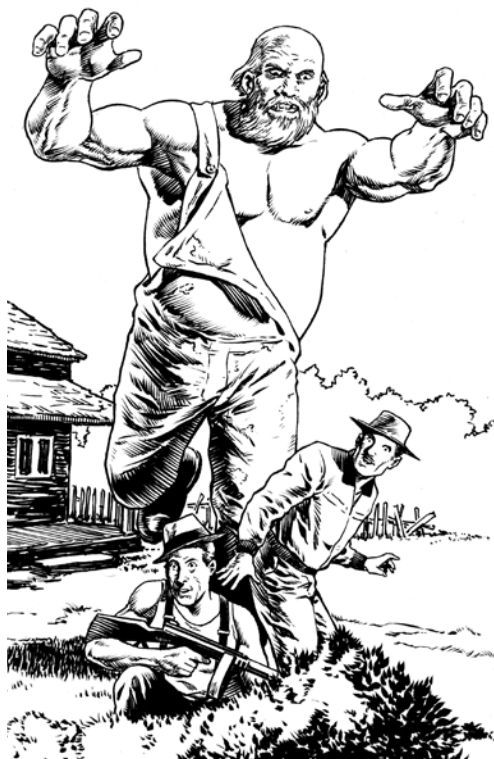
or 12 (or by armor type)

Attacks: 1 bite
(1d4) or by weapon

The ghouls of the New World aren't undead, but rather a subspecies of humans whose metabolism requires the consumption of human brains. Ghouls appear as thin (sometimes almost cadaverous) humans with unnatural pallor and sharp teeth. They have little to no body hair, and young ghouls have hair on their heads, but many have lost it by middle age. Their pupils are larger than humans, and reflect light like those of cats.

Ghouls live underground and come out to scavenge at night. They have much better nightvision than humans but also have light sensitivity and are *dazzled* in bright light. They're eaters of carrion and have a taste for human flesh, but it's human gray matter that provides the essential nutrients they need. Ghouls who don't consume it in 14-28 days (depending on the individual) begin to suffer from a degenerative, neurological malady. See page 86 for a discussion of the ghouls of Undertown.

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GIANT, HILL-BILLY

No. Encountered: 1d10

Hit Dice: 5+5

Armor Class: 5 or 15

Speed: Medium

Attacks: 1 weapon or fist

In the hills and hollers of the Smaragdines are found the giant descendants of the Ancients: the so-called hill-billy giants. The brutish men of their race are around ten feet tall, while their statuesque women are somewhat under nine. The stereotypical hill-billy giant is of poor means, dresses as he can, talks as crudely as he likes, drinks corn whiskey when he can get it, and resorts to violence with alarming frequency.

GNOME

No. Encountered: 1d8

Hit Dice: 2

Armor Class: 2 or 18

Speed: Slow

Attacks: 1 punch (1d6) or by weapon; possibly petrification (once per day, see below)

Defense: move through stone

Gnomes are 2-3 ft. tall elementals of earth appearing as bearded, colorfully dressed little men. They're often taken as statues; their experience of time is different than a human's, and they sometimes stand immobile for long periods of time before springing to sudden action. They travel from the subterranean depths via veins of minerals, moving through stone or earth with no more difficulty than air.

Their reasons for visiting the Prime Material Plane are often inscrutable. In the Southron attraction known as the Rock City the gnomes seem to be attempting art. They've turned grottoes in a cave complex into dioramas—eerily glowing scenes from Old World fairytales and nursery rhymes.

There is some mystery as to where the gnomes get the non-gnomish statues in their dioramas. Some experts hold these are gnomes assuming different forms. Others point to the unusually high number of disappearances in the area and suggest that the gnomes may sometimes need human stock for their quaint designs.

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GOON

No. Encountered: 1-50

Hit Dice: 5

Armor Class: 6 or 14

Speed: Medium

Attacks: 2 claws (1d4) or large club

Defense: regenerates 3 hp/round

Goons are tall, spindly-limbed humanoids found most often on isolated islands. Their rubbery bodies are remarkably resilient, and they can regenerate, though they don't regrow lost limbs. Goons have two sexes, but they're indistinguishable to any non-goon.

Goons are able to learn other languages, but they seem incapable of speaking anything but their own warbling, mumbling

tongue that sounds like utter gibberish to anyone else. Their societies are loosely organized—more like a herd or swarm than any human tribe. They're hostile toward anyone entering their territory, and some groups are rumored to be anthropagous.

HOBGOBLIN

No. Encountered: 1d100

Hit Dice: 1

Armor Class: 7 or 13

Speed: Medium

Attacks: 1 weapon or bite (1-2)

Hobgoblins are small, ugly humanoids of somewhat apish proportion who live as itinerant vagrants or tramps on the fringes of human society in the New World. They occasionally *claim* to be seeking work, but most often beg, scavenge, and steal to make a living, hopping freight trains to move from place to place. They're considered pests, but can be dangerous when the situation is to their advantage, so the prudent tend to avoid places where they congregate.

Hobgoblins can be found skulking around railyards, squatting in abandoned buildings, or camping in ramshackle “jungles” (shantytowns) on the edges of cities or in poorly kept city parks. Other than the occasional knife, they are seldom armed with more than improvised weapons—pipes or boards for clubs, and thrown rocks as missiles.

Hobgoblins can be helpful, particularly to those who can speak their cant. They gather a great deal of information (living on society's fringes—and watching), and their shamans know rituals for warding

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off vicious dogs, finding shelter from the elements, and calling up freight trains. No one should ever mistake them for trustworthy, however, and one should deal with them only with caution.

Random Hobogoblin Names (1d100):

01-02 Violets M'Gurk **03-04** Burlap **05-06** Whiskey Bazoo **07-08** Coffin Nell **09-10** Hang-dog Legee **11-12** Fleabitis **13-14** Nimble Jek **15-16** Greenyeteeth **17-18** Rotpizzle **19-20** Smolderblunt **21-22** Old Kid Slaug **23-24** Grimey Low **25-26** Dry Gulch **27-28** The Right Reverend Sinister **29-30** Grinless **31-32** One-Eye Elrood **33-34** Jabber Obscuro **35-36** Crooknose **37-38** Silent Zed **39-40** Gentleman Distemper **41-42** Spectacles **43-44** Mad Heck **45-46** Tusker Duke **47-48** Mumbles **49-50** Chauncey Throttlebottom **51-52** Goofus **53-54** Young Hairback **55-56** Ol' Rheumy

57-58 Lack Thumb Hari **59-60** Quicklip **61-62** The Grumbler **63-64** Handsome Bloat **65-66** Furious **67-68** Flash Bastard **69-70** Seldom Gently **71-72** Tobacco Sweetback **73-74** Unreasonable the Lesser **75-76** Bullneck **77-78** Wormy Ned **79-80** Boneyard Meech **81-82** Blundercuss **83-84** Ruckus Quietus **85-86** Thar'n'back **87-88** Brazen Dingus **89-90** Jenkin Miserable **91-92** Little Lord Flapjack **93-94** Bleeding-Gums **95-96** H. Hiram Horribilis **97-98** Simple **99-00** Lonelyhearts Ginny Finn.

LIVING HOUSE

No. Encountered: 1

Hit Dice: 8

Armor Class: 6 or 14 (outside) 10 (inside)

Speed: n/a

Attacks: digestive acid (2d6/round)

Special: 50% chance the house will disgorge its prey after suffering 25% its total hit points in damage

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Visitors to the small town of Butterwort, Freedonia, will find themselves encouraged to sample the pleasures offered by Stang House (supposedly named for the New Ylourgne madame held to have opened it in '52)—a “sporting house” in the antiquated local parlance. A short trip to the edge of town will reveal suggestive silhouettes behind gauzy curtains in the house’s windows and the faint but seductive sounds of feminine laughter, music, and general merriment coming from within.

Those entering the house will find things very different from what they expected. The inside is pink-walled and pulsating. The undulating floor is slick with secretions, and possibly strewn with glistening (and softening) bone. Should one try to turn and run for the door, he’ll find the opening tightly sealed. Then the caustic, acrid smelling liquid will begin to spew forth in gouts from the walls....



LIVING TOTEM

No. Encountered: 1

Hit Dice: 8

Armor Class: 6 or 14

Speed: Slow

Attacks: 1 fist (2d8) or stomp

Defense: immune to piercing attacks; half damage from cutting/bludgeoning

Living totems spend long periods of time in torpor or slumber, appearing as normal Native totem carvings, but awaken at intervals to terrorize or declare their tyranny over whoever is in close proximity. After a few weeks of such behavior, they typically fall into inactivity again. Living totems take a -1 to initiative due to their ungainliness. They take no damage from penetrating weapons (like arrows), only half damage from bludgeoning or cutting

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weapons. Fire-based attacks, however, cause an additional point of damage per damage die rolled, and flaming weapons do +1 point damage (or 1 point if they are of a class which would otherwise do none). They also suffer a -1 penalty to saving throws against fire-based attacks.

LOUNGE LIZARD

No. Encountered: 1d4

Hit Dice: 6

Armor Class: 5 or 15

Speed: Medium

Attacks: 1 weapon, spell, or bite (1d4)

Special: impersonation (as per *alter self* but indefinite duration)

Walk into a night-spot in Heliotrope or the City, or maybe even down in New Ylourgne, and you might unknowingly rub shoulders with an ancient inhuman race. They're derisively called "lounge lizards," but these sybaritic sophisticates have about as much in common with the various sorts of lizard-folk as a movie star has with a skunk-ape. Unlike their brutish, reptilian country-cousins, they're alluring creatures with a beauty alien to humanity—lithe, sensuous, and gorgeously scaled.

They're great sorcerers who sometimes claim to have been the originators of the knowledge stolen by Meropis, or to have ruled the world of man's apish ancestors, but they're notorious liars, so there's no way to know for certain. Some scholars link them to the Serpent in the Good Book, responsible for mankind's exile from Paradise. Despite conspiratorial theories they probably *don't* eat human flesh (probably). What's certain is that they're masters of magics of music,

intoxication, sex, and illusion. They put their arts to use in their night world of jazz, liquor, and carnal pleasures—all in pursuit (supposedly) of some sort of mystical enlightenment.

Some former hangers-on of these serpent men (as they're also sometimes known) claim that they follow the pronouncements of a mad poet—the Lizard King—who performs at an endless party in his people's ancient, underground temple. He recites in a husky, dream-darkened voice to the beat of bongos before enrapt human followers, swaying like charmed snakes before him.

MURDER BALLAD

No. Encountered: 1

Attacks: induce homicidality (see below)

A man in a bar hears a bluesman sing a traditional ballad about a betrayal and the grim things that followed, and he goes and shoots his business partner. A housewife listens to an old record that spins a tale of woe about a wayward man and a woman's revenge and serves up a rat poison dinner to her husband.

What thaumaturgists know as a murder ballad is a malevolent alien presence that hides within traditional songs recounting a murder. The exact song which conveys the entity or infection varies—perhaps even from one day to the next—but it may be that target individuals are somehow "marked" ahead of the performance, and the song is chosen to maximize the chance of influence. What the entity desires is to induce the target to commit violent murder. The target is someone with angry or resentful feelings toward another (though not typically *murderous* feelings). The

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narrative of the song performed will have elements that vaguely relate to the target's present situation. A failed saving throw means the target's anger and resentment will suddenly grow, and the target will attempt to the murder object of his or her anger within whatever time frame is feasible (typically 24 hours). While the target is emotional, he or she is not without reason; the attack will be as playful and calculated as the time permits. If the target is restrained or prevented from completing the attack for at least an hour, he or she receives a second saving throw. After 24 hours—or after a completed murder—the whole experience will seem dream-like to the target.

Dispel magic cast during the song's performance will negate the murder ballad's effect, and *protection from evil* or the like will bar its influence.

The performers who act as conduits for the ballads are called "Murder Balladeers." At first, they're unaware that they're carriers of virulent murderousness, but over time the horrible truth becomes clear. Early on they may turn to alcohol or drugs to escape the guilt, but eventually most either become corrupted, willing participants or else take their own lives. Some stories suggest that Murder Balladeers develop other music-based magical

abilities over the time they carry the malefic influence, but this has not been verified.

OGRE

No. Encountered: 1-10

Hit Dice: 4

Armor Class: 5 or 15

Speed: Slow

Attacks: 1 weapon

If the human and hilly-billy giant inhabitants of the Smaragdine Mountains



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weren't enough to contend with, travellers in remote areas may have to face ogres. These misshapen brutes are criminal ne'er-do-wells at best—and man-eating psychopaths at worst.

Ogres are thought to be degenerate relatives of the hilly-billy giants, and as such descendants of the Ancients. While the giants are generally well-formed and human-like in appearance except for their size, ogres are of a squatter more Neanderthalish build and misshapen in a variety of ways, akin to various birth defects and disfiguring metabolic conditions.

The cause of the malformation of ogres is a subject of some scientific controversy. Some experts hold that it's a result of centuries of interbreeding, combined with possible toxic exposures from the bootleg alchemicals they've been making for generations. Others believe that the ogres' ancestors made pacts with dark gods and were twisted by forbidden magic—though even this school of thought concedes that a degree of inbreeding occurred when they were driven deep into the hills by the giant-folk. Still others think that ogres may be related to giant-folk in a way analogous to how ghouls are related to normal humans—a theory likely to result in one getting “invited for dinner,” if voiced in front of ghouls.

Ogres live in extended family units in backwoods shacks or cave lairs. Their relations are complicated due to inbreeding, so many members of the family will have dual relationships reflected in their kinship terms—“mother-sister,” “brother-husband,” or the like.

In addition to making bootleg liquor and poor quality alchemicals, they also may waylay travellers on remote roads or trails. Robbery would be the least of one's concerns, as ogres are notoriously promiscuous eaters—they eat any sort of roadkill and have been known to have a fondness for human flesh. At the very least, they have a reputation for torture—something like bad children tormenting small animals but on a larger scale.

Luckily, ogres don't exist in great numbers. Violence and rampant abuse of substances kill many, and the same genetic defects that lead to their physical deformities cause a high rate of stillbirths. What they lack in numbers, however, they make up for in pure meanness.

Random Ogre Deformity:

Roll of 1d6 determines the number of deformities possessed by each ogre, then roll d20 the requisite number of times on the following table:

1. Eyes not level (1-3 inches difference).
2. Massive jaw with widely spaced teeth.
3. Two small, useless, accessory arms on shoulder blades.
4. One eye (40% chance of being centrally located, cyclops-like).
5. Cauliflower or absent ear (50% chance of either).
7. Fleshy tubers on upper-lip (1d4, 1-2 inches long).
8. One arm boneless (50% chance either useless, or tentacle like).
9. Snaggle-toothed tusk.
10. Six-toes on one foot (total toes still 10).
11. Ambiguous primary sexual characteristics.
12. Extremely hairy ears.
13. Scowling face of only partially absorbed twin on some part of body.

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14. Horn-like growth on some part of the head.
15. Body covered by weeping pustules.
16. Hunchback.
17. Albinism.
19. Excessive wrinkles, giving the skin a baggy appearance.
20. Massively oversized forearms.

OLD ONE

No. Encountered: 1-4

Hit Dice: 4 or 16

Armor Class: 4

Speed: Medium (swim), Very Slow (land)

Attacks: 4 (1 bite 1d6, 2 feelers 1d4), mental domination, psychoactive slime

Old Ones are sentients resembling catfish. They're an ancient race, perhaps the oldest sentients in the world, and they have an abiding contempt for other species. The Old Ones dominate and co-mingle their blood with isolated human communities along the rivers in which they dwell.

On a successful hit to an opponent, or if an opponent hits an Old One with bare skin, the slime which coats their skin may get transferred. A victim must make a saving throw or experience hallucinations, and perhaps paranoia, for 2-8 hours. Scrubbing the slime off with soap or an organic solvent will halve the duration of effect. On a damaging bite, genetic material may be conveyed by some unknown means into the victim's bloodstream. On a failed saving throw, the skin around the area begins to change in appearance—to transform into an Old One/human hybrid form. On one brief exposure, the effect is short-lived (perhaps 2-16 days), but longer with lengthier, repeated exposures. Cultists in the rural South purposefully

offer themselves to their masters in this way using ritualized hand-fishing techniques.

Three times per day, Old Ones can, with concentration, mentally enslave a person within 30 feet. This functions like the *dominate person* spell, and allows a saving throw every 24 hours to escape thralldom.

PARA-ELEMENTAL, OIL

No. Encountered: 1

Hit Dice: 8, 12, or 16

Armor Class: 3 or 17

Speed: Slow

Attacks: constriction (2d8)

Defense: can only be harmed by magical weapons or flame

Para-elementals can form in petroleum deposits. The exact mixture of the primal



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elements that leads to the formation of a petro-elemental is unknown, but their quickening only occurs under intense heat and pressure and in the presence of the heaped remains of microscopic sea life. The negative energy from that mass death fills these creatures with hostility toward all living things. They destroy the drills and equipment that roused them and rise from underground to kill anyone close by.

PHANTOM GASSER

No. Encountered: 1-3

Hit Dice: 2+1

Armor Class: 8 or 12

Speed: Medium

Attacks: 1 gas (see below)

Special: explodes if killed (3 dice fireball)

Phantom Gassers or Phantom Anesthetists are mysterious beings who make sporadic attacks on towns and villages by use of gas and the widespread panic these apparently random and motiveless attacks cause.

The Gassers are human-like, though thin and androgynous, but their movements are strange—parsimonious almost to the point of mechanicalness. They dress completely in black and wear stylized gas masks over their faces. They have never been known to speak.

Phantom Gassers seldom operate in groups larger than three. They attack homes with relatively few people in them (no more than five) and introduce their gas with spray nozzles through whatever means available—open windows, under doors, or the like.

The gas is colorless, but has a peculiar, sickly sweet odor. It functions similar

to *stinking cloud* (lasting 2d6 minutes), except that all those who fail their saving throw must make a second saving throw or be feebleminded (as per spell) for 1d10 additional rounds. Even those who make the first saving throw are sickened (-2 to rolls) until they can leave the area, or the cloud disperses.

Few suffer any long term effects of the attack, but when word gets out in the community, everyone who hears the tale responds as if they've entered an aura of fear, and will react as per the *fear* spell if they encounter anything suggestive of another phantom gasser attack.

It may be that the creation of fear is the true motive behind these beings actions.

PINK ELEPHANT

No. Encountered: 2d6

Hit Dice: 3

Armor Class: 7 or 13

Speed: n/a

Attacks: cause fear in those who see them (see below)

Defense: only harmed by magic, or other astral beings

Those who become too inebriated or intoxicated invite the astral invaders known as pink elephants into their minds. These creatures appear as gelatinous, multi-colored (not just pink), bipedal elephants, with sinister, leering expressions and eyes as featureless as the abyssal depths. They are non-corporeal, and can only be harmed by magical means or by other astral beings. They cause fear in those able to see them (unless they make a save vs. magic). This unreasoning fear drives those that perceive them to fight for their

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lives against the elephants as if they are corporeal beings, which can lead to the victim inadvertently injuring themselves or those around them. During this period (which lasts 1-4 hours) the victim's mental faculties and dexterity are effectively reduced by 1d4. After the resolution of the elephants' attack, the victim will sleep for 2-12 hours and awaken with a monstrous headache. There is a 33% chance that an encounter with the elephants will lead to more serious, permanent impairment of mental abilities, if a save vs. death is failed.



PULP MENACE

No. Encountered: 1

Hit Dice: 1-1

Armor Class: 10

Speed: n/a

Attacks: wisdom drain (1d4/story read)
and *suggestion*

A weird menace haunts the newsstands and magazine racks of the City. Behind some seemingly innocuous — if lurid — paper cover there lurks an alien entity with an appetite for human minds. This entity has no official name, but is sometimes called the “shudder pulp” after the odd “someone walked across my grave” feeling people often describe upon first encountering it. A warning, perhaps. They generally ignore it.

The entity appears as a pulp magazine of the most prurient variety. It changes the specifics of its title and cover image on each occasion, but invariably teases tales of violence, sadism, and the macabre. There are some reports of the entity appearing as a comic book as well, but these have not been verified.

A purchaser will find the pulp largely indistinguishable from any mundane publication of the type. The stories will be as expected from the cover, though perhaps a little less logical and more nightmare-like that would be typical. A Wisdom roll upon first browsing its contents gives the victim a chance to recognize the inherent wrongness of the publication and avoid further harm. A failed roll means the victim will read the entire volume over a period of time unless there is some intervention.

Every story read (2d6 in the volume) will require a saving throw (with a cumulative -1 for every previous story read) or result in the loss of 1d4 points of Wisdom. When a victim's wisdom drops to 0 they disappear from the Prime Material Plane, and no one knows where they are taken.

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In addition, even having the item in one's possession requires a saving throw every 1d6 days or else the possessor acts as if under a *suggestion* spell performing increasingly depraved acts (though starting at the relatively mundane) bearing some similarities to those depicted in the stories in the volume.

The entity may be destroyed by any of the usual means used to destroy a mundane magazine. Destroying its physical manifestation breaks its spell, and limits further effects. However, the entity will likely re-coalesce elsewhere in a slightly different form in 1d10 days.

RED

No. Encountered: 3-18

Hit Dice: 3

Armor Class: 3 or 17

Speed: Medium

Attacks: by weapon

Defense: magic resistance (+2 against spells and direct magic effects)

Few threats seem to strike as much fear into the populace of the City as the Reds. These agents of a technologically advanced underground civilization seek to transform the world in their society's image, wiping out free thought and individuality in the name of their perverse vision of equality and unity. Despite their aims, their tireless machinations often dupe innocent citizens and draw them to the Red cause.

The origins of the Red menace lie with an Old Worlder named Carisdall, who returned after being presumed lost at sea with a strange story of a hidden island civilization where private property was forbidden, and everyone worked for the good of the society as a whole. For the rest of his life, Carisdall tried in vain to relocate his utopia. He wrote a manifesto describing the islanders' philosophy he called "Communalitarianism." His work found adherents and spawned small-scale, experimental communities and political parties in several countries.

The danger came when Carisdall's philosophy spread to the degenerate remnant of a once-mighty subterranean



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civilization. During the Great War, that society experienced a violent revolution based on these ideals. The idle and intellectually diminished ruling class was slaughtered by the more bestial workers. The former workers sought to realize Carisdall's utopia, but in a "scientifically perfected" manner that would have likely horrified the man who inspired them. The workers began to alter their own minds and bodies to create different functional groups, the better to serve society. Then, using the thought-broadcasting machines of their ancestors, they began to subtly influence the minds of unsuspecting surface-dwellers.

The Reds (so-called because of their fondness for symbols colored a deep red) seek to transform the whole world into a sterile ordered society with the egalitarianism of the ant hill. To this end, they subvert humans to their cause—either through bribery, deception, or mind-control. There are those evil humans who join the Reds, cynically hoping to enrich themselves as long as possible before inevitable Red transformation. Some humans under the influence of Red thought-machines become more carnal and depraved, before finally entering into an emotionally vacant, automaton-like state that is the Red's end goal.

Reds see magic as the product of decadent superstition, and disbelieve it entirely (despite the evidence). This disbelief provides them with a degree of *magical resistance*, as it does their human stooges in more advanced stages of Red mental conversion (+2 to saving throws vs. spells or direct magical effects). Humans in earlier

stages are sometimes given technological devices by their masters that duplicate the same effect. Agents might also be loaned other technologically advanced items as well, though these will always be parcelled out in a limited, efficient fashion.



RUST BEETLE

No. Encountered: 10-100 in swarm

Hit Dice: 1d4 hit points

Armor Class: 7 or 13

Speed: Medium

Attacks: 1 bite for 1-2 points; spit enzymes that corrode metal

Rust Beetles (or rust roaches) are insects vaguely resembling thick-bodied locusts, usually six inches in length, but growing as long as a foot. As the locusts they somewhat resemble can be an agricultural plague, so can rust beetles be a plague on industry. They feed exclusively on metal oxides produced through the action of quick-acting, magical corrosive enzymes they generate. Rust beetles will only attack humans in defense—but they will aggressively attempt to devour anything made of iron or its alloys they find.

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SANDMAN

No. Encountered: 1-2

Hit Dice: 1+1

Armor Class: 4 or 16

Speed: Fast

Attacks: 1 by weapon or oniric dust (cause *sleep*, or waking dreams)

Defense: able to *gate* to Dream Realm at will

From his castle coexistent in the Dream Realm and on the dark side of the Moon, the Dream Lord maintains oneiric devices and monitors the content of the flow of dreamstuff. He works to prevent the spread of virulent nightmares to other dreams and the curdling of idle fantasies into dangerous obsessions. Aiding him in these tasks are gnome-like beings called Sandmen.

The Sandmen carry pouches of silvery, glinting powder made from desiccated and alchemically treated dreamstuff. They use this oneiric dust to induce sleep in mortals, to cause waking dreams, or even to cause multiple beings to share the same dream. This is their primary tool for observing or even entering dreams for the purposes of monitoring and testing.

These dream guardians may not be incorruptible. There are persistent rumors of Sandmen on the take selling blue dreams to Hell Syndicate incubi and succubi to slip to unsuspecting marks. There are also rumors of black-market Tijuana bibles produced from the concentrated salacious dreamings of certain celebrities being peddled on the streets of the City and possibly elsewhere.

SEPULCHRAL CHOIR

No. Encountered: 1 (1d4+2 in the choir)

Hit Dice: (1+2) x the number of choir members

Armor Class: 0 or 20

Speed: Medium flyer

Attacks: 1 (haunting song: -2 to all rolls, -1 to Wisdom per day)

Defenses: incorporeal undead

A sepulchral choir or spectral chorus is an incorporeal manifestation summoned to drive a victim to madness and perhaps suicide. The choir appears as a group of skeletons of small children, only visible to the victim (unless the choir wishes otherwise) without the use of magic. Their beautiful and intensely unnerving singing is likewise heard by the victim alone, in fact, it specifically relates to her, referencing her deepest fears and darkest secrets.

Choir visitations will come mostly at night, but might also occur in the day if the victim is alone, even for a brief period. The haunting will so distract the victim he will suffer a -2 to all attack rolls and saving throws for a period of an hour after experiencing one, unless he makes a saving throw. The psychic and emotional assault causes a progressive -1 per day to Wisdom, and an inability to get restful sleep or concentrate. The end result is insanity (as per the options given in the *confusion* spell) or suicide. The choir may be turned (though this is only temporary), or banished by a *remove curse*.

Only one complete copy of the ritual needed to create a sepulchral choir is known to exist. It was found in the City, scrawled on the back of a handbill and left inside a hymnal in the Our Ladies of Sorrows Church.

WEIRD MENACES



SKUNK-APE

No. Encountered: 1d4

Hit Dice: 3

Armor Class: 6 or 14

Speed: Medium

Attacks: 2 (any combination of claw and bite 1d4 each)

Special: Stench (save or -1 on attack roles)

Skunk-apes are shaggy-furred primates native to warm, swampy areas like many parts of the South. They're cunning—smart even for apes, perhaps—but show no real evidence of being more than beasts.

Skunk-apes are notable for eyes that appear to glow in the darkness, and the strong stench that they exude—so strong that dogs will often refuse to track them. Skunk-apes sometimes appear to leave three-toe tracks—unheard of for primates, particularly when they have *five* digits.

ZOMBIE, CUJIATEPECAN

No. Encountered: 1d10

Hit Dice: 2

Armor Class: 8 or 12

Speed: Very Slow

Attacks: 1 strike (1d6) or by weapon

Special: Immune to sleep and charm

Those who die in Cujiatepec without the means to pay the stiff “grave tax” are exhumed a month after burial—time enough for the eldritch soil of the town’s cemetery to transform them into mummified zombies. They’re then put to work at labor for the city.

Cujiatepecan zombies aren’t animated by negative energy. They lack many of the properties or susceptibilities of regular undead.



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