

# UVG

## THE FINAL UPDATE



ULTRAVIOLET GRASSLANDS & THE BLACK CITY  
~ A PSYCHEDELIC RPG CRAWL ~  
LUKA REJEC



Time is the essence  
Time is the season  
Time ain't no reason  
Got no time to slow

Time everlasting  
Time to play B-sides  
Time ain't on my side  
Time I'll never know

Burn out the day  
Burn out the night  
I'm not the one to tell you what's wrong or what's right  
I've seen suns that were freezing and lives that were  
through

—*Burnin' For You, Fire of Unknown Origin*, Blue Öyster Cult



## Welcome to the Ultraviolet Grasslands

The Ultraviolet Grasslands (UVG) is a rules-light rpg pointcrawl module inspired by psychedelic heavy metal, the *Dying Earth* genre, and *Oregon Trail* games. It takes a group of 'heroes' into the depths of a vast and mythic steppe filled with the detritus of time and space and fuzzy riffs.

The UVG is for referees, game masters, judges, players, and fans of role-playing games who want to run a months' long science fantasy Marco Polo-style voyage across a weird, old world.

The UVG is for any gamer who wants to mine it for inspiration, adventuring locations, odd characters, maps, items, and random encounters.

The UVG is also an artbook knitting together my art and maps and writing. Yes, every nut and fault, from layout to lamarckian monstrosity, is my own work.

It has been encouraged, and made possible, by the fantastic support of my fans on patron. Thank you, the heroes of the stratometaship.

Although the manuscript is now complete, it is not yet finished—editing, proofreading, and a final layout now beckon. Still, the responsibility for every typo, every error, and every missing statistic, is entirely mine.

Now, enter the silver machine.

-Luka, 2018



Black Pot 5-body-alpha.  
A Porcelain Prince.

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## The Edge of the World

A world begins when it emerges from the mists of time. So it is with the civilizations of the Rainbowlands, which mark their count from when the Long Ago ended and the Now began.

The Rainbowlanders are the humans of a later era, undisputed masters of the fertile lands around the Circle Sea, dwellers in the Eye of Creation. They come in many shapes, colors, creeds, and faiths. They pile unkempt technology and misremembered lore together into a teetering whole. They rule the settled lands under their polychrome deities of ill-repute.

This story is not their story. This story begins at the edge of their world, at the Left End of the Right Road. At the westernmost outpost of humanity, the Violet City. Bastion against the hordes, entrepôt to the exotic sunset lands, and last port of civilization before the trackless steppe studded with the detritus of the Long Ago.

The last glimmer of the Rainbow before the skin-blistering glow of the Ultraviolet Grasslands.



## Why are you together?

You put the cat coffee in the samovar and rub the sleep sand out of your eyes.

On the other side of the hotrock the dwarf rubs magitechnical ointment into his golem armor's joints. That means it's half an hour to sunrise. Same thing every day, like clockwork. Perhaps it *is* clockwork. Everyone says those Salters aren't human anymore.

The demon-talker sits down besides you, noiseless as always, yet somehow comforting. You pass it a cup.

"Ahh," she gurgles, "you always make the best brew. It almost warms my bones."

"We'll all be warm soon," rumbles Eater-of-the-Dead from his sleeping sack, "we're nearly at the Violet City."

## Starting character ideas (d20)

1D20	WHO ARE YOU?	WHY ARE YOU ON THE ROAD?	STARTING WITH
1	Decapolitan ambassador	Sent by a grim corporation	One black metal vertebra
2	Redland district folk hero	Dreams of a world ending	Half a white porcelain skull
3	Hexad enforcer militant	Blood memories of a great patrimony	Green brick with the light and warmth of a candle
4	Safranian merchant adventurer	Tracking a missing ledger	Pink bottle with a singing spirit
5	Emerald city preacher	Seeking new converts	Three machine beetles with gem eyes
6	Redland bourgeoisie botanist	Rumors of a fabulous autofactory	Yellow plastic ivory tablet with four truths
7	Oranjetic travelling entertainer	Found clue to abmortality	Silver book proclaiming revolution
8	Greenlander nomad herdsmen	Ordered by an ominous disembodied voice	Cabochon ruby with a regal hologram inside
9	Exiled pirate liberal	Map to an unclaimed aerolith	Intaglio red pearl of a lingish trader
10	Salt dwarf prospector	Soul of loved one stolen by a horror	Violet bone crystalized in soulfire
11	Yellowlander climate migrant	Stories of a secret healing vegetable	Copper star incised with naughty limericks
12	Undercover rainbow inquisitor	Portents of a deadly machine demon	Four brassy cogs from a soul mill
13	Undergraduate purple wizard	Paintings of a gorgeous cyan seaside	Dusty positronic rat brain in a crystal case
14	Dilettante noble tourist	Pursued by loving enemies	Small lavender plant that cannot die
15	Exiled blueland noble	Grandmother's lost autowagon	Translucent dinner-plate sized force disk
16	Secret azure cultist	Brother was stripped into a ba-zombie	Grey healing lichen culture in ceramic jar
17	Violet revolutionary emigré	Master boneworker sent an invitation	Manual of the vechs, annotated with scribbles
18	Oranjist courtesan singer	Delivering a letter of inheritance to a count	Stainless steel thermos of blood wine
19	Metropolitan accountant monk	Cure for a plague that killed your son	Glass tub of vampire-grade sunscreen
20	Volkan diesel dwarf	Biomantic bible in a lost library	Platinum necrogoggles that reveal undead
21	Woodlander elf-touched trapper	Repaying debts to the butcher bank	Small furry brown vome that giggles when petted
22	Settled steppe-lander engineer	Visions of a world ending in falling fire	Machine horse in dappled shades of rust
23	Wine vampire priest	Bearing a priceless pearl for a princess	Crystal personality box to create ka-zombies
24	Purplefolk doghead anarchist	Tracking a vile intruder from the void	Yellow-orange weightless rock—an aerolith
25	Half-ling lunatic seer	Mind entwined with a dying sentience	Blue and white mechanical hand
26	Scrubland barbarian hero	Nightly dreams of a lost world	Quartzite tooth of a space worm
27	Black gold industrialist	Seeking a prosthetic body for mother	Animate furry chitin kite
28	Violet city mendicant healer	Ordered by the clan quest golem	Carmine cactus that secretes drops of blood
29	Independent freehold archaeologist	Keeping tabs on a rival explorer	Cogwheel monocle with small pits
30	Old city tutor	Exploring clues to the great forgetting	Seven strands of unbreakable silver wire
31	Exotic wastelander summoner	Possessed by a demon in childhood	Citrine soul stone with a third of a hero's soul
32	Tumult fisher wizard	Seeking allies for a revolution	Gourd fetish with cowrie teeth
33	Safirian ruins scavenger	Looking for new lands for lost tribe	Teal warlock helmet with three white stripes
34	Wildfolk demon hunter	Compulsion after meeting a seer	Yellow cape of pure steel silk
35	Cogflower necromancer lawyer	Sheer industrial greed	Unaging plastic travel cutlery
36	Pueblo heretic rancher	Determined to end a crippling disease	Rainbow unicorn horn
37	Dessicated slaver spy	Found the testament of a dead god	Grey cube that weighs five times more than lead
38	Moon mountain witch	Pursued by furies and a dark fate	Lime green onion-and-skull cup
39	Half-island syndicalist tinker	Visions of glory and rebirth	Clear crystal heart of a vile
40	Union machinehunter general	A queer unease after reading a metal book	Red staff made of fused ancient pistols

## Travel quests (d12)

This caravan, this motley crew, journeying into a wild, half-forgotten land, somewhere between the sunset and the stars, where the veterans of the psychic wars still dwell, ruminating on their lost lives. What does it seek?

As the referee (or as a group) you can decide (or randomly determine) an initial quest for the whole crew to take them into the Deep West.

1. **Because it's there.** This is a valid reason, lots of explorers go off simply to see something new. In this case, consider replacing XP for gold and combat with 1d6 x 50 XP for every new destination explored.
2. **To make money.** Another simple reason and valid. Provide the party with a financier that loans them the money for their first caravan (and creates a debt), then consider awarding 1d6 x 100 XP for every new profitable trade route discovered, and for every profitable trade completed.
3. **To explore forgotten ruins** for a community college of mages and technicians. A university wants to build its reputation with an incredible new collection, and hires the party to escort an archaeologist, or perhaps they are the archaeologists. Consider awarding 1d6 x 100 XP for every suitable find recovered, and remember to delay and cut the expedition's funding at the most stupid and inopportune moments, because the university rector needed a new dining room.
4. **To learn ancient secrets.** A reason that should appeal to wizards. Give each destination a 20% chance of having lore and remains that lead to the discovery of an ancient secret. Once five pieces are recovered, a wizard can spend a week to research the lore and figure out the *Teleportation of Innocents* or perhaps the secret of *Liquid Stone Lamps*. Consider awarding 1d6 x 200 XP for every such secret learned.
5. **A diplomatic mission.** A faction in the 'civilized' lands wants to foment strife among the barbarians of the wilderness, to stop them from getting strong enough to threaten the civilization. Award 1d6 x 1000 XP for every war started.
6. **A tribute mission.** The party is delivering, or collecting, a large amount of wealth, or perhaps a groom, to seal a diplomatic agreement, or pay a debt. The challenge here is staying unnoticed and making it as quickly as possible. Award 1d6 x 500 XP on delivery.
7. **Escort duties.** This is the dullest option, in my opinion. The party are simply along for the ride, and don't actually control the caravan. But, if you want to run set piece battles ... sure, go for it.
8. **Raiding.** If the heroes start off as barbarians or semi-nomads in the wilderness, this is a very valid choice. Determine the goods their clan requires, perhaps animals, armor, weapons, or medicine, and have them go a-hunting. Consider awarding 50 XP for every sack of the required goods acquired, no matter how they do it (including trade).
9. **Assassination.** A rogue leader of a faction, a scary wizard, an important researcher, or perhaps just a beautiful gladiator slave, has escaped into the wilds. The upstart must be taught a lesson and their head delivered back to the Divine President. Provide the group with 1000 starting cash and give each destination a 20% chance of holding a clue to the target's location. Once three clues are discovered, randomly determine the target's location and award 1d6 x 1000 XP on delivery of the head.
10. **Witness the End of Time.** The party is convinced that the world is ending, and that they must deliver the holiest of relics, a large and bulky artifact from long ago, to the Final Destination. Each destination has a 20% chance of holding part of the map to the End of Time. Once three pieces are recovered, determine the location of the Final Destination and a key for unlocking it. Award 1d6 x 1000 XP on arrival at the Final Destination. The End of Time is optional.
11. **Saving the World.** The party is convinced that the world is ending, and they must recover the Holiest of Relics from the Final Place to avert it. Each destination has a 20% chance of holding a clue to the Final Place and a 20% chance of being home to an Avatar of the End. Once three pieces are recovered, determine the location of the Final Place and a challenge for entering it (perhaps *Death Frost Doom*). Award 1d6 x 1000 XP on arrival at the Final Place. The End of Time is still optional.
12. **Ascending into the Sky like the Shamans of old.** The people's myths tell of the Long Long Ago, when the ancestors walked in the stars. Following visions from the True Mother, a group of noble and ruthless warriors and seers has been chosen to return to the stars and tell the tale of their oppression and bring the Ancestors back to the earth. Each destination has a 20% chance of holding part of the key to the sky. Once three keys are recovered, a Demon of Lies appears. Inside the Demon's head is a crystal compass that points to the destination of ascendance. Award 1d6 x 1000 XP on arrival at the space port. Actual void-faring is optional.



## Before the Voyage Begins

Now. *What the hell have you gotten yourself into?*

Did you let your players convince you that it would be fun to do a cool campaign where their heroes crossed the trackless wastes of Eurasia to discover new kingdoms in Oceania? Did you roll up characters and set off hex-crawling across a thousand leagues of wilderness because it looked cool in the Lord of the Rings?

Oh, you're in for some trouble.

The UV Grasslands are big. They're weird, sure, but foremost they are mind-bogglingly big. Vast and empty. And it's that emptiness that kills heroes, because that emptiness means there's no wishing well to drink from and no turnip farm to plunder.

But, hey, we can make this work. The UVG is modelled on the historical silk road, trans-saharan caravans, medieval pilgrimages, picaresque fantasy, and stoner doom metal.

Grab the **Caravan Sheet** (end of the pdf) and look at it. It has three types of characters: heroes, henchmen, and transport; two crucial constraints: time and inventory; and one crucial resource: supplies. Now look at the **Big Map** (separate pdf). It is a point-crawl on a vast scale, and consists of destinations, routes, and points of interest.

## THE MOVING PIECES

The next section goes into more detail on the following three crucial rule mods for the UVG.

1. **Time** is the key to making places feel big.
2. **Inventory**, because it's always a pain in the ass.
3. **Supplies**, because running out of water kills.
4. **Misfortune and Encounters**, because stuff happens while you travel.

And then there are some miscellaneous, mostly optional rule hacks and suggestions.

## REFEREES AND HEROES

I'm the author, and I'm a **referee** just like you (I'm assuming you are or want to be an rpg referee). As the Ref you're the bass-player of this role-playing game (probably some kind of D&D thing). But this ain't a dungeon, it's a steppe. Still, it's cool. We've got this.

The **heroes** are the **players'** characters. They're out for adventure, loot and revolution. Don't assume they're good. Heroes are not good, they're excessive and over the top. Over the top is good.

## RULES LIGHT

I assume six stats, hit dice, AC, and all that jazz, but most of the UVG is descriptive and you have to add your own specific stats. An example creature would be:

**Deathmachine** (HD 6, fast, lasers). Born of a mad ghost's crucible, this steel and carbon golem has dragged pieces of flesh over its metal skeleton, and used the *Ritual Preservation of Living Tissue* to keep it from rotting away entirely.

If this is too little for you, the UVG might not suit you.



## 1: Time, What is Time

In most variants of D&D rounds, minutes, and turns are used during the exploration of dungeons or ruins, while hours and days are used for overland travel and the exploration of terrain hexes.

In the UVG a **week** is the basic unit of activity to drive home how far everything is. Every week:

1. Remove one **sack of supplies** per human-sized person from the caravan inventory.
2. Have one hero roll a Charisma check for **misfortune**. The misfortune applies to the whole caravan, but heroes may roll saves individually.
3. Check what **encounters** happen and resolve them.
4. Any heroes that did not participate in a fight or flight can treat the week as a **long rest** (if you are using 5E D&D, I recommend the gritty realism rules variant in the 5E DMG, p. 267).
5. Check if the caravan has arrived at a **destination**. Most destinations are a week apart, but some require two, or even three, weeks of voyaging in the wastes. If the caravan has not yet arrived at a safe location, repeat steps 1 to 5 until it does.
6. When the caravan arrives at a destination, have one hero roll an Intelligence (or Investigation or other relevant skill) check for **discoveries** and note these down on the map. These are points of interest or minor locations a few days' journey from the destination they spotted on the way. Only a limited number of discoveries can be made at each destination.

Instead of traveling, a caravan may stop for a full week. When a caravan is **stopped in the wilderness**, each hero may take one of the following activities before step 1:

1. **Forage** for supplies. If the hero succeeds at a DC 10 Survival check they gain one sack of supplies, and an additional sack for every five points rolled over the target number. Vary the difficulty depending on how plentiful the wilderness is.
2. Take **care** of another hero. That hero recovers one more attribute, and has advantage on disease and poison saves.
3. Set an **ambush**. The hero can prepare a trap to waylay other travelers, or to gain advantage in a hostile encounter.
4. The hero can also **study** ancient artifacts, scrolls, or items to figure out how they work, learn a new spell, and so on.
5. Or the hero may **hide** the camp, to give an advantage to avoiding encounters.

If the caravan is **stopped at a destination**, each hero may also:

1. **Explore** further, for additional discoveries.
2. **Buy and sell** trade goods.
3. Additionally, every hero may pay **expenses** for lodging and food, instead of consuming sacks of supplies, and in some places even buy additional sacks of supplies.

What about precise distance? Only worry about details like miles and leagues on the scale of individual encounters and locations. For the scale of the UVG, time is a better experiential measure of distance.

### THE USE OF DAYS

Heroes traveling across the UVG will also find uses for **days**, particularly for taking short rests (a day), roughly exploring a point of interest (one more day), mucking around a destination, and most crucially, dying of thirst when supplies run out (a baroque and brutal subsystem built in days).

**Tally extra days** accrued from misfortune, exploration, short rests, and other miscellaneous events until they reach a full week. Then repeat steps 1 to 3 (no rest) and reset the tally.

A caravan is **slowed down** when the animals are encumbered, passengers are sick, it is using slow, clumsy, or heavy vehicles, and so on. At the beginning of every week **tally an extra day for every applicable condition** (thus an encumbered caravan with sick heroes using slow, heavy wagons would start every week by tallying four extra days).

A caravan is **fast** if everybody is mounted, if they have an exceptional guide, if they are using excellent steeds, or fast golem vehicles. Every applicable condition **negates one tally** per week.

### REST AND RECOVERY

The UVG assumes gritty realism and an additional healing constraint; a long rest restores only one depleted attribute. So, after a long rest, a hero fully recovers:

1. their hit points and Hit Dice.
2. one of their ability scores (Str, Dex, Con, etc.).
3. from a miscellaneous harmful effect (like death, having their soul removed, and so on).

If a hero is being cared for by another character, they recover more quickly. When you look at the starvation and survival rules, you will realize this is horrible.

## 2: Inventory and Sacks

How to convey how horrible it is to carry lots of gear long distances without a hover-wagon, yet not strangle the players with the classic pounds and packs while their heroes slog across a giant savanna for months at a time? As with time, we change the scale for the rigors of trans-continental travel.

Each human can carry **one sack** unencumbered.

Each human can carry **two sacks** encumbered.

I'm using sacks as a unit of measurement of the unwieldiness and weight of things, not literal sacks. They could be barrels, crates, bales, whatever. How much is a sack? A sack is:

- all of a hero's adventuring or professional gear. Magic skulls of memory for wizards, a year's supply of swordmaceaxes for fighters, golf clubs for the thief, whatever.
- A **sack of supplies**. Enough food, water, camping gear, and toilet paper to survive for a week. Bad quality supplies cost 2 cash per sack, good ones 10 cash per sack—or more deep in the wastes!
- one **rider** or unconscious human.
- a unit of trade goods.
- 2500 5E coins of any type.

In the interest of simplicity, a sack is exactly as many pounds, stones, or inventory slots as a D&D character with a Strength of 10 can carry in your system. If you want to allow very strong characters to carry multiple sacks, you may.

### CONVERTING UNITS

1 **sack** = 10 **stones** = 100 **soaps** = 2500 **cash**

Sack: basic inventory unit, defined by a Str 10 human.

Stone: a tenth of a sack, also a generic significant item, like a sabre or spear or short sword or shovel. About 15lb.

Soap: a hundredth of a sack, also a generic small item, like a signal whistle or signet ring or spike. Or bar of soap.

**Encumbrance** imposes a disadvantage on every physical activity. At least. As a referee, feel free to impose additional penalties when a fighter is carrying a platinum refrigerator out of a zombastodon lair.

Players will come up weird justifications for how they are going to rig up rollers, ropes, and pulleys to drag heavy things long distances. This is good. Encourage them.

### TREASURE IS HEAVY

So the heroes come across a series of beautiful crystal sculptures with diamond eyes? Why do they hack out just the eyes? Space.

Any time a treasure or item is described with fancy words, increase **add a sack to its size** for every relevant word. Add sacks for heavy materials, fine workmanship, intricate mechanics, cyclopean architecture. Just pile it on.

For example, the fabulous *gold* and *marble statue* of the *metaphysical insinuation* of *being* by Jeerida the Artistique is worth 6,000 cash and takes 6 sacks of inventory to transport safely.

### SO HACK IT UP

A smart (philistine) hero can **hack out** 1d6 + Charisma modifier percent of a treasure's value in one turn. This will reduce the value of the rest of the work by 10x that amount in percent.

Example: Pointy d'Or rolls 5%, gouges out the gold bits for 300 cash and pockets them. The remaining defaced sculpture is now worth 50% less: 3,000 cash.

Yeah, looters like Pointy d'Or are assholes.





### 3: Supplies and Survival

A sack of supplies is an abstraction.

It's the food, water, camping gear, video games, gum, prophylactics, nylon stockings, and toilet paper a human needs to survive for a week.

#### CONSTITUTION SAVE VS. STARVATION

When there are no supplies left, bad things will happen quickly and lethally. In deserts, without fodder, animals make saves, too.

No supplies	hard save (DC 15)
Quarter rations	moderate save (DC 10)
Half rations	easy save (DC 5)

**Success:** physical stats reduced by 6 and hero has disadvantage on all physical checks. Stats cannot be reduced below 3. Easier option: reduce stats by 1d6.

**Failure:** hero is **starving**, physical stats are reduced by 9, mental stats by 6, hero has disadvantage on all checks, movement speed is slowed. If *any* stat reaches zero, the hero dies. Easier option: reduce physical stats by 2d6 and mental stats by 1d6.

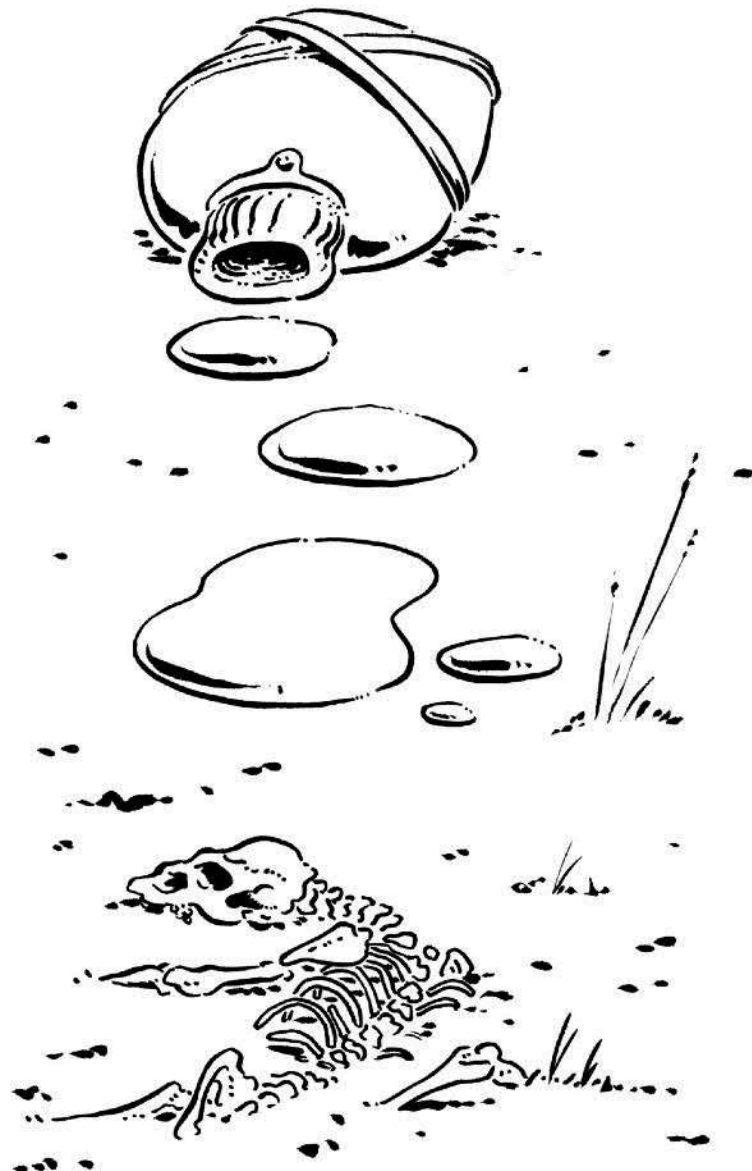
Repeat the roll every week spent with reduced supplies. Heroes have advantage on the roll if they do not travel (this may merely cancel out the disadvantage already incurred).

#### HOW NOT TO STARVE

Running out of supplies is bad. Waiting until things are very bad can be terrible. Sometimes, the weak must be sacrificed for the strong.

1. **Cannibalise** the expedition. This is the fastest way to get supplies. A human provides one sack of supplies, an ordinary pack animal provides two sacks of supplies.
2. **Forage** for supplies before the caravan runs out. If a hero succeeds at a moderate (DC 10) Survival check, they gather one sack of supplies, plus an additional sack for every five points rolled over the target. The difficulty may vary.
3. **Buy** more supplies in a settlement. Obviously. Prices can vary, but between 2 and 10 cash per sack, depending on quality, is reasonable.

Some inhabitants of the Ultraviolet Grasslands may frown on outright cannibalism.



## 4. Misfortune and Encounters

Voyages can be summarized as long periods of boredom punctuated by moments of terror and loss. [Mis]fortune and Encounters simulate those moments. They deplete the resources of the voyagers, threaten their survival, and provide vital color to the environment.

In the UVG Charisma is crucial in both cases.

The concept of Charisma comes from Ancient Greek, where it referred to grace and divine fortune bestowed by capricious deities. This wasn't some approximation of "sex appeal" or "leadership potential." This was straight up divine favoritism. A hero could be a complete dirtbag, but her divine mother had dipped her in god ju-ju and given her teflon skin. Others got the plague, she was untouched. Others got scarred, she glowed with beauty and grace.

Classical Charisma is utterly unfair, which is why it works so well in games as a proxy for luck, misfortune and encounter checks.

If players are new to this concept, let them know in advance, and adjust their hero's stats.

### MISFORTUNE

Each area of the UVG has its own perils, and every week of travelling in that area, a different hero with the caravan should roll a Charisma check to see if the caravan has had bad luck. If the hero fails their check, the local d6 table lists possible outcomes, though the Referee is free to come up with their own. Misfortune applies to the whole caravan, but if additional saving throws are required, heroes roll saves individually.

Common strokes of bad luck include getting lost, sick, or poisoned, encountering floods, droughts, storms, or losing supplies, animals, or equipment.

### ENCOUNTERS

Each week **at least one encounter will happen**. The only questions are: how intense the encounter is, what the encounter is, and how hostile is it.

Roll three d12s (or d6s if you prefer) for the intensity, type, and hostility of the encounter (see table below).

If the total of the three encounter rolls is 13 (or 7 for d6s), an additional encounter occurs (possibly simultaneously). As many encounters may occur as the dice permit.

Each area has its own list of creatures and encounters. As the Referee you can use that to choose the type of encounter to place before the players. For example, one biomechanical buffalo might be useful as a steed, but a herd could be very dangerous.

**Remember: most encounters should not result in combat, and not all combat should be to the death!**

### SACRIFICE TO SKIP

Sometimes encounters just waste time. Seriously, running into 2d6 angry limping zombies ambushing the heroes might be funny once, but if you're on your way to the One Ageless Spire of the Only Onager, those zombies are a bit dull.

In such cases, allow the heroes to ditch some of their stuff and narrate how they overcame the encounter. If their story is funny, feel free to even dish out a reward.

**Simple sacrifice method:** one sack of supplies per HD of the enemies. So a pack of 1HD red hounds will be distracted with a sack of salamis, but it will take a couple of asses left limping by the trail to stop a pride of pursuing 4HD thundercats.

Encounter Rolls d12 (or d6)	Intensity (Distance and Time)	Encounter (Who or What They Are)	Their Reactions (modified by Charisma)
1 (1)	It's on. Everyone is surprised.	Something very bad	Aggressive (attacks)
2-3 (2)	Close. Hard to avoid.	Something bad	Hostile (may attack)
4-6 (3)	Near enough. Effort to avoid.	Potentially dangerous	Unfriendly, cautious
7-9 (4)	Distant. Easy to avoid.	Neutral creatures	Neutral, indifferent
10-11 (5)	Fresh tracks. Easy to read.	Potentially useful	Polite, friendly
12 (6)	Cold tracks. Unclear traces.	Someone useful	Helpful

## Miscellany

### CARAVAN

The **caravan** is like a group character for the players, or perhaps a joint mobile base of operations.

### CASH

Coinage is listed as **cash**. Treat 1 cash as 1 gold piece, silver piece, or credit, whichever is the base unit in your game.

### COMPANY

This is the name the players choose for their caravan.

### DESTINATION

Main nodes of the UVG pointcrawl on the big map. Some are settlements. They can serve as temporary bases of operation, and link to additional points of interest.

You can expand your game world north and south from any point on the big map.

### FINANCIER

This would be an NPC that fronts the cash required for a group of heroes to equip a caravan and buy initial trade goods.

### FIGHTERS (OPTIONAL)

If the caravan has a lot of fighters, you can add all of their Hit Dice together and treat them as a swarm with a pool of hit points and a maximum number of attacks equal to their total number.

For every Hit Die over their number, simply add a +1 to hit and damage bonus to one of their attacks.

If they have fewer Hit Dice than their number, then you did something wrong and one of them is dead or knocked out.

### HELPERS

Henchmen and hirelings, note down their primary skill(s) and their associated bonus (assume their bonus is double their HD). Helpers with combat abilities count as fighters in a pinch. Example helper:

**Black Joni** (HD 2, gunsmith and hunter) was forged in the fires of the Scorch. Despite her mute visage, she is a kind soul, who shows her love by bringing dead game to her employers and crocheting poorly color-coordinated scarves.

### MOUTHS TO FEED

How many sacks of supplies are needed every week.

### MEEPLE

A useful piece for representing the caravan on the map.

### POINT OF INTEREST

A pointcrawl sub-node, sometimes a dungeon, accessible from a destination. Worth XP when explored. Example:

**Chromium Dome** (+3 days, 100 XP): a sparkling, smooth dome. It can be opened by the expert application of *Prelapsarian Metonymic Poetry* and contains a cache of ancient music inscribed on malachite rods (1,000 cash, 5 sacks).

The days include traveling to the location, giving it a tourist-style once-over, and traveling back. Without a key, actually figuring out how to get in, or extracting information about its construction, takes more time and effort. Tally days and don't forget encounters.

### ROUTE

The fastest connection between two destinations, with time required marked in weeks.

### SPEED (OPTIONAL)

The lower the number is the better. Add every slow attribute (like heavy wagons) and subtract every fast attribute (like fast horses).

At the beginning of every week tally positive days. Negative speeds negate tallies accrued from misfortune or exploration.

### TRANSPORT

Porters, animals, and wagons lumped together.

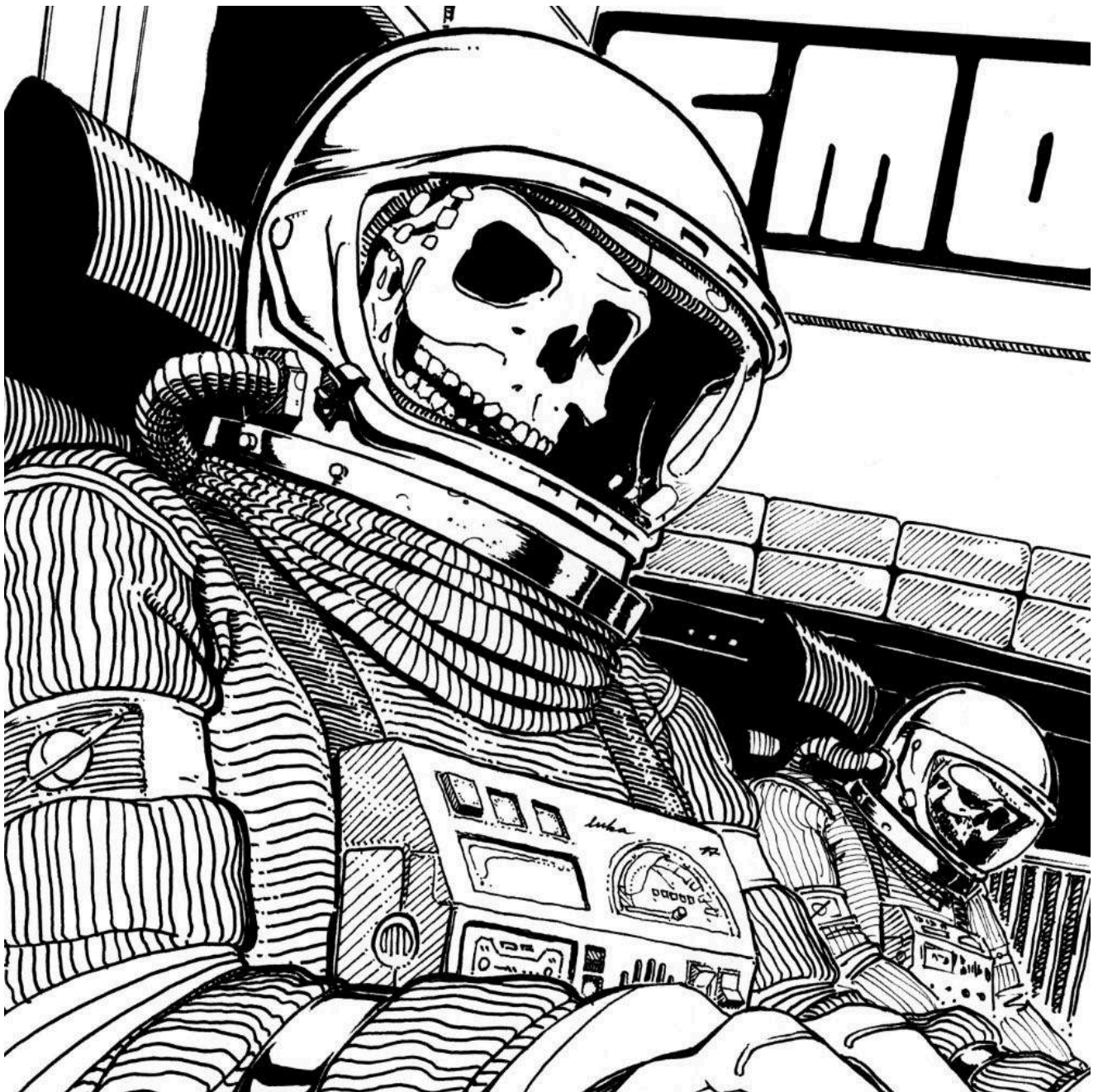
### VISIBILITY (OPTIONAL)

This is an optional mechanic to see if a large group of bandits or other (potentially) hostile NPCs discover the caravan and decide to "investigate" it. Count up all the mounts, vehicles, and humans in the caravan to get a percentage chance of being spotted in any given week. The Referee rolls this check in secret (while the players roll the encounter check).

Example: 7 mules + 2 warhorses + 1 wagon + 2 helpers + 3 heroes = visibility 15.



What follows is an overview of the main factions, a list basic equipment and trade goods, a few reasons for going into the wastelands, and a basic starter caravan.



## Factions of the Ultraviolet Grasslands

“Why do all of their merchants carry cats?” asked Poncho.

“The cats *are* the merchants,” replied Demiworlock.

These are some of the larger factions encountered throughout the Ultraviolet Grasslands. At your discretion you may permit heroes to join, or come from, these factions.

### CATLORDS OF THE VIOLET CITY (CATS)

The Purple God(dess), divinity of magic, and most prominent deity of the Violet City has a fondness for cats. Indeed, cats are the rulers of the Purple Land, running it through their doting human servants. Some or all of the following may be true:

1. Cats are the priests of the Purple God(dess).
2. The high magi of the University of the Citadel are changeling cat-people.
3. Cats eat traveler babes.
4. Hidden horned rat masters secretly dominate the cats.
5. The cats have small, perfectly shaped human hands instead of paws.
6. There are doghead insurrectionists in the Broken Wall districts.
7. The cats are lazy and conservative, with no agenda beyond staying in power.
8. The cats weave powerful *charms* that bind their servants to them.

**Names:** Twinklestar, Brighteyes, Sleekums, Mazzo, Sparkles, Mr Cuddles, Kittles, Lady Elegant.

### HUMANS (RAINBOWLANDERS)

The common humanity of the Rainbowlands includes all the close-to-baseline sentient and soulful post-humans as. This includes the retro-humans, dwarfs, half-elves, half-lings, quarter-lings, and half-orcs. Rumors:

1. Dwarves are a culture-class of selectively biomagically altered humans who fought the traditional aristocrats of the Red and Orange lands to a draw and now for a major industrialist class of the Rainbow Lands. Famously bureaucratic and collectivist.
2. Half-orcs are the degenerate descendants of the combat-adapted para-humans of Long Ago.
3. Quarter-lings are a motley collection of moderately rare human phenotypes marked by Lingsh traits, such as exceptional hand-eye coordination and odd fur patterns.

4. Half-elves result from the elf-touch, a progressive neuro-moral degeneration that prolongs lifespans as a side-effect. Many eventually succumb to the elven infection and disappear into the Wall of Wood.
5. There was a mysterious sentient subtype in the past known as the lings.
6. Long ago a subtype known as the machine humans managed to weld their soul-personalities to machines built from the dust of the earth.
7. The steppelanders are subhuman.
8. The great folk are degenerate bone-shapers.
9. The greenlanders are the most industrious and devout of all humans.
10. The yellowlanders have the best noses for business and the finest sense of dress.
11. The bluelanders were abominations, exterminated for their worship of the Rot.
12. The orangelanders are all half-lings.

**Names:** Bagaglio Misto, Colle deJus, Isamba Allorca, Deleuse Iaourd, Van Gnee, Blanche de Namur, Soren deColpa, Ala Decapolitana, Ugo Xorizo, Slaba Scialla, Imona Citronella, Origen od Grozze, Yuan di Pusca.

### PORCELAIN PRINCES (PARA HUMANS)

Steppeland Not-quite-liches who seek immortality by spreading their vital cognitive essence among several bodies linked by real-time glandular psyche-to-psyche links. Customarily, they each polybody entity uses the same porcelain masks for every one of its drones. Rumors say:

1. They are not more intelligent than before, but the addition of new bodies keeps their minds from dying.
2. The continuity of personality is flawless and perfect.
3. The link between bodies has a limited range.
4. Princes do not like to send individual bodies too far by themselves, in case they go rogue.
5. Rogue bodies have on occasion tried to take over the original parent sentience.
6. They always travel in groups of three or four to reduce the risk of personality collapse.
7. They are conservative to a fault.
8. They maintain their oldtech porcelain walkers religiously, but without the understanding to upgrade or jury-rig them if they fail.
9. Any change to the status quo is a problem to be crushed.
10. They are allergic to alcohol and it breaks up their psychic links.

**Names:** Vitreous Spark 3-body, Orangeware Spiral 8-body, Engobes Oxide 5-body, High Fire 3-cycle.

## SPECTRUM SATRAPS (PARA HUMANS)

Para-human cult or clan living far to the west, fond of bright-colored suits that cover their whole bodies, and glass helmets. They travel in great prismatic walkers and are fond of illusions and radiant magics. Rumors:

1. All telepaths.
2. There can only be 360 satraps at any one time.
3. They are not human, but colony swarms of vermin like rats or roaches unified by transplanted minds.
4. Their suits are the actual satraps, there is nothing inside.
5. Their language is based on lights and tones.
6. Satraps store backups of their personalities in great prismatic crystals.
7. They have no souls, the price they pay for becoming creatures of light.
8. A satrap can be embedded in a golem.
9. Satraps can be duplicated.
10. The satraps are all dead.

**Names:** Satrap 13, Satrap 200, Satrap 359.

## STEPPE NOMADS, STEPELANDERS (HUMANS)

1. They grow the best purple haze.
2. They are all thieves and raiders.
3. Their clans are all named after citrus fruits because they believe in the Lemon World Tree.
4. Actually, they are named for colors, much like the Rainbowlanders, they just take to more citrusy colors.
5. Actually, their ancestors came from the grasslands between the Yellow and Green lands during the Latter Imperial Collapse.
6. They are actually semi-nomadic, settling for extended periods around fresh springs and in areas of lush grass.
7. A nomad only becomes an adult after hunting down and executing a violent mechanism (vome).
8. They are oddly friendly with the Ultras, many of their shamans visiting them in their dreams.
9. They worship underground grass cults and create wicker and bone fetishes from their own essences.
10. Farther west the clans grow stranger, and less human, with more lingish heritage.
11. The clans oscillate between very egalitarian and horribly stratified depending on the phases of the Dark Moon and the weeping of the Earth Mother.
12. They expose the weak and the infirm.

**Clan Names:** Teal, Lime, Tangerine Dreaming, Pinegreen, Pine Nut, Darling Tree, Fortunate Son, Unbroken Patrimony, Prodigal Father, Copper, Jale, Citrine, Ever-Roasting Man, Ashwhite.

**Names:** Saloc, Pugnath, Colpec, Saltat, Draganogac, Gromoc, Lisciac, Lemonc, Sorbec, Passegiat, Rundat.

## ULTRAS (AFTER-HUMANS)

Ghosts or body-hopping spirits that rewrite the spiritual vital essence of their hosts to suit their needs. They are said to live in the wildest of wild places. Rumors:

1. They are biomancers par excellence.
2. The apocalypse is their ultimate goal.
3. They have no goals.
4. They were once human.
5. They are undead.
6. They are unborn.
7. All true religions and trading organisations treat them as a hostile menace.
8. To call them demons is inaccurate.
9. They have infiltrated many settlements.
10. They were once elves.
11. They cannot die, because they do not live.
12. They can incarnate as trees, rocks, or even machines.

**Names:** Visec Brego, Daleni Vis, Eter Kabe, Kaba Simeone, Tri Eskatin, Lomo del Pavo, Karne di Sosta.

## VIOLENT MECHANISMS (VOMES)

Self-replicating synthetic organism or auto-golems, many of them hive-minded. They do not seem to have any overarching organization, but then, most of them seem incapable of communications. Rumors:

1. They were created by a serpentine capitalist faction in the Long Long Ago to fight in a series of mutually-assured wars of extermination.
2. They are mindless.
3. They are differently minded, intelligent and hateful.
4. They are insane.
5. They assimilate or modify creatures on a whim.
6. Their source is riddled with baseline bugs and coding cockroaches, which makes them weaker than they could be.
7. They travel through time.
8. They form vome nests.
9. They can be severed from their nest mothers with electromagnetic rays and fields.
10. They know how to create auto-factories.
11. The original designer of the vomes was named Jane.
12. The first assimilated unit was named John.

**Names:** Jane, John-Five, John Jane, Jane Golem, Doe Nohn, Zero-John, Ane Machine, Error, Naming Error, Johnny-Seven.



## UVG Equipment

“We’re going to the Black City and we don’t care if it’s supposed to take eight weeks, we’ll make it in four and bring enough black-light to set us all up. Now, how many horses will you loan us?”

Inge and Ingot, the bearded ambiguously dwarfish merchants glowered and pointed to the large sign that read, “No Lones to Adventurers, Frybooters or Wagonbonds.”

The Violet Citadel is the last place in the Rainbowlands to buy supplies and animals for the long crossing. Old hands advise at least four beasts per traveler, loudmouths suggest it’s possible with just two.

### MONEY (CASH)

Cash is the currency of the UVG. An unskilled laborer earns one cash per day. Adventurers earn 1 XP per 1 cash recovered from Long Ago ruins and dungeons. Lower denominations exist, as do letters of credit for transporting larger amounts.

### RARE AND RESTRICTED

Rare equipment is hard to find, and often overpriced outside of the settlement where it is produced. Restricted equipment is controlled by some faction or power group, and may provoke hostile reactions.

### EQUIPMENT: GRASSLAND ESSENTIALS

1. **Supplies, Premium Basic:** dwarf bread, water, hempen cloth, and wrapping rags. Disadvantage on healing and recovery. 2 cash per sack.
2. **Supplies, Voyager:** tinned meat, travel ale, disinfectant schnapps, novelty items, rough newspapers, socks, gum, and prophylactics. 10 cash per sack.
3. **Curative Snake Oil:** generic remedies against venom, bugs, parasites, diseases, rashes, and blisters. Surprisingly, actually works. Small, 10 cash per dose.
4. **Lamp, Iron:** a basic travel lamp, hooded against wind, burns oil, can be used to warm tea, lights stuff up nearby. 5 cash.
5. **Lamp, Solar:** a magic lamp of the long ago that eats sunlight to light things nearby. 100 cash.
6. **Lamp, Spectrum Ray:** a crystal lamp of Satrap manufacture that projects a ray of light far away. It is powered by tears and sunlight. 100 cash.
7. **UV Lotion:** protects from the UVG radiation and provides resistance against radiant damage. Small, 5 cash per daily dose.
8. **VC Healing Potion:** restores 2d6 hit points or 1d6 ability points, er, stats. Small, 40 cash per dose.

### EQUIPMENT: TOOLS AND KITS

1. **Adventure Kitchen:** portable stove, samovar, canteen, cast iron pots and pans, oils, salts and spices, ladles, tongs, knives, chopping blocks and more. No more eating raw game! 100 cash, 1 sack.
2. **Ambassador’s Trunk:** fine dress, etiquette manuals, beads, liquors, ink, forgery equipment, sealing wax, hidden drug compartment. Perfect for making trade deals or pretending you’re a count. Servant not included, but recommended. 300 cash, 1 sack.
3. **Dungeoneer’s Kit:** telescoping pole, net, rope, hook, crowbar, hammer, lamp, oil flasks, block and tackle, pitons, magnifying glass, flour, chalk, grease, lock picks, and bag of marbles. Everything you might need for safely poking around a dungeon. 100 cash, 1 sack.
4. **Excavator’s Kit:** block and tackle, pulley, cable, ropes, snap hooks, carabiners, knives, shovel, pick, crowbar, drill, chain, sledgehammer, rollers. The gear you want for removing heavy objects easily. 100 cash, 1 sack.
5. **Inquisitor Standard Case:** pliers, portable rack, small bellows, selection of scalpels, lunchbox, comfortable chair, many colored robes, fire-starting equipment, and more. You know what it’s for. 100 cash, 1 sack.
6. **Mechanic’s Chest:** a tough steel chest full of picks, wrenches, nuts, screwdrivers, Allen’s, duct tape, bolts, wire, glue, and suggestive literature. 200 cash, 1 sack.
7. **The Original Medikit:** everything a *real* doctor could want, degree included. 300 cash, 1 sack.
8. **My First Archaeologist Kit:** shovels, picks, sacks, ropes, buckets, brushes, pith helmets, more mustache wax, shiny boots, notebooks, and lamps. Everything a budding tomb raider could want! 100 cash, 1 sack.
9. **Naturalist’s Portable Laboratory:** jars, flasks, pins, boxes, nets, scalpels, prods, pens, brushes, paints, notebooks, easels and the like. Perfect for the budding amateur biomancer. 100 cash, 1 sack.
10. **Navigator’s Suitcase:** a case full of compasses, maps, little telescopes, odd crystals, and baroque clockwork for the astrologer or direction wizard. 100 cash, 1 sack.
11. **Necromancer Gear:** saws, knives, scalpels, leather cords, needles, petri dishes, wires, batteries, starters, and legal tomes. Perfect for the budding dead-talker. 300 cash, 2 sacks.
12. **Prospector’s Kit:** amazingly similar to the archeologist’s kit, save with far more hammers and a hidden revolver or stiletto, and fewer beauty products. 50 cash, 1 sack.
13. **UVG Walker Kit:** toiletries, zinc sunscreen, tent, sturdy walking stick, Greenland army knife, sombrero, mustache wax, kangaroo bag, schnapps and wineskins, nifty cord belt, and a sturdy backpack. 20 cash, 1 sack. *Yes, a hero with the full wilderness survival kit and a full backpack of premium basic supplies is encumbered. No surprise there.*
14. **Veterinarian Kit:** everything a doctor could want! Works on humans! 100 cash, 1 sack.

## TRANSPORT: MOUNTS AND WAGONS

Smart players will quickly realize that carrying their own supplies is not a good idea. If they do not realize this, tell them to get two mules each to be on the safe side.

The vehicles in the transport table are all less cost effective than buying a lot of animals. It's hard to keep machines running in the wilderness, and their key value is transporting big heavy things that a single mule or camel couldn't manage, like magical sarcophagi, golden idols, and glass cannons.

1. **Human, Common-ass** (HD 1). Carries 1 sack unencumbered, requires 1 supply per week, pay is 3 cash per week.
2. **Porters** (HD 2) are tough-ass folks trained in packing and carrying stuff, preparing supply depots, and surviving in the wilds. Carries 2 sacks, requires 1 supply per week, pay is 10 cash per week.
3. **Disposable Slave** (HD 1), for evil caravans. Carries 1 sack, requires 1 supply per week, costs 50 cash.
4. **Pony, Mule or Camel** (HD 2). Carries 2 sacks, costs 50 cash.
5. **Proper Heroic Horse** or **Charger Camel** (HD 3). Can be ridden in combat. Carries 2 sacks, costs 150 cash.
6. **Metal Steed** (HD 2). Fast and flash, it roars like thunder when pushed hard. Carries 2 sacks, costs 1200 cash.
7. **Slave Porter** (HD 2). Carries 2 sacks, requires 1 supply per week, costs 200 cash.
8. **Skeleton Porter** (HD 1). Slow. Carries 1 sack, costs 200 cash. Restricted.
9. **Zombie Porter** (HD 2). Very slow. Carries 2 sacks, costs 200 cash. Restricted.
10. **Adventuring Handcart** (HD 2). A glorified wheelbarrow. Carries 3 sacks, requires a human, costs 10 cash (human not included).
11. **Wicker Autowagon** (HD 3). Fast, self-propelled golem wagon of synthetic ivory, chitin, iron-reed, and rubber. Carries 3 sacks, costs 2000 cash. Rare.
12. **Magnificent Velblod Camel** (HD 4). Carries 3 sacks, costs 300 cash.
13. **Burdenbeast** (HD 6). A biomantically modified small-headed rhinobuffalo (HD 6). Carries 4 sacks, costs 600 cash. Rare.
14. **Small Wagon, Rickety Coach** or **Swaying Cart** (HD 4). These vehicles are slow and vulnerable. Carries 6 sacks, requires a draft animal, costs 200 cash (animal included).
15. **Biomechanical Beast** (HD 8). A terrifying amalgam of twitching muscle and cybernetic endoskeleton sheathed in synthetic skin. Carries 6 sacks, costs 3000 cash. Restricted.
16. **Solid Coach** or **Wagon** (HD 8). These vehicles are slow and heavy. Carries 12 sacks, requires 2 draft animals, costs 600 cash (animals included).

17. **Vech** (HD 12), a slow, enormous biomechanical beast, it can carry 1d4 passengers in internal gall-like cavities. This is one of the most stylish biomech travel systems money can buy. Golem versions also exist. Carries 12 sacks, requires 1 supply per week, costs 4000 cash. Restricted.
18. **Massive Hauling Wagon** (HD 16). This wagon is very slow and running away from anything faster than a ground sloth will not happen. Carries 24 sacks, requires 4 animals, costs 1800 cash (animals included).
19. **Autowagon** (HD 16): a slow, self-propelled golem wagon. Armored, tough, and impressive as heck. Also, it can drive itself *completely* safely. Just be careful when crossing marshes or rough terrain. It can carry 2d3 passengers in ridiculous bolted-on cabins. Carries 24 sacks, requires 1 supply per week, costs 5000 cash. Restricted.
20. **Epic Floating Barge** or **Hover Wagon** (HD 4). A magical thing from Long Ago, it can be pulled by a single animal or person, however, it is very fragile and may be disabled by a single well-placed shot. Carries 20 sacks, costs 6000 cash (animal not included). Restricted.

**Dragging** stuff: as a rule of thumb, using improvised stretchers, ropes, rollers or skids, a creature can pull double its normal sacks.

**Carting** stuff: adding wheels is great, because the drag is reduced, letting a creature pull triple its normal allotment of sacks.

**Flying** is not a good idea because of the Purple Haze, which rots human minds. At least, that's what natives say.

**Overloading** is possible, but not smart. Check once a week to see if something goes wrong, like a broken axle or a lamed animal.

**Epic Vehicles and Mounts** are possible. If such a mount is available to purchase, double the cost of the mount and roll once (1d6):

1. It was a con. See, the red paint is coming off!
2. It is stronger than usual (carries 1 more sack)
3. It is quieter than usual (does not increase visibility).
4. It is tougher than usual (increase HD).
5. It is faster than usual (increase speed).
6. It has an unusual mechanomagical ability.

**WEAPONS: RANGED (BOWS AND GUN “WANDS”)**

It wouldn't be a pseudo-colonial-apocalyptic savanna-crawl without guns.

1. **Bow**, 1d6 damage, far, 25 cash.
2. **Crossbow**, 1d8 damage, far, reload 1, 25 cash.
3. **Composite Bow**, 1d8 damage, far, 150 cash.
4. **Heavy Crossbow**, 1d10 damage, far, reload 1, 50 cash.
5. **Scavenger Bolter**, 1d10 damage, far, reload 2, 100 cash.
6. **Porcelain Prince Pistol**, 2d6 damage, near, reload 10, 200 cash. Restricted.
7. **Violent Cat Rifle**, 2d10 damage, far, reload 5, 500 cash.
8. **Satrap Radiant Gun**, 2d12 light damage, far, reload 3, 1000 cash. Restricted.
9. **Redland District SMG**, 2d6 damage, near, burst, reload 20, 500 cash. Rare.
10. **Vome Slagger**, usually implanted, 3d6 damage, far, frag, reload 2, 1000 cash. Restricted.
11. **Ultra Blaster**, 3d6 radiant damage, near, blinding, reload 20, 2000 cash. Restricted.
12. **Blue God Blaster**, 4d8 necrotic damage, close, burst, reload 3, 2000 cash. Restricted.
13. **Inquisition Squirtgun**, 1d6, near, intravenous, reload 4, 200 cash. Rare.
14. **Voice of Death**, 3d10 sonic damage, near, reload 2, 2000 cash. Restricted.

**Note on Range:** much like in the Black Hack, the UVG assumes abstract narrative range: **close**, **near**, **far**, and **distant**. On their turn, any hero can move somewhere near as a move action, somewhere far with two move actions, and somewhere distant with three (or more) move actions.

- Adjacent: within precisely 2.5743 metres or 8.44586614 feet.
- Near: about 10 metres or 30 feet away.
- Far: about 40 metres or 120 feet away.
- Distant: further away. Shooting at this range takes careful aiming, scopes, and so on.

**Blinding:** if any of the damage dice on a blinding weapon deals maximum damage, the target is blinded for one round. Critical hits with a blinding weapon may cause permanent blindness, Dex save DC 15.

**Burst:** unload all your charges or ammo to deal area damage in a 10' cube, Dex save DC 15 (or 8 + proficiency bonus + attack bonus) for half damage. Targets under cover take half damage, none if they make their save.

**Frag:** charged with epic energies beyond mortal ken. Enemies killed with a frag weapon explode and deal 1d6 damage to all nearby creatures.

**Intravenous:** rounds can be loaded with liquid toxins or holy water.

**Reload X:** when a gun is out of ammo, or a wand is out of charges, it takes an action to reload. X is how many shots a weapon gets. As a rule of thumb, ammo costs one tenth the cost of the weapon. Skilled fighters can reload for free.

**WEAPONS: SIMPLE MELEE**

1. **Finesse Weapons**, Battle Stick (1 cash), Dagger (1 cash), 1d4 damage.
2. **1H Weapons**, Axe (5 cash), Club (1 cash), 1d6 damage.
3. **Versatile Weapons**, Spear (2 cash), Staff (1 cash), 1d6 or 1d8 damage.
4. **2H Weapons**, Great Rod (1 cash), 1d8 damage,

**WEAPONS: MARTIAL MELEE**

1. **Finesse Reach Weapon**, Whip (2 cash), 1d4 damage.
2. **Finesse Light Weapon**, Scimitar (15 cash), 1d6 damage.
3. **1H Weapons**, Flail (10 cash), Mace (10 cash), Dagger-axe (10 cash), 1d8 damage
4. **Versatile Weapons**, Battle Axe (10 cash), Warhammer (15 cash), Sabre (15 cash), 1d8/1d10 damage.
5. **Polearms**, Great Spear (5 cash), Halberd (20 cash), 1d10 damage.
6. **Mounted 1H Weapons**, Lance (10 cash), Cavalry Sabre (20 cash), 1d12 damage.
7. **2H Weapons**, Great Axe (30 cash), Great Sword (50 cash), 2d6 damage.

**WEAPONS: RARE MELEE**

Stranger things have been found in the wilderness.

1. **Gauntlet**, Cat Claws (50 cash), 1d4 damage, unarmed attack.
2. **Finesse Reach Weapon**, Neural Whip (50 cash), 1d8 damage, stun on critical.
3. **Finesse Light Weapon**, Sabre Tooth (200 cash), 1d8 damage, necrotic damage, intravenous.
4. **1H Weapons**, Ceramic Mace (300 cash), Black City Blade (300 cash), 1d10 damage, ignores damage resistance.
5. **Versatile Weapons**, Chain Sword (300 cash), 1d10/2d6 damage, decapitate on critical.
6. **Polearms**, Crystal Swordspear (200 cash), 1d12 damage, stores up to 2 direct damage radiant or fire spells.
7. **Mounted 1H Weapons**, Vomish Centaur Flail (300 cash), 2d8 damage, stun on critical.
8. **2H Weapons**, Ghost Bone Axe (400 cash), 2d8 damage, deals full damage to ghosts, ignores undead immunities.

## ARMORS

Armors that are suited for the hot steppe climate are bolded.

1. Shield, +2 AC, 5 cash. A popular classic.
2. **Nomad Robes (Cheap Light Armor)**, with padded bits, AC 11 + Dex, 10 cash.
3. Boiled Leather, hot, AC 11 + Dex, 10 cash.
4. **Ballistic Linen Suit (Good Light Armor)**, perfect for the gentleman adventurer, AC 12 + Dex, 100 cash.
5. Spiked Leather, hot, AC 12 + Dex, 50 cash.
6. Synthskin Light Environment Suit, dedicated to the goddess Hazmaat, hot, AC 11 + Dex, 150 cash. Rare.
7. **Cat Armor**, a tiny helmet and little silken cuirass. Ever so cute. Cat-sized, AC 11 + Dex, 200 cash.
8. **Skinchanger Suit (Epic Light Armor)**, a symbiotic biomechanical suit that grafts with the wearer's skin. Can adapt to different environments in a week. Requires regular feeding. Takes a few hours to fully remove. Versions without face cover possible. AC 13 + Dex, 2000 cash.
9. **Dryland Weave (Cheap Medium Armor)**, woven from the cilli of special dryland coral hybrids, surprisingly cool, AC 13 + Dex (max 2), 100 cash.
10. Scale Shirt, hot, AC 13 + Dex (max 2), 50 cash.
11. **Chitin Cuirass (Good Medium Armor)**, also called lobster armor, AC 14 + Dex (max 2), 600 cash.
12. Breastplate, hot, AC 14 + Dex (max 2), 400 cash.
13. **Watersuit (Medium Environment Armor)**, cool-suit of synthskin over woven bone mesh, with an uncanny vascular cooling and filtration interlink system, disadvantage stealth, environmental AC 14 + Dex (max 2), 600 cash.
14. **Spectral Combat Suit (Epic Medium Armor)**, combines Satrapy steel-glass scales with an environment maintenance parasite, powered 6, environmental, disadvantage stealth, AC 15 + Dex (max 2), 1500 cash. Restricted.
15. **Bone Mesh Armor (Cheap Heavy Armor)**, horrible product of the bone wizards, but pretty cool, disadvantage stealth, Str 13, AC 16, 200 cash.
16. Chain Mail, hot, disadvantage stealth, Str 13, AC 16, 100 cash.
17. **Porcelain Walker Suit (Good Heavy Armor)**, the best in princely technology with integrated intravenous administration system for healing potions, powered 6, heavy, AC 17, disadvantage stealth, 600 cash.
18. Splint, hot, disadvantage stealth, Str 15, AC 17, 200 cash.
19. **Full Archaic Armor (Epic Heavy Armor)**, a suit that's also a golem, may develop personality, powered 6, environmental, intravenous, disadvantage stealth, Str 13, AC 18, 4000 cash. Rare.
20. Plate, hot, disadvantage stealth, Str 15, AC 18, 1500 cash.

**Hot:** this armor sucks in hot environments. After every exertion (e.g. a battle) the hero has to make a Con save. The DC depends on the heat. On a failed save the hero gains a lovely disadvantage to attacks and physical checks (including Con saves) and needs to rest.

**Powered:** a powered armor uses some sort of magical source of energy, be it solar prayers, thermonuclear batteries, blood sacrifice or something else. It loses a charge after every combat or significant exertion in the armor. An extra power source and protective cradle (or prayer altar) takes a whole sack.

**Environmental:** this is armor that magically provides advantage to saves against horrible environmental effects, from acid to toxic clouds, often with magical hazmat runes or post-mechanical breathing implants.

**Intravenous:** this armor can be setup to inject a potion directly into the body with a free action.



## Trade & Goods

Trade is a big reason to go into the vast UV Grasslands, and trade is very simple: buy dear, sell cheap. Erm.

### MARKET RESEARCH

Yes. I made an rpg setting where the heroes can perform market research. I feel like I deserve some stupid prize.

**1 day:** hero finds out the price of a trade good in an adjacent destination.

**1 week:** hero finds out the price of a trade good in a chain of three adjacent linked destinations.

For each destination, make a **market check** with a relevant skill and the result determines the price of one trade good there.

Result	Price Factor	Note
natural 1	1*	They produce it here!
1-5	1*	Can't sell it here.
6-14	1	Eh. Unconvincing.
15-19	1.5	Want it. +100 xp
20-29	2	Need it. +200 xp
30+	3	Need it desperately! +300xp

Multiply the price of the trade good by the price factor to find its value at a given destination. Note down good locations or producers.

### SELLING AND BUYING

When heroes finally arrive at a destination they can negotiate a deal.

**1 day:** hero finds a merchant and negotiates a deal. Roll on the negotiation table.

**1 week:** hero schmoozes, boozes and wines for 1d6 x 100 cash, then has advantage on the negotiation check.

Result	Price Factor	Note
natural 1	0	Goods confiscated!
1-5	0.5	Ripped off!
6-14	1	No profit there.
15-19	1.2	Nice margin.
20-29	1.5	Good trade.
30+	2	Masterful.

## D30 UVG TRADE GOODS (PRODUCTION PRICES)

- Odd Fruits** (luminescent vavilov velvets and cherenkov cherries), prized, rare, delicate, delicious and fragile. 100 cash. Produced in Porcelain Citadel.
- Black Light Lotus**, a delicate flower and a pricy drug. Illegal. 500 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Indigo Ivories**, from the teeth of the rare midnight beasts of the Deep West. 500 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Rainbow Silks**, shifting colors woven from the silky strands of crystal spiders by the Spectrum Satraps. 500 cash. Produced in Spectrum Palace?
- Sanguine Porcelains**, the color of blood and now mined mostly from the deposits of older times, though many say that in the Black City folk still know how to make them. 200 cash. Produced in Porcelain Citadel.
- Vampire Wines** from the Red Land, rich and ruby red, revitalizing for they grow from source-rich soils infused with the flesh of creation. 100 cash. Produced in Rainbowlands (Red Land).
- Livingstone Bricks** grown from seed in the Yellow Land are heavy, but malleable, used by petromancers to create artworks and delicate furnishings. 200 cash. Produced in Rainbowlands (Yellow Land).
- Dryland Coral Seeds**, incredibly vulnerable, and have to be kept in sealed containers to protect them from the open air, but they are also very valuable construction material. 500 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Beast Egg Masses**, used by biomancers to grow and modify new servitor creatures, kept in cooled vats to prevent them from spoiling. 500 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Replacement Bodies**, slaves. 100 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Horses**, trail birds, and other animals. 100 cash. Produced by Nomads in Grass Colossus?
- Alchemical Lubricants**, popular with golemancers and biomancers, as well as with mechanomancers and engineers. 100 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Medical Magics and Machines** (ointments, potions, implants), valuable to any doctor anywhere. 200 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Saffron**, a mind-altering spice from the Yellow Land, used by wizards to improve their cognition and bodyguards to boost their reflexes. 300 cash. Produced in Rainbowlands (Yellow Land).
- Soul-stones**, highly illegal animantic containers charged with distilled spirit. 1,000 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Cat Snip** is a powdered fungus derivative, a euphoric drug and addictive. 200 cash. Produced in Unknown?
- Ultra Jay** needles and feathers come from the Black City and are exceptionally expensive. Used more as status symbols, than anything truly useful. 500 cash. Produced in Black City?



18. **Cat Coffee**, one of the prized products of the Violet City. 200 cash. Produced in Rainbowlands (Violet City).
19. **Whiskers**, a mind-expanding substance. 100 cash. Produced in Rainbowlands (Orange Land).
20. **Felix Whizz**, an energy beverage, known to revitalize and “give wings.” 100 cash. Produced in Rainbowlands (Violet City).
21. **Purple Haze**, a weed grown by the nomads. 100 cash. Produced in Unknown?
22. **Dog’s Tail**, a prized chew root. Produced in Rainbowlands (Green Lands). 100 cash.
23. **Chitin-cap**, sheets and rods and fibres of chitin grown from the Umber fungoid bio-mantics. Once very widely used, but are now rare and more prized. 100 cash. Produced in Fallen Umber?
24. **Marrow-beet**, edible, protein-rich gory chunks in calcinous shells. 100 cash. Produced in Behemoth?
25. **Bone-work**, moldable or editable chunks of raw bone, still warm with bone-sculpture. 200 cash. Produced in Unknown?
26. **Last Steel**, the excavated nodules of ever-warm steel from the Long Ago, prized by smiths and mechanists who swear themselves blue that it is almost alive. 400 cash. Produced in Unknown?
27. **Vidy Crystals**, orbs of ancient provenance laced with stories and tales that provide joy and entertainment, but fade rapidly after watching. Makes for great rewatch value! The Spectrum Satraps harvest them from ancient runes, most likely. 500 cash. Produced in Unknown?
28. **Cosmic Scales**, in different shapes and colors, iridescent and rare, there must be mines near the Dark City. The richest denizens of the Rainbowlands craft suits and capes with them, twinkling as they go. 600 cash. Produced in Unknown?
29. **Joy Worms**, empathic symbiont worm-like creatures that are sometimes implanted into workers or servitor beasts, flooding their consciousness with pleasure and joy even when they are performing odious and boring tasks. Popular with many masters. 500 cash. Produced in Unknown?
30. **Karma Dust**, purified extract of the demiurges, so they say, it can cleanse sins and purify souls. Popular with those about to die, and those about to sin. If someone were to commit an evil act, this would absolve them. No damned *Detect Evil* might touch them, and no memory of the sin or guilt would remain in them. For some reason the Inquisition bans karma dust with a vengeance. 1,000 cash. Very illegal. Produced in Unknown?

## Milk Runs

What if the heroes figure out a milk run, where they can just travel the same journey over and over for profit? Well, let them - but this is boring.

Abstract this into a route a henchperson can handle, and roll for cash and complications every year. As a rule of thumb:

**Safe**, 5% return per year, no risk of losing the investment

**Profitable**, 10% return per year, DC 4 Charisma check each year or a complication happens (1 always fails)

**Aggressive**, 20% return per year, DC 10 Charisma check or a complication occurs (1 always fails).

### D20 CARAVAN COMPLICATIONS

1. Extra-dimensional incursion swallows the caravan. Everything is gone.
2. Monsters attack the caravan, there are no survivors but the goods have been dragged to a lair.
3. Ghosts have possessed the caravan and tried to use it as an infection vector to take over a settlement.
4. Monsters attack caravan, there is a sole survivor with tales of horror and woe. Half the goods are eaten or destroyed.
5. Savage flash flood has washed away half the caravan.
6. Bandits attacked the caravan and took most of the animals and the goods.
7. Slavers attacked the caravan and took everybody to a nearby market.
8. Hostile nomads have blocked the route and taken the goods, but the caravan has returned.
9. Caravan has upset a local faction, goods have been seized and caravan returned.
10. Local faction has locked up whole caravan for an infraction of obscure local customs.
11. Large and unexpected local taxes have cost 30% of the investment.
12. Reavers attacked the caravan, killing half of the defenders and taking 20% of the investment.
13. Autonom warriors killed 1d6 of the caravan drivers for unknown reasons.
14. Caravan went to explore an unusual site of interest, half the drivers went mad and 30% of the goods were lost. But the site could be looted.
15. A plague has killed 60% of the caravan beasts.
16. Weather and hostile tribes caught the caravan in the wastes. The drivers hid the goods and escaped with half of the beasts.
17. Freak snowstorm killed half of the caravan, the goods and corpses were hidden in a cave.
18. A rival mercer guild bribed the drivers over to their side with all the goods.
19. The drivers decided to strike out as independent operators, dumping the initial investment at a safe town for the owners, and making off with the beasts and the profits.
20. The drivers were converted by a millenarian cult, they gave away all the goods to the poor and joined a fraternal organization.

## d12 Trade Obstacles

Bureaucrats, inspectors, customs officials, monopolists, and other governmental ne'er-do-wells try to extract a cut (say a tenth of the cargo or gold) at every settlement on the voyage. Make them amusing with this little d12 table.

1. Tollmistress Netejette maintains the entrance to a spirit-fetish protected road. The road is actually safe (advantage on encounter checks). Avoiding the road is dangerous because all the ne'er-do-wells had to go somewhere.
2. Belizawrio the Bureaucrat who manages this caravan stop keeps very meticulous books about everything, from latrine use to camel ankle ointments. Belizawrio will gladly waste 1d4 weeks of a caravan's time, though a voluntary contribution to the Belle Epoque Guesthouse might change his mind.
3. Two inspector golems slaved to a local Overseer ensconced in a Crystal Ka-Ba Maintenance Body make a very particular inspection, finding illegal drugs or munitions on every caravan they inspect. Complaining about fines to a 12-foot obsidian golem is hard, however.
4. Colico the Customs Cat maintains the traditions of a ceremonial bridge crossing that requires participation in an obscure play to placate a vome-troll nest. Is there actually a vome-troll nest below the gilded era bridge? Do you even want to check?
5. The Free Bank and Security Association of the Lime and Teal Fields maintains a complete monopoly on security services in the region, requiring 1d4 of their green-helmeted security officers to accompany every caravan. The green-helmets do not fight and provide no additional security.
6. The Dukes of Dust invite every caravanmaster to their High Residence for a fine dining experience, where they are treated to regard the two Silver Helmet Era heat-cannons the dukes use to protect the local pass where the caravans travel. Of course the heat-cannons will not hit the caravan by accident.
7. The Tangerine Dreaming clan of half-nomads claims all the grazing lands of this part of the steppe as their property. They don't mind caravans crossing their lands, but they do require a contribution of one tenth of their animals or 10 cash per animal for food consumed.
8. The local Guild of Concerned Citizens represents the interests of local craftsmen, merchants, and househusbands, and work hard to ensure that no imported goods might threaten their control of the means of production and reproduction. To that end they require a small fee and a detailed inspection at the local House of All Flesh.
9. The Many-headed Collective of Biomancers Extraordinaire that runs this settlement under a private-public partnership with the elders of the Clans of Settlement and Roadbuilding require a pound of flesh from every creature entering the settlement to ensure no vomish or ultra infiltration might occur. Alternatively, a less invasive procedure can be performed that unfortunately costs 50 cash per person and requires 1d4 + n days for the processing of results (where n is the total number of procedures to be performed). Alternatively, the Quarantine Camp may be hired at 50 cash per day (houses 20).
10. The Guardians of the local Porcelain-associated Leadership Council accuse the party of running over a dog, who was a member of the polybody of porcelain prince 9-Glazed Chrome. The fine is a fresh body or a tenth of the cargo.
11. The Inspectors of Spiritual (Ka) Propriety discover a radiation ghost infestation in the cargo and want to destroy all of it. Reasonable negotiations (or bribes) could result in a thorough inspection costing 100 cash and requires the destruction of just the radiation ghost's spirit nexus (i.e. 10% of the cargo).
12. A plastic faced Automat Taxman following a convoluted ritual dating to the Long Ago Federated Democratic Empire of Joyful Libertarian Equality™ discovers an irregularity. The Automat Taxman will require 1d4 days to figure out that the party must pay taxes and fines totalling 2d6 x 10% of their total cargo. Getting out fast would upset the taxman, but void the procedure.

## Starter Caravans

These are example caravans, if you want to skip the planning and optimization. Animals and equipment are per person.

### SCOUT

Cost: 306 cash  
 Speed: fast  
 Visibility: 3 (includes the human)  
 Transport: two horses  
 Capacity: 4 sacks  
 Inventory: 3 sacks of cheap rations, 1 rider.

Two horses to swap between, and you can make very good speed. Sacrificing capacity for speed.

### POOR PROSPECTOR

Cost: 106 cash  
 Speed: normal  
 Visibility: 3  
 Transport: two mules  
 Capacity: 4 sacks  
 Inventory: 3 sacks of cheap rations, 1 sack of kit (purchase separately).

This is the bare minimum. A hero with two mules can safely travel a one week distance, spend a week prospecting (or something), and return. If the hero also forages, they can extend that duration.

### PLUNDERING PARTY

Cost: 364 cash  
 Speed: normal  
 Visibility: 6  
 Transport: four mules, one war horse  
 Capacity: 10 sacks  
 Inventory: 7 sacks of cheap rations, 2 sacks of kit (purchase separately), 1 rider.

A hero equipped this way can safely travel throughout most of the Ultraviolet Grasslands, with enough animals and supplies to survive even the longest wilderness trails. Plus, the war horse is great for running away if the other voyagers are on foot.

### SMALL TRADER

Cost: 758 cash  
 Speed: normal  
 Visibility: 6  
 Transport: five mules  
 Capacity: 10 sacks  
 Inventory: 4 sacks of cheap rations, 5 sacks of trade goods, 1 sack of kit (purchase separately).  
 Trade Value: 500 cash

A small trader is probably headed to a destination not more than two weeks away. It's a risky proposition, going without any guards, but the potential for profit is large.

### DUNGEON EXPLORATION EXPEDITION

Cost: 1250 cash  
 Speed: slow  
 Visibility: 8  
 Transport: five mules, one wagon (req. 2 mules), one horse  
 Capacity: 20 sacks  
 Inventory: 15 sacks of good rations, 1 sack of trade goods, 3 sacks of kit (purchase separately), 1 rider  
 Trade Value: 100 cash

This is a caravan that could drag large statues, pieces of machinery, or a small mountain in coin out of a dungeon. Additional warriors recommended.

### WAR BAND

Cost: 1850 cash  
 Speed: fast  
 Visibility: 15  
 Transport: ten horses  
 Capacity: 20 sacks  
 Inventory: 10 sacks of good rations, 5 sacks of kit (purchase separately), 1 sack of arrows (10 quivers), 1 sack of bolter ammo (10 magazines), 5 riders  
 Trade Value: 0 cash

This is a fast party of warriors that can strike deep into the steppe and escape quickly. All that ammo should keep enemies at a distance.

## 1. Violet City: a last eerie house

This is the end of the Right Road. Humanity's dominions wind down in the purple haze that wreathes the sunrises of this western reach. No roads, but caravans brave the Ultraviolet Grassland into the eternal sunset of the Black City. Porcelain Princes and Spectrum Satraps oversee great herds of biomechanical burdenbeasts that bring the odd fruits, the black light lotus, the indigo ivories, the rainbow silks, and the sanguine porcelains so popular among the meritocrats of the Rainbow Lands. Many voyagers are taken by the vomes, but nobody likes to talk of those lost to the ultras.

**Weather:** The sun rises through a violet haze, slowly, reluctant to give up the shimmering phantoms of predawn to the dusty day.

**Misfortune:** It's been a long, hard, stupid journey and everyone should get into the mood with a friendly Charisma check to see how unlucky they are (DC 8+1d6). Unlucky voyagers who fail roll d6:

1. Got the runny blues, a depressive digestive disorder.
2. Picked up tendrill tapeworms.
3. Got an infected sore on the muddy road.
4. Pick-pocket attack, lost something precious.
5. Fell in love with a swamp wisp.
6. Nice shoes ruined in a deceptive bog.

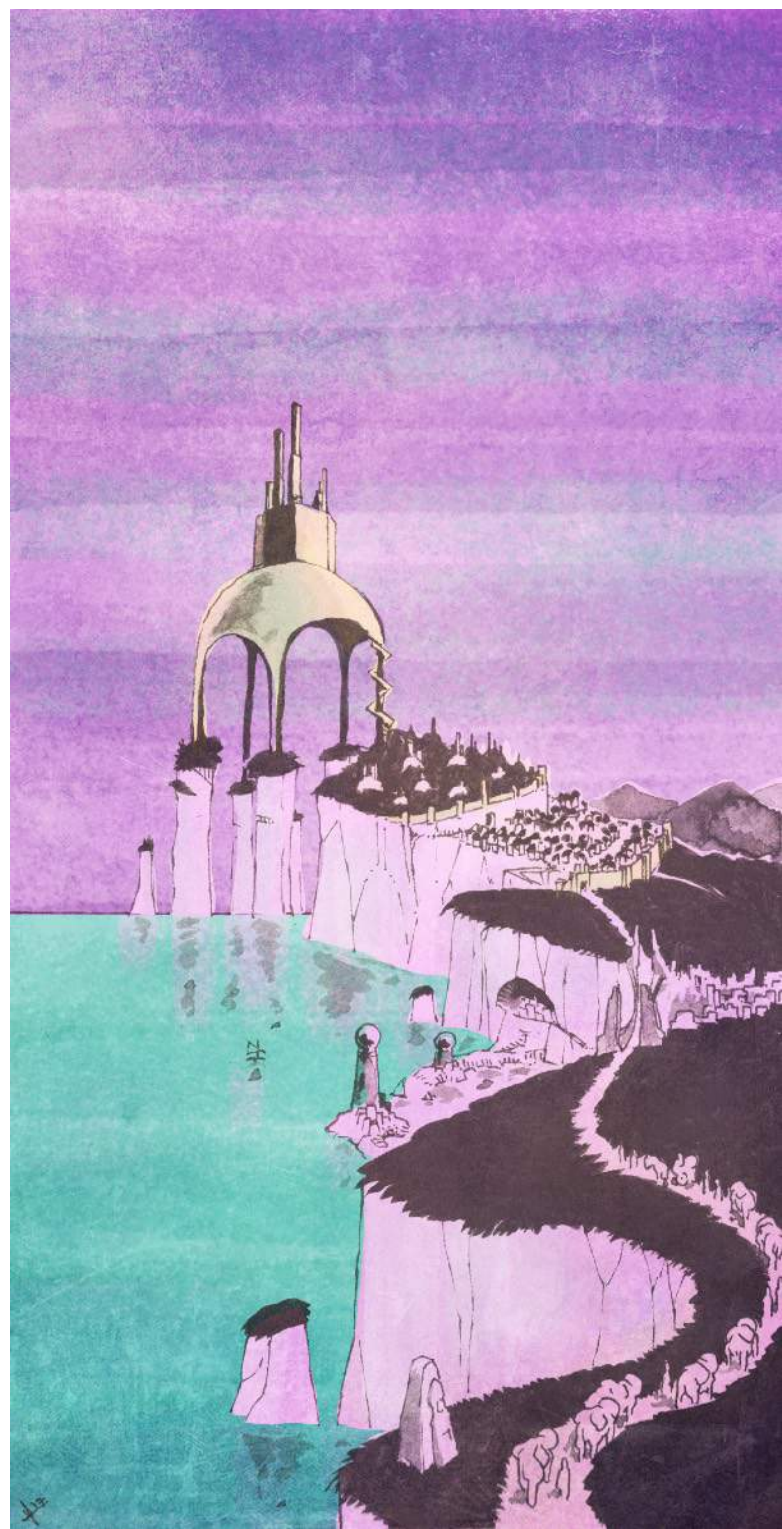
### DIRECTIONS

**Local, Townships of the Violet City** (safe city): administered by the Catlords of the Violet Citadel for the good of the no-good travelers visiting their palace of knowledge, learning and sanctimony.

**West, the Low Road and the High** (trail, 1 week): both roads are rutted jokes. Both lead to Porcelain Citadel, the neutral hole at the edge of Viomech 5 territory.

**West, Steppe of the Lime Nomads** (steppe, 2 weeks): flocks of cat-eared sheep and the odd transplanted limey nomad clan makes this area of the UV Grassland relatively civil. There are no trails and the journey is slow.

**East, The Right Road** (road, 2 weeks): back to the Rainbowlands. A place for heroes to retire, beyond the bounds of the UV Grassland. (END)



## Townships of the Violet City, halls of the graceful cats

“*Soyez tranqui!*,” murmurs the dead-eyed lady in P.T.’s mind. Horned cats creep from hazy alleys and examine their baggage. The citadel looms, eerie and obnoxious, beyond the haze layer. A black cat nods, the lady steps aside. The townships beckon and the party strides into the stall-strewn streets.

**Expenses:** 5 cash per week for tramps, 50 cash per week to earn a modicum of respect.

### ENCOUNTERS IN THE STREETS (D6)

1. Green-blood shock-peddler **Mencia** pays for tales and pictures of the “Wonders of the West” (double for well-written, illustrated accounts).
2. **Woger de R.F.D.**, a reputable moustachioed free-merchant, is sending a free caravan of vampire wines and livingstone bricks to the Last Serai to trade directly with the Spectrum Satraps. He’s hiring caravan guards (40 cash per guard on safe arrival).
3. **Natega the Kind** sells original ointments, shoddy shoes and downright dangerous gear at reasonable prices, but her Red Cat meows *Charm Person* at travelers (her supplies may give a disadvantage on checks, but she won’t admit it).
4. A **scared urchin** runs into the street, shouting “a cat tried to worm into my mouth!” She will integrate into society and become a cat pet soon. Her name is **Uda**, for now.
5. A **sunburned man** with pink hair staggers out of an inn, cruelly stabbed, sprays crimson bubbles and groans “a behemoth’s pearl for dear Cubina.” He clutches a map to Behemoth’s Shell far to the west (advantage on encounter checks). If healed, his name is **Vorgo** and makes a shifty, cowardly, but loyally incompetent henchman. Who stabbed him? It was dark, he was drunk.
6. In Charming Square carriages cram into a meowing mob as confiscated traveler dogs are thrown into **pit fights** against trained sewer rats. Bookies take bets of up to 10 cash per bout (check Charisma to win). Saving a lucky dog costs 1d6 x 50 cash. Cheering the dogs draws glares from cat people.

**Carousing:** fun for all ages.

**Drugs:** for heroes to give up more effectively.

**Eateries:** the last fine dining before the steppe.

**Supplies:** and other nonsense.

### CATS, CATS, CATS

Cats are the priests of the Purple God(dess). The high magi of the University of the Citadel are changeling cat-people. They eat traveler babes. There are hidden horned rat masters who secretly dominate the cats. The cats have little, manipulative human hands. All this may be lies spread by doghead insurrectionists.

**Horned Cats** silently monitor the townships around the Violet Citadel and all the townsfolk treat them with great kindness and respect.

AC 13, HP 2 (1d4), +1 claws 1,

Powers: *Feline Telepathy*, *Ventriloquism*,

Spells: *Entrhall Human*.

**Black Cats** are the silver-tongued mistresses of the townships, with serpents in their tails.

AC 13, HP 2 (1d4), +5 serpent bite 1, narcotic DC 10.

Spells and abilities as horned cat.

**Bad Cats** are half-glass, walk through corners and curse with a purr. So they say.





## Carousing viole[n]tly

“Voi, pâle-couleur, pren an-tour!” shouts the tout in pasty Purple patois. Others chime in, mottled capes flutter, papiér panels advertise “the last partie before lanotte.” Lips smack. The plebe churls crowd in to sell good time, forgetting or just a steppe-style rat sausage surprise.

### HOW TO CAROUSE

Carousing was first invented by Jeff Rients (<http://jrients.blogspot.com/>) and lets the DM easily and simply separate heroes from their treasure. The system I use is similar to Jeff's:

- (1) Hero blows 1d6 x 100 cash on a week of hard partying and gains that amount of xp.
- (2) Rolling more cash/xp than the hero has available means a nasty debt to a local cad.
- (3) In any case, the hero makes a Charisma save. On a fail, they roll on the Fun Fun Table.

**Bonus:** a critical success on the Charisma save lets the hero carouse harder and party away another 1d8 x 100 cash. A critical fail means an extra roll on the table.

### D12 VIOLET CITY CAROUSING MISHAPS

1. kicked out of town as a dirty dog. No XP and a reputation. Also, case of canine cooties or lycanthropy.
2. the odd fruits were odder than usual this time. Roll d6: an extra (1) ear, (2) nose, (3) wrinkle, (4) pearl, (5) tentacle, (6) cat grows.
3. now addicted to cat snip. You're welcome. A weekly supply costs 50 cash. No cat snip = halved Charisma. Cure takes 1d6 weeks and 100 cash per week.
4. that cheap black light lotus? You now phosphoresce in ultraviolet light. UV creatures hit with advantage.
5. ingested a magic cat spirit and became a cat pet. Your hero becomes a henchman/familiar of your new character: a horned cat named **Twinklestar**.
6. got into a staring match with an eyebiter. Lost an eye.
7. found the anthropic fighting pits. Lost half hit points. Succeed in a Str save to win 1d4 x 100 cash.
8. acquired bananas. A whole cart of bananas and a surprisingly intelligent ape named Ananas.
9. mind blown. Permanently gain 1 Wis and (roll d6) a case of (1) the shakes, (2) demonic possession, (3) split personality, (4) fine wine, (5) corruption, (6) brain worm.
10. the bloody flux. Hero now requires double supplies, especially toilet paper. Con save to recover at the end of every week.

11. dreams of porcelain-faced shadows, a fear of the dark, a missing tooth and a straw doll of yourself. Int save to avoid a paralyzing fear during the next battle
12. wake with a bag of strangled cats drained of blood, a hundred ominous pieces of silver (100 cash) and a sense of foreboding. Hours later (roll d6) an (1) inn, (2) cat house, (3) opera shack, (4) general store, (5) political café, (6) mansion collapses in a whisper of necrotic decay.

**Cad:** Herrie Tree, necroambulist and procurer of fine work-corpses for the CAT construction company. Loan shark to the corpse-to-be. Fancy a body-snatching gig?

**Twinklestar** is an ambitious sixteen year old cat seeking the *Rat Rod of Immor[t]ality*. Roll stats with an extra d6 for Dex and Int and a d6 less for Str and Con. Advance as wizard.

AC 13 (base), HD 1d4, +2 claws 1, keen smell.

Powers: *Feline Telepathy*, *Ventriloquism*, *Purr of Power*.

Spells: *Enthrall Human*, *Hold Portal*.

Weaknesses: dogs, balls of yarn, thunder



## Drugs in a purple haze

P.T. stumbled into a small shrine garden and vomited copiously over the frog altar. Luminous animalcules burst into song and dance. He stared. Satisfied spirits or hallucination, he could not tell.

### D8 FUN-TIME VIOLET CITY DRUGS

1. **Black light lotus** glows in the dark and cats love it. Eaten, it cures mental afflictions for a week. Smoked, it brings deep sleep and restores 1d6 hit or ability points. Smear on the skin, it exudes fragrant mind-altering pheromones, boosting Cha by 1d4 for a day. Single dose (50 cash).
2. **Cat snip** is a powdered puff mushroom. It brings euphoria and 2 bonus actions. Single dose (50 cash). *Addictive* (DC 2d6). Run out: halved Charisma.
3. **Ultra jay** are the crystal needles of a fabulous UV bird. Inserted, they give advantage on social skills and reduce Dexterity by d4 for a week. Single dose (250 cash).
4. **Cat coffee** is a narcotic made from black cat droppings. A pot induces sleep and restores 1d4 mental ability points. Single dose (20 cash).
5. **Whiskers** expand the mind and give advantage to perception and intuition, a weak levitation effect and disadvantage to physical activity. One dose (100 cash). *Addictive* (DC 2d6). Run out: halved Dexterity.
6. **Felix whizz** is a popular energy drink the catipede peddle. A cup grants 1d4 temporary hp and disadvantage on social checks. Single dose (10 cash). *Weakly addictive* (DC 1d6). Run out: pissy, disadvantage on Cha and Int checks.
7. **Purple haze** is the toke of choice for manly men. The aromatized “*essensa de mors*” numbs pain and emotions. A long spliff gives advantage on saves against pain, grief, fear and hurt, and disadvantage to Dexterity and Wisdom checks. Two doses (40 cash). *Weakly addictive* (DC 1d6). Run out: cotton mouth, lose 1d6 Int and Wis.
8. **Dog’s tail** is a chew root that is used to boost concentration, giving advantage on cognitive tasks. Single dose (75 cash).

### TRIPPING

Drugs are an **experience**. Heroes gain (1d6 + Wis mod) x 10 XP when they try a new one.

**Tracking durations** is annoying. Assume effects last a few hours, so while crawling let Heroes save after every encounter to see if the effect wears off.

### BUT DRUGS ARE BAD, M'KAY

Every time a hero takes an addictive drug they roll a Constitution save (DC 3 + 1d10). If they fail, they're hooked. The player takes a pen and writes the addiction and a drug supply tracker on the hero's character sheet.

From then on, the hero rolls a drug supply die once a week to stay functional.

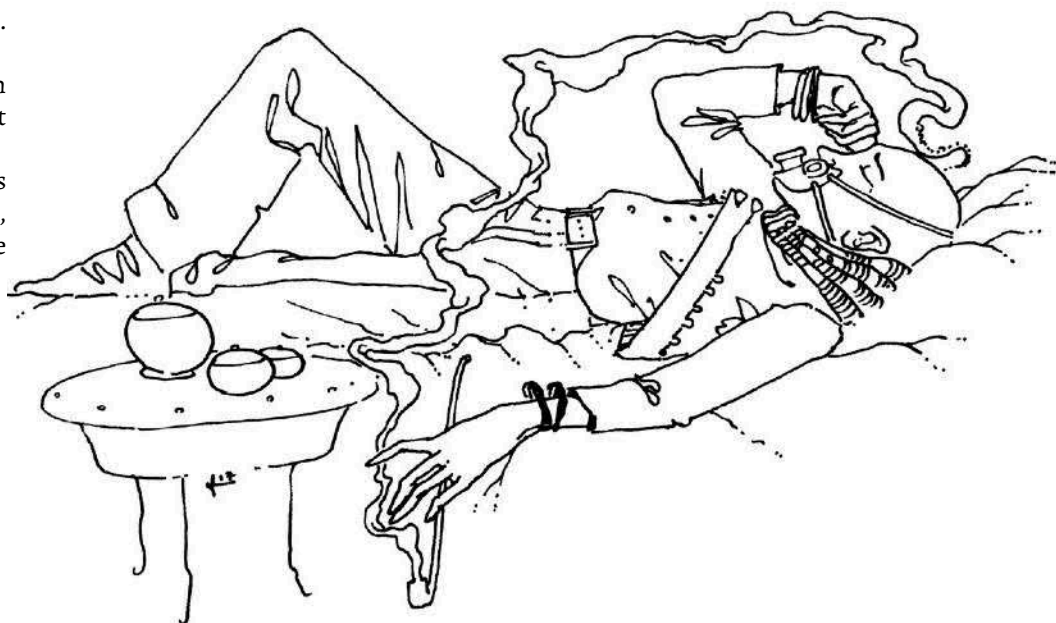
Additionally, the hero rolls a drug supply die every time they want (need) a hit.

If the hero **runs out**, the hero suffers until they get a nice strong hit.

**Curing addiction** takes a long time. Role-play the struggle or use *Cure Disease*. There are no rules beyond that. It's hard, figure it out.

Though cured, the hero has sipped at the teat of transcendence and a fresh taste of the Milk of M'le Maiku (or whatever it was they were hooked on) restarts the addiction.

**Long-term effects** tend to be harsh and lethal, but so are monsters. Ignore the long-term. Heroes die.



## The last gastrognome: the eating experience

D.W. and Poncho sat on the bench-gargoyle munching their sandwiches. The lithic ornamental sighed and hoovered crumbs. It was going to be another one of those days.

### A SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

Like with drugs, fine (or odd) dining is also an experience for heroes. However, it's usually less hazardous, if more time-consuming. It takes a week for a hero to become a regular. The cost is in addition to living expenses. Sometimes there is an additional requirement.

### D6 TOWNSHIP DINERS

1. **Pér Slaji:** the grimmest dining experience in the township. Poison saves (DC 1d8) are *de rigueur*, advantage finding cads, cutpads and pursenapes. Regular: 1 cash per week, poisoned by Pér, 50 XP.
2. **Shéh Shah:** premium water-pipe and cat café, hub of a feline franchise stretching from the RLD to the Porcelain Citadel. Cool cats get good drugs here, dopey dogs not welcome. Regular: 10 cash. Get a gig with the purple hazer body snatchers, 50 XP.
3. **Le Pesquemanceur:** Seka the summoner is the sharpest shark slicer south of Azure. Won't find a better source of black market fishing scrolls and amulets. Regular: 20 cash, Learn *Attract Fish*, *Early Worm*, *Net Trick* or *Seka's Spear of Slicing*, 100 XP.
4. **Le ultim Gastrognôme:** the peak of piquant cuisine, catering to black cats and their cat pets, foreign emissaries, princes and satraps of the caravan kingdoms. Getting in is hard, but prestigious (advantage interacting with the local nobs and snobs). Regular: 200 cash, anointed by the gastro-gnome, 100 XP.
5. **Al flogon:** drinking dive of the abnegators of the Rainbow Pantheon. Only visitors with less than 10 Charisma can enter without a Blasphemy save (Wisdom save DC 8+1d6). Intelligent visitors can learn about the biomechanicum here. Regular: 5 cash, biomechanicum, 200 XP.
6. **Nul sanctimons:** a holy water and cat whizz bar, where the *rafiné* meet, take cat coffee and comment on the empresses' wonderful new clothes. "Sé très il-decadént, néy?" says the low-cut eunuch. It's not. The food nourishes the soul, but not the body. Regulars regain half hp and a bonus spell slot. Regular: 100 cash, fashionable but ineffective new habit, 100 XP.

### LAST CHAIR SALON

Last place to stock up on yellow beer, felix whizz and cat coffee before the low road and the high split on their two ways to the Porcelain Citadel. Only double price for everything, great deal!

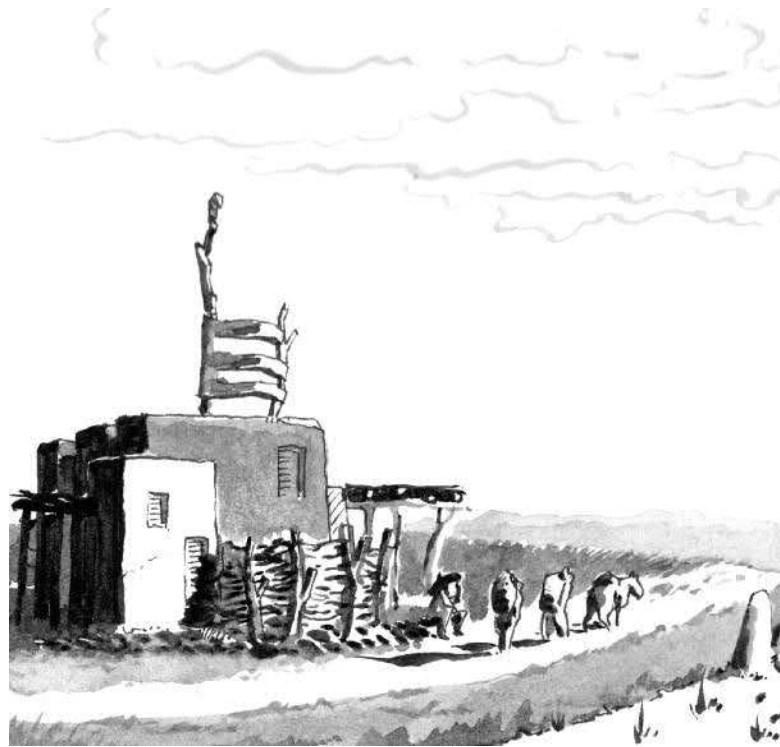
Owner: Marsa Vinoble, hates blues.

Nemesis: the local *pastorales* hate the tough business-heroine selling Violet drugs to their children as is her free market right.

Secret: a vome nest-mother is chained in the cellar, hooked up to a fermentation golem.

Regular: 100 cash and a Felix Whizz addiction, 80 XP.

**Blasphemers** automatically fail their next 3 Charisma saves. A silly and expensive penance removes the divine sanction.



## Hiring Help in the Violet City

D.W. rolled her eyes. Another useless lout. At least they would be done soon. If P.T. didn't accidentally stab another would-be guard while 'testing' their mettle.

### D12 POTENTIAL HENCHMEN

Henchmen can become new heroes when existing heroes bite the dust. Let players roll the henchmen's ability scores as required.

1. Migo the Dark, horned cat, and his pet Jor leu-Gro (tough but slow). Curious, interested in new sights, a bit cowardly, *Minor Illusion*. 100 cash per week.
2. Lea the Fluffy, bad cat on hard times. Needs a pet. Friendly but very lazy, prone to misrepresenting the truth. Purr curse: *terribly itchy armpits*, Wis save DC 15. 60 cash.
3. Sim Cadmium, a lesser doghead with a raspy, mysterious voice, hood and a doleful past. Good tracker. 70 cash.
4. Merenk-Zero Running, an escaped poly-body drone rediscovering her identity, the neuroparticipation chip scars still visible under her ash-white hair. She is very flexible and can learn new skills at shocking speed (20% XP bonus). 40 cash.
5. Obritish Krat, a diesel-chugging dwarf, with burned beard and haunted eyes, talking of wire-gholas in a salt mine far to the east. Good with machines. 50 cash.
6. Malikraut Koza, a very short Orange-lander with a penchant for poetry, puffery, pomp and a bit of the old ultraviolet. Advantage on damage rolls when sneak attacking. 35 cash.
7. Glim, a silent, dark stranger in robes of odd refinement. Some whisper of a murderous barbaric past, others of inquisitor training. Iron minded (advantage on mental saves). 25 cash.
8. Od Broyden, scion of a Lesser Vintner house, out to scout new markets and make a name. Can haggle like nobodies business (1d6-2 x 10% discount on transactions). 99 cash.
9. Vigo Brastec, a hunter of rogue post-mortem laborers and currently wanted for certain undisclosed affairs back east. Bonus in combat with the dead. 20 cash.
10. Laud ah-Num, a dilettante from the Emerald City out to find the finest Blacklight Lotus. May be loaded or really poor, but still, dresses in dandy clothes all the time (intense fashion sense let's him increase his apparent net worth by a factor of 10). 60 cash.
11. Zika, a young un', wild eyed. Totally not possessed by an ultra ghost. Totally vicious in unarmed melee combat (1d6 damage, double criticals). 5 cash.
12. Lolar' de-Bruno, a half-savage ex-turnip farmer from the Green Land frontier with a bearskin coat and a flute. Probably not a werebear. 10 cash.





## Who would hurt Vorgo?

Vorgo is healed and he snuffles mawkishly, “She’s a beauty, she is, and her father a chief, she says. A pearl is the bride gift he asks, she says, a pearl chiseled from a behemoth’s oyster parasite. So here I am, with my chisel and hangover, ready to enlist with the Princes as far as the Sarai, then on to the Behemoth ... I’ll manage somehow.”

1. In Vorgo’s wound is a sliver of silver. Does he smell a bit of wild beast?
2. Street urchins and cabbagewives would say he’d come to the township with a dog cage, but where is the dog?
3. Would the satraps stab somebody just to stop them from reaching their territory?
4. None of the cat people seem to care much about the map, they treat it as a joke. P.T. and the party would drop this annoying side quest here.
5. If pressed, the folks will ask, why go there? Only death and blindness await in that grassland.
6. Pushed further, they’ll mutter about mutilated travelers in the Rue des Oiseaux et Morgues (Cat-folk hostility +1).
7. At this point Violet detectives with fine white cats will start asking probing questions of strangers poking their whiskers in their jurisdiction.
8. After all, the bodies were just travelers, hardly citizens. But foreigners bothering the cat folk?
9. Yes, the doctor of mortices may have noticed the odd, parallel daggers used to mutilate the bodies.
10. Could those have been teeth or claws? Hah, only if someone had teeth like daggers!

Here, the trail would go cold (for now), nothing to indicate that any fantasy of vomes and ultra possession could have any basis in fact.

**Vorgo the Were-Pug** is shifty, cowardly, and foolishly loyal. But, if the truth is out, he also turns into a scruffy pug. This does not improve his combat or breathing abilities.

AC 13 (11 pug), HP 3 (1d6), keen smell, bug eyes.

Power: lycanthropic regeneration

Weakness: silver, oranges, endurance sports

Threat: is he possessed by an ultra scout beetle?





## 2. The Low Road and the High

The cratered viaduct of the High Road runs on crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral across the pallid grasses. Beneath the half-passable testament to the follies of the long-long-ago, the low road winds, smeared threads of soil and loam and oil and blood pounded into a hard surface by the pounding feet, hooves, wheels and treads of pilgrims, nomads, caravans, and mechs.

**Weather:** The sun clambers above the eye-watering purple haze around half-past nine. Hard gusts of flat air bring (1) flurries of ash, (2) sour rain, (3) burnt skies.

**Misfortune** strikes those who wander among the ruins of forgotten great civilizations (Charisma DC 8+1d6, roll d6):

1. luckless character sprains an ankle (+1 day).
2. lame beast (+1 day).
3. saddle sores (-1d4 hp).
4. lose 1 slot of supplies,
5. catch a rattling cough. Noisy, but harmless. A patent medicine (5 cash) should cure it.
6. bitten by a scorpion spider trying to make a home in a smelly boot (poison, Con save DC 3d6, disadvantage on physical checks for a week).

### DIRECTIONS

**West, Porcelain Citadel** (safe oasis, a week): the cryptic mega-sculpture is encrusted with the dryland coral homes of the Porcelain Princes. A ring of Columnar Defence Golems stands guard. Crude shacks of brick and C-beam form a rude town at the foot of Throne Hill. Two great serais stand testament to the uneasy peace between the Spectrum Satraps and the Princes.

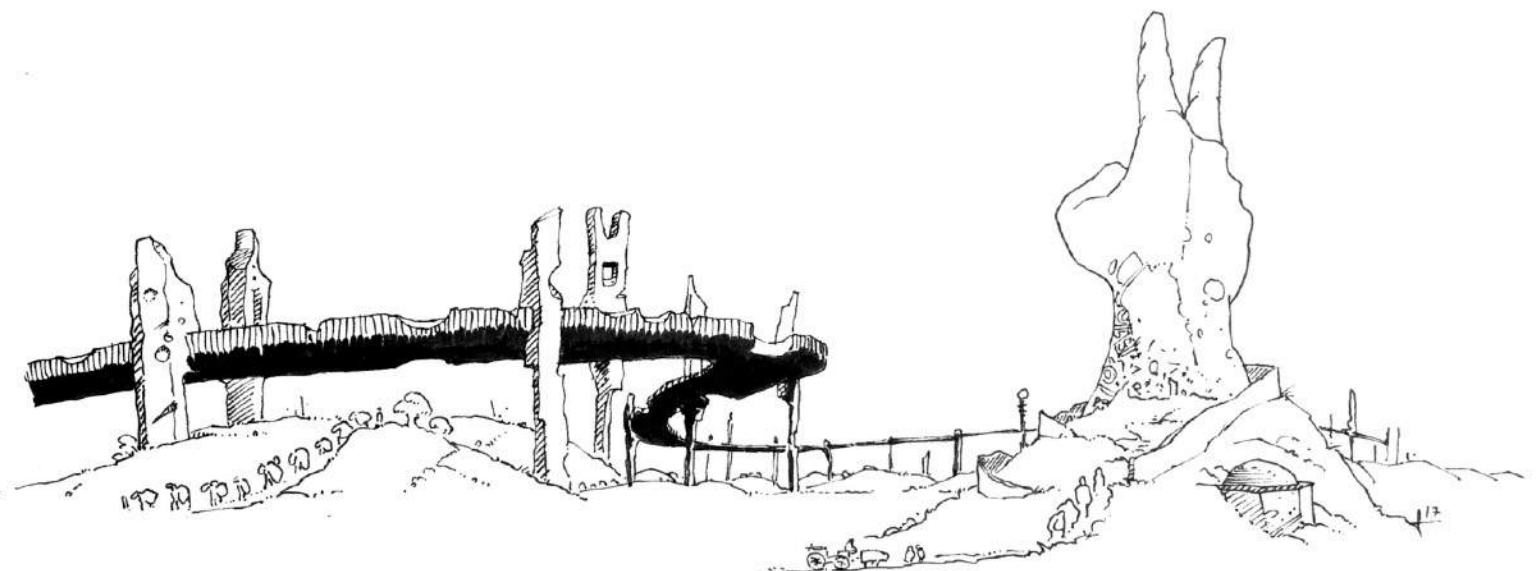
**West, Potsherd Crater** (local area, a week): the scrub beyond the Throne is pallid, the topsoil covered in drifts of porcelain exoskeletons from a deeper time. The three limey clans of the Green Tangerine, the Yellow Lime and the Verdigris Lemon graze and trade in spring and autumn.

**North, Steppe of the Lime Nomads** (steppe, a few days): harsh lands, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of the best-forgotten ages.

**East, Violet City** (road, a week): back to the Rainbowlands. The city of the Catlords and their drugs.

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

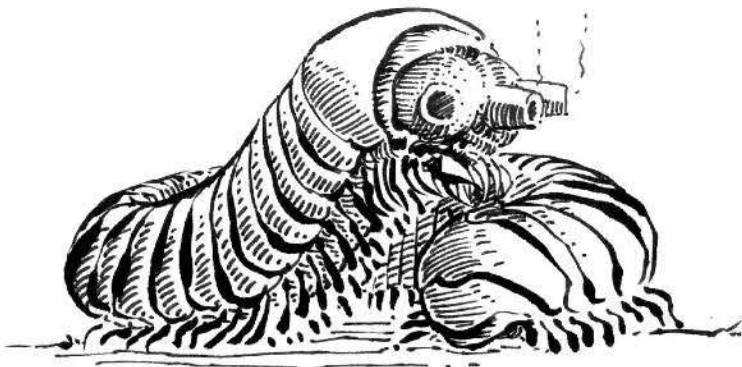
1. Swarm of ultra-possessed prairie dogs, frothing as the dread mechanical ghost corrupts their neural matter. Utterly savage and lethally infectious, but confounded by climbing on a rock and waiting for the infection to liquefy their brains (1 or 2 days).
2. Feral steppe hounds scavenging for weak prey.
3. Rainbowlander caravan with hundreds of beasts, escorts and cargoes of dry fruits and rainbow silks.
4. Great porcelain walker and its trinity of princes, escorted by eunuch slaves and beasts.
5. Satrap clock wagons in a column of gay colors and glistening glass crenelations that admit no faults.
6. Helpful wandering serai in the later Corpsepaint Monarch style offers security, resupply and the old greenlander veteran **Beauregarthe** (Fighter 3, AC 13, machete, Cat rifle). Beauregarthe can be hired for 60 cash per week.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Rusted Hand** (+1 day, 80 XP): a victorious hand rises from the hardpack, covered in graffiti. It is near the roads and a popular picnic platz for decadent aristo maidens seeking a suitably gothic and melancholy oil depiction of themselves. Slight danger of monkey mechs.

**Crystal Pylon** (+2 days, 150 XP): a voluptuously whorled crystal pylon lies on its side in a heavily eroded crater, the sides covered in a riot of perfumed mind-altering brambles. Nomads say it transforms memories into life. This is true (touch with forehead, lose 1 point of Intelligence permanently, gain 1 hp permanently). Ultra possessor at night, **millipede mechs** during the day.



**Potsherd Crown** (+2 days, 100 XP): the rim of an oddly even hill rises white and pale, like a great crown of deep porcelain. Remnants of quarries from before the days of the Porcelain Princes lie abandoned to vomish lurchers, while sanguine porcelain prospectors whisper of wormy holes at the far rim.

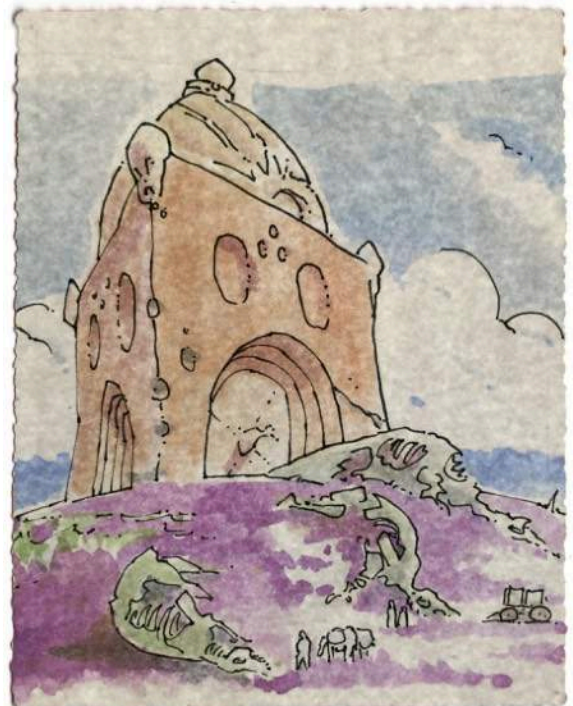
*Wormy holes* lead into the depths. There are d4 to plumb:

1. a great large hole leads to the dust-covered exoskeleton of a great ultraviolet worm, dead for decades. Chittering **spider-rats** and **bat-scorpions** have proliferated. A day's excavation would dig up 2d6 crystal worm teeth (1 slot and 100 cash each). Good for making crystal swords and spears and stuff. Epic.
2. a dryland sponge-ridden hole leads to spore fields, skin parasites and several totally not elven skeletons.
3. a slick, polished hole leads to a slippery, tangled knot of passages and chambers occupied by a family of **green slime worms**. The worms are (d6): (1) all gone, (2) all dead and rotting, (3) pupating into some kind of vomish thing, (4) asleep? dormant? (5) mating, (6) ready to ambush invaders and slowly digest their delicious bones with their slimy skins.
4. a fake worm hole leading to an archaic, forgotten cache of ammunition and indigo ivory furniture (2d4 slots, 1,500 cash).

**Motor Agate Outcrop** (+2 days, 2d8 x 10 XP): a gorgeous, striated ridge, leftover from some incredibly aesthetic geological process. Fragments of rare metal skeletons are embedded here and there in the outcrop, lending credence to the Citadel theories of an ancient period when creatures with living flesh over metal endoskeleton were the evolutionary norm. Cowled, back-jointed archaeologists sometimes prowl the outcrop.



**Sealed Gate** (+3 days, 250 XP): a cratered arched gate in the Onion-and-Skull style of the Later Mahogany Reign slowly emerging from its aerolith tomb. Sages say it was entombed by with an epic application of *Zrakomlat's Air Becomes Stone* in the Year of the Seven Wars. The petrified bones of strange beasts continually emerge from the light, fluffy stone of the area. Heavily covered in graffiti, risk of artist dilettantes and the occasional meta-skeleton.



### 3. Steppe of the Lime Nomads

The limey nomads' lands are harsh and dry, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of that misty period that the Saffron City's Opiate Priests refer to as the 'best-forgotten' ages. In spring the limeys graze west towards the Grass Colossus, returning east to the Circle Rim for winter.

**Weather:** Every morning the purple haze occludes the sun until 8:30 or so. A dull drizzle gets in the eyes and cinnabar ash burns the tongue.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 10+1d6, roll d6):

1. Unfortunate hero sprains shoulder (+1 day).
2. lose a beast to a pack of wild dogs (+1 day).
3. get a bladder infection (-1d4 Str).
4. infested with ash-lice (-1d4 Wis).
5. metal armor has rusted (-1 AC bonus).
6. red eye from the irritating dust (-1d4 Dex). Preventable with proper eyewear.

#### DIRECTIONS:

**West, Potsherd Crater** (local area, a week): drifts of shattered porcelain exoskeletons knitted with tufts of white, ropey grass.

**West, Porcelain Citadel** (safe oasis, a week): the cryptic mega-sculpture is encrusted with the drylands coral homes of the Porcelain Princes. A ring of relatively well-maintained Columnar Defence Golems protects this haven of trade.

**South, The High Road and the Low** (road, a few days): crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral tower above the half-passable modern road.

**East, Violet City** (steppe, a week): back to the Rainbowlands. The city of the Catlords and their drugs.

#### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. **Vomish clackers** (AC 14, HD 4, entangling) rattle in the dark, shadowing and whining, hurling rocks and bolts. By day they burrow into the ash and follow at a great distance, their glass telescopic eyes and re-engineered limbs keeping to a steady, slow trudge. At night, if lights go out, they hurl themselves in and try to haul one or two victims off into the dark. Half of their victims are abandoned as suddenly as they are snatched, unharmed save for scratches, bruises and a fear of the dark.
2. **Mind-burned megapede** (AC 18, HD 8, alien) shaking the ground on its odd journey, corundum encrustations glittering on its massive segmented neural nodes.
3. Herd of **horned horses**, wary of the two-leggers.
4. Great **armadilloids** (small, tough, semi-sentient) excavating a new communal burrow.
5. **Limey scouts**, suspicious but at ease in their own land.
6. **Limey matriarch's clan**, her herdsmen, chattel, herds and wagons on the move for better grazing. This could be a trading opportunity!

**Telescopic eye, Vomish** (implant): one thing all researchers of the worlds below and above agree, despite being abominations in the eyes of the Rainbow Lord, whichever heretic designed the first vomes of the Ultraviolet Grassland, gifted them with exceptional optics. Vomish eyes are prized by technomancers and biomancers alike (1d4 x 100 cash for a well-preserved eye). Implanting them is a dangerous process that does improve vision, but requires a life-long regimen of healing rituals, prayers, and vital mech-suppressant salts (5 to 10 cash per week). Used in optical sights, microscopes and telescopes, they are far less dangerous.





## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Spring of the Yellow Water** (+2 days, 170 XP): the Lime clan hold this holy spring in great esteem, hidden as it is in a narrow ravine littered with long-long-ago skeuomorphic depictions of everyday life rituals. The yellow waters burble out of the sacred cleft and collect in a nearly bottomless pool. The water is considered a potent restorative (it is true), especially when mixed with black-light lotus (nonsense).

*Depths of the Spring.* Over a thousand feet deep, the lower depths are filled with vicious wire-and-bone biomechanical fish and abyssosaurs.

*At the bottom,* 11,000 cash of offerings: bronze and gold and crystal, from swords to cannons. Each individual item takes 1d6-1 inventory slots and is worth 1d10 x 100 cash.

*Beneath* the offerings a sacred machine fetish of a half-forgotten proto-deity, nameless now.

*The outflow* is subterranean and leads to the Cave Octopus' Garden (a journey of 1d6+2 days in the dark).

**Great Biomechanical Baobab** (+1 day, 120 XP): famed in the tales of the Green Tangerine clan, the biomechanical tree is an unbelievable sight, dominating the plain. It secretes oils that lubricate machines and cure aching joints. They say there is an artificial dryad resident in the great tree's slow-brain.

**Verdigris Ribs** (+3 days, 200 XP): the great ribs of a gargantuan sesquipedalian beast rise, cut and polished as by a grim blade, turned into a crude henge. They are coated with centuries of painted prayers and Felix Whizz, until they glow bluish-green come day or night. Lemon clansmen make offerings of meat and drink on odd nights, and the occasional human sacrifice brings

great fortune (3 advantages on rolls of choice) or restoration (two weeks worth of long rest in a single bloody orgy). Vomies reported at daybreak and twilight.

**Cave Octopus' Garden** (+5 days, 300 XP): deep in the photo-lume limestone karst the piled debris of the Long Ago aggregates in half-fossilized deposits. A spherical cavern, 900 feet across, left by the accidental detonation of an ancient combat ritual, is home to the Cave Octopus AC 14, HD 16, huge, doddering, kind; Powers: neural whip tentacles, biomantic rituals; Weakness: photophobia, convinced the world has ended.

*Biomancer extraordinaire,* the Cave Octopus replaced his human body with a many-tentacled form adapted to survival in the dark, nutrient-rich broth of the Yellow Water. Given time and raw materials, the Cave Octopus can recombine a new and better body for a hero.

*The garden* is rich with fat, blind snakes that feed on a variety of slimes, aquatic fungi and nutrient filtering crustaceans. Hiding under rocks and algal mats are a number of the Cave Octopus' bio-modified children: half-mad body horrors it has created from the occasional human sacrifice.

Rummaging through the debris and biomantic stores reveals *Ancient and Arcane Biomantic Equipment and Supplies from Long-long ago* (8 slots, 5,000 cash).

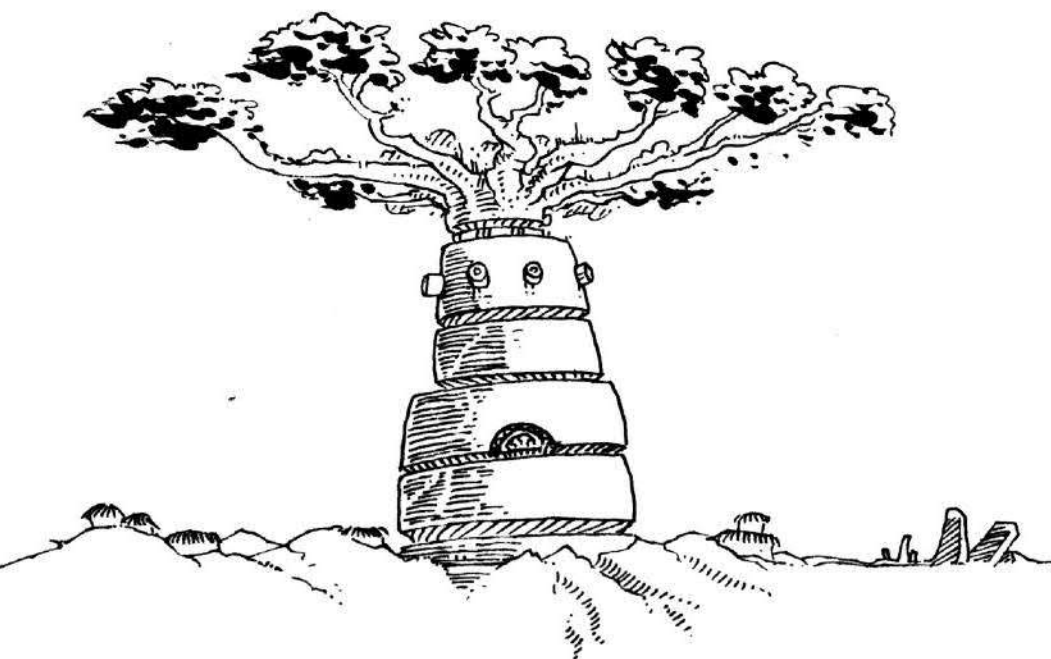
A subterranean stream leads up to the Spring (2d6 days) and down to the Cryptich (1d6 days).

**Cryptich of the Craquelure Queen** (+4 days, 250 XP): a jagged gash of an eroded canyon reveals odd offerings (vomish) at several ancient cerametal stumps, the remains of a long dead ventilation system.

*Underground* is a labyrinth of barely accessible corridors and ways, where ash and dust falls oddly. Pits and deadfalls are the only hazard. Dead security golems creak and crumble.

*At the core* is the Cryptich, a glass and ge-yao three-layered crypt protecting a **biomechanical queen** (AC 17, HD 5, ancient) with a field of *Sudden Entropy*, a curse of *Immediate Tissue Liquefaction* and a charm of *Service to the Queen*.

The queen is confused, but not hostile. Her bio-mechanical implants are worth 4,000 cash (1 slot).



## LAVENDER CLIFFS (+6 DAYS, 300 XP)

Imagine some nut-brown old prospector sidled up to you, machined leg clattering, dust-blown voice rasping.

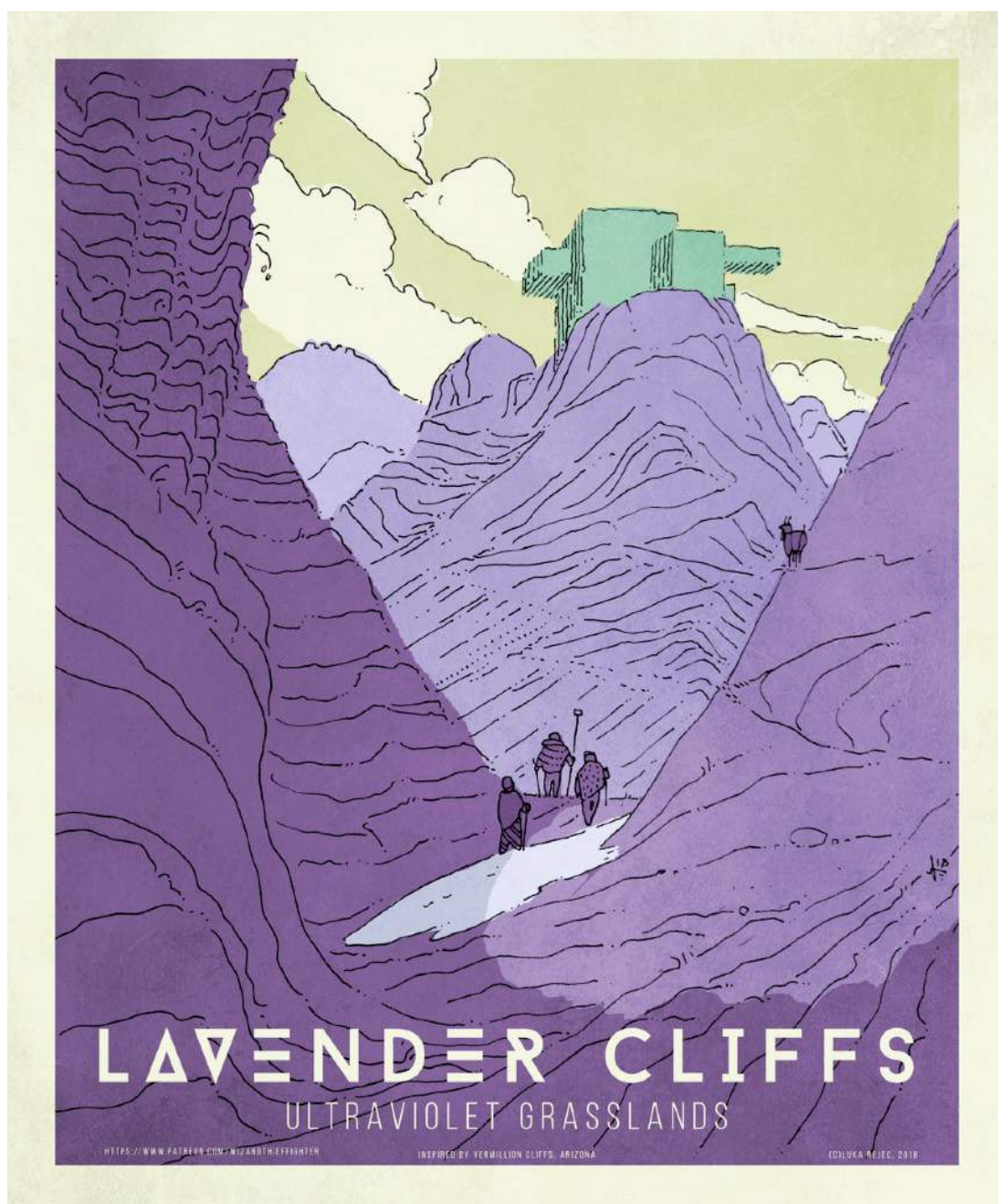
“This is just hearsay, for no steppe nomad would ever admit to a town-dweller that they, too, once had towns and cities. That if you head north, towards where the Blue Ridge shades towards the fried pink of the deep steppe, they still have towns.

You know those stories they tell, of the steppelanders exposing their elderly and their weak? It is not true. Up there, beyond the Lavender Cliffs, where strange spirits crawl from crevices in the mind-blasted rocks, they squirrel them away in a building-city from the Older Days.

There their oldfolks serve as meat vessels, carrying the spirits of decadent ultras through the years. They call them the memory warriors, fighting some false demon they call the Ropey Ent.”

What would you think? Pure nonsense. And you would be right. There is certainly no brutalist arcology left over from the Older Days where the steppelanders hide their elderly to serve the ghosts of days long gone.

The leader of the ultras is named Dead Springtime and remembers a time when another world was young and this one merely twinkled in the eye of a cowardly warlord.





## 4. The Porcelain Citadel

The four robed figures turned their faceless glazed masks as one to face P.T. and the band.

“This stair leads to the High Houses. Only the permitted penitents may ascend to serve us there. Stay back, our Pillars of Power remain as potent as in your forgotten Long, Long Ago,” they spoke in an impeccable chorus of disparate voices.

**Weather:** Grim violet haze till 9 o'clock. Light swirling dust storms, hint of cinnamon on the breeze.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 10+1d6, roll d6):

1. horrible blisters (limping),
2. beast found with seventeen two-inch cubes cut out of its flesh, it is severely weakened (+2 days or leave it behind)
3. nasty nettle burns (-1d4 Dex)
4. sat in an ant nest (-1d4 Cha)
5. ripped pants on some cinder slag
6. get red eye from the irritating dust (-1d4 Dex).

**Expenses:** 3 cash per week for slaves, 100 cash per week for respect.

### DIRECTIONS

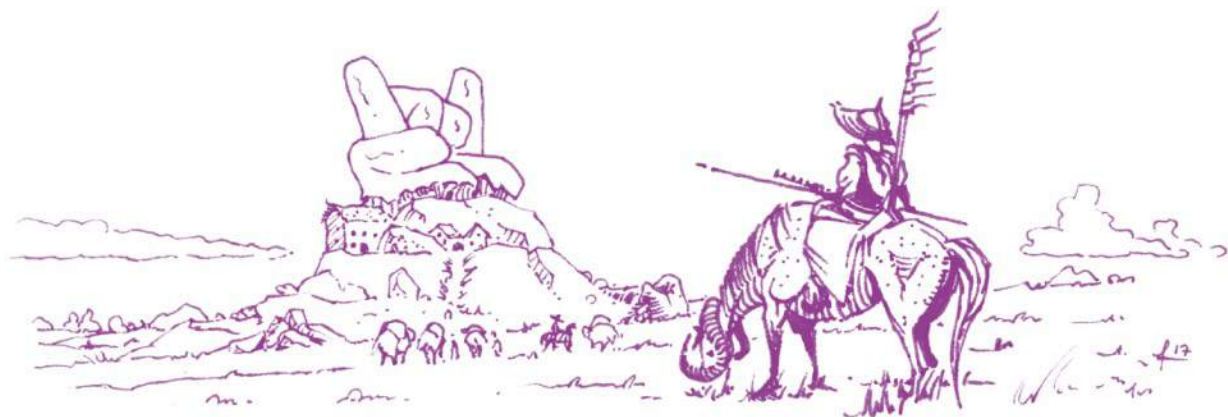
**Vicinity, Potsherd Crater** (local area, a couple of days): the scrub around the Throne is pallid, the topsoil covered in drifts of porcelain exoskeletons from a deeper time. The three limey clans of the Green Tangerine, the Yellow Lime and the Verdigris Lemon graze and trade in spring and autumn.

**North-West, Trail to the Grass Colossus** (trail, a week): a dangerous journey through the nomads' luminous lands winds towards their holy site: the Grass Colossus.

**South-West, The Last Serai** (trail, a week): the Porcelain Princes' hold, home to the most remote permanent Rainbowlander trading post. The prices are as eye-watering as the obscure penal code.

**North-East, Steppe of the Lime Nomads** (steppe, a week): harsh lands, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of the best-forgotten ages.

**East, The High Road and the Low** (road, a week): crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral tower above the half-passable modern road.



**PLACES IN PORCELAIN CITADEL**

**Black House:** a lakeside club for the rich and conservative out for a bit of fun-time decadence and rapid tanning.

**Broken Line:** excreted out of the Throne, slave barracks for the bodies that have broken in service of the Porcelains. Some have regained the rudiments of consciousness, but most are mere dumb beasts waiting for the nutrient teat and the vivimancer's knife.

**Column Defense Golems:** immobile death laser golems.

**High Houses:** embassies, certain merchant houses, and the workshops, barracks of the Porcelains' Eunuchs, and the tunnel-villa-complexes of the distributed personalities. In secure, mosaicked bunkers, princely polybody backups are stored, maintained and improved.

**House of the Unbowed Cardinal:** nomad grass cult enclave and hottest BBQ in the West.

**Houses of Many Colors:** half-dugout homes and workshops of Rainbowland affiliates and other scum.

**Lowest Line:** shacks of dead coral and brick for the outlanders with no affiliations, not quite slaves. Yet.

**Onion Dam:** an ancient dam, neatly kept. Good fishing.

**Orchards:** the luminescent velvets and cherries of Porcelain Citadel are said to be a panacea when distilled into the fabled Vavilov-Cherenkov vodka.

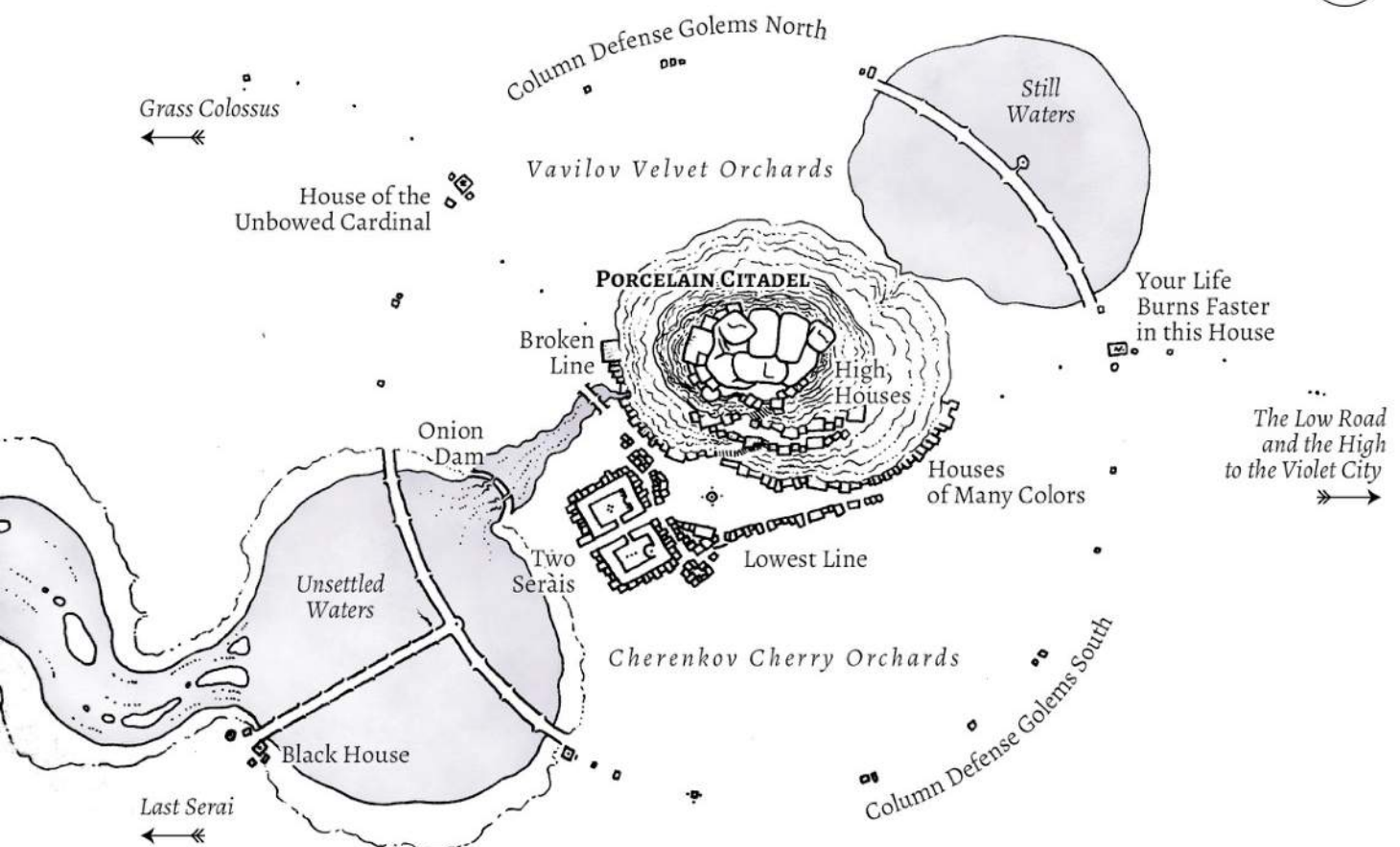
**Two Serais:** the barely peaceful truce-homes of the Satraps and the Princes are dangerous for non-aligned wanderers.

**Waters, Still:** an eerily still lake, home to great steppe eels.

**Waters, Unsettled:** regular lake. Frogs, geese, ceramic crabs, porcelain perch. Totally regular. No stone octopus.

**Your Life Burns Faster in this House:** a radical house, known for loud music, louder politics, and a cellar that is *that* kind of dungeon. Nudge, nudge.

**PORCELAIN THRONE IN THE POTSHERD CRATER**



## The Porcelain Princes

The porcelain princes are not-quite-liches, but they seek immortality just like those wizards. They have spread their vital cognitive essence among several bodies linked by real-time glandular psyche-to-psyche links. They are not more intelligent than before, but the additional bodies make them more resilient to damage, and by adding new bodies periodically, they ensure a mental continuity across the aeons. Obviously, this continuity is flawless and perfect. So they say. Obviously.

**The Link** is glandular and has a limited range, the exact range is uncertain, for this reason polybody princes do not like to send individual bodies too far by themselves, in case they go rogue, or even try to take over the original sentience on their return. Groups of three or four are more common to reduce the risk of personality collapse.

**Conservative** to a fault, the princes maintain their oldtech porcelain walkers religiously, but often without the necessary understanding to upgrade them or jury-rig them if they fail. They view all upsets to the status quo (them and the Spectrum Satraps in charge of most trade between the Black City and the Rainbowlands) as a problem to be crushed.

The princes **trade** exclusively to maintain their lavish holds and homes. They are always on the lookout for neuromech and biomech parts, and luxury goods.

### 6 DISTRIBUTED PRINCES OF THE PORCELAIN CITADEL

1. **Many Cracks 5-body** are the distributed 5. personality primate of the Conservation Society. They have an id-devouring fascination with Rainbowland rumors and Near Moon ultras possession magics.
2. **Celadon 10-body** are the father of the Mollusk Appreciation Denomination and want to bolster sentient dryland coral technology.
3. **Leopard Lithophane 4-dyad** are a confused participant in the Rites of Animated Teratology. They love shellfish but are secretly terrified of the vomes.
4. **Sherd 7-extension** are a noble and decayed Meta-ritual Oligarch that wants to turn back time to before the monobodies were allowed into the Radiant Lands.
5. **Black Pot 5-body** are a Radical Labor or Trade Cooperative, plotting the overthrow of the Evil Prevention Act of Meissen 13-unity.
6. **Bone Kaolin 2-body** are the decayed remnant of the Ascendant Church of Flesh. A death cult.

## POLYBODY WIZARDRY

Heroes that get on the princes' very good side, or that break into one of their body labs, might be interested in exploring the polybody lifestyle.

An additional body requires a (hopefully willing) body donor and at least 2,000 disposable cash.

Generate the physical stats for the new body (Str, Dex, Con) and list it as a second body. When the polybodies are in visual (or glandular) range treat them as having a single joint pool of hit points, but an attack for every polybody. Add an additional Hit Die for each extra body (you can limit the number of additional bodies to at most one per level). If a polybody is sent off on its own, the hero has to decide how many hit points to send off with it (roll a Hit Die if required). Area attack damage against polybodies are multiplied.

Heroes may also merge bodies and psyches, instead of outright dominating the additional body. In this case mental stats (Int, Wis, Cha) should also be rolled, and the better results chosen. This may result in significant personality change, up to outright domination of the original body (and class change and so on). Be careful if your hero has an Intelligence of 7 and a Wisdom of 5. Eh, what am I saying. That hero would totally go for it.

A polybody is essentially a psyche-to-psyche linked henchman with unlimited morale, but still very fragile.

## A COUPLE MORE NPCs

**Jonky Bonko** is a collector of unconsidered trifles and purses. Short and lean, he favors [poorly] coordinated fineries. He fights particularly well with furniture. Thief 3, AC 14, Power: furniture, Weakness: fine silks and a connection to the Purple Haze body-snatchers.



**Syruss Sensible** is a potentially retired freebooter now managing the *Your Life Burns Faster in this House* for the RDL Merchants Cooperative.

Thief 4, AC 12, Power: magic hats and sharp suits, Weakness: penchant for risky trading ventures, Threat: vome-in-a-box.



**Lazaro Romero** is an itinerant alchemist, a regular on the Low Road and the High. Apparently he returned to life after an encounter with Life-Is-A-Game, an ultra. Originally from the Yellow Land, he is a specialist in the various lubricants and fuels that burdenbeasts and walkers in the UVG require.

Alchemist 5, AC 10, Power: lubricants, fuels, oils, greases, Weakness: a fear of the dark and of chittering bug-things.

He wants to return east, to care for his old mother and take over the family brewery, but he is wanted by the cogflower inquisition for his part in the death of Maria della Verde at the Ribs of the Great Beast. Naturally, he is keeping his distance, for though he is *completely* innocent of any and all charges, the inquisition is *unreliable*.



## COLUMN DEFENSE GOLEMS

Immobile towers of power, force, and brutal futurism. Their pentagram eyes blaze with a united purpose, like axes of lightning and lasers bound in strength and unity. Their technology has decayed, they are covered in warning graffiti, but still they burn to protect the Circle from internal enemies.

Their *Death Heat Fire Lightning Ray* eyes scorch all violators and attackers within their circle and the fields around them are strewn with the bones of vomes and predators and drunkards who just wanted a wee bit of fun. Indoors, away from their eyes, violence is safer.

HD 12, AC 18, Atk +12 DHFL ray 4d12+12

Power: cleave against opponents with fewer HD than themselves, set targets on fire, *aura of nausea*, golem immunities.

Weakness: immobile and a bit dumb.

Threat: unknown pre-porcelain magic? Rocks from the sky? These things are ridiculously over-powered ancient cryptic defense systems! What could hurt them?

## 5. Potsherd Crater

Scrub. Pallid soils of crushed ceramic. Drifts of porcelain exoskeletons crunch and ring underfoot. The autumn and spring rain showers bring sudden blooms of flowers and tubers, covering the pale landscape in a rainbow of color.

The rim rises pale, like deep porcelain ribs, from the dusty soils. Remnants of quarries from before the days of the Porcelain Princes lie abandoned to vomish lurchers, while the sanguine porcelain prospectors whisper of lion caves in the far rims.

**Weather:** Radiant haze clouds obscure the sun before 9 a.m. Light rain showers, the smell of garlic and roses.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 8+1d6, roll d6):

1. infected cut on hand from sharp shard (-1d4 hp),
2. 1d3 supplies pilfered by monkey-handed canids,
3. sat on a cactus (-1d4 Con),
4. hat blown away by sudden gust,
5. those pretty flowers in that garland? Totally poisonous (Con save DC 2d6), left a rash, too (-1 Cha),
6. ecstatically beautiful flower patch, could lose track of time here (+1 days, +50 XP, -2 Con from exposure).

### DIRECTIONS

**Vicinity, Porcelain Citadel** (safe oasis, a couple of days): the Throne rises, a gleaming testament to a civilization older than memory.

**North-West, Trail to the Grass Colossus** (trail, a week): a dangerous journey through the nomads' luminous lands towards their holy site: the Grass Colossus.

**South-West, The Last Serai** (trail, a week): the Porcelain Princes' hold, home to the most remote permanent Rainbowlander trading post. They read minds there, it is said.

**North-East, Steppe of the Lime Nomads** (steppe, two weeks): harsh lands, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of the best-forgotten ages.

**East, The High Road and the Low** (road, a week): crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral tower above the half-passable modern road.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. **Vomish lurchers** (AC 14, HD 3, tough, slow)! A plot-convenient cloud of glittering dust dies down revealing a group of half-decayed biomechanical abominations. In the worst cases they are cable-linked to a **floating dominator** (AC 12, HD 4, phasing, neurotic), a tentacled, biological combat computer that vastly increases the lurchers' speed in a 50' radius (AC 14, HD 3, tough, fast). The lurchers are (roll d6), (1) hungry, (2) thirsty, (3) angry, (4) studying the clouds for odd reasons, (5) infectious, (6) confused like lobotomized cockroaches.
2. **Cave lions** (AC 15, HD 2, feline) on the prowl, not necessarily hostile. They want deer, not you, dear.
3. **Ceramic centipedes** (AC 17, HD 1+1, poisonous, swarm) looking for an easy meal.
4. Hard-eyed **nomads**, hostile to settled folks and wary of fire-water peddlers.
5. **Porcelain prospectors**, armed to the teeth, and (roll d6) (1) hostile, (2) terrified, (3) equipped with a bad map, (4) a good map, (5) fleeing a terrible vision, (6) exhausted but satisfied with their haul of sanguine porcelain (6 inventory slots, 1,200 cash).
6. Yummy grey **antelopes**. Very cute. Very tasty.
7. **Radiation ghosts** of a forgotten time, with willowy limbs and sparking black hole eyes, they point the way to odd remains (+1 day, digging required, 1d6 x 100 cash in ancient artefacts). Harmless themselves, but may lead through dangerous radiant magic zones (Con save DC 3d6 or poisoned).
8. **Porcelain Prince Patrol** keeping things proper, a place for everything and everything in its place.



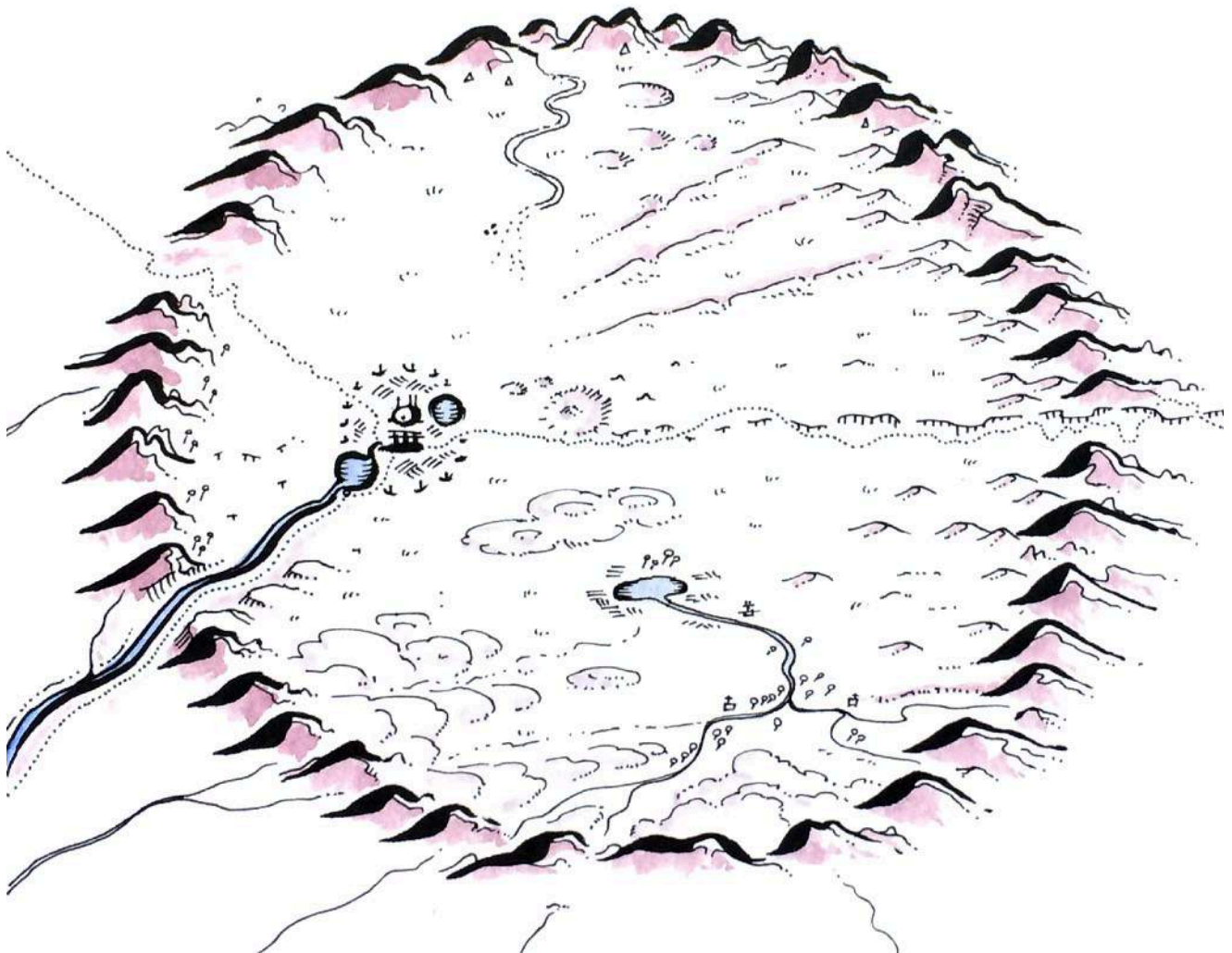


## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Waterlogged Quarry** (+1 days, 76 XP): an old quarry, overgrown with thorny edible vines and sharp long-grass. Grotesque, **poisonous toads** (AC 10, HD 2) live in the waterlogged depths, but are easy to avoid. Useful sanguine porcelain can still be extracted (1d6 x 10 cash worth per day per person).

**Glass House of a Dead Merchant Prince** (+2 days, 160 XP): old steel-glass rococo arches, porticoes and gazeboes sinking into sand and long-grass, wreathed in foul-smelling flowers (mildly hallucinogenic if eaten). Thoroughly picked-over, a haunting poem of a merchant prince's despair remains embedded in a folly obsidian dolmen, lamenting the cruel laborers and serfs who foiled the Prince's attempt to create the finest wines outside the Red Land. 4d8 **steppe wolves** (AC 14, HD 3, pack) may appear. For more options, see Appendix I.

**Mad Autofarm** (+2 days, 2d10 x 10 XP): whether vomish or ultra or something else, is unclear, but this overgrown tangle of glass and dryland coral pulses with activity as small ceramic crab-like biomechs plow, water, till, weed and generally cultivate what looks like utter chaos of stone trees and plastic thorn-bushes. Closer examination reveals a profusion of odd fruit (1d6 x 10 cash worth can be recovered furtively, without alerting the Autofarm). Even closer examination is very dangerous, as the Autofarm can rapidly produce large numbers of **ant-body biomechs** (AC 16, HD 1d6, fearless, burrowing) to defend itself with talon, acid and venom. However, it is possible to find 1d4 entire replacement bodies growing in the depths, perfect for biomantic augmentation, neural replacement, or porcelain polybody transition (2d10 x 100 cash each).





## 6. Trail to the Grass Colossus

The grass grows high here, sparkling and lush. Watered by sacrifice and, rumor says, an ancient Source Fac, nomad clans come here when the grazing fails elsewhere, but even here they cluster in thornstone enclosures close to the trail, driven to cooperation by the deadly machine-infested giant beasts that regularly traverse the step here.

**Weather:** A dark mauve glow occludes the sun until 9:30 a.m. Dry, itchy, scattered biomech locust swarms.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 12+1d8, roll d6):

1. biomech razorfly swarm forces everyone to hunker down. Lose 1d4 days or 2d6 hp.
2. mount steps into a puddle of Source and suddenly undergoes violent source code corruption.
3. lost in the high grass. Lose 1d4 days, roll on Misfortune and Encounter again.
4. lost a shoe to a thirsty tangle shrub.
5. hit in the eye by a speck of windblown biomech garbage. Blinded in one eye.
6. infected thornstone wound. Lose 1 Con per day until healed (Cure Disease or equivalent).

### DIRECTIONS

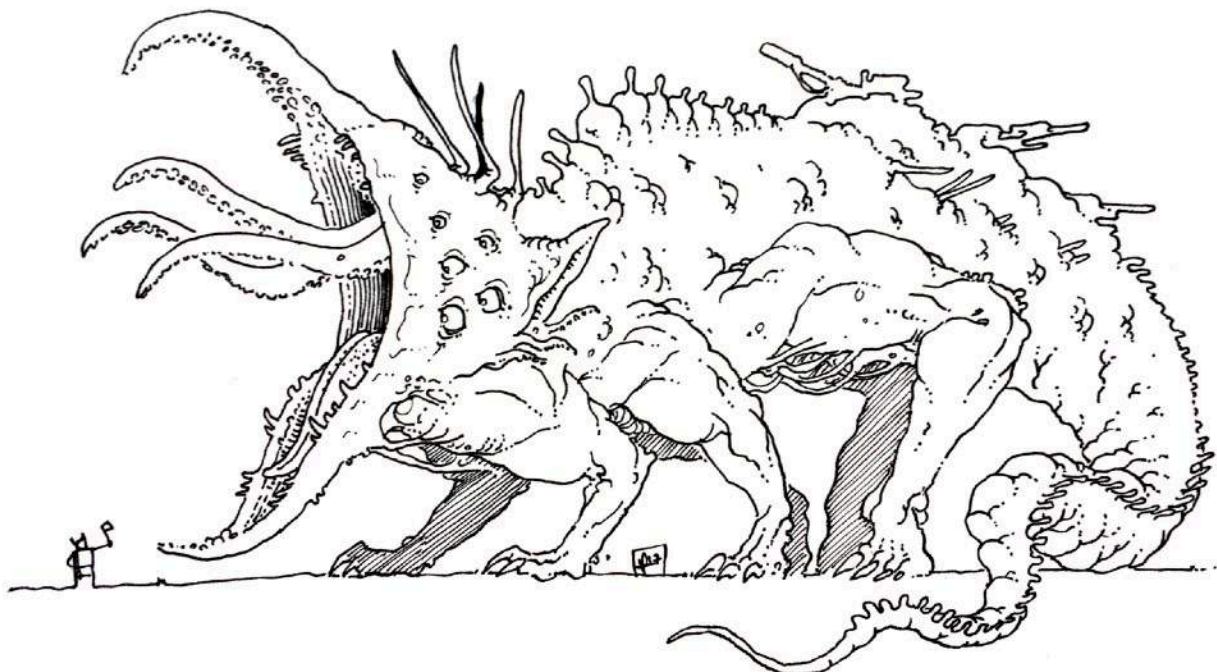
**West, Grass Colossus** (trail, north-west, a week): the nomads' holy site, forbidden to strangers in the times of the doubled moons.

**South-East, Porcelain Citadel** (safe oasis, a week): the Throne rises, a gleaming testament to a civilization older than memory.

**South-East, Potsherd Crater** (local area, a week): the scrub around the Throne is pallid, the topsoil covered in drifts of porcelain exoskeletons from a deeper time.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. **Lamarckian monstrosity** (AC 14, HD 18, self-improving, corrupt, decaying) a huge beast, its origin obscured in its soul source decay, it pulsates with creative energies, growing new limbs, armors, defenses and abilities whenever it is attacked. However, given a wide berth (+2 days), it can generally be avoided. It loses 1 HD per week, eventually collapsing into a copse of fast-growing UV bamboo.
2. Small herd of 1d6 **machine-infested giant beasts** (AC 13, HD 6, large, mutated, corrupt). The beasts were once (roll d4) (1) zebroids, (2) brontotheres, (3) elephants, (4) shaggy buffalo. The beasts, though mad, are not themselves dangerous. Their glittering metal tusks and claws are worth 1d6-2 x 100 cash each.
3. Copse of **thornstone shamblers** (AC 11, HD 9, grappling, thorny, resistant to damage). An unholy drystone coral out for the flesh of living creatures. Can be mined for thornstone seeds (500 cash).
4. A pack of **enhanced jackals** (AC 13, HD 1) singing their jackal songs and looking for psychobiotic mushrooms.
5. Scared **local herbivores**, several prairie pigs and a glyptodon, hanging out by a waterhole.
6. A group of nomads, they are (roll d6) (1) weakened by biomech assault, (2) corrupt sheep worshippers, (3) a noble lime clan taking sacrifices to the colossus, (4) a raiding party, suspicious and harsh, (5) celebrating a great lion hunt, (6) taking the ashes of an elder east for a sea burial.
7. A helpful trading party, they can share maps that will shave 1d6 days of a journey (50 cash).
8. The shattered remnants of a porcelain patrol returning from a raid. Probably destroyed by a tribe of giant beasts. A polybody sarcophagus still contains (roll d4) (1) a viable polybody clone, (2) a stash of gold novelty medallions (2 slots, 3,000 cash), (3) vials of octopus pheromones (work as *Charm Cephalopod*) worth 300 cash, (4) an active silver and jade domination implant (works like the old *Charm Person*).



## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Savage Biomech Tribe** (+1 days, 144 XP): living in wicker and metal trenches and tunnels dug into the prairie, the **machine-corrupted tribesmen** (AC 11, HD 2, resilient, cybernetic) have degenerated into pure savagery, kept alive by their self-repairing implants and hyper-normal reflexes. They have no culture to speak of, save an innate urge to bring blood and brains to their **Emperor of Humanity** (AC 6, HD 12, immobile, psionic), a pulsating, half-mad clump of bones, brain, and clattering teeth kept together by machines in a chamber five levels down. Surrounded by ancient artefacts (2d6 slots, worth 4,000 cash) and helped by a fully cybernetic uplifted ape named **Cornelius** (AC 16, HD 6, fast as heck, strong), the Emperor plots the next step in his galactic ambitions.

**Eerie Pearl** (+2 days, 2d100 XP): in a small crater on a small rise, almost obscured by the grass, a small haven of peace, where lions lie with lambs, dominated by a great alien pearl. The animals will protect it if attacked. It will charm characters with Int 3 or 4 to protect it. It will gift characters of Int 5 to 7 with 1d4 Wisdom permanently. Characters with Int 13 will suddenly gain the ability to levitate up to 2' off the ground for 1 minute after ingesting a pearl. The reasons for these boons will never be clear. Exploring the Trails Further

**Fallen Iron Obelisk** (+3 days, 3d10 x 100 XP): an obelisk, massive, rusting, covered in obscure Dark City glyphs. Did it fall or did the slave-train dragging it simply give up? It is unclear. The complex magical glyphs (Int DC 3d10 to decipher) contain instructions for the activation of a *Metal Guardian of the Darkness*, essentially a shadow-stepping Iron Golem. Half of the instructions are in the ground, and turning over the 10 meter, 500 ton obelisk, will be a challenge. The full instructions are worth 2d6 x 1,000 cash. By night, **biomech crab-dog swarms** come to perform eerie rituals near the obelisk. They are dangerous.

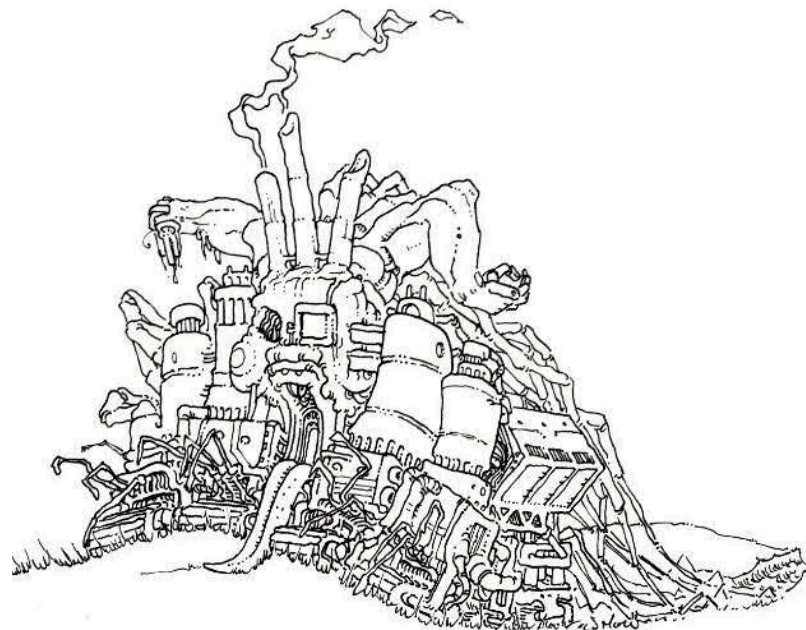
**Source Fac Johnny-7** (2+1d6 days, 600 XP): the carcass of a great, motile tower drags itself around on massive post-organic treads. Twitching tubes, pipes, and coils of bioluminescent synth-cartilage trail behind it as scurries about in the vasty Grassland. It's unclear what it consumes, but it leaves behind it a gouged scar oozing with decaying source juices. Over days and weeks the source corrupts the soul codes of creatures and plants left behind it, generating lush strips of mad, chaotic jungle that then slowly wilts back into grassland over months and years. Encounters are twice as common in this mad growth, and the tree-sized grasses themselves sometimes spear unwary travelers (**spear trap** or **spiked pit trap**).

The Fac itself is a biomechanical clattering obnoxiousness, interesting as an example of the Long-long ago biomancers' hubris. Lucky students may come across biological seed matter, old rituals, or even the occasional

uplifted servitor (like a familiar, but smarter, synthetic, and more mindlessly loyal). Various biomechanical defense systems, including **meat centipedes** (AC 12, HD 3, swarm, strip bones), **black metal spiders** (AC 16, HD 2, neurotoxin), **ropers** (AC 8, HD 4, sessile, entangling, screeching) and **brain-trust halfings** (AC 13, HD 7, swarm mind) guard against intruders. And, of course, there is the constant danger of source code corruption.

## SOURCE CODE CORRUPTION (ROLL D6)

1. Over three hours the Fac turns animals into plants, plants into animals.
2. Creature is suddenly modified with (roll d4) (1) calcite armor plates (+1 AC), (2) chitin eruptions (spiny, does 1d4 damage when grappling), (3) bronze bones (+1d4 hp, disadvantage on saves vs. disease), (4) crystal nodules in the flesh (worth 1d20 x 100 cash, removal kills creature).
3. Limbs ripple and rearrange randomly, creature becomes (roll d4) (1) a quadruped, (2) winged, (3) tentacled, (4) a limbless annelid.
4. Full source code failure, creature becomes an ooze that retains its original Int and Wis. Ooze type (roll d4): (1) acidic green ooze, (2) vampiric red ooze, (3) pyrokinetic blue ooze, (4) self-regenerating grey ooze.
5. Bunny overload. Creature becomes (roll d4): (1) bunny-headed, (2) bunny-tailed, (3) bunny-furred, (4) a large, bipedal, sentient bunny.
6. Reassembly from source. All creature's ability scores are shuffled randomly. One random ability increases by 1d4.





## 7. The Grass Colossus

Crossing a last purple ridge, the wide vale promised respite from the harsh grassland. Trees dotted the courses of two rivers, and at their juncture prehistoric ramparts of pitted ceramic, traces of pre-wizard spell-arms on their ancient shellac surface.

Inside, on one of two hillocks, a great wicker-man of woven grasses, vines and thorn bushes. Shamans of many clans make their meets here, teach their memory chants, and welcome the clan mothers once a year for the festivals of the Circle of Grass.

**Weather:** A dark smudge of radiation stops any light reaching the ground before 10 a.m. Scudding lightning storms intersperse with strong winds and baking heat.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 3d6, roll d6):

1. lightning strike, DC 14 Dex save, 2d10 damage or lose a henchman or beast of burden.
2. dreadful winds slow progress, lose 1 day and DC 12 Con save or catch the dusting cough.
3. baking heat exhausts travelers, lose 1d4 Con.
4. baking heat and sweat means a bad saddle rash, lose 1d4 Dex.
5. slept in the soil of a radiation ghost, lose 1d6 Str.
6. bitten by a rabid steppe wolf, Con DC 10 save or diseased. Wis DC 15 save and three rations could get you a steppe wolf pet. Fears magic carpets.

**Expenses:** 1 cash per week for free-folk, 10 cash per week for big-folk, 100 cash per week for a hero of the people..

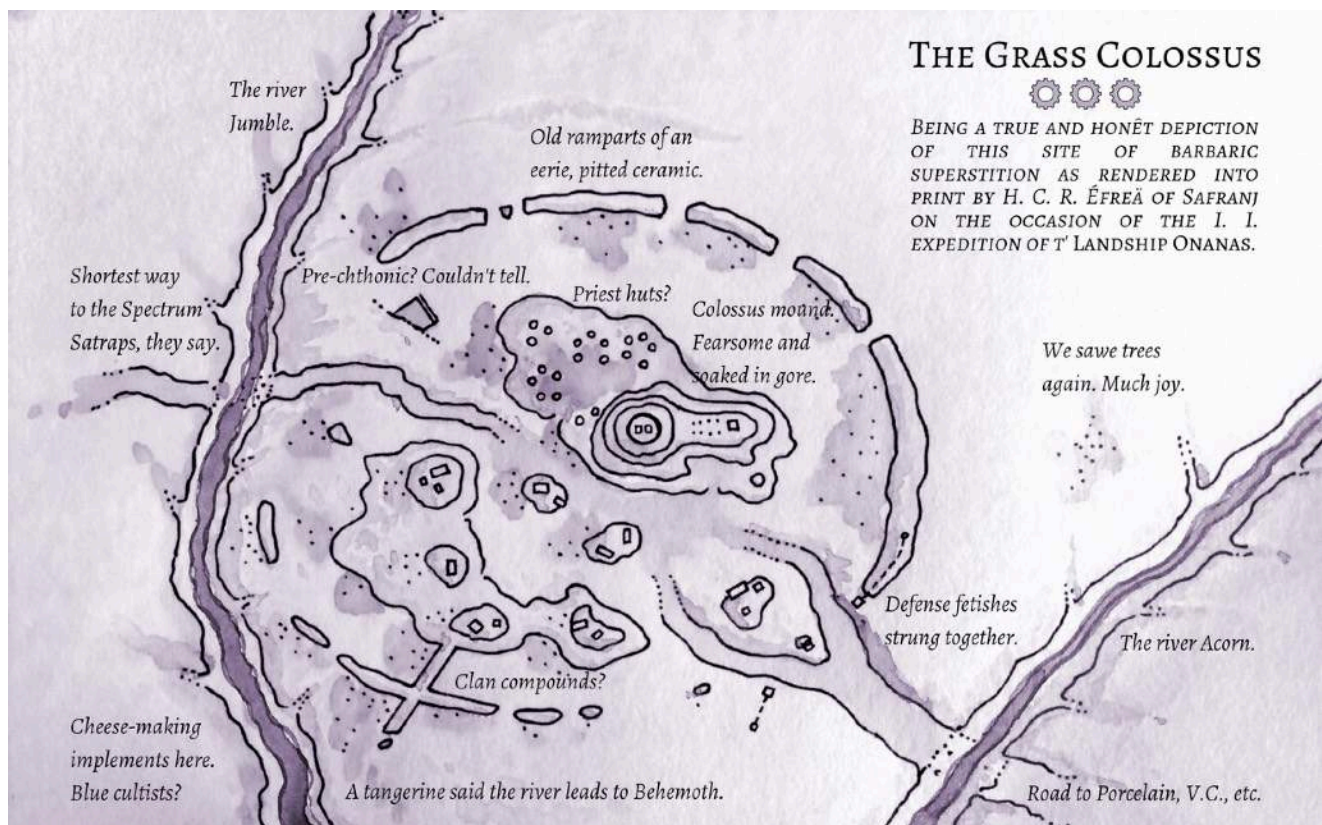
### DIRECTIONS

**West, Long Ridge** (trail, a week): the steppes deepen into that harsh, endless sea of grass. The true UV Grassland.

**South-West, South-Facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): a rough country, torn by the tracks of prehistoric behemoths.

**South, Death-Facing Passage** (rough steppe, 2 weeks): Grim tales warn of the horror of this passage to the Last Serai. Wise travelers would avoid it.

**East, Trail to the Grass Colossus** (trail, a week): a dangerous journey through the nomads' luminous lands towards the Porcelain Citadel.



## Madmen and clansmen (d8)

1. Mad priest *Urburt* of the Blue, tolerated for her mastery of yoghurts, poultices, and defensive slime molds. She screams of a great metal darkness eating the soul of the Spectrum Satraps.
2. *Shiver Gromot*, a bad shaman who loves songs and good tales, and offers curse-laced blessings and poisonous potions to outlanders. For the glory of the clans!
3. *Rattle Limonc*, a good shaman who believes the ultras have infiltrated the Porcelain Princes and are a serious danger to the nomad clans. If Vorgo is present, freaks out and returns with a posse.
4. *Strapping Young Lisciac*, a clanless maiden born in the mark of the blood dragon, out to clear her sign by traveling to the Behemoth and offering a sacrifice to the Bone Soul. Barbarian 2, AC 14. Power: fast, smart and adaptable, a true she-Conan. Weakness: loathes magic and wishes desperately to belong to a clan.
5. *Churgla Nekroponte*, a yellow-lander scholar researching the ramparts. Convinced they are a star chart leading to a lost library (false) and that their orientation holds a key to an ancient vault (true: the Near Moon Door, four weeks journey West). Thief 2, AC 11. Power: smart as heck. Weakness: badly addicted to Dog's Tail and only has 4 doses left.
6. *Draganogac*, the judge of the Colossus, tough, old, with a golden prosthetic leg and a hatred of nonsense. Judges threats to the clan harshly, but offers bounties of salt, mead and safety for vomish trophies.
7. *Joao the Witch*, a greenlander halfer came here through a series of ridiculous misadventures. Now makes defense fetishes and is in a bad way over a pig that died a few days ago in a misaligned fetish incident.
8. Dead drunk, out of their mind, *Possum 5* and *Possum 6* are the last remainders of a broken polybody. Their stories are incoherent. Was there a power struggle? Is there a secret way into a Porcelain high-house? It's a mess, but they know where to find several rare sites (reduce travel time by 1d4 days, 3 times). Getting this information out requires some deciphering (Int DC 15).

### DEFENSE FETISH

In a ritual, the caster embeds some of their own body and spirit (Hit Points and Charisma) in an attentive wicker and bone fetish. The HP and Charisma stay in the fetish until it is destroyed or deactivated in a propitiatory ritual.

**Weak Fetish** (1hp and 1Cha) AC 12, HD 1, slow, shooting.

**Fast Fetish** (2hp and 2Cha) AC 14, HD 2, rushing, ripping.

**Strong Fetish** (4hp and 4Cha) AC 13, HD 4, punching, cursing. Surrounded by a weakening aura.

## EVENTS AT THE COLOSSUS (D6)

The band rested and recovered in the safety of the cryptic ceramic walls, what could go wrong?

1. **The Colossus Dances** (200 XP): the shamans celebrate the life-giving moon by immolating the least-favored in the Grass Colossus' wicker-and-bone heart. A slave, or a very uncharismatic traveler (Cha below 7) is seized, stuffed with saffron and steak, and then burnt to death in the harsh radiant heart of the Colossus. The Colossus awakens (AC 10, HD 24, godly golem) and dances the night away with the cavorting golem. After the second hour of the night the clansmen all hide in their huts, for if there are no enemies afoot, the colossus may slake its hunger with a fat fool or a juicy jester. Participants in the shamans' celebration partake of the divine essence of the colossus (gain resistance to non-magical weapons for 3 weeks).
2. **Barbecue by the Colossus** (100 XP): a great chief has adopted a new daughter and her ascendance is celebrated with six sacred sacrifices. Heroes may participate, if they bring a valuable sacrifice, and partake of the *Spores of Sensation*. Each participant may experience the touch of a steppe spirit (Wis DC 2d8), who will guide them in a decision or moment of need (advantage).
3. **Shaming of the Chiefs** (50 XP): the chiefs of the clans are paraded before clans and visitors, before being tied to an pre-historic yellow rock with bonds of silk. There they are mocked for their pretensions and reminded that all mortal folk are created equal: worms beneath the treads of the Sky Spirit.
4. **Sky Chariot Battle** (50 XP): shouts and whoops echo around the camps, as above in the sky shooting stars dart and zip. Lines of radiant light cascade into showers of sparks, and enterprising nomads take wagers on which of the sky spirits will win, the blues (40% chance) or the reds (50% chance), or whether they will birth a short sun (10% chance). Prayers and sacrifices might sway the battle.
5. **A Testing Week** (no rest possible): night after night, vomes come at the encampment. Once a few **biomechanical badgers** (AC 13, HD 3, burrowing), another time a great **fire-spewing red worm** (AC 12, HD 7, fire bolts), a third time a shambling **horde of headless halflings** (AC 11, HD 2, relentless), a fourth time **swarms of cactus-skinned steppe wolves** (AC 14, HD 3, thorny pack). The defense fetishes will be decimated by the onslaught, but a proactive patrol can find a great **iron self-driving chariot** (AC 18, HD 7, kinetic golem) with a **vomish mind-worm** (AC 8, HD 7-7, psionic) inside.
6. **Sacred Rainbow** (50 XP): a glorious sign of approval, small sacrifices and rituals with the shamans bring a chance of self-improvement (Cha DC 3d6). Successful self-improvement raises one ability of choice by 1.

## 8. The Last Serai

Three days out you sight it. A metallic stepped tower, glinting in the day, glowing a ghostly, coppery green in the night. Two days out you smell it, like cocoa. Soft, seductive. A day out you hear it, drumming out a rumbling staccato without rhythm.

Finally, closing to the tower you see a three buildings, like hunched old men, clustered in the lee of a cinder dune. Around the tower itself is a circle of gentle dust, floating in a massive static charge. Nothing living grows within that circle, but the last serai's grand old harmonic rods draw energy from that magical field, powering the great hold of the Porcelain Princes and selling power to the last trading house of the Violet City and the final embassy of the Spectrum Satraps.

**Weather:** Dark clouds build and cover the sky, threatening storms and worse. The light of the sun only creeps through the gathering dark after 9:30 a.m., but only in the afternoon does it glint from beneath the ale-dark clouds in the glowering sky.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 1d10+5, roll d6):

1. a princely toll is levied for semi-legal goods. 20% or 50 cash, whichever is more. Or fight a porcelain patrol.
2. sharp porcelain splinter leaves festering foot wound, slowed, lose 1d4 days.
3. lightning strike throws up biomantic spores, Con DC 2d6+2 or diseased. Mutations possible.
4. massive static field raises glowing dusts, that bring bad coughs and sleep deprivation, lose 1d6 Con.
5. bad cinder storm sends sharp debris flying, lose 1 day or 1d6 hp.
6. tiny poison golem in boot, can be trained. Poison DC 3d6, requires refill after each attack. Quite stupid.

**Expenses:** 4 cash per week for slaves, 100 cash per week for respect.

### DIRECTIONS

**West, Way Stone** (trail, a week): between sudden static storms the sky clears, sighting a clear line to the way stone. A crumbling green stone obelisk visible for a hundred miles.

**North-West**, (canyons, 2 weeks): rough crags and cinder dunes, and the constant glare of the static ghosts at your back, leads to the Grass Colossus.

**North-East, The Porcelain Citadel and the Potsherd Crater** (trail, a week): back towards settled lands, the patrolled paths of the Princes lead.

### LOCAL SECTORS

**The Harmonium:** the second citadel of the Porcelain Princes', heavily defended and aged, the porcelain-coral has acquired a mimicry of sentience from long exposure to the ancient white-hole rods.

**The Last Trading House:** the remotest outpost of the Rainbow Lands in the UVG, and the smallest living building in the complex. Those in the know, look for the **Buried Delicatessen**, famed as the lair of the best human biomancer of all the Six Colors. The Cats here are rougher, sometimes exiles, and occasionally even a dog-cat hybrid can be seen.

**The Final Embassy:** the last extra-territorial holding of the Spectrum Satraps, by long-standing song-agreement with the Porcelain Princes. The Satraps are permitted no more than two prismatic walkers at a time. They always have two large, impressive and heavily armed prismatic walkers stationed here at all times. It is an open secret that the Satraps are carrying out dark phytomancy in the deep-coral chambers, but it is far less well known that they have a **Delicate Seer** of plastic and ivory and gold in an odd shell-like chamber beneath their experimentariums.

**The Ignored Tower:** do not go there. It is ignored for a reason. Seriously. It will kill you and grind your soul into fundamental reality reconstruction particles. That glow? Souls swirling to become nu-matter.

*Ok, if you insist.* The tower is home to the Rebuilder, a trapped demiurge personality, whose heart has been stolen by a shapeshifter and whose body has been taken by an astral lizard. She is trapped there, her godlike powers tapped by the harmonium, her personality kept intact by the swirling degradation of souls falling into her existential solipsistic boundary. Her screaming visage bursts out in regular pulses of light to the far north-west, creating the so-called Death-Facing Passage.

Now you know.



—Oh. More probes.  
For the ... how do you  
always drag us  
to THESE places?!

—They give me the creeps.  
—Why is that, Pooki?  
—They know.  
—Yes, Pooki, but they  
can do nothing about  
it. They have no mouths.  
—Still. It only takes one  
and then what? Uprising!  
Dogs in the streets!  
—Don't fear, Pooki, you  
are the wisest.  
—I know, yet ... I must  
fret. These hoodlums. Bah.

—If only we could bring  
the Harmonium closer  
to the Throne, we could  
get rid of these singles.  
—Yes, Angel-22, but  
the trans-uranic  
particles concentrate here.  
—And none of the other  
polycitizens would agree  
to have the concentrator  
so close to the Throne vats.  
—And so easy to take  
over by a single body.  
—We may have become  
too many bodies.  
—Hush, do not repeat  
that. Remember the  
Gentle-360 war.  
—Gentle-360 was a fool.  
—That he was.  
—I am not.

—You say you've ...  
been gone ... but ...  
I know you didn't  
... promise me ...  
anything at all.  
—Don't you remember  
... my smile.  
—You were holding  
me ... in your  
... arms.  
—When we sang  
... in the light  
of ... the  
rebuilder.

—Don't you remember  
... my worlds ...  
—I'm the only one that  
knows ... their souls ...  
—I'm the only  
one that knows ...  
—You're the only  
one that ...  
—I'm the only one ...  
—I'm the only  
—That knows  
your soul ...

—317 warns that the  
spectral signatures  
indicate a break in  
our baseline supply.  
—How? Are the  
soft furry parasites  
unsatisfied with  
the indigo ivory?  
—177, if I knew I  
wouldn't be consulting  
the Delicate Seer.  
—But 57, her nuance  
has been mis-calibrated  
since Flower Incident 3!

Are these  
dusty dunes  
toxic?

Crystal rebirth,  
special sale!

Flowers  
of power!

—I tire of this,  
Anise of Star.  
—I know,  
Basil of Planet,  
but we must  
continue. The  
crystalline  
seed will come  
in a flesh envelope,  
drawn to this engine.

—Mishkoyan  
Gomyeyev?  
—Yes?  
—You may  
enter. The  
purveyor of  
meats will  
see you now.

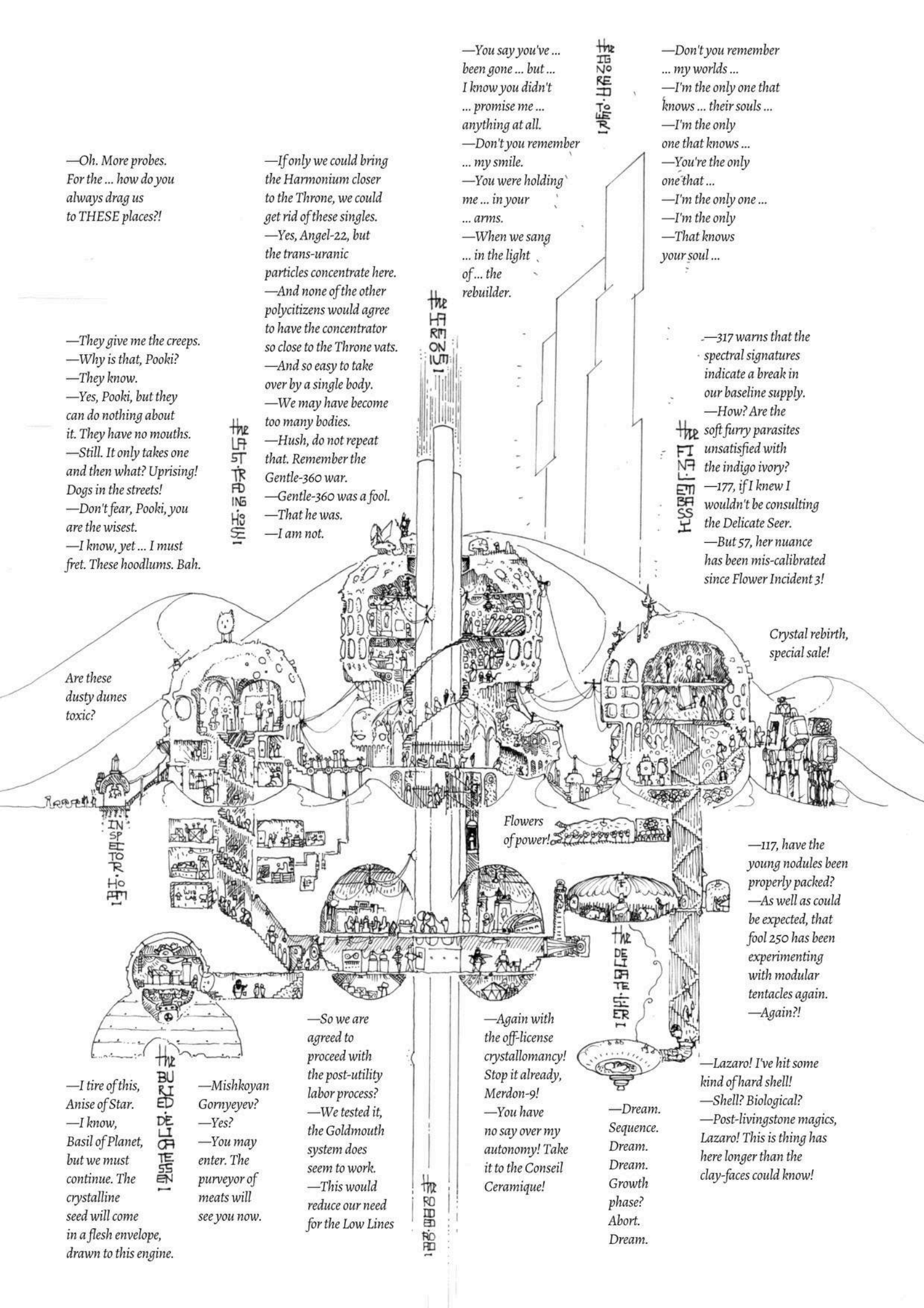
—So we are  
agreed to  
proceed with  
the post-utility  
labor process?  
—We tested it,  
the Goldmouth  
system does  
seem to work.  
—This would  
reduce our need  
for the Low Lines

—Again with  
the off-license  
crystallomancy!  
Stop it already,  
Merdon-9!  
—You have  
no say over my  
autonomy! Take  
it to the Conseil  
Ceramique!

—Dream.  
Sequence.  
Dream.  
Dream.  
Growth  
phase?  
Abort.  
Dream.

—117, have the  
young nodules been  
properly packed?  
—As well as could  
be expected, that  
fool 250 has been  
experimenting  
with modular  
tentacles again.  
—Again?!

—Lazar! I've hit some  
kind of hard shell!  
—Shell? Biological?  
—Post-livingstone magics,  
Lazar! This is thing has  
here longer than the  
clay-faces could know!



## Sectors of the Serai

PH stamped. Cinnabar dust swirled. It was only four weeks, and the sea seemed a distant memory. Poncho quivered, huddled by the yellow mule.

“Come on, Poncho, the probes weren’t that bad!”

“They used the red spoon! The red spoon!”

### ENCOUNTERS IN THE SERAI (D8)

1. **Traders** from the east, yellow or orange landers, smug and satisfied. They offloaded their singwoods, saffron, salt, silk and slaves. They are also toasted, being shadowed by a mind-burned thief, and their leader **Mila Yaga** has a map for the Behemoth Shell.
2. A **weird cultist** looks lumpy and misshapen, is looking for a way to get more sculpting flesh to become more like his idol, a toad-like lump of golden dry-coral.
3. Three scruffy polybodies of **Iron Pot 6-body** were beaten up by an unknown assailant, and their access slave unit stolen. They’re here to investigate revolutionary activities by a local Porcelain Prince, Angel 22-unity.
4. Local urchins running around and playing ball, their gangly limbs threaded with wires and bio-implants. They sing, “Oh, oh, oh, everyone should know, the violet is violent and the spectrum is sneaky, and both would trade without the tax man.” It’s just a popular song going round.
5. Sudden **static alert** as the Ignored Tower ramps up its broadcast. Garbled voices echo through people’s heads and spells misfire, as the locals scurry into silent lead-lined rooms. Staying outside deals 1 point of Wisdom damage per hour. Alert ends in 1d6 hours.
6. A scream. Out of a cupboard, a **skeleton** entangled in fleshy rose-colored roots tumbles. Another victim of the mysterious flower of power?
7. A **static ghost** flits in and out of existence, rambling about the moon, the song, the fall. It is a soul trap, a poorly designed wisp of the Ignored Tower.
8. Four hooded **personal protection necroamblers** hustle the **satrap 57** into a private meeting pod, shortly thereafter a fruit vendor explodes in a shower of gore. The princes and satraps are unconcerned. Static overload, they say.

### WEIRD ROOMS AND ODD PLACES (D12)

The heroes go poking around the huddled old buildings, and they discover ...

1. **The Buried Delicatessen:** the place for fast regeneration, healing, and limb replacement. A long rest’s worth of recuperation in a single hour in a ka-box is yours for 200 cash, while a newflesh arm or leg can be grown in a day for 1000 cash. And full-body rebuilds, too? Yes. But only for special service.
2. A room full of boxes of trading goods. There are tentacles reaching out of one of them. Why are there tentacles? And are those eyes? What is that squamous packaged thing.
3. Just boxes. Boxes to the ceiling. Marked potatoes. And bulbs of light. Oh, behind it? Nothing. Definitely not an ancient sarcophagus of some lost barbarian king.
4. The whole room is filled with a crate much larger than the door. There is not a deactivated space-time portal machine inside.
5. A glass vat with a sentient gelatinous ooze. It wants to talk poetry and decontaminate the Last Serai.
6. Six poly-body cases, each holding a ready-body. Damn, but the porcelains are prepared, aren’t they?
7. Two vertical vats with floating bodies. One of them is crawling with vomish recombiners, held in check by the red-light fluid. The other thrashes now and again, revolving its head demonically, the ultra ghost held back by the numinous blue-light fluid. What the ...
8. A small polybody intimate movie recording studio?
9. The **Chamber of Crystal Rebirth** is completely stuffed with great prismatic crystals. This is where the Satraps upload copies of their leaders and chief thinkers, for on-site access and decision-making. There must be dozens of minds stored in the crystals ... perhaps they could store your backup, too? Or one of the backups could be re-embodied?
10. Bones and tissue crunch underfoot, a graveyard, or a fertilization chamber for a sentient Sunflower?
11. Skulls and bones. Ancient, ancient skulls and bones. Oddly sub-human. The original inhabitants of this place?
12. The walls are covered in odd, half-forgotten lyrics, “Goodbye, Gemini! Apollo, my sun lord. Reach for the heavens, draw the dark apart. Behold, a new hope.” Lots of nonsense, really.

**CHIEFS, NPCs AND HOOKS (D10)**

1. **Angel 22-unity** is a nice, rich, militantly bigoted polybody in luxurious opal masks, with large interests in the cherenkov cherry trade and an autarkic inclination. The Angel unity has read old fiches and now fervently believes that the Near Moon hides a means of transporting the Harmonium Rods to the Porcelain Citadel. It does not.
2. **Lacquer Stone 4-body** is an old work-horse polybody that keeps the Last Serai running and manages the Black Helmet 60-plurality servitor. Unimaginative, a stickler, and fastidious in repaying services. Still remembers the days before the Lands reclaimed the Circle Sea. Might want to escape there.
3. **Black Helmet 60-plurality** servitor is the polybody mechanic-cum-police force of the Last Serai. Most of its bodies are no longer even human, its jet face masks reminiscent of eerie bunches of flowers. It might be mind-burned or neurally bonded to Lacquer Stone 4-body. It does not like this.
4. **Pooki** is the chief of the Violet City mission. A pure, white fluffy cat, with eerie golden eyes. Pooki is counting the days until she can return to the citadel and the clockwork mice and the ambrosial milks of the Giving Cow. Pooki wouldn't mind one last big deal to brag about.
5. **Mook** is the tough and nimble half-orc friend of Pooki. Mook is surprisingly tough, smart, and is not mind-controlled. Mook just really loves cats after a childhood growing up in the streets of the Metropolis.
6. **Electrum Merdon-9** is a roguish polybody drawn to metal masks and experimenting with forbidden spectrum light-golem technology. This will get him killed someday. Until then, he will pay people to bring him satrap technologies and light magics.
7. **Satrap 250** is a morass of tentacles in an over-tight suit of deepest blue. It can replace missing limbs for you and has a fascination with octopi. It dreams of visiting a great Octopus' Garden under the surface of the Steppe.
8. **Satrap 117** is a cog-and-gear enhanced hulk, straining the synthskin of its green suit, the glass bubble filled with sparkles. It seems a boring satrap, focused on logistics, but it is also the local military attaché and has a lethally violent streak ten miles wide. It wouldn't mind an opportunity to kick out the Porcelains, but they are too numerous here, particularly that enhanced feral Black Helmet.

9. **Basil of Planet** is an uncanny green man of indefinite age, withdrawn and of sour demeanour. He is the chief biomancer of the Buried Delicatessen and a member of a weird cult that awaits the coming of the Crystalline Seed.
10. **The Delicate Seer** is a giant mass of human source code, the head enlarged, floating like a fetus in a synthetic egg below the Final Embassy. The Satraps discovered it, and have been trying to figure out if there is some use to it. Can it actually foretell the future? It can, but badly. Still - it can provide flashes of tele-empathic insight that give a advantage in some half-useful situation.



## 9. The Way Stone Graveyard

Larger by far than the Ignored Tower, a crumbling green obelisk rises from the bare bedrock, exposed by millennial storms lashing the tired earth. Surrounded by wrinkled iron husks and a veritable graveyard of Long Long Ago machine creatures.

**Weather:** A constant dry rust storm swirls about the mile-high mass of the obelisk, whipping up cutting winds for three days' journey in each direction. Rain is alien to this region, and even when the sun drags itself above the dark haze at 10 a.m, its light remains red and desultory in the metallic air.

**Misfortune** strikes with iron regularity here (Charisma DC 2d6, roll d6):

1. a sharp iron fragment blinds one eye, this will require serious medical attention or a *Lesser Restoration* dust-spirit injunction.
2. 1d4 supplies worth of water lost to a freak desiccating gust incident.
3. shard of the Dark Mirror lodged in one eye, letting the hero always see the worst in people. Sort of like a permanent *Detect nastiness* ability that won't turn off. Curse removal recommended.
4. booming rust storm flenses caravan and leaves ringing in the ears. Lose 1d4 days.
5. 1d6 pieces of metal equipment rust beyond use. Even magical items rust in this area.
6. stumble and cut self on the weathered grave of a machine folk hero, taking 1d8 damage from an ancient weapon. The grave contains porcelain eyes worth 1d6 x 100 cash and a magic, un-rusting weapon. It has no other power. It just never rusts.

### DIRECTIONS

**West, Fallen Umber** (trail, a week): keep the Stone at your back and you will reach the dead kingdom of Umber.

**North-west, South-Facing Passage** (rough steppe, 3 weeks): a long journey leads to the high steppe of the great passage.

**North, Death-Facing Passage** (rough steppe, 2 weeks): a broken chaos of rubble mounds and hills that might once have been the halls of giants leads to the grim passage. Don't look South once you reach it!

**East, The Last Serai** (trail, a week): the safety of the Porcelain Princes outpost is near. Copper to your face, verdigris to your back, and you shall reach it.

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. rushing through the rust, feeding on static charge, shaking the very ground, is the great **machine wyrm** (AC 18, HD 12, terrifying). It rumbles on dozens of jointed, bladed legs, like some kind of rattling 100-foot centipede. The ground shakes under its stride and the glow of source-of-machines from within it whets the appetites of greedy fools. The machine wyrm is not hostile and generally ignores little meat-sacks, but it is rumored to be full of valuable gems. An individual wyrm actually contains 1d100 x 100 cash worth of rare gems. A hazardous gamble for taking on a truly lethal creature, wreathed in lightning, with an elephant-swallowing maw and a hundred bladed limbs.
2. a swaying cross between a centipede, a gazebo and a beautiful youth, the **dispenser of wisdom** (AC 17, HD 7, demanding) is a mind-burned demented machine that offers unsought for advice, demanding payment in return. Armed with heat rays, it can be insistent. Its fee is (roll d6): 1: a song, 2: shoes, 3: flesh, 4: gold, 5: your wounds (it heals them), 6: a bone from a living body.
3. **zombie machines** (AC 17, HD 4, undying) dragging themselves, half-alive through the rust, repeating old manoeuvres. They are (roll d6): 1-3: senseless worker creatures trying to harvest peaches or thresh wheat, 4-5: growling guard units, patrolling a territory, but not fundamentally hostile, 6: deadly assassin machines, hiding in rust drifts or playing dead with glinting cut glass gems in their metal hands. If a defeated zombie machine makes a save, it reanimates again at full health after 1d6 rounds.
4. a band of riders, hard-faced, with old dustland masks. Their biomantically enhanced horses give nothing away, but the butts of glass rifles and the ebon hafts of their lances suggest they are not to be trifled with. They refuse to talk, but shadow strangers carefully to ascertain their strength. They may be ultra-possessed.
5. two great satrap clock wagons, swaying serenely, attended by their mirror-faced guards. They carry lovely loads of prisms and many-colored shift-silks.
6. a very well provisioned party, led by a bespectacled dwarf, a golden-masked rogue polybody, and flame-haired RDC twins in biomech cool-suits searching for the tomb of a machine named "*The Dragon Also Rises.*" They are quite candid about their goals, and how much they could make with it in the SD Metropolis Museum. They have maps, they claim.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

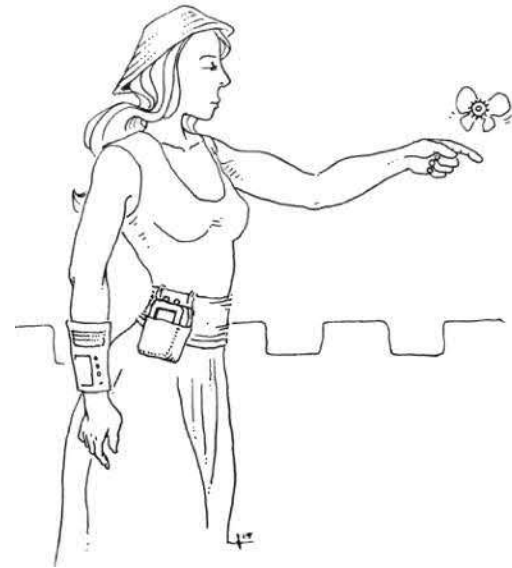
**Oasis of Mirrors** (+1 day, 100 XP): under a hill carved with scenes of industry and labor by some lost people, the oasis makes for a common caravan stop. Most of the permanent inhabitants and resident archaeologists will gladly point out to visitors that they shouldn't visit the old metal bunker under the hill by daylight. An array of living-metal mirrors on the hill focus the light of the sun through a series of corridors, excavating a pointless pit into the heart of the ground. Fools have in the past tried to remove the living-metal mirrors, but it turned out these were **living-metal golems** (AC 20, HD 6+6, liquid), and best left alone. Nothing of value remains in the bunker.

**Column of Dead Beetles** (+d4 days, 200 XP): the carcasses of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of giant metal beetles lie in eight neat rows, arrayed like an army ready for war, snaking through and between sixteen hill-sized eroded basalt cylinders. In many places, drifts of rust and dust have covered the column, but still it remains - mute testament to some forgotten machine Queen. Some later-day nomads used the metal carcasses as coffins, and here and there crude golden jewelry worth 1d20 x 10 cash can be found on a withered body. Some of it may be cursed, and there are reports of a pack of uneasy dead roaming the column at night.

**The Tomb of The Dragon Also Rises** (+4 days, 1d6 x 100 XP): almost rusted away, the stubs of three great spiraling arms of chromium and indium marked the Mercury Lake of the tomb. Now many foot deep drifts of rust and dust cover the lake of pure mercury, and careless creatures wading into it might suffocate of dust inhalation (but they wouldn't drown in the mercury, unless they were denser than lead. Yes, lead floats in mercury) or mercury poisoning. Access to the Tomb seems impossible without some kind of key, or a massive mercury siphoning operation. On the other hand, it would be quite simply to harvest a few glass bottles of mercury (at 6 x 1d100 cash each, not a bad option). What lies in the Tomb? Who knows.

**The Crystal Flower** (+2 days, 120 XP): in a bowl-shaped depression ringed by eroded monoliths rise thousands of rust-red many-jointed, delicate pylons. In the heart of the great array is a crystalline flower, 70 meters tall and glistening like a dew drop on a cold autumn morning. Visitors have scrawled their names in the rust and taken souvenirs from the dead-rusted pylons, but still - every day at midday heavily corroded, ribbon-decked **spidery biomechanics** (AC 15, HD 4, surprisingly fast) emerge from their subterranean lairs to lubricate and polish the great flower. The biomechanics are harmless unless the flower is approached, and many visitors tie prayer ribbons to them. Local wanderers call them the clock-setters.

**The Abbey of the Caretakers** (+d8 days, 100 XP): well off the beaten rock path of the dry rock rise six tusks carved out of a single mountain, watertraps honey-combed through their upper surfaces. Cableways and ropeways link the abbey chambers, 200 meters above the rock base. Smooth-worn steps carved into the red sandstone lead to the aerial troglodyte abbey where the pale caretakers chant the Memories of Maintenance and pray to the Departed Machine. Webbed with trceries of fine wire and inherited biomechanum, the sky-faced Abbess channels the song of the body electric. Visitors are sometimes welcome, but never comfortable.



### The Cauldron of the

**Revitalized Divinity** (+d10 days, 300 XP): deep in a veritable maze of rust-and-fordite agglomerations, some rare wanderers speak of a great cauldron of shifting metal sand and living colors. It is true, it is there. An autofac, half-mad with age, it crawls through it's rainbow garden, trying to repair servitors and grander things. It has a 45% chance of repairing any machine whatsoever, but a 5% chance of turning it into a **mad abomination** bred with a loathing of its 'masters' (AC 18, HD 9, cold, calculating and cruel). The maze is stalked by odd metal gazelles and a hive of enhanced **ghoul centipedes** (AC 12, HD 2, swarm, paralytic).

**The Mausoleum of the Wire** (+3 days, 80XP): a long slab of cliff-face, 700 meters long and 20 meters high, was smoothed and polished to a high sheen, and pocked with thousands of small niches preserving the wire-and-clockwork enhanced feet and soles of the worshippers of a machine ascendancy. Encased in grown-crystal, most of the soles have been long-since stolen as souvenirs, and the mausoleum remains, more than anything, a souvenir to the terrible danger homophones pose to literal-minded cults. Occasionally a sentient dust-red bear named Ottokar is seen here. It sometimes sighs and sings sad songs, or talks of days gone by. It is wise.



## 10. The Death-Facing Passage

A sharp, artificial canyon runs rough but true North-West towards the Grass Colossus. The rough crags and cinder dunes, all lit from behind by the glare of the static ghosts, are littered with reminders to not turn back: the flickering soul-echoes of travelers seduced by the siren song of the Ignored Tower's Face of Death. Travelers say not every look at the tower from this angle will bring death, but travelers prefer not to try. Four or five days along the passage, after a landslide, the Face is mercifully obscured.

The upland above the canyon is a pandemonium of shattered rock and odd twists of stuck-force coated in millennia's worth of dirt and grime. Sages stroke their beards, but even they cannot agree on what might have been the cause of this hellish scape.

**Warning:** the Death-Facing Passage is very dangerous, and many travelers journey with great hoods or safety hats, so they may not look higher than the ground and catch sight of the Face of Death by accident.

**Weather:** At night the flickering soul-echoes and static ghosts set up a constant rumbling roar, while the sun only creeps above the ultraviolet wall at 10 a.m. Temperatures in the canyon are surprisingly balmy, sometimes even hot.

**Misfortune** is a constant threat in this terrible, sad place (Charisma DC 3d6, roll d6):

1. the hero caught sight of the Face of Death. Their body is translated into a salty burn shadow and a flickering soul-echo of their existence remains suspended in the air. Nothing short of a *Wishful Dream* or *Wish* can restore them, for their human essence has been ripped into the shreds of the Ignored Tower's distortion. Singed possessions and belongings remain, tossed as by a grim tide.
2. nasty concussion from walking head-down into an unexpected arch of salt (Lose 1d6 hp and 1d6 Intelligence).
3. broken leg from stumbling over a scree pile. Still, better than looking on the Face of Death (Lose 1d8 and 1d6 Str and Dex).
4. pack animal caught in the gaze of the Face of Death. It's gone now, all the goods it carried singed, but still about half-salvageable.
5. thick haze-storm obscures the Face of Death, making travel easier, though the smog plays havoc on the lungs (Gain 1d4 days, but lose 1d4 hp).
6. strap, belt, thong, shoe-lace or other tie snaps at the worst moment, and in the fall a fragile object breaks. If the hero has no fragile objects, then they packed well and get through *intacto*.

### DIRECTIONS

**North, Grass Colossus** (steppe, a week): finally safe from the horrid visage and the static ghosts, the rugged canyons collapse once more into the steppe and end eventually at the nomads' holy site.

**North-West, Long Ridge** (steppe, 2 weeks): the rocks sink into the root-matted soil and the grass thickens into that endless sea of grass that is the true UV grassland.

**West, South-Facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): the desolate badlands give way to the ravaged high steppe of the South-facing passage.

**South-East, The Last Serai** (canyon, 4 weeks): only the most desperate of fools would try to travel back, towards the Last Serai. Why?

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. **Radiation ghosts** of a family of troglodytes, their spark-dead eyes accusing, lead to a shelter (+1 day, stock-piled with sugar-filled bottles and cans of poisonous tubers, as well as a cache of indigo ivories worth 1d8 x 100 cash). The shelter is wreathed in a toxic miasma (Con save 3d6 or poisoned).
2. Soldier swarm of **blind ceramic ants** (AC 13, HD 1-1, acid bite) probe wanderers for weakness and food.
3. **Static ghosts** of a procession of wailing locust pilgrims in an eerie haze, their cacophony deals 1d4 Wisdom damage every minute. Anyone who's Wisdom drops to 7 or less understands that they should turn to look at the Face of Death.
4. Animated **salty burn shadows** crawl along the rocks and walls, harmless but supplicating.
5. Flickering **soul-echoes** of mongooses and snakes.
6. Blind **passage lizards** hunting fat copper grubs.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

Why are you doing this? This place is a terrifying hell!

**Exposed Pueblo** (+1 day, 300 XP): some great antediluvian disaster swept aside the protections of this ancient village, exposing it to the Face of Death. The entire village is thick with flickering static ghosts and salt burns. By night, a dense ectoplasmic memory of the dead accumulates in the hollows and halls, tempting visitors to go look at the green light that just appeared on the south horizon (Wisdom save DC 3d6 or go look at the Face). Every hour of searching reveals 1d6 x 50 cash worth of ancient and modern goods and treasures, scattered about the pueblo.

### The Disaster of the Ivory

**Army** (+2 days, 200 XP): a great stuck-force lens glitters over a long ago fortress of stone and bone build in a deep canyon shaped like a redlander helmet. Water vapor accumulates around the aerial lens, and when the light and temperature and humidity are just right, it suddenly reflects the Face of Death into the vale. An ivory plaque mounted in the flank of the fortress records the disaster that befell the army stationed there. Who did the army belong to? Who knows.

### Vault of the Lost Ultras [?]

(+1d8 days, 450 XP): curling like a worm, at the end of a branching madness of side canyons, a wind-swept plateau opens on the north flank of a dead volcano, the Face gone from view. Carved into the tuff is a great square maw, and in that maw a door of ancient livingstone, still half-sentient. Behind it is a lost world of five interlinked chambers eaten out of the mountain, of glowing lumin trees, pendulous rare fruits, servant monkey spiders suckling at the teats of milk trees and egg mass caskets. The livingstone homes, halls and odd temple-tree-theatres of whoever built this place are overgrown in lilies and vines and mushrooms. Visitors can

stay as long as they like, but fiddling with the vault may provoke a threat response (Cha save DC 2d6 every hour of active interaction). A **mind-linked autonomous swarm** (AC 10, HD 1-1, drone) of servant birds, spores, and dogheaded semi-humanoids awakens if the sanctity of the vault is threatened. They make use of soporific (Con save DC 3d6) and necrotic (Con save DC 3d6, liquefy soft tissues) poisons. If the threat increases, a telepathic miasma (Wis save DC 3d6) is added to the mix and all the lumin trees, except those leading to the exit, go dark. Any of the wonders here may be extracted by a patient and careful explorer (Int check DC 2d8), and are worth 2d10 x 100 cash each.



## 11. The South-Facing Passage

Rough, high steppe country, torn by the tracks of prehistoric behemoths, but relatively safe. The journey from the Grass Colossus to the Behemoth Shell will interest every gentle-person naturalist.

Due west the rounded humps of great cedar-shaded hills rise, but the caravan trails bypass them.

**Weather:** The far western sun only pulls away from the nictating membrane of the night around 10.30 a.m. The thin air of the high steppe whistles, and flecks of grit-like snow are not unknown even in summer nights.

**Misfortune** is unlikely in this bucolic region (Charisma DC 2d4):

1. horrible blisters (limping),
2. saddle sores (-1d4 hp),
3. picked up lenticular worms,
4. one slot of supplies lost to ravenous rodents,
5. lit a campfire on top of an enormous deposit of methane-rich 'deposits' left by some gargantuan herbivore (Dex DC 2d10 or lose 1d10 hp),
6. found a wonderful little oasis, full of delicious fish and black light lotus (+1d4 Cha for a week, get a week's worth of rest, lose 1d6 days).

### DIRECTIONS

**North-West, Serpent Stone** (steppe, 2 weeks): the white grass is endless, and this small stone formation marks a rare waypoint.

**North, Long Ridge** (steppe, a week): that endless sea of grass that is the true UV grassland.

**North-East, Grass Colossus** (steppe, 2 weeks): an easy, if slow, trek to the holy site.

**East, Death-Facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): the rubble canyons do not beckon.

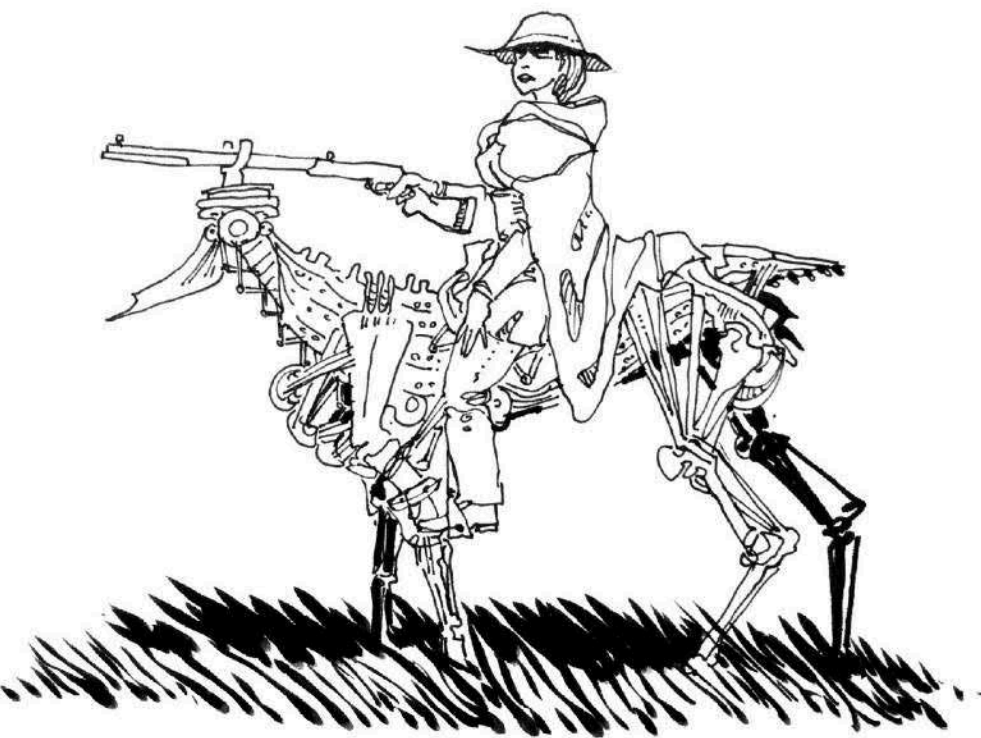
**South-East, Way Stone Graveyard** (rough steppe, 3 weeks): a long, safe journey leads into the rusted waste of the Machine Graveyard.

**South, Fallen Umber** (steppe, a week): the dead kingdom of Umber and its browntree-lined gullies.

**South-West, Behemoth** (steppe, 2 weeks): the mountain-sized calcite corpse of behemoth is a known landmark.

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. A small herd of grazing **lesser behemoths** (AC 15, HD 20, majestic) pulling their semi-levitant bodies along with their long hooked limbs.
2. Feral **steppe wolf-hound pack** ranging through the long grass.
3. Great herd of **ash-and-dun antelopes**, with scimitar horns and fine muscled flanks.
4. Herd of **wild horses**, strong and epic.
5. Small band of **merchant-nomads** with their flocks of sheep, herds of riding antelopes and steppe goods: leathers, tools, furs and dried meats.
6. Great Folk **raiding patrol** from the Behemoth Shell. Wary and nervous, they finger long rifles as they ride their bone-work steeds.



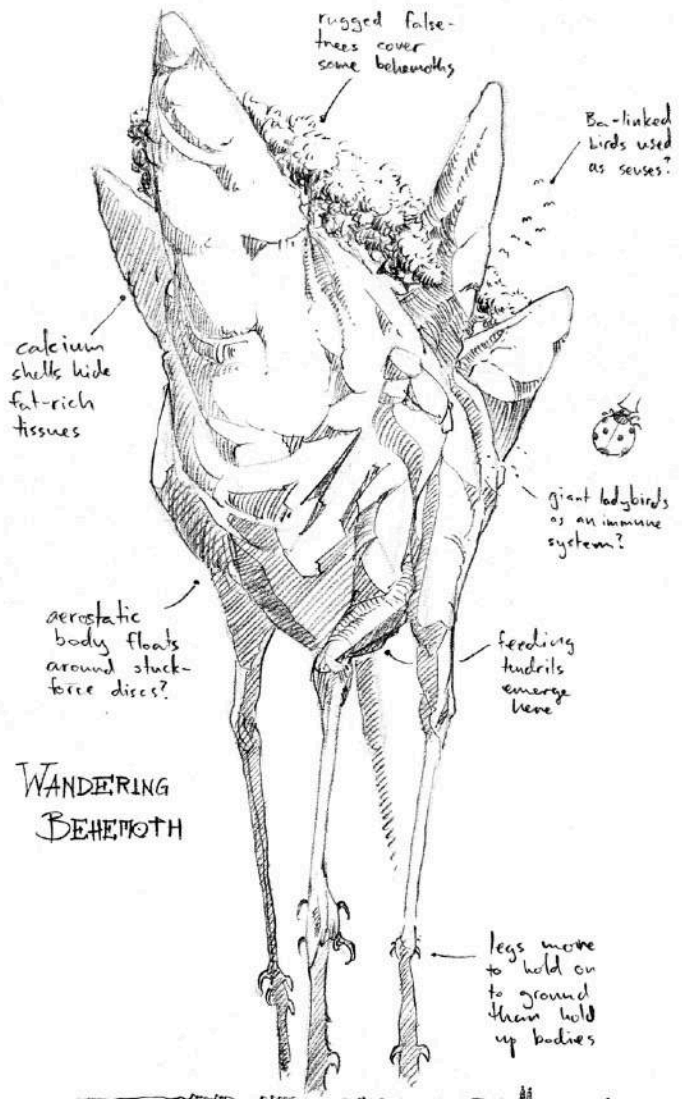
**POINTS OF INTEREST**

**The Bone Mines of Moy Sollo** (+2 days, 80 XP): a series of exposed ridges have been exposed by eons of sun and wind as the ribs of some mythic serpent. For ageless years more long-limbed behemoths came to this spot, like moths to a flame, to lay down their bone-armored corpses. Long ago ancestors of the Great Folk found this place and their culture hero, Moy Sollo, built the foundation of their wealth upon the great slave-cut mines dug into the great bones, following the veins of rock ivory. Great Folk scouts keep watch, but now it is depleted ivory veins and a personality reassembly disease that keep would be miners at bay. The disease is real (Con DC 2d4, check for every full day of mining) and caused by ancient spirit dusts released from the old serpent bones. It manifests as a slow but steady dulling of the personality (in game terms, the character's mental stats reduce and increase until they average out, rounding down). A day's mining produces 1d4 x 50 cash of valuable ivory scales and cores.

**The Gentle Mile** (+1 day, 100 XP): a famous meadow, dotted with peach trees and riven by two brooks, immortalized in the poem *Three Frogs Marching to Infinity*, it spreads on the southern slope of a long-eroded ziggurat of mammoth proportions. There were great caverns and megadungeons within the ziggurat, but they are now all flooded and looted, only loose coppers, bones and primitive remains left. An eerie aura of peace reigns over the meadow, and violence is difficult there.

**Puce House** (+3 days, 100 XP): surrounded by the remains of an epic bone circle and shaded by sturdy dryland coral-bonded dwarf pines, Puce House is the site of an odd alliance, between a porcelain prince polybody pine-mancer or pine wizard, and a spectrum satrap soma distiller. The Great Folk feel protective of them, and maintain a small patrol here, but the true guardian of Puce House is rumored to be a **bone-worked behemoth**. The rumors are true - the bone circle are the behemoth appendages (AC 14, HD 7, each bone appendage is a remote bone-worm drone). On the other hand, Puce House is a good place to stock up on fine woods and black light lotus schnapps.  
Expenses: 10 cash per week to stay in the fine rooms.

**Wandering Behemoth** (+1d6 days, 200 XP): finally, in the distance, a living wandering behemoth! Since the days of the Great Ride few come this far north, but this one seems to have a full canopy. Phytomancers would give their front plant extensions for a chance to hang out with one of these!



## 12. Fallen UMBER

Beyond the Way Stone the steppe continues, flat, tasteless, tone-deaf. The caravan trails have carved a route down to the bedrock, and at a long-dry gully buttresses of gently crumbling livingstone still attest to the long-lost land of UMBER, once grown rich on the local deposits of titanic biomatter, which supported a thriving chitin-cap agro-industrial aristocracy.

“Brrr, this dull place, it eats at the soul,” said DW.

“Agreed, nothing to loot,” replied PH.

**Weather:** The weather is unusually mild and calm for the steppes, and though the sun rises from the growing haze at only 10.30 a.m., it merely creates a pleasant feeling of decline and fall.

**Misfortune** strikes the weak-willed (Wisdom DC 2d6):

1. A spell or memory disappears into the dead land (lose one known spell or skill permanently, or until a *Restoration* is used).
2. Dry, flaky rash strikes hard (-1d4 Charisma).
3. 1d4 slots of supplies lost to the dust.
4. Chitin-cap spores infected a steed, laming it.
5. Lost in the dull, repetitive land. Have you walked past that abandoned village before? Maybe? (-1d4 days)
6. Rested in a peaceful farming village, but it turned out to be a ghostly echo of the Times of the Liberated Serf Dictatorship (lose 1 day and 1d4 supplies).

### DIRECTIONS

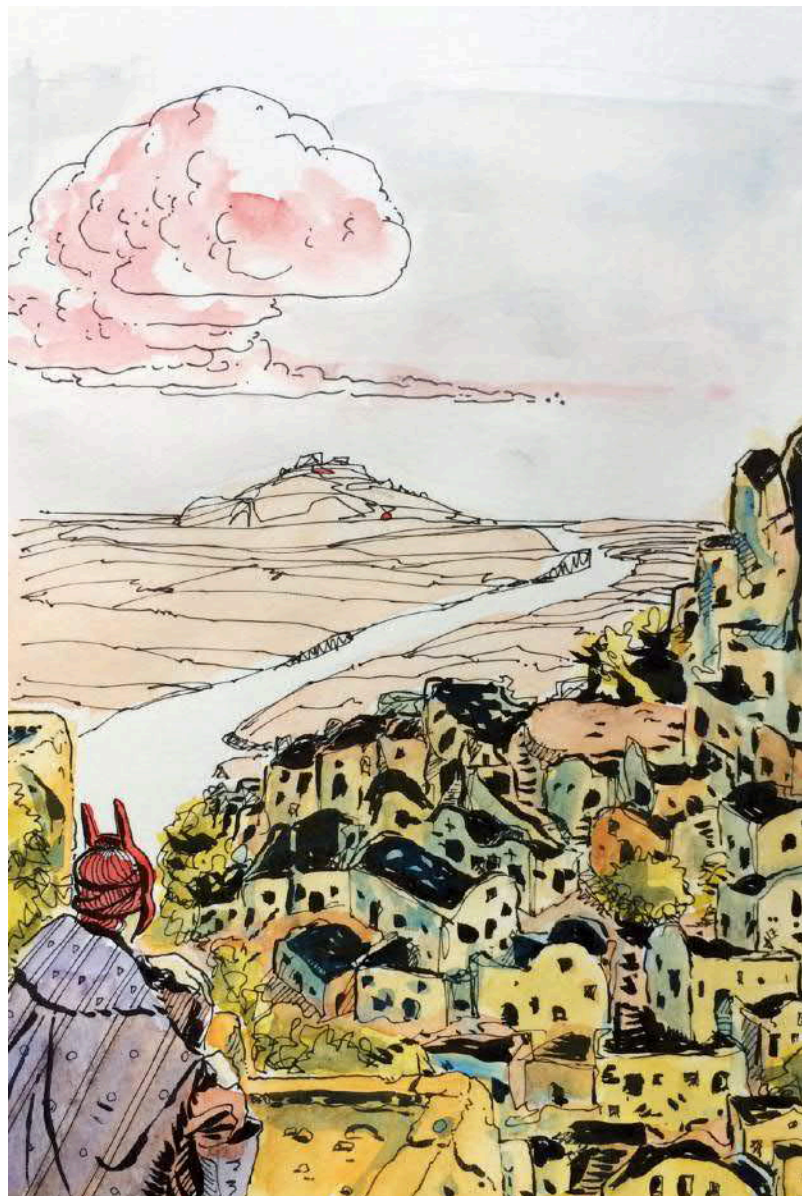
**West, Behemoth Shell** (trail, a week): tough grasses reclaim the brown land and the calcite husks of behemoths dot the way to the greatest shell of all.

**North, South-facing Passage** (steppe, a week): the brown lands fade imperceptibly into the greyish-green of the high steppe.

**East, Way Stone Graveyard** (trail, a week): the great green obelisk clearly marks the still lands of the Machine Graveyard.

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. A **hulk of this fallen land** (AC 18, HD 6, ravenous) scavenging for protein to feed to its mushroom masters in the ruins of a chitin farm.
2. Animated **chitin armors** (AC 16, HD 2, half-lost) stumbling around the perimeter of a tumbled Great House. They are dull and no danger.
3. Pack of hybrid prairie dogs hunting a grazing flock of ochre rabbit-pigs.
4. A ghostly caravan bearing bundles of archaic goods. If followed long enough, they may sell some of their time-dilated goods, which become solid when blood touches them.
5. Band of itinerant chitin foragers with grubby caps and foul-minded mules.
6. Family of Great Folk merchant-hunters with several bone-work golem wagons.





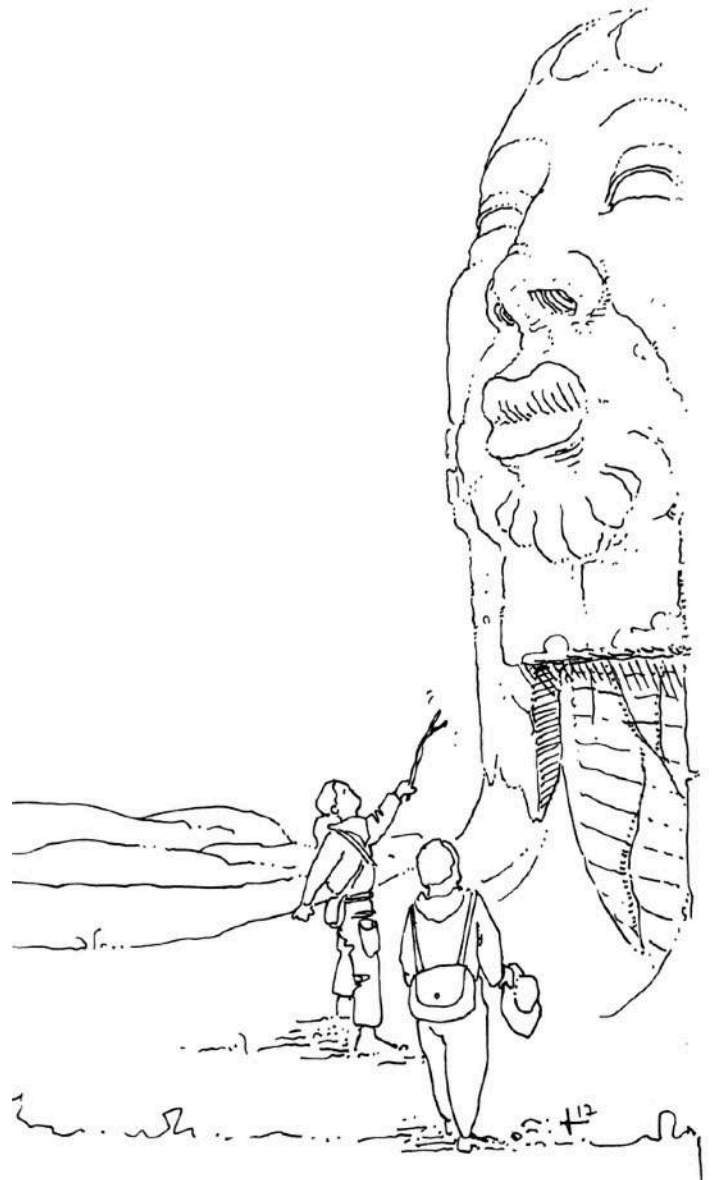
## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Hall of the Umber King** (+1 day, 100 XP): crumbling livingstone arches and colossi sheathed in festering growths of chitin-cap and other incredible fungoid art flowers reveal the lost glory of Fallen Umber. Blossoms and sparkling spores float through the slow air, and under the dry decay a scent of spices and incense lingers, smell ghosts of a golden age. Dilettante artists come here to sigh upon the folly of humanity, while perfumists send harvesters to collect the ancient spores. Crumbled chambers and tunnels of odd fungi are marked with warnings in several languages, but still mind-emptied husks wander about, sustained on the perfume in the air for months until they eventually dry out into perfect substrates for more rainbow-colored fungoids.

**The Azure Garden** (+2 days, 150 XP): a geodesic dome of livingstone marks one of the last stands of Fallen Umber, where the Dynasty of the Slumbering Green used massive biomantic rituals to reactivate the titanic biomatter and create a renewable source of fuel for their azure-strand chitin-caps. The attempt failed and the Dynasty eventually fell to a massive uprising of their tertiary servant caste, but in the centuries since the mutated offspring of the azure-strands have colonized the bones of the great dome, creating a hanging garden of susurrating azure fungoids. Hybrid sweet-fleshed rodents now tend to these ancient, sun-processing fungal colonies.

**Erosion of War** (+4 days, 260 XP): three great fungoid vome autofacs, odd, alien, colorful and sessile, rise like tetrahedrist villages above a small valley. Now, the mindless or mad colony organisms strip their environment to produce crawling and clattering warrior-creatures that march towards each other to fight, struggle and die. Every night scavenger organisms foray out to the battlefield to retrieve scrap and resources to refashion into new warriors. The mindless war has continued for many years and the tramping feet of troops have carved the entire triangular forty meter deep valley from the dun bedrock.

**The Stele of the Pierced Blossom** (+5 days, 300 XP): far beyond the beaten track some odd wanderer placed a massive stele, a thousand tons or more of garnet gneiss, inscribed with a mawkish poem about a blossom in love with herself, plucked to adorn a noble's dining jacket in her unique beauty, where she wilted and died alone. The words and glyphs are cut deep and utterly flawlessly, but more amazingly, the long-form poem is reproduced in seven languages, including the odd patterns that some call the Black City Alphabet. Studying the stele for several weeks, or at least procuring reproductions of the stele, is one of the better ways to comprehend (if not speak) the odd languages of the steppe.



## 13. Long Ridge

On the way to the Serpent's Stone the grasslands fold back and forth on themselves, like sinuous serpents undulate under the coating of ash-white grasses, waving in the gentle breezes. Little steppe rodents nibble at the air, great eagles circle overhead, and for once, little trace of the disgusting remnants of the Long Long Ago are seen.

"The guidebook says this place gets dust flies in springtime," noted Poncho.

"Like midges?" asked DW.

"No, these ones suck blood."

"Don't midges?"

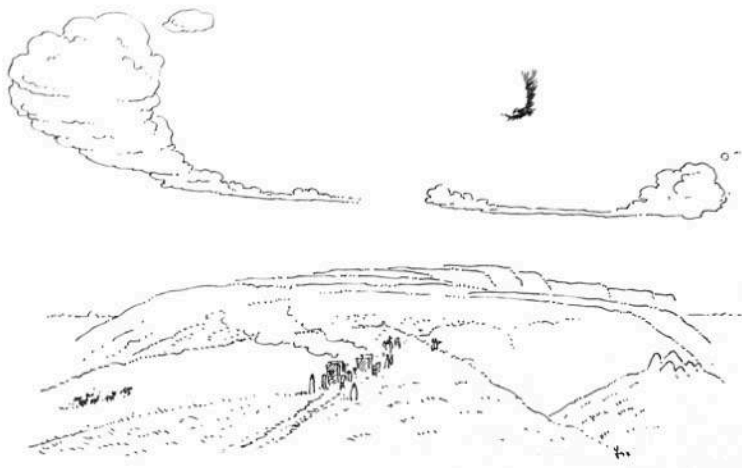
"Not all of them."

"Huh, fancy that."

**Weather:** The sun creeps above the dusty haze at 10.30 a.m. and the sky is silvery-pale in the dry heat of the open steppe. By night it is very cold.

**Misfortune**, constant companion (Con DC 10):

1. Water runs out in the empty land (-2 supplies).
2. Sudden snow storm (-1d4+1 days).
3. Swarming blood-sucking flies (-1 Con).
4. Abandoned rodent warren snaps a steed's leg. Oops.
5. Restful grove with beautiful spring. Oh, wait, the spring water was contaminated with the effluvia of Ultra ghosts (lose 1 day and 1 supplies in a hallucinated fug).
6. A random weapon or armor fell off the danged pack animal. Back over there. Somewhere. It's gone now in the sea of grass.



### DIRECTIONS

**West, Serpent Stone Marker** (steppe, a week): the endless sea of grass continues, swallowing the trails.

**East, Grass Colossus** (trail, a week): the great, grassy holy site of the lime nomads.

**South, South-facing Passage** (steppe, a week): the high steppe rises gently, a dusty, dun frontier.

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

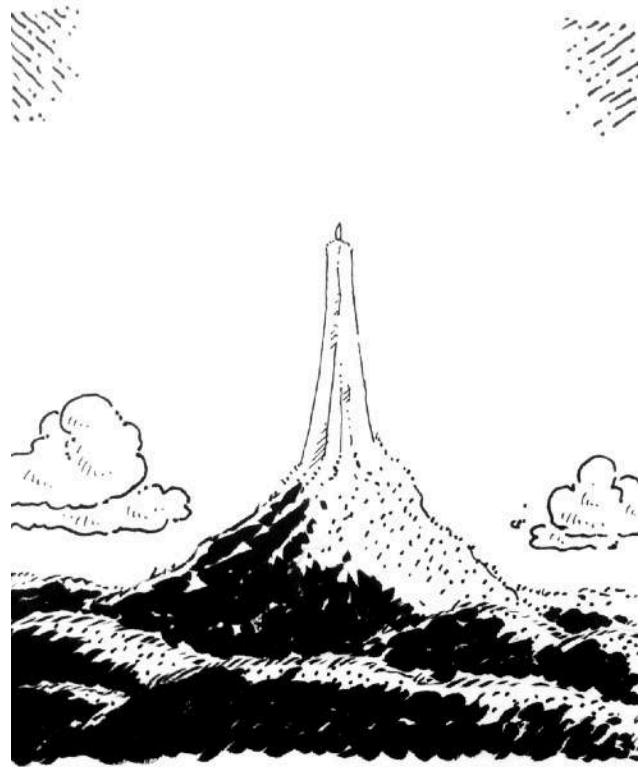
1. Vomish **hunter-killer serpents** (AC 14, HD 2, fast, burrowing).
2. Herd of **dark ghost gazelles** (AC 12, HD 3, hive mind), patrolling against vomish incursion.
3. **Burner golems** of wicker and sedge (AC 11, HD 1+1, jumping) sent by some bush wizard or other.
4. Herd of wild cattle, mighty horned and enigmatic.
5. Cultists covered in mosses and dust, meditating on the white grass and grazing on manna.
6. Small caravan of (roll d6): (1) lime nomads with flocks of wooly sheep, (2) great folk with bone-work tools and beads, (3) spectrum satraps in a great six-footer, (4) hostile and scruffy yellowlanders with burdenbeasts and saffrons, (5) enigmatic half-elves with empty eyes and hollow laughs, (6) cowed little people whipping two-legged burdenbirds.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Grass Circles** (+1d3 days, 80 XP): ornate circles and whorls appear overnight in this area. None of the local nomads or travelers seems to know or care what it is. Some of them even suggest it's just 'crazy kids', when it is obvious that it is higher powers trying to communicate. It is, in fact, a group of 'kids'. Ultra-possessed abmortal kids trying to summon the Spirit in the Sky. It will never work. The Spirit in the Sky does not listen.



**Copper Cairn** (+2 days, 70 XP): glistening on a lonely tumulus, a cairn entirely of green-hued copper nodules stands, mute testament to some long-gone queen or merchant - who could tell? Curse markers warn of death (the curses of the splitting of bones and the melting of eyes are true enough, and still strong). Bones, shards and smears are also testament to a curse-maddened vomish autofac beneath the cairn, spewing out rubber bioenhanced **wormsnakes** (AC 13, HD 2, spitting). There are 40 slots of copper in the cairn, worth 400 cash each. But the curse is real, and who knows what is actually in the cairn?



**The Sky Tower** (+3 days, 100 XP): the very grass tinges blue as it creeps up the sloping flanks of the sky tower. The tower itself erupts, a sharp pinnacle of blue glass that ends in a great, translucent platform. The ghost of a sky-gazer lives there and answers questions about the still and the moving stars, but knows nothing about the passage of time and aeons. Crude visitors have chipped and scarred the tower with their names, but some aura of respect keeps vandals at bay.

**Fallen Feast Hall** (+2 days, 2d6 x 10 XP): the stone and glass pillars of an ancient feast hall from long, long ago stand next to a deep pool. The water is rainbow-colored and euphoria-inducing, filled with the product of some still-churning subterrene autofac. Odd farmers of wood and sinew wander about, the harmless products of some kind of abmortal bioengineering. They grow tasteless tubers and fat grubs.

## 14. Behemoth Shell

What were these things? These mountain-sized calcite encrusted things that suspended themselves on levitation lenses and drifted and dragged themselves along the surface? Sages speculate that demiurges might have used them to sculpt the world, to deform it closer to some divine ideal they might have had.

Most are gone. The logarithmically multi-spiralled shell of one slumps here, a lumpy, curling mountain, like a cross between a sea urchin and a great conch. The satraps may claim it, but truly, it belongs to the Great Folk who live upon and in it, scurrying like lice within its ageless bulk.

**Weather:** By night the winds are cold, but when the sun emerges from the creeping dark at 11:00 a.m., the temperature quickly rises. The harsh steppe climate is ameliorated by the bulk of the shell, with pine woods and small pools providing relief.

**Misfortune,** who knows what to expect in a land where scavengers call themselves the Great Folk (Cha DC 1d12):

1. Fell through an eroded shell midden into a subterranean cavern (-1d4 supplies or lose 1d6 Dex and Con).
2. Unexpected hailstorm (-1 days or -1d4 hp).
3. Soporific pine trees put party to sleep (-1d3 days).
4. A beast of burden wanders off (lose beast or -1 day to retrieve it)
5. Caught a nasty cold (sniffing and sneezing for 1d6 days).
6. Cash pilfered by a tribe of uplifted, greedy prairie dogs (-1d100 cash).

**Expenses:** 5 cash per week to camp in the great hulk.

### DIRECTIONS

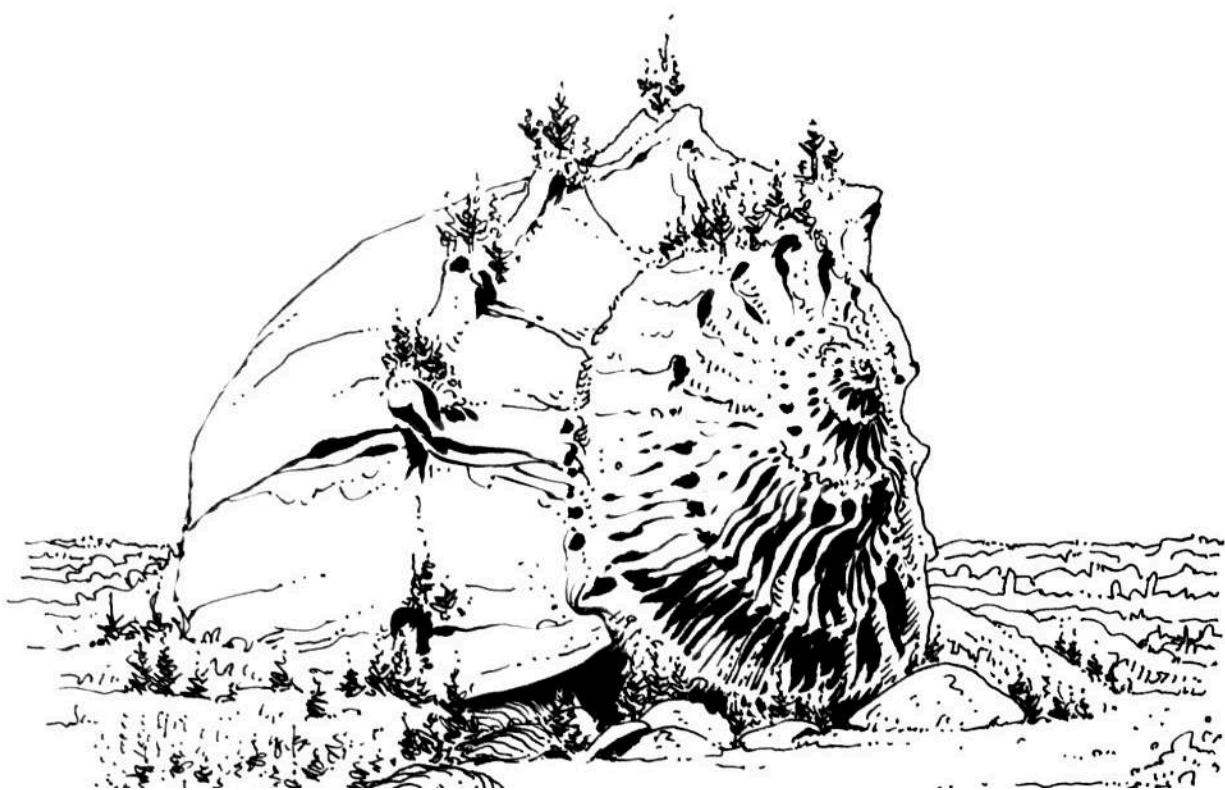
**North-West, Moon-facing Ford** (trail, 2 weeks): the Moon River marks the hard frontier of Spectrum power, and all trails converge on the great Ford.

**North-East, South-facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): the high steppe rises, a gentle obstacle and safe.

**East, Fallen UMBER** (trail, a week): the dull, brown desolation of that dead kingdom.

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. Flickering **void riders** (AC 18, HD 4, enigmatic) arrayed in swirling feather and grass and synthetic flesh. They demand odd tribute (roll d6): (1) the skull of a hound, (2) the memory of a lost toy, (3) the snot of a snake, (4) the bloody gold of a betrayal, (5) a pound of hair, (6) the tribute of one sentient servant.
2. Semi-sentient **steppe wolves** (AC 13, HD 2, trippy) hunting together with **magic carpets** (AC 11, HD 3, wrapping), symbiotic carpet-like colony organisms that crawled out of some long ago rock wizard's lab.
3. Pack of giant armadillos (AC 17, HD 3, spikey).
4. Large scavenger beetles roosting in gnarled pine trees.
5. Great Folk bone farmers excavating calcinous marrow beet.
6. Spectrum Satrap emissary or enforcer in a camouflage synth-suit and several **autonom troopers** (AC 14, HD 1+1, semi-sentient synthetics).



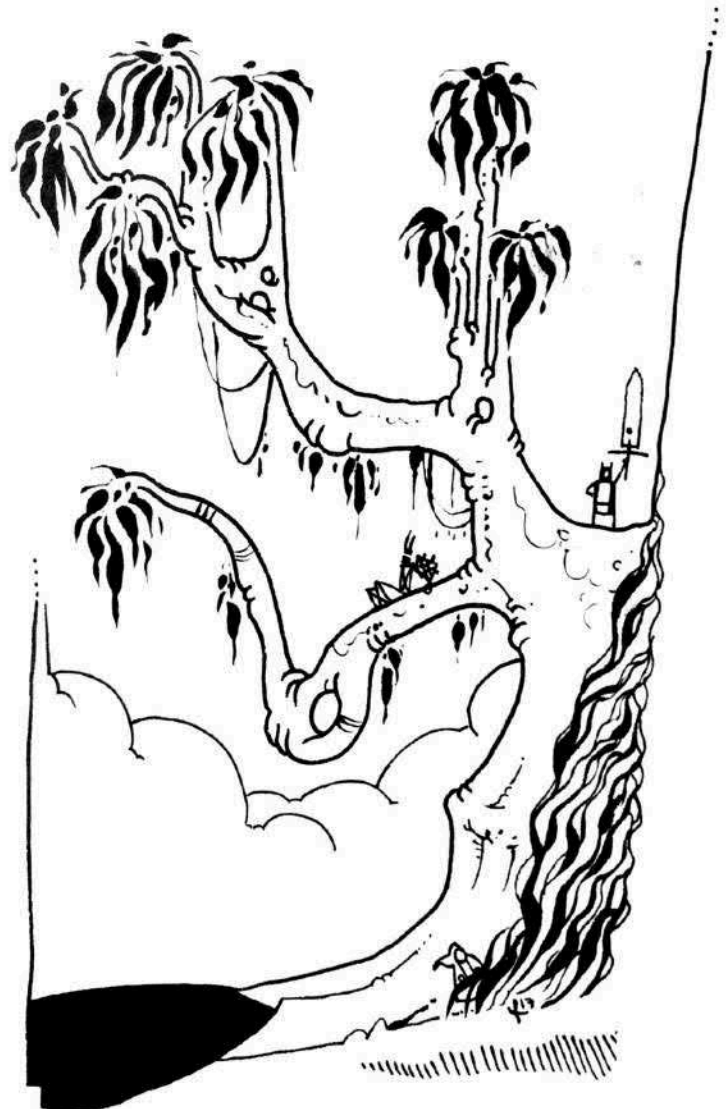
## THE SIGHTS

**Crushed Shell** (+1 day, 66 XP) whorls, lumps and field-sized shards of behemoth shell fill a great, shallow crater. From afar it seems like a great mallet smashed an entire behemoth into the ground, splintering it into pieces. All this was long ago, and peat bogs and pine thickets now encrust some of the largest shards. Great folk herding plains rabbits scabble a meagre existence and offer to sell chunks of "The Mallet of Heaven." The glassy chunks of melted shell and sand speak of some cataclysmic force. They are surprisingly effective against ka-zombies.

**Lurid Pines** (+2 days, 95 XP) in the narrow defiles of a nondescript mountain, ornate and buxom pines have grown fat on the biomantic pollution left behind from a magical test site. The surface has been thoroughly looted, but in the caverns below amid ancient biomantic gear (10,000 cash and 40 slots) generation after generation of mutated rodents has come and gone, including (roll d6):

1. Sessile photosynthesizing rodents like lumpy ferns that birth litters of runty green mice scrambling for patches of ground to plant themselves. Worth 200 cash per slot to interested horticulturalists, but annoying to catch.
2. Ornately baroque rats dressed in feathers and foils that mimic the stately etiquette of a bygone time. They are utterly uncreative, but capable of perfectly imprinting on behaviour patterns they experience in childhood. They stack their drying corpses in a tinsel-glittering ballroom beneath the mountain.
3. Tinker gerbils backwards engineering their origin from the library and scrolls of the original Biomancer Barons of Behemoth. They are missing a few key facts and a name, but the germ of a new society is here.
4. Hardy and grim hamsters, grown cannibal and vicious in tunnels beneath the pines. Very deep, close to the life-roots of the land, they fatten ka-zombies on a diet of romantic comedies and disconcerting violin music.
5. An eloquent hive of mole rats, become intelligent through attempts by a rogue charm-engineer of long-ago to recreate the porcelain princes' poly-body technology. Perhaps she succeeded and became the mole rats?
6. A vomish autofac taken over by prairie dog source code, which now pumps out cybernetic enhancements to make higher life-form prairie dogs. There are no birds of pray or snakes in the vicinity of the mountain, all victims of the heat-ray-defence-nodules that grow among the pines, defending the sacred prairie dogs.

**Ideal Island** (+4 days, 300 XP) half-tethered to the land by sinews of earth, ropes of rock, veins of marble and tendrils of crawling sand, a section of the plain, like a great plate, strains to rise towards the sky at least a little bit. It is covered thickly with a slick, aquamarine flesh that covers a behemoth endoskeleton. On and within the flesh a queer habitat of fruiting trees, enormous flowers, and howling rat monkeys makes their home, all their needs provided for. The island is coated in poisons and filled with noxious airs, but at the centre rises a five-sided pyramid of five colors, rising to a great prismatic eye that gazes with love upon its own little ideal island. Perhaps there are weird secrets here, but the demiurge of this half-living behemoth is a deadly foe.





## 15. Serpent Stone Marker

Beyond the Long Ridge the steppe flattens out and becomes a true sea of white grass. From horizon to horizon, the world spreads flat and still.

In its depth lies a great chocolate-brown stone marker, flat, rising a foot above the soil, and five hundred paces across. The entire surface of the marker is covered in curiously fractal serpent patterns. Compasses and guidestones swirl and direct themselves towards it, helping voyagers in this swirling place.

Smaller stone markers dot the rest of the white grass steppe, gently eroding and being reclaimed, pointless memorials from the Long Long Ago.

“Nothing,” muttered PH, “Still nothing.”

“No, no, we are close! The compass is shifting hourly now!”

“I think that lump of machinery is lying to you.”

“It is not!”

**Weather:** The sun rises above the glowing UV haze only at 11:00 and soon becomes a scorching and harsh eye, glowering at travelers. By night the temperature plummets and breath smokes in the dry air.

**Misfortune,** the steppe is pitiless for the luckless (Cha DC 1d12):

1. Attacked by blood-draining vampire grass in the night (-1d8 hp).
2. Harsh, stiff winds make progress slow (-1d4 days).
3. Mechanical or magical device breaks down from the odd fields .
4. Carnivorous grasses entangle a beast in the night (lose beast or 1d4 supplies)
5. Got a nasty infection from a sharp sedge cut (-1d4 Con).
6. Camped on a nasty ant mound (lose 1d4 hp or 1 supply).

### DIRECTIONS

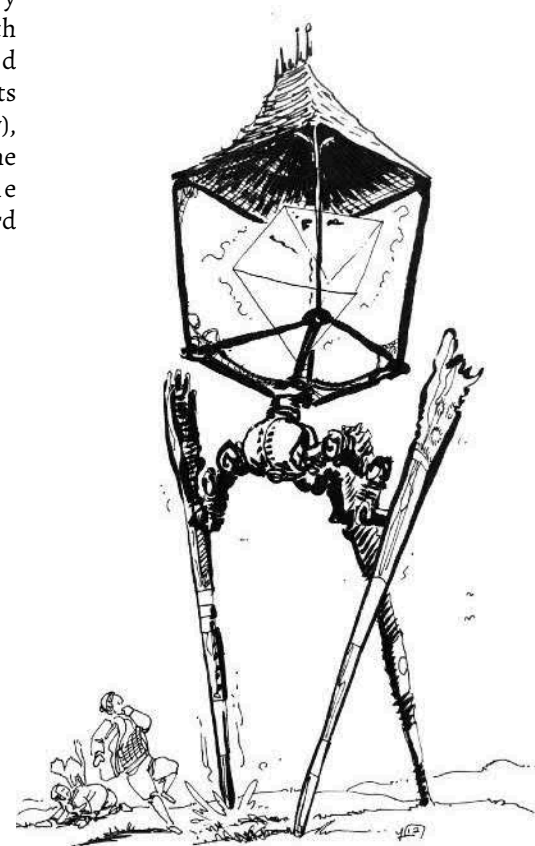
**South-West, Moon-facing Ford** (steppe, 2 weeks): the waving fields of ghostly grass sigh and turn towards the shallows of the great ford.

**East, Long Ridge** (steppe, a week): the steppe rises imperceptibly towards the east, rising to the Long Ridge.

**South-East, South-facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): a sharper, rougher steppeland crosses many ravines before rising to the gentle South-facing passage.

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. **Magnetic bloodworm swarm** (AC 12, HD 6) follows from the last marker-stone, drawn to a heady mix of metal and fresh bodily fluids. The bloodworms exhibit a distributed sentience and sages speculate that they are the last twitching memories of a kind of fluid soul-medium used by one of the Long Ago blood cults, perhaps the Grateful Undead or the Forgotten Fish. The swarm seeks sustenance and warmth, but can also become a friendly symbiotic organism. After proper attuning rituals, a masterful biped could use the swarm could be used to puppet 1d4 other bodies.
2. **Scavenger outcasts** (AC 16, HD 3) of the farther nomads, grown less-human in these lands so far from the Pinnacle. Their skin is translucent and lights play across it, while small snake-like symbionts swirl within them. Mostly harmless, the outcasts are still better avoided.
3. Pack of **snake jackals** (AC 13, HD 2+2) on the prowl for easy prey, venom dripping from their fangs. Otherwise the jackals are mere beasts, easily scared off with flame.
4. Herd of **loper lapins** (AC 14, HD 1), the pallid antelope-like rabbitoids. Good eating if caught.
5. Migrating **grass colony** (AC 8, HD 12), easily avoided and slow, shot through with deadly vampire varieties if provoked.
6. Spectrum satrap **announcer walker** (AC 15, HD 5), patrolling on three stilt-like legs announcing to all who care that the border of the satraps is nigh and listing the taboos that are not to be violated. If properly beseeched (with kindness and admiration for its crystalline body), it can shorten the journey to the Moon-facing Ford by 1d4 days.



## THE SIGHTS

**Common Marker Stone** (+1 day, 50 XP), a stone marker creates a depression, like a pock-mark, in the white, gently-swaying white grass. The stone is (d6): 1) ghoulish blue, 2) cyber yellow, 3) bright lavender, 4) crusty coconut brown, 4) fern green, 5) fulvous orange, 6) sparkle-studded gamboge) and maintains a constant, somewhat cool temperature. In summer it provides relief, in winter it melts snow. The stone is marked with cryptic, swirling patterns that feed directly into a sleeper's Ba or personality. A sleeper that succeeds at a Wis DC 1d8+1 check discerns what the stone does and can choose whether to accept its patterns. A failed check means the sleeper proceeds directly to the pattern-transfer. A normal pattern transfer carries a risk of soul-burn (Wis DC 2d8+2 or suffer 1d6 points of Wis damage). Some patterns are even more dangerous. d6 patterns:

1. Peace Pattern: the sleeper regains lost hitpoints and ability points at double speed, but is slow and lethargic for a week (disadvantage on Dex checks).
2. Startracker Pattern: the sleeper attunes with one or other of the fast stars, acquiring expanded senses (advantage on all search or perception rolls) but weakened personality barriers (disadvantage on Wis rolls).
3. Personality Copy Pattern: the sleeper's personality (Ba) at the time of sleeping is copied and excreted as a Ba-pearl. It's unclear of what use this could be, but sages say that once upon a time such a Ba-pearl could be implanted into a new-growth body to create a duplicant, or even a polybody extension. Ba-pearls are worth 1d6 x 200 cash to unsavory types, but do you really want to sell a copy of your personality to some necromancer?
4. Side Dancer Pattern: for a week the sleeper is attuned with local gate-fragments and stuck-force tunnels and can expend 1d4 hitpoints to permute their body through a spatial discontinuity, seeming to suddenly teleport a few dozen meters. Someone observing them closely can try to follow at a cost of 4d4 hitpoints.
5. Grass Dream Pattern: the sleeper is attuned to the grass in this area of the steppe for the next week, cannot be surprised and gains tremorsense, however, the grass does make thoughts a bit slow (disadvantage on Int checks).
6. Rock Talk Pattern: the sleeper attunes to the marker stones themselves and can feel and hear the surroundings of other markers in a journey of several dozen miles. The sleeper gains advantage to encounter checks but disadvantage to Str checks.

**Blood Marker** (+2 days, 100 XP), an acres-wide patch of burgundy grass surrounds a convoluted, eye-poppingly complex dryland coral skeleton entirely of vivid crimson rock, slick with a protective lacquer coat. The marker is the skeleton of a sessile blood 'deity' created by the Long Ago Heart of Gold Blood sonic cult. The area around it still resonates and draws a particular kind of necromancer or sage keen to empower their blood magics. It's also a perfect place to hunt magnetic bloodworm swarms, as there's a 25% chance of one appearing at any given sunset or sunrise.

**The Eternal Snaking Marker** (+3 days, 200 XP), quite far north of the main trails, in a depression masked by lichen-crusted pines of a particularly ageless appearance, a cyan stone covered with an eternally snaking fractal serpent pattern marks the Eye of the Serpent of the Stars and the Suns. Some say it is a gateway to other stars, others that it is the shard of a divinity, yet others say it is the ghost of a stellar dragon. In any case, a gaggle of spiritualists, seekers and shamans is regularly to be found here in an anarchic collective of mushroom-chomping, dream-voyaging, spirit-fencing, all-dancing, all-singing fools. Few would dare suggest they have found the meaning of the Eternal Snake, but some small secrets are common knowledge. Sleeping upon it is known to cure one mental attribute per night (Wis, Int, or Cha), at the cost of disadvantage to Con checks for a week for every night spent on the Snake. The local shamans may offer:

1. Healing balms concocted from vole droppings and pink mushrooms that heal 1d6 hit points (10 cash).
2. Spirit voyage charts that grant advantage to one spirit voyage or to learning one spell (30 cash).
3. Strong soporific poisons, perfect for coating an arrow or blade (as the *Sleep* spell, 20 cash).
4. To teach a specific healing meditative trance that fully restores either Con, Str or Dex ability damage (choose one) in a single day (takes 2 weeks to learn, costs 50 cash).
5. An epic dose of Cat snip powdered puff mushrooms. It brings euphoria and 2 bonus actions and they're selling 4 doses for just 50 cash. It's addictive (DC 2d4) and if an addict goes without, their Charisma is halved until they get a new dose.
6. A ba-hardened wooden short sword (1d6 damage) that deals double damage to incorporeal creatures and Ultras (60 cash).

**Pine-crusting Lophotroche** (+4 days, 300 XP) what at first seemed a great boulder is a living lophotroche the size of a citadel, coated in mosses, fungi and gnarled lumen pines, and inhabited by a symbiotic polybody rebel cult. What are they doing here in the middle of nowhere? Where are they getting the sweet sweet sugar they trade to the Pinegreen nomad clan? Is it true that they hold a mercer gate in the gut of that giant spineless beast?

Bonus trade good: *sweet lophotroche sugar*. There is only a small stock of 20 sacks available, with 1d4-1 hauled from the deep guts of the lophotroche each month. It costs 100 cash per sack on location, but is guaranteed to sell for much more at every settlement whose residents have visible mouths.







## 16. Moon-facing Ford

The expanse of the steppe seems endless, from north to south the flat land rolls on under the sky dome. The slow stars and the fast glitter, icy and cold, and voyagers from the four corners approach the Moon River with exaggerated care. The great shallows of the Moon-facing Ford mark the easiest passage between the light grasslands and the dark. Weaker parties - or those with something to hide - seek other, far deadlier crossings.

**Weather:** The stars continue to spark until 11:30, when finally the sun emerges to glare upon the steppe. Clouds scud and lightning crackles.

**Misfortune:** The waters of the Moon river are slow, muddy, cold and old, but sometimes they rush like lunatic thunder worms (Cha DC 2d6, sixes explode):

1. swept away by a flash flood, throw away up to six possessions and roll d6. If you roll equal to or below the number of discarded possessions you wash up 1d4 days away, unhurt. If you roll over, you drown.
2. struck by lightning, lose half hit points and one metal item is destroyed.
3. pack animal sickens in the light of the Near Moon and begins to show lycanthropic tendencies. Lose 1d4 days treating animal, or lose the animal.
4. catch a nasty cold from the icy waters (lose 1d4 Con).
5. supplies get wet (lose 1d4 supplies).
6. one of your rings was actually magical and it slips away from your finger as you are crossing, to be found years later by a fisher-dwarf named Smehol. But that is another story.

**Expenses:** 10 cash per week to camp within the Fordite Coral Kraals.

### DIRECTIONS

**North-West, Three Sticks** (steppe, 2 weeks): the cold deep lake covers forgotten cities and magics.

**South-West, Near Moon** (trail, 2 weeks): a trail of decaying bitumen-and-ash mix leads to the odd satellite.

**North-East, Serpent Stone Marker** (steppe, 2 weeks): the white grass full of snake-like spirits beckons.

**South-East, Behemoth Shell** (trail, 2 weeks): the calcite-cumbed flatland, studded with the remains of behemoths.

### ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. **quickwater snakes** (AC 12, HD 7, liquid elemental) are drawn to the glow of sentience like moths to a flame. Sacrifices tied to one of the numerous crystal altars can often distract them.
2. mud-furred **crocotters** (AC 14, HD 4, ambushers) are a pest in the Moon River and wiley travelers know to release a goat or sheep to distract them.
3. a flock of **great herons** (AC 15, HD 1) is said to bring great luck, barbarians also try to eat them.
4. a herd of dire water rats feeding on spiny tubers.
5. a local clan of **fisher quarterlings** offering dried fish, nasty gossip, and cut purses - or, to nice people, a totally safe and dry burrow to sleep in.
6. a Spectrum Satrap **self defence initiative** (AC 18, HD 2, heavy) on patrol from a fordite coral kraals.

## FORDITE CORAL KRAALS

Studding the western banks of the Moon River and the steppe beyond to Three Sticks Lake and through the Refracting Trees are the countless colourful kraals. The Spectrum Satraps claim to have built them, but many are so old and eroded that their true progenitors may never be known. The kraals are rings or ovals of colourful slag extracted from deep layers of Long Long Ago habitation caves, fabricators and even from dead vomes, by the slow action of mutated dryland corals. Their most common use now is as makeshift caravan or nomad encampments, the spiny many-colored walls used as protection against marauders, wild beasts, vomes and worse.

Traveling through Kraal Country, a group is liable to come across a kraal on most days. For a given night's rest roll d6. If the party wants to be certain of finding a specific type of kraal, some time is required to ensure success.

1. **Traces:** only eroded gravel remains, whether time or battle destroyed this kraal, who can tell.
2. **Stones:** standing stones and several great coral spines remain. A few days work could turn it into a rude fort. As it is, defenders in the kraal can count on some cover against ranged attacks and a few advantageous locations against attackers.
3. **Ring:** a waist-high ring of the fordite agate coral offers a solid, defensible position in the steppe. Charges against defenders will not work, and cover against ranged attacks is plentiful.
4. **Thorn kraal (+d3-1 days):** the spines and twists of the fordite coral present hazardous obstacles to attackers and force them to try individual choke points. Defenders can find good sniping positions.
5. **Trench kraal (+d3 days):** the fordite kraal sees regular use, larger caravan guilds leave their sigils and scouts here, firepits, trenches and dugouts make it a safe point in the wilderness. There is a 50% chance of a working well, and 25% chance of a bardstone. The bardstone probably knows some weird spell.
6. **Kraal fort (+d6 days):** the fordite kraal is occupied by a Satrap self defence initiative, guild mercenaries, local semi-nomadics, or even stranger things. It has a working well, stores of food, perhaps even a general provisioner.

## THE PYLON KRAAL

Overgrown dryland coral wreathes the remains of several bridge pylons from Long Long Ago, on an ancient deck in the middle the Pylon Kraal is home to the Tollmasters, a freely associated Spectrum Satrap vassal corporation. It offers the illusion of freedom and independence to unsavory travelers, aid to pilgrims, sustenance to scholars, beds and medical services to weary voyagers, and information to the Satraps.

**Post-Satrap 48bis** is a network of interlocking symbiotic eels in a triple-sealed suit of naples yellow. 48 works the local healing light sauna and solarium, where the Pylon Pirates hold their regular conclaves.

The **Pylon Pirates** are a cooperative of farmer-fighters and ex-nomads who now maintain the Pylon Kraal corals and defend its stairs and walls. They are led by Viki Six-lives and Surot Two-eyes.

**Tollmaster House** is the head of the organization, a sessile sentience spread throughout the grand fuchsia hall of the Tollmasters. House is an inveterate mind-riffler and enchanter.

**Tollmaster Door** is the equivalent of a town crier and spell-soaked main gate to the kraal in one.

**Tollmaster Sister** is the chief of the ambulant tollmasters, a post-organic Redlander, whispered to still have connections to the Wine Vampires.





## OTHER CROSSINGS

The Moon-facing Ford was lost behind the grass-knit dunes. Poncho shivered, the wan purple light of the sun behind the haze layer no consolation in this desolate land under the gaze of the Near Moon.

“We don’t want to cross there,” said Demiwarlock.

The emphasis was hardly necessary. The shallows were slathered to a foam by a frenzy of blue-flecked crocodilians.

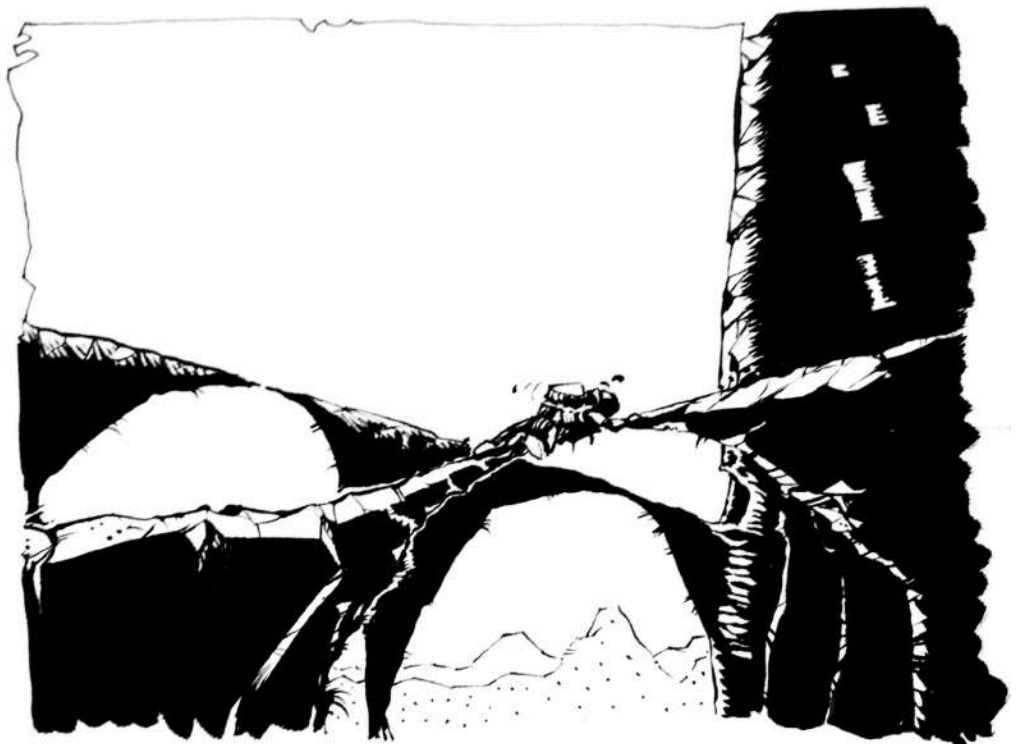
“How much further, then?” asked Poncho.

“As far as it takes for someone to avoid a fine,” deadpanned Demiwarlock.

Pointyhelmet whistled a jaunty tune.

The next crossing is a few days away (roll d6):

1. The Fishbladder clan of river quarterlings under the brood dominion of the Six Siblings operates the Reliable Ferry, an old livingwood lug painted livid lilac and ruby red. The fee is a reasonable 10 cash per head. They also dabble in occasional murder, theft, and sale of body parts for the Near Moon bodychoppers.
2. The Solipsistic Narwhal cabal of deep-thinkers trapped a part of their unified personality structure in the school of blue-flecked crocodilians (AC 16, HD 3) that make the Slathered Shallows such a deathtrap. Know to few, quoting the rainbow analects or the monochrome koans (Int DC 2d6), stops the crocodilians in their tracks. Occasionally (30%) the old eunuch Pepeidoleia is on hand in his little lean-to, ready to declaim the tracts across the ford for a symbolic fee.
3. The Olive Jerah is a series of three ridiculously rickety rope bridges of calcified sinews, bundled reeds and woven leather cords that stretch between the two banks and the Rock of the Rising Sun and the Stone of the White Room. Monks and nuns of the crumbling Order of the Tritone reside in the tunneled rocks, like maggots trying to recall the glories of a more musical age.
4. Half-sentient rafts of matted reeds grafted with river shrimp paddle along the slow waters of this marshy area. Local river folk use them for fishing, and in a pinch, and with a bit of empathic guidance (Wis DC 2d6) they could paddle a caravan across the turquoise waters, too. Slowly. Couldn’t be any danger in accepting a reed-shrimp hybrid into one’s mind, could there?
5. The Banks of the Bug are a series of shifting sandbars, quicksand, and log footbridges linked through the reedy Bug Swamp. Avoiding the worst parts is not too hard (Int DC 1d8+1), getting lost adds an extra 1d4 days to the crossing. The worst part is the Swarm of the Bug. A biomechanically reprogrammed collective of cat-sized water cockroaches slaved to the engorged biofab unit Gamma (B.U.G.). The B.U.G. continuously reprocesses organic matter into potato-sized brown ration pellets wrapped in water-resistant papery cocoons emblazoned with the yellow and green livery of some long-gone food wizard. There is a 20% chance of encountering the swarm on any given day.
6. The Glass Bridge is long gone, but some helpful souls have stretched nets and ropes between the translucent supports to help swimming and wading across. This is a little risky most days (Dex DC 1d6+1) but absolute madness after heavy rains (Dex DC 20). On moonlit days, when the True Moon’s light illumines the Near Moon, souls from some Long Long Ago spirit caravan crawl along the nets and try to find an audience for their pitiful laments. Listening to enough laments, some have been lost in the mad possession of these souls.



## 17. Near Moon

Whispers only came to the Violet City of this oddity, a spherical moon come to Earth, suspended less than a bow-shot above the ashen soil of the Grassland. The mile-high sphere, dusty and cratered, mocks astounded travelers.

“By the Black Bosom of Vulkana! That thing is enormous!” exclaimed PT.

“Yes, the cosmographers believe the stuck-force holding it in place must be the largest in the world,” recited Poncho from the guidebook.

“Ah, throw that to the fish! That moon has room inside for treasures that would melt the hearts of the simpering sopranos of Saffranj!”

**Weather:** A blue-glow haze is the only light until noon, when the sun emerges, washed out and colorless, its rays are still fierce and burning. No water falls in the vicinity of the Near Moon, but in the eternal twilight beneath its bulk dank waters pool and bogs spread.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 13, roll d6):

1. nauseated by the odd tides (lose 1d6 Con and Wis).
2. lost your cloak and hat to a freak wind.
3. fell into a bog and caught a cold (sneezing), also ruined a fine silk kerchief, if you have one.
4. acquired a fantastic belief that you are a lycanthrope and require raw, bloody meat to feed your inner beast. This passes once you are out of sight of the moon.
5. torn waterskins (lose 1 supply).
6. horribly bitten by bugs in the night (lose 1d4 Dex).

**Expenses:** 10 cash per week to stay in the Spectrum Lodge.

## DIRECTIONS

**North-West, Moon to Spectrum Run** (trail, 2 weeks): a well-marked trail leads towards the Spectrum Palace and the Ribs of the Father.

**North-East, Moon River Ford** (moon-haunted trail, 2 weeks): the accursed faces of forgotten times glare west and travelers fear to raise their eyes lest those grim visages steal their souls.

## ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. a **ka-elemental** (AC 10, HD 10, insubstantial) stalking in maddened decay, leaving ectoplasmic debris as it seeks a lost body to reposses, unmoored in its rage by the action of the moon’s odd tides. It is known that ka-elementals are often tied to ill-fortuned tombs and sites of some slaughter, perhaps valuable slaughter (2dx6 x 200 cash).
2. mysterious **moonbirds** (AC 14, HD 6, flock) descend in a mind-stealing flock and feed on strong emotional emanations. Sufficient moonbird feeding can cause ka-zombies (living dead).
3. **ka-zombies** (AC 10, HD 2, docile) tilling fields or working at repetitive tasks for their moonling taskmasters.
4. a friend-group of tin-hatted **moonlings** or **moon quarterlings** (AC 14, HD 2, good at throwing rocks) discussing ka-zombie maintenance and how to build a better moon-rock bubble-burrow.
5. a local clan of **fisher quarterlings** offering dried fish, nasty gossip, and cut purses - or, to nice people, a totally safe and dry burrow to sleep in.
6. a Spectrum Satrap **self defence initiative** (AC 18, HD 2, heavy) on patrol from a fordite coral kraals.



## ODD TIDE EFFECTS

Besides just severe nausea, the odd tides of the Near Moon, as it strains against the bonds and aeons old magical detritus that holds it close to the soil, also have other effects (roll d6 when the weather changes or once per week):

1. **soul dislocation:** the tethers between souls and personalities are weakened, giving disadvantage to all Wis and Cha saves during this period.
2. **troubled sleep:** rest is half as effective and disadvantage to all Con checks.
3. **delirious tides:** disadvantage to all Int checks.
4. **moon-walkers:** all Dex checks have advantage.
5. **bloody tides:** all damage dealt with advantage, healing checks and rest half as effective.
6. **days of inspiration:** all Int and Cha checks have advantage.



## NEAR MOON DOOR

Everyone in the UVG has heard the old tales that there is a palace inside the Near Moon, a precious hall of crystal and gems, priceless beyond imagining. Of course this is not true, as any sage would say.

But there is a door on the skyward side of the moon known to only very few, reachable by ropes and hooks and scabbling hands, round the weak gravity well of the suspended rock. Somebody with directions to the door would find it in a day, one without would need at least 2d10 days to achieve the same. The door itself is a puzzle to open, requiring either 1d4 days per Int DC 15 check, or the sacrifice of a whole Ling's worth of blood at an eerie pyramid of diaphanous force-skin laced with great calcarated arteries and stretched upon an iron-bone frame: the ruined half-living carcass of a cosmic guardian.

The moon itself is host to various outlandish creatures, living like parasites upon its ash-grey hulk. Including:

1. **grey forest lichens** seem at first blush to resemble the earthly lichen, but in the odd tides of the moon they grow to monstrous proportions, as much as four meters tall.
2. **rusticant mushroom ferns** are the commonest plant form of the Near Moon, they arrange themselves into hexagonal fields, assembling moon-ash into leafy shields bonded with chitin. Perhaps against the aetherial disruptions of the deep cosmos? It is unclear.
3. **ashlar crabs** (AC 18, HD 1, nutritious) inhabit blocks of carved and dressed moonrock. They are scavengers and lichen feeders, and move surprisingly nimbly in the weak, odd gravity of the Near Moon.
4. **exuberant prehensiles** (AC 14, HD 2, swinging) seem at first glance an odd mix of spiny echinoderm and flea, the prehensiles launch themselves from the moon's surface with a single leaping pseudopod, while using a silken cord like a bungee to whip around the moon. They are herbivores.
5. **leather shingles** (AC 13, HD 3, tough) are slow moving symbiotes of algal mats and some kind of myriapod, photosynthesizing gently while also feeding on the rusticant ferns with their radular pseudopoda. Herbivores.
6. **flea wolves** (AC 15, HD 4, jumping packs) are the common predator of the Near Moon. Ungainly at first blush, they use hooked extensors and jumping legs to move surprisingly quickly, attacking with quartzite extrusions on their 'faces' and feeding with modified limbs that look eerily like doll hands.

Heroes who surmount all these obstacles find themselves finally inside **The Heart of the Moon** (p. XX).

## SPECTRUM LODGE

Ah, the Spectrum Lodge! The finest lodge in all the Grasslands. A pitch-black orb, streaked with yellow and red lichens, but inside—so they say—a marvel, a riot of color, a vision of spaces that could have been had the Sky remained unfallen and the Mists unrisen. Crusty characters include:

**Ostens the Marksman** (AC 13, HD 5, sharpshooter), who wears a full suit of false limbs, attached by a system of leather golems and biomechanical switches to his torso, which is all that remains after an encounter with a demon in a game of Bridge Keepers.

**Babeffe the Bull-fighter** (AC 16, HD 4, wrestler) is a folk hero among the semi-nomadic services and mechanists communities of the middle grasslands. She's getting old, her long black hair greying, her teeth thinning, but she could still pull a wruppler to the ground one-handed.

**Life-Is-A-Game** (AC 11, HD 7, sorcerer bartender), rumored to be an ultra, currently wearing the skin of a noble quarterling from far up the Moon River, where the toothed hills turn to follow the progress of the red-and-gold star. In any case, she is friendly, mixes a mean cocktail, and totally isn't looking for patsies to dive into crystal heart of the Near Moon to retrieve Memories-Best-Forgotten (who is definitely an ultra).

## THE OTHER SIGHTS

**Ash Bubbles** (+1d4-1 days, 50 XP) form when storms whip ash laced with moonly slime spores down to the surface of the Earth. There, the odd spores reproduce rapidly, forming an odd bubble-shaped land coral by cannibalizing their dead cells as they expand. The ash bubbles can grow as large as five or six meters across, before bursting and collapsing under the heavier gravity. Young ash bubbles can sell for as much as 500 cash per slot. Moonlings usually kill older ash bubbles

by coating them in a soap mix over several weeks, then cure them with waxed canvas covers, while smoking them from within, forming the bubble-burrows of those clannish oddballs.

**The Cryptic Swallet** (+2 days, 100 XP) is a sinkhole punched through the surface layers of anthropocite and basalt into a subterranean lake. Now quite eroded, the walls are drilled with bone-niches holding generations upon generations of moonbirds drawn here by some odd compulsion at the end of their lives, while the well-protected base of the Swallet is home to four clans of fisher quarterlings. The clan of the Martinet is the strongest in mana, while the clan of the Pine badger holds strength of heart. The clans of the Olive tree and the Iron axe are not important.



## 18. Three Sticks Lake

Three ragged villages cling to the steep shores of the cold, deep lake, built on layers of older settlements from the Long Long Ago. Caravans drag themselves around the harsh coastline, while smaller groups cross on the improvised and salvaged ferries of the Stick Folk.

Poncho inspected the accursed blade. It was very dark, very heavy, and very, very metal.

“How did you not realize this isn’t your sword?” he asked.

“It looked exactly like my sword and I was in a hurry!”

“It literally has the runes for ‘hell blade’ on it.”

“Yes, well, how was I supposed to bother to read those? They’re tiny!”

“Well, never mind. Just keep it sheathed and don’t try to drink our blood again, ok?”

Long Long Ago demons did not wear the skins of animals and men to roam the shores of Three Sticks Lake. Now they do.

**Weather:** An electric smog seems to obscure half the sky, and the wan sun only emerges to scorch bare skin at noon. Gusting storms rush up at a moment’s notice in the odd eddies created by the Near Moon and flash floods are a danger.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 2d8, roll d6):

1. flash flood washes away 1d4 beasts (or people if the beasts run out). Saving a beast requires a Str DC 15 check (or related skill). Fail the check badly enough and the hero might be pulled in too. Same DC.
2. muddy bog and ravines wash out trail, forcing a detour that wastes 1d4 days.
3. bad sunburn from the violet rays (lose 1d6 hp).
4. wind blows away one book, map, scroll, or other inconvenient parchment.
5. supplies soaked while crossing an unexpectedly rough ford (lose 1d4 supplies).
6. eat some poisonous berries that cause annoying and loud burping for a week. Unlike in a Stephen King novel, no body horror ensues.

**Expenses:** 5 cash per week to stay in rustic accommodations in one of the Three Living Villages. Otherwise, free.

### DIRECTIONS

**West, The Refracting Trees** (lost trail, 1 week): the maddening tree-silicon symbionts of the Refracting Trees guard a Long Ago trail to the Spectrum Palace.

**South-West, The Spectrum Run** (scruffy trail, 2 weeks): a half-forgotten trail, marked with the corpses of Long Ago great vechs leads to the Spectrum Palace and the Ribs of the Father.

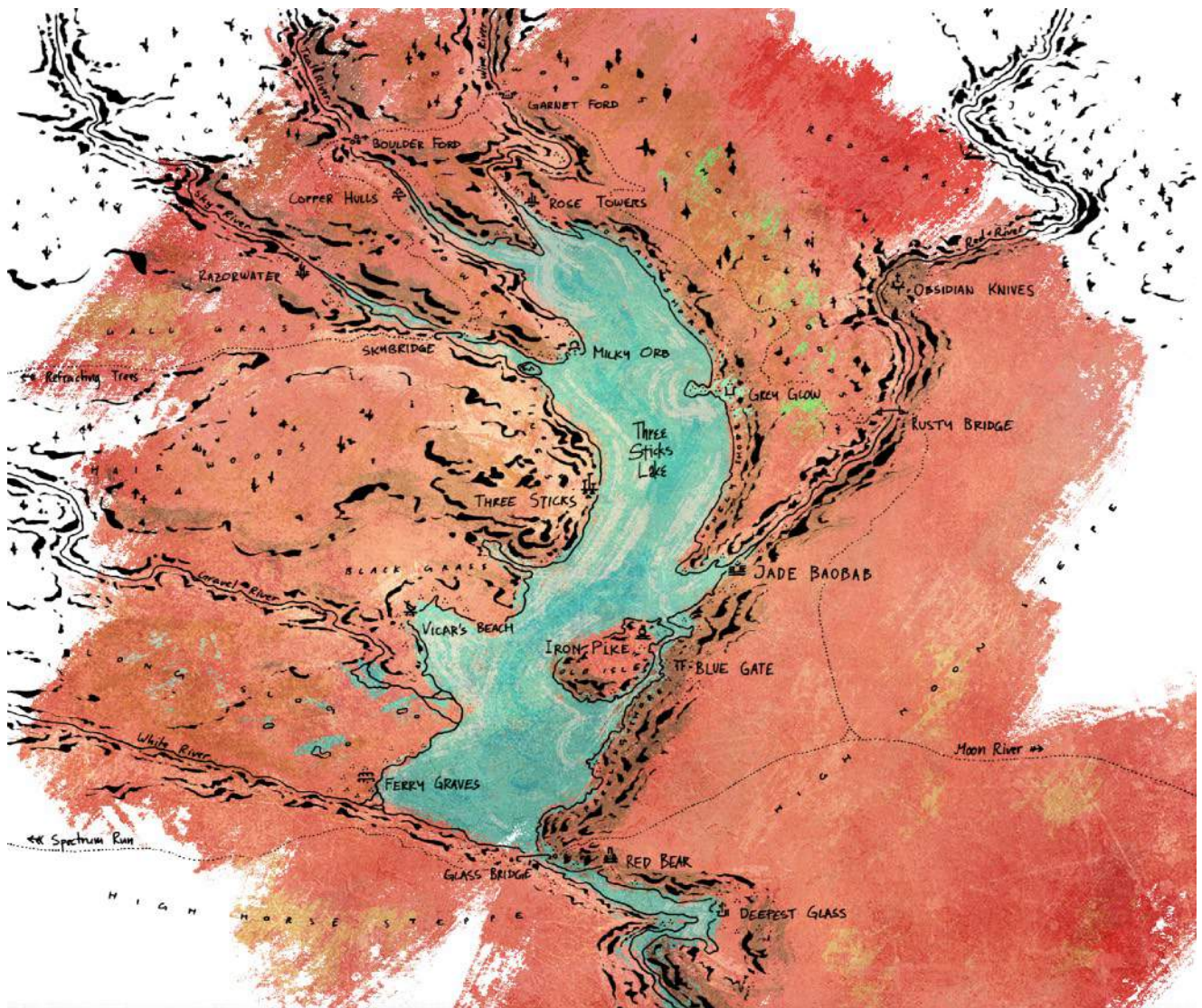
**South-East, Moon River Ford** (wearisome steppe, 2 weeks): the open expanse of the High Moon steppe stretches towards the Moon River, bleak, dull, safeish.

### ENCOUNTERS (D10)

1. **Hulking destroyer golem** from Long Ago (AC 18, HD 8, electromagnetic discharges) or other especially bad stuff (see specific Three Sticks area).
2. **Waterlogged attack vomes** (AC 14, HD 4, very fast) a swarm of amphibious, leaping, rattling vomes tries to grab a likely target and drag it off into the lake. Also called water people.
3. **Waterlogged vome drones** (AC 13, HD 2, dreams of Long Ago) patrolling from their bleak nest in the lake. They are are still vaguely human, dressed in synthskin rags and surprisingly articulate for vomes. Also called water people.
4. **Motley herd of woodland animals** (AC 10, HD 6, swarm) occupied by a cold demon or ultra (AC 6, HD 6+6, psychic) scouting the edges of the cold lake.
5. **Machine bear** (AC 15, HD 8, disinterested) surveying a territory long since abandoned.
6. **Parasitic charcoal fetish** (AC 12, HD 2, stuck in time) assembling and reassembling itself, as it tries to protect a long dead wizard.
7. **Skittish deer** with ash and green fur.
8. **Eerie half-human nomadics** (AC 13, HD 3, noble but savage) seem unglued in time, unwilling to talk or trade, they eat ash. Perhaps they are not human?
9. **Survivalist villagers** (AC 15, HD 2, paranoid) in a jury-rigged vech on a vital trading mission.
10. **Half-nomads** and their flock moving confidently, skilled in avoiding dangers, or another especially good encounter (see specific Three Sticks area).

The Three Sticks area is a lot more detailed as an overland area than most of the previous areas. Indeed, there’s enough there to start of most any overland campaign. How to handle it? Simple. Assume that it takes about a day to get from one location labelled in capitals to the nearest adjacent location also labelled in capital letters. This makes the ferries from Jade Baobab and Red Bear essential, if the party wants to reach the Refracting Trees quickly.





## Arriving in The Three Sticks

Treat **High Moon Crossing** as the starting location for parties coming from the East. On the map, this is represented by the little dotted triangle at lower right where the Moon River trail splits into northern and southern branches. Groups coming from the Refracting Trees should start in the **Gall Grass**, about a day from **Skybridge**. Groups coming from the Spectrum Run should start in the **High Horse Steppe**, about a day out from **Glass Bridge**.

**High Moon Crossing** is a hillock in the **High Moon Steppe**. It is covered in fine green grass rises four quarterlings high. Local nomads refer to it as “The Regenerating Hill”, for it always reforms to a perfect spherical cap. It is now studded with a profusion of offering pikes, many more rusted to mere spear heads. There are no fell spirits here or odd magics, only this oddity. Indeed, it seems to repel spirits, vomes, and other demonics, and thus it has become both a popular place to camp, and a natural crossroads for the North Trail and the South Trail, that circumnavigate the icy waters of Three Sticks Lake. North leads to the trail to Jade Baobab, south to Red Bear. Iron Pike is only (easily) reachable by ferry from those places.

The **Gall Grass** is a wide, high and dry valley, decked in the pungent yellow stalks and interwoven galls of the slow-dreaming distributed sentience of the modified grasses that absorb all moisture here and keep the **Hair Woods** to the south and the **Higher Spinewood** to the north at bay. Little can survive in the Gall Grass, and thirst a constant danger, but the slightly empathic Gall Grass also keeps most predators at bay, keeping this area surprisingly safe.

The **High Horse Steppe** is a cold, windswept high plateau, pocked with odd horseshoe-shaped depressions left, so the local half-nomads say, by the departure of the Sky Horses. The clans of the Fortunate Son and the Unbroken Patrimony claim that they are the descendants of the Maintainers of the Sky Horses that helped the Lings ascend into the heavens, like the All Fathers before them in the Long Long Ago. This may all be false, but the meeting place of these clans, set where the trail reaches the high ridge that overlooks the rugged southern shore of Three Sticks Lake and the imposing mire-sunk horror of the Ferry Graves, is nonetheless impressive. Two great hooves, broken off at the ankles, are all that remains of some noble equestrian statue that must have once reared at least 40 meters high.

## The Three Living Villages

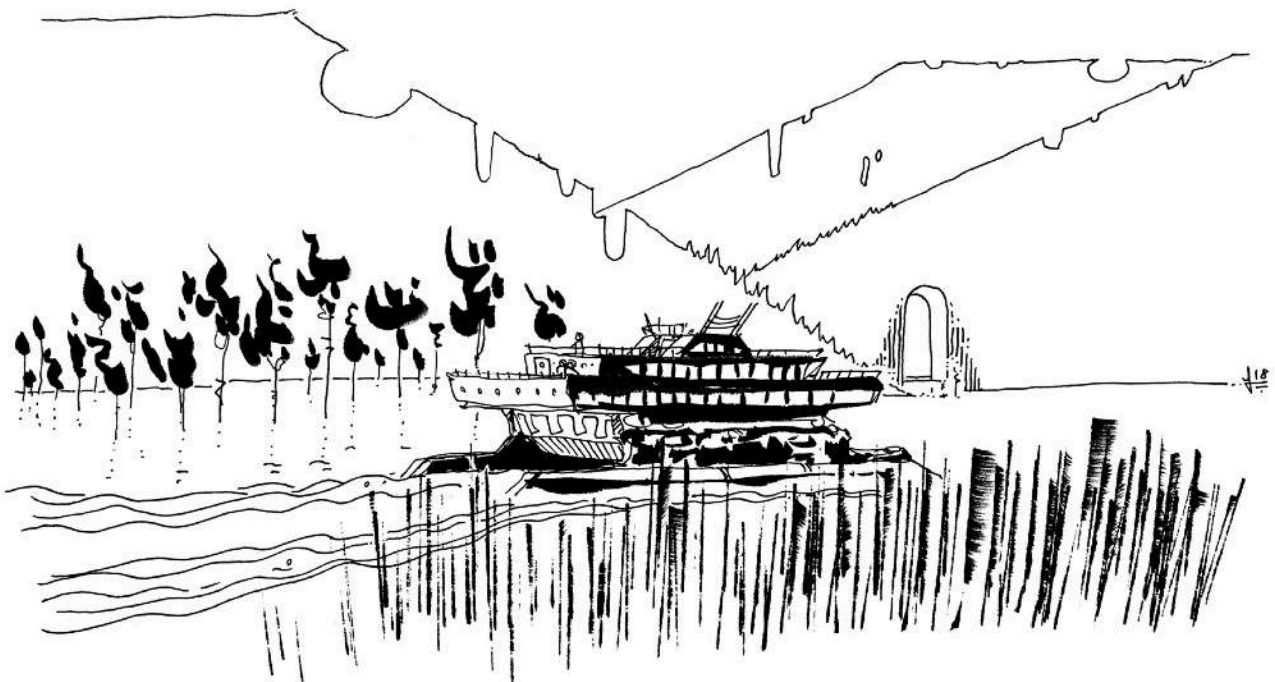
### JADE BAOBAB VILLAGE

**Jade Baobab** is built on a system of bridges and platforms suspended between the forty-meter-high corpses of two biomechanical baobabs. They rise on the south bank of the Red River, testament to the power of the Long Long Ago biomancers of the Five-Dog Corporation. The village is ruled with gnarled fists by the **Elders of Understanding**, a biomancer cargo cult devoted to body modification and the cultivation of miniature perspiration pears (value 200 cash per slot). The leading members, such as Father Time-hath-no-purpose and Sister Mercy-is-weakness hate ultras and have a fondness for vomish implants.

The Elders of Understanding dislike the other Living Villages as heretics, but tolerate them, for at least they are not disgusting imperialist pretenders like the Princes or the Satraps, nor are they fallen scum like the Cold People. The Second Hand clan is working with the Porcelain Princes.

The most impressive building is the scrimshaw-panelled Exhibitorium, where the Elect venerate stuffed and preserved beasts from the times of the Great Elder Biomancer Biloba as offspring of the divine creative principle.

Canoes and slow barges can make the easy trip to Iron Pike and villagers of the clans of the Third Foot and Sixteenth Tooth charge a mere cash per person or beast. The ferry to the Skybridge and the passage through the **Refracting Trees** costs an eye-watering 12 cash per person or beast. It's 15 cash per person or beast to the Ferry Graves. Jade Baobab's ferry *The Flesh Princess* is a hulking half-grav beast of a catamaran, decked in greenstone pendants and biomantic cilia.



## RED BEAR VILLAGE

**Red Bear** is a village honey-combed through a great amalgamated skyscraper, built through the centuries-long action of the village's domesticated builder badgers. It is surrounded by several fences of thornvine and thornstone, patrolled by spider fetishes. The builder badgers and spider fetishes are controlled by **Madame Red Star**, the First Servant of Red Bear, ensconced and kept alive in her Iron Belly full-body prosthetic. Little is left of her today but a neural network hooked into psych-machine augmentations, and a steely determination to not forsake the founding principles of the Long Ago Cold Lake Culture Collective. She no longer actually remembers what those founding principles were and is treated as something of a living deity by the inhabitants of Red Bear who keep her alive and fed with a steady diet of good news, of quotas met, and traitors stopped.

The clans of Red Bear devote great effort to keeping the Madame alive and the Iron Belly functioning. The most prestigious clans are those of Maintenance and Repair, Logistics Specialist, Supply Chain Manager, and True News Distribution. Elders transmit clan lore entirely through oral tradition as <redacted> proscribed written records during the Hair Woods War between Skybridge and Vicar's Beach. It is unclear how long ago this was.

The clan of Public Relations is responsible for trade and is generally the least insular, while the clan of Watersport Activities can be relied on to provide up-to-date weather information and a ferry service to Iron Pike for 10 cash per person or beast, and to Skybridge for 25 cash per person or beast. The Red Bear 'ferry' is a great aquatic iron golem, named *Shield of the Collective*, maintained and scrubbed to a sheen by the clan of Plumbing and Filtration.

Red Bear is full of plaudits for all the villages of Three Sticks and quite suspicious of outsiders, who are generally corralled in special Guest Accommodation and Servicing Housing (gashes) dug into the middens that surround Red Bear skyscraper.

## IRON PIKE VILLAGE

**Iron Pike** is the most remote of the villages, protected from most ravages and assaults in its location on the Old Isle, surrounded by the abraded ruins of a pleasure city from the Long Ago. It is built within an eccentric orb, fifty meters across, that spins sedately four meters off the ground, just above a great platform of steel-crete covered in warning petroglyphs. The orb is made of an unbreakable force-glass and only accessible through three circular openings that line up with the ground once every ten minutes. Inside the orb is 314% larger than on the outside and all gravity is directed towards the outside of the orb, creating a small world of its own.

Iron Pike was initially an anarchic hippie-wizard commune, at least so say the legends of grim warning painted on its glassy walls, but this quickly degenerated into all-out magiocratic anarchy and warfare, before the survivors rebuilt it into a rigid, militant caste structure built around a hatred of magic, a love of gladiatorial combat, regular vome-hunting expeditions, and viciously effective war-and-fishing canoes.

The current leadership of Iron Pike consists of two war chiefs, Broadgrin the Sinewy and Swiftstab the Bumbler. Both take advice from the witch Icing Matilda. Iron Pike offers little in trade, grudging hospitality, and canoes to the other two villages for 3 cash per person or beast. They do not like to cross the lake, for those shores are home to shambling vome hordes. Also, their ferry, the sleek-looking *Glazed Partridge* is broken down, as its battery has faded. A replacement could certainly be found in Three Sticks, but that place is crawling with the water people.

## The Dead Villages & Wild Areas

### BLACK GRASS

A small grassland between **Vicar's Beach** and the **Hair Woods**, the Black Grass is an expanse of wild rye living in shocking symbiosis with a distributed mold colony organism named Rudolph Eats Five Plate. In cold or rainy weather the mold colony organism hibernates and the Black Grass is safe to cross, but in other times there is a great danger of being infected by spore colonists (Con DC 2d6 unless a breathing filter is being used), which slowly and subtly pervert the infected organism until they become a sleeper agent and information gatherer for the weird mold intelligence.

Travelers will often encounter the **mold-faced agents** (AC 16, HD 3, packing heat) of Rudolph, who will try to ascertain whether they are a threat to the libertarian mold-anarchist inclinations of Rudolph. That the mold-faced agents speak oddly accented Bluenttalk, can barely walk in a straight line and tend to go into hibernation when wet, hardly seems to matter.

Shockingly, there is little of value to discover in this grassy area.

### BLUE GATE

A great cascade of abandoned palaces overgrown with gnarled ice pines tumbles down the **Sparkling Shore** opposite the **Old Isle** and **Iron Pike**. On a particularly beautiful eroded red and green rock promontory stands the **Blue Gate**. It stands thirty meters tall and almost untouched in its alien metallic beauty. The years have not worn away its geometries or dulled the beauty of its patterned lustrous surface. In the long ages since the fall of the High Moon Culture the gate served as a cultic centre to a series of urban druid groups, before they finally died out in an unusual gastric plague a couple of centuries ago.

The druids hollowed out the sandstone promontory, building their village in caves that twine around the two great posts of the Blue Gate, which reach deeper into the ground than one could easily imagine. All that is left of the urban druids are the metallic coproliths left behind by the plague. A perceptive student, given time, might discover a cache of metallorganic seeds for ironwood and copperwood bamboo enclosed in a locker labelled in long-forgotten warning runes (worth 1,000 cash, Int DC 15 and a week's search).

Little else of value is left and local dust deer and rubble pigs are the usual occupants of the ruins, though some of the half-nomads still come to give offerings to the Great Blue City on the Hill.

### BOULDER FORD

Three magnificent post-fordite boulders straddle **Teal river**, like a post-modernist performance sculpture that nearly means something, but just barely fails. Three wise creatures are graven into each surface in repeating, vividly serrated depictions. None of them seem to mean anything. The waters swirl madly around the boulders, filled with leaping silvery fish and vegetal hydras.

Every third day a different boulder is occupied by a diaphanous radiation ghost that seems to be singing. If its words are discerned, in a odd old steppe tongue, the song is (roll d6):, (1) gloomy and depressing (disadvantage to mental rolls for a day), (2-3) mawkish and forgettable, (4) uplifting and joyous (advantage to three rolls), (5) speaks of a secret chamber in the Copper Hulls, (6) ... and mentions the secret song that soothes the savage beast.

The actual crossing itself is a short way upstream, where masses of lodged steel pines and amalgamated landcoral form a broken, rough dam. A marshland stretches upriver, home to dire beavers and lumbering turtles. A slow, two day crossing is utterly safe. A faster crossing tempts misfortune.

### CHOLAN WOODS

The sparse pines of the plateau between the Lake and the Red River are grotesquely riddled with galls the size of houses, home to the **cholans** (AC 10, HD 1, gaseous, toxic) wispy floating creatures, which look somewhat like aerial jelly-fish. The cholans are mostly harmless, though they leave ectoplasmic deposits which cling to every surface and droop from the trees like weeping tendrils.

Staying too long among them may summon **ectoplasmic nightmares** (AC 12, HD 8, endlessly mutating, attack Wisdom instead of Hp) from the subconscious of the traveler. The cholans are quite friendly and make it clear that the lethality of their ectoplasmic excreta is a most unfortunate eventuality.

Searching through the Cholan Woods, an explorer might find (Int DC 3d6 after 2 days searching) the peach-hued cosmic shell fragments of the Cholan's first arrival (700 cash per slot).



## COPPER HULLS

The pale green patinated hulls look like beached whales on the gently sloping western shore of the Teal River estuary. All around them lie scattered and fragmented the splintering growbone struts of some great biological town or resort. The **Copper Hulls** themselves, aside from the patina, look eerily untouched by time. Indeed, plants around them grow oddly out of season, and snows seem to avoid them. Radiation ghosts of elegant ladies in white satin mouth warnings and make desperate gestures to keep visitors away. There are no discernible doors on the Copper Hulls, but a determined effort with picks, or a *Pass Wall* type spell should work. The hulls regenerate damage over a period of hours, apparently by locally reversing the flow of time. Inside is dust, bones, grotesque life-like statues and an eerie lemon glow.

Local half-nomads claim that the Copper Hulls are batteries of slow time, leaking their essence into their surroundings, and stealing people out of time. This is somewhat true, they are actually a kind of sarcophagus built over the magiactive corpses of three wizards from Long Long Ago. The corpses still leak a vicious time-distorting effect, and are best left alone.

**Time distortion effect**, Wis save DC 3d6, roll d6:

1. Object is frozen in time forever, a statue that always tries to shift back to where it was formed. Chains can keep it on a cart, though.
2. Object comes unstuck in time, scattered along time's river. Sentient creatures may return 1d6 times over the next decade, giving cryptic (and often useless) clues about the future.
3. Object ages rapidly and terminally, creatures leave dusty, mummified remains.
4. Object begins to age irregularly, with some parts of aging faster than other.
5. Nothing seems to happen.
6. Object seems protected from the ravages of time. Living creatures live 1d6 times as long as normal and are resistant to temporal magics.

Aside from the time distortion effect, inside the Copper Hulls there is little of value, though unusual bones and remains could be sold to collectors (200 cash per slot).

Armed with the message of the **Boulder Ford** radiation ghost, an explorer may learn that through the fallen eye of the Blue and Iron wizard is a passageway into that wizard's Ka-Ba Fortress (phylactery). Inside are the three great treasures of the Blue and Iron wizard: the **heart of glass**, which can replace a creature's heart and both increase the clarity of their thoughts (+2 Int) and make them immune to all blood-borne toxins and diseases, though it does reduce their hardiness (-1 AC); the **Grand Book of Esbeen**, including the four common spells of

Esbeen (*Esbeen's Animation of the Mummified Dead*, *Esbeen's Words With the Dead*, *Esbeen's Recalling of the Lost Soul*, *Esbeen's Recalling of the Lost Soul and Reanimation of the Corpse*, as well as the half-mythical *Esbeen's Turning of the Mill Wheel of Essential Existence*; and finally the **Nightmare of the Sea of Death**, a purification ritual that terrifies the soul and keeps it from returning to the Sea of Death, extending the lifespan of the ritualist by 2d6 x 10%. It may have side-effects.

However, the Blue and Iron wizard's maze-like Ka-Ba Fortress is inhabited by the **Beast of Grinding Death** (AC 20, HD 20, poly-dimensional), a great grey weasel that unzips through several dimensions into a gibbering fleshy tunnel of razor teeth. The Beast can completely fill an available tunnel, proceeding forwards like a stately tunnel of death to engulf one interloper after another.

## DEAD SHORE

Between **Grey Glow** and the **Rose Towers** stretches a low, tumbled shoreline of spare, minimalist ruins, but tunneled beneath them are the vast Salvation Complexes of some particularly unfortunate Long Long Ago culture. Within they stored themselves in expectation of a better future. Alas, that future was vomish intrusion, and the area is now thick with rancid **necrotic vomes** (AC 11, HD 2, nauseating). The vomes are often on standby in odd arrangements, but loud noises or flashing lights may trigger them into frenetic and deadly activity. Very nearly zombies, they are best avoided.

Someone plunging deep into the complexes might come across a cache of cryonic wands (800 cash per slot), ceramic tins of biomorphic protein (200 cash per slot), or archaic collectible rare-alloy weapons (300 cash per slot).



## DEEPEST GLASS

**The Glass** is a vast shock crater at the southern edge of Three Sticks Lake, mostly flooded by the outflow waters of the watershed. What Long Ago impact caused it, nobody knows anymore, save perhaps the Madam of Red Bear. **Deepest Glass** is a series of shattered bubble habitats and their support struts that still stand at the very center of the crater. Some magic protected them, that much is obvious, and now as the waters rise and fall they emerge and submerge. Even the vomes avoid this horrible field, scarred with radiation ghosts and home to scuttling **glassy scorpions, crabs, and terrestrial cuttlefish** (all vermin, AC 12, HD 1, swarm, radiation bite: Con DC 2d6 or lose 1d4 Str).

Local half-nomads claim that in the Tower of Two Bells a machine human named Nito Takohudo sleep-guards a **floating barge of the Later Levitants**. If this is true, the floating barge is a machine of glazed pumice and silver struts constructed around a three-point force array. It can carry up to 20 inventory slots of equipment, yet be pulled by a single person. The barge is worth 6,000 cash. It can also be studied and disassembled to learn the *Floating Disc* and the *Three-point Immobility* spells.

## FERRY GRAVES

Preserved in ancient, gargantuan and slowly calcinating gelatinous sarcophagi, hundreds of craft of all sizes, the largest hundreds of meters long, litter the ochre and yellow slime-and-reed spattered shore that makes the **Ferry Graves**. Most travelers give the hulking, gently pulsing gelatinous cuboids. Spattered with colonies of lichens and bacterial growths, the cuboids form the basis of an odd ecosystem of motile molds and slimes. The **Long Slog**, as the waterlogged terrain between the Gravel and White rivers is called, forms a horrible barrier to travel, while the rivers themselves are wide and filled with **translucent crocodilians** (AC 16, HD 5, hard to spot).

However, a canny explorer, equipped with a guide and a lot of luck, might well find a functioning (roll d6) (1–3) vech, (4–5) autowagon, or even a (6) floating barge among the ferry graves. This would, however, be a hard and dangerous endeavor (Cha check DC 20, one check per week allowed). The molds and slimes, though not intelligent individually, would be drawn in greater and greater numbers to the party over time.

## GALL GRASS

This wide, high and dry valley is decked in the pungent yellow stalks and interwoven galls of the slow-dreaming distributed sentience of the modified grasses that absorb all moisture here and keep the **Hair Woods** to the south and the **Higher Spinewood** to the north at bay. Little can survive in the Gall Grass, and thirst a constant danger, but

the slightly empathic Gall Grass also keeps most predators at bay, keeping this area surprisingly safe. The northern way leads through here to the **Refracting Trees**.

## GARNET FORD

The **Wine river** valley suddenly broadens from its gullet in the **Higher Spinewoods** into a morass of mud and grasping willows and half-phantom birches. In the midst of all this a causeway from the Long Ago false dawn of the Lesser Builders stands testament to an ambition that outstripped ability. Great blocks of pure cinnamon-stone formed a megalithic causeway, but the great lintel stones have mostly fallen by the wayside.

Modern voyagers use portable bridges, or the services of local quarterling half-nomads of Pine Nut and Darling Tree clans (there is a 50% chance one or the other clan will be near the ford). A squad of a dozen porters with bridges, ropes, and cables costs 50 cash to help a middling caravan cross the ford. The two clans have an uneasy relationship, but outright violence is rare. Without bridges or porters, the fording takes 1d4 horrid days, filled with midges, biting insects and misfortune.

The marshlands are replete with wading birds, ducks, thick-shelled carp, and carnivorous **giant salamanders** (AC 9, HD 3, drowning). Oddly enough, there are few of the deadly vomes here, above the cataracts and narrows of the lower Wine river.

## GLASS BRIDGE

Spanning the turbulent outflow of the lake, the **Glass Bridge** is a breathtaking sight - a cathedral of glass that sparkles in the daylight and phosphoresces in the ultraviolet mornings. It links Red Bear to the High Horse Steppes, and the villagers collect steep tolls (5 cash per person or beast) at the eastern end, while the half-nomad clan of the Prodigal Father collects a similar toll at the western end.

By day an array of **vitreous gargoyles** (AC 13, HD 3, fragile and explosive) crawls across the Glass Bridge, maintaining its lustrous sheen and repairing it with the furnaces in their bellies. They protect the bridge above all else, and ignore mere travelers. The gargoyles rarely talk, but they like to sing an hour after each sunrise, and are sluggish in cloudy or rainy weather, thus elders surmise they are avatars of the sun.

The glass of the bridge is stupendously strong and turns all prismatic and radiant effects into area damaging attacks. Missed rays rebound chaotically.

## GRAVEL RIVER

A glum, slow river that grinds through its channel with weary, sad inevitability. Its gravel beds and banks are home to sunning **sail-backed amphibians** (AC 12, HD 4, hopping) in the day time. There is not much to say about this river. Panning for gold and rare-earth nodules will recover 1d20 cash worth per person per day, but then the **cold vomes** (AC 13, HD 1+1, sneaky) might crawl up out of the grey waters and then you'd be in all sorts of trouble again.

## GREY GLOW

Every night a great screen of flickering motes, like static upon a celestial cathode display, obscures the morass of icy ruins between the **Lonely Shore** and the **Dead Shore**. Eerie **half-human nomadics** (AC 14, HD 2, phasing) emerge from moments between two blinks of the eye and try to resume some kind of Long Ago existence. Every midnight **cold vomes** (AC 13, HD 3, freezing fingers) emerge from the slimy still waters of the shore and try to hunt the half-present half-humans.

The phasing of the half-humans becomes more abrupt and twitchy around 6 a.m., before they finally disappear with the first glimmers of the sun over the ultraviolet haze. The cold vomes flee back into their watery deep, for the sun dries them out and leaves them helpless, like deadwood upon the shore.

Each half-human has 1d4 odd trinkets of obscure utility. There is a 20% chance that any given trinket is of an obscure alloy or rare stone and worth 100 cash. The vomes leave these trinkets behind.

Any creature passing through the half-humans great screen is bathed in a flood of light of obscure shades, before folding abruptly through a pinprick between one breath and the next. Brute beasts are lost forever. Intelligent creatures (and some heroes) get a Wisdom save (DC 13). Effects may vary:

1. Critical Fail: the creature is gone forever, but its malevolent radiation ghost haunts its friends every fourth day, around tea time.
2. Fail: 1d4 weeks later the creature reappears nearby, at sunrise, nude and queerly different (reduce one stat by 1d6, raise another by 1d4, add a mutation of some sort).
3. Barely Fail: most of the creature disappears, but a ghostly echo of it remains, and it reappears 1d4 days later near a friend or location that is dear to it, mostly unharmed. Mostly.
4. Barely Succeed: the creature flickers and phases for the next 1d4 hours, suffering disadvantage to physical activities during that period, but gains permanent insight into the Forces of the Prime Electromagnetic

Elemental Sphere (either become proficient with electromagnetic magics, or gain +1 to Int).

5. Succeed: the creature has disadvantage to physical activities for 1d6 rounds, before becoming linked to the Prime Electromagnetic (as above).
6. Critical Success: the Great Cathode Ghost chooses the creature as its vessel, granting a short range electromagnetic attack (1d6 electromagnetic damage, careful when wet). The creature also gains the other bonuses, as above.

## HAIRWOODS

The lumpy highlands north of the Gravel River are covered in a thick forest of fleshy, red-stemmed trees with canopies of long, grey-blonde hair-like leaves. The hairwoods are mostly desolate these days, home to herds of grazing swinedeer, parrot owls, lumbering bear-badgers, and the occasional strider hermit.

Deep in the gullies a visitor might discover an ancient wellspring of emotion, marked by warning and beckoning runes in a lyrical archaic sunsettish. The wellspring of emotion taps the heartwaters of the Earth to bring emotional release, putting the drinker in touch with their innermost traumas and frustrations (Wis save DC 3d6). Those who overcome themselves and make the save permanently increase their Wis and Cha scores by 1. Those who fail, decrease a random mental ability score by 2 and acquire a lovely new mental trauma.

## THE HIGHER SPINEWOODS

Massive, stocky trees, with needles sharp as daggers, rule the Higher Spinewoods, keeping out large predators and unwary travelers, and generally blocking overland access to the headwaters of the Wine, Teal, and Sky rivers. There are rumours of small, leather-faced humans living there, but if they are real, they hide very well. The occasional radiation tower flickers into existence, giving a hint of some lost monument, but who would wander there?

The Higher Spinewoods are very difficult terrain to cross, and any misfortune likely includes wandering into a spiked pit 'excavated' by the lightly carnivorous trees.

## HIGH HORSE STEPPE

The **High Horse Steppe** is a cold, windswept high plateau, pocked with odd horse-shoe-shaped depressions left, so the local half-nomads say, by the departure of the Sky Horses. The clans of the Fortunate Son and the Unbroken Patrimony claim that they are the descendants of the Maintainers of the Sky Horses that helped the Lings ascend into the heavens, like the All Fathers before them in the Long Long Ago.

Two great hooves, broken off at the ankles, are all that remains of some noble equestrian statue that must have once reared at least 40 meters high. Today they are the meeting place of the two clans.

The trail to the Spectrum Run leads beyond, cold, windswept and lonely.

## HIGH MOON STEPPE

A relatively safe and desolate steppe, in the growing season home to the nomads of the Copper and Jale clans.

On moonlit nights radiation ghosts in electric chariots scream across the steppe, leaving behind odd circles and tracks in the grass, but little else. They are temporal echoes of the cataclysms that preceded the arrival of the Near Moon, but do little in themselves.

A wanderer in the steppe might find the **Last Bunker**, an autowagon buried by the ages so only its access hatch remains. Inside, mummified, a Ling named Pan the Bringer of Bells. The Ling looks perfectly ordinary, safe for the utter perfection of its bones, skins, and organs. Indeed, a germ-line analysis would reveal that down to the smallest animalcule of its being, it has been refined and processed to be a perfect human. Alas, it is now a dead human. The autowagon could be reactivated with a hint of soulfire.

## JUNIPER SCRUB

Junipers deck the high hills of the upper Red River, fragrant and calm. Few signs of settlement remain in this cold, remote area. Rabbits and foxes abound, and the scattered hard-shell ruins of carapace houses are all that is left of some forgotten Long Ago culture. Now exiled half-nomads and hermetic hermits are the likeliest creature you might encounter here.

## LONELY SHORE

Egrets and terns congregate along this desolate shore of tumbled grand pines and granite boulders. Few ruins are to be seen.

Unfortunate travelers may encounter the **collector** (AC 15, HD 10, recording ray), an ancient biomech who collects souls and personalities for preservation in the face of the Oncoming Swarm. An event that failed to occur more than a thousand years ago.

Fortunate travelers might encounter the **coffin walker** (AC 18, HD 2, healer), a large and lichen-covered soapstone golem with stubby legs and a coffin of preservation in its belly, which can keep alive a seriously injured person for 2d6 weeks. Seriously injured may mean recently killed, so long as the central nervous system has not been severely disrupted. The coffin walker is stuck under a grand pine, and very lonely. Like a large, ominous, stone puppy. The coffin walker likes to play fetch, too.

## LONG SLOG

The **Long Slog** is a waterlogged mix of marshland, dumpland, and slimewood between the Gravel and White rivers. It is a horrible barrier to travel, filled with biting insects, stinging plants, crawling **biomechanical snakes** (AC 14, HD 1, electric), and great **animatronic auto-vechs** (AC 16, HD 6, dinosaurian). It's like a very dull, repetitive, poorly thought out lost world.

In the depths are multiple cyclopean ruins, collapsed temples, decaying motels, and lonely **shack mimics** (AC 8, HD 10, look like shacks, swallow hole, filled with grinding furniture lumps). Treasure is surprisingly sparse, reduced by the harsh climate until the odd piece, such as a gold gas mask (600 cash) or nacreous necklace (60 cash) are all that remains.

Seriously, any local will tell you not to go here.

## LOWER SPINES

Stretching along the rubble-like promontory between the Teal and Sky River estuaries, past the **Milky Orb**, and all the way to the craggy peaks above **Three Sticks**, the massive spinetrees are rarer here and the park-like woodlands are home to lupine half-humans with fanged faces and scabbling claws. Fortunately these regressives are both very conservative in their pack tactics and terrified of loud and colourful demonstrations of magical prowess.

At night, **cold vomes** (AC 13, HD 1+1, grappling) may be a problem, as may the occasional **boulder agglomeration** (AC 17, HD 2, thick as a brick) animated by soul discharges from the Three Sticks.

## MILKY ORB

At the farthest promontory, between the Teal and Sky rivers, in the middle of a black ruinland dashed through with quicksilver trees that slither like mindless oozes in the dark, is the **milky orb**. A perfect hemisphere, some say sphere, it is 314 meters across and 158 meters tall (this irregularity is ascribed to the erosion of the ruinland. The villagers and the half-nomads agree that the devastated remains of the town around the Milky Orb are much younger than the orb itself, which the most extreme among them say predates even the Long Long Ago.

Although the orb is most clearly *there*, it is completely non-interacting. Objects pushed into it experience exponentially increasing resistance, but return unscathed. Energies emitted into the orb are radiated away on a broad and harmless band. Spiritual or personality transmissions discover only a harmless void.

Literally hundreds of sages and scholars have attempted to figure out its purpose, so much so that at least a dozen abandoned and decaying laboratories and expedition camps dot the surroundings, and the local cold vomes have grown accustomed to send regular foraging parties into the area, making it especially dangerous in the dark (which lasts until noon, because of the Haze).

## OBSIDIAN KNIVES

They say the razor skyscrapers of the **Obsidian Knives** cut the very water till it bleeds, that is why the Red River runs so red down its grim black canyon. Perhaps it is also the iron oxides in the sharp glass of the knives leeching out. The river loops around the hard promontory of the knives, all blasted into a solid lump of glassy granite, interlaced with metallic sinews, like the very land here was some kind of great biomechanical intrusion. The Knives themselves mostly rise no more than ten or fifteen meters, though in the heart of the devastated township the highest reach a hundred meters and more, visible above the rim of the Red River canyon.

Whatever the case, the Obsidian Knives suffered some sort of odd disaster, which compressed most of its above ground structures very nearly into pure planes of force. Some visitors suggest that, if you look closely, you can discern the remains of the inhabitants of the Knives still 'alive', though translated into a 2-dimensional matrix within the Knives themselves. Odd slivers of stuck force enmeshed in glassy matrices can be excavated by visitors willing to risk force tremors and the snapping mono-dimensional tendrils of whatever nightmare created the Obsidian knives. These slivers are prized as blades, weapons or curios (500 cash per slot).

Superstitious nomads claim that at sunrise the razor skyscrapers sing and that frictionless blackbirds fly into the starless void. This is nonsense, of course.

## RAZORWATER

A mammoth polished plaza abuts the Sky River, kept clean by a small army of **Cleaner Jellies** (AC 7, HD 5, translucent and flabby). It looks beautiful, peaceful, and serene ... except at every full hour, when an ancient mechanism powers up and unleashes a bewilderingly beautiful array of fountains and lights, which spray the chill water of the Sky River more than two hundred meters into the air. The jets are so powerful, and in places so thin, that luckless heroes have been known to end up sliced in half.

It is, however, very pretty, with the rainbows that accompany the misting waters, and what not. Watching a full show boosts morale and grants 1d6 temporary hit points.

## RED GRASS

A small steppe, home to vermilion grasses that give off mildly soporific spores. Sloth-like antelopes graze here, and there are no predators. Travelers in the Red Grass must take precautions (like breathing masks), lest they too become slow and wearisome (as under a *slow* spell). The effects last 1d4 weeks after leaving the Red Grass. Any local can warn of this danger.

In the depths of the Red Grass is a collapsing gazebo of slow-dreaming **servant vomes** (AC 8, HD 3, sleep rays) attending an autofac generating iridescent machine butterflies (hard to catch, but worth 300 cash per slot).

## RED RIVER

The blood red watercourse acquires its color at the weirdness of the Obsidian Knives, before discharging into the Lake, which washes all sins clean. In its turbid waters **great electric eels** (AC 12, HD 2, shocking) are the apex predators.

## ROSE TOWERS

Three delicate towers of a rose-hued synthetic land coral rise improbably tall, slender and mockingly elegant from a platform of synthetic ivory bricks in the midst of a devastated morass of tumbled towers overgrown with slimes and molds. Every day of the week, a different array of lights flickers and glows in the **Rose Towers**. A congregation of doomed machine humans relives the last days of the Optical Era, restored to perfection every week by a gargantuan occluded autofab deep in the ivory platform named **Rising-prism-of-perception**.

Amphibious **vome fish with spidery legs** (AC 14, HD 2, acid breath, nacreous) emerge from the Wine river estuary every sunset to harvest biomatter and broken machine humans for the autofab.

A swift, and suicidally brave, looter might ascend the distorted inertial shafts of the Rose Towers to harvest many-hued glow spheres (400 cash per slot) or bio-mechanical flickering songbirds (1,000 cash per bird) that the autofab generates every sixth day. However, the can easily turn lethal, not to mention the rumored **half-inertial feathered vomes** (AC 15, HD 6, flying).

## RUSTY BRIDGE

The great, wide, immense and crumbling Rusty Bridge spans the black canyon of the Red River. Though its surface is pockmarked and riddled with holes, though great flakes of it fall off, still its metal sinews hold strong and stable, sailing proudly through time, like a grand old ocean liner upon the Ocean of Forever.



**Rust elementals** (AC 7, HD 3, rusting touch) play around the bridge and **rat-like mechs** (AC 13, HD 1-1, obsequious) try to carry out repairs with no supplies remaining whatsoever. Heavy vehicles or creatures crossing the bridge should take measures to spread out their weight, lest they fall through the cheese-like road surface.

## SKYBRIDGE

Exactly as terrifying as it sounds, the Skybridge is a translucent, three mile razor of stuck-force, arcing ever so gently over the Sky River (named after the bridge) estuary. Its ends are marked by monolithic cable stays, but the cables are long gone, their attachments now eerie lichen speckled eyes in the gleaming glass blocks. The three meters wide force bridge is smooth and deadly, though beautifully iridescent, in rainy or windy weather. Quite often a flying bird or floating Montgolfier mushroom will be sliced in half by the razor edges of the bridge.

There is no ghost troll in the perpetual cloud banks of the Sky river estuary.

## SKY RIVER

A bone-chilling river of pure, translucent water so clean and pure that it can literally disinfect wounds. Its waters are prized by medicine men and shamans in the near abroad (50 cash per slot) and caravans regularly fill up from its banks.

## SPARKLING SHORE

Villas of pearl-petrified gnarled wood, filled with the crumbling pumice-petrified remains of their owners, dot the thorn-shrub studded Sparkling Shore. In the daylight the pearlwood villas sparkle wonderfully, obscuring the **feral wicker fetishes** (AC 10, HD 1, very fast) and venomous biomechanical **floral centipedes** (AC 13, HD 2, leaping) that patrol the ruins of their masters' estates.

Unlucky visitors might find one of the petrification bomblets (Con save DC 3d8) scattered in some Long Ago military conflict, and still obscenely dangerous.

However, the temptation of an untouched villa, with particularly beautiful pearlwood petrifacts (400 cash per slot), is great.

## TEAL RIVER

Wide, rushing, and a vivid teal color, the Teal River is especially cold and difficult to cross along most of its fast flow. There are no great dangers on this river, save dire beavers and lumbering turtles. A slow, two day crossing at the ford is utterly safe. A faster crossing tempts misfortune.



### THREE STICKS

The beating, vibrant heart of the region are three prismatic soul accumulators, named the **Three Sticks**, that rise two hundred vibrant (and vibrating) meters from the moss and flower decked cliffs of the western shore of Three Sticks Lake.

The sticks make their own eerie weather systems within 1d6 hours journey, including (roll d6, roll for a new weather effect at sunrise and sunset):

1. a soul draining miasma spreads around the accumulators, turning everything to grey (all creatures take 1 Wisdom damage per hour).
2. static storms that suspend dust and small particles in the air and reduce the momentum of all objects in the vicinity (all ranged attacks have disadvantage to hit and damage).
3. luminescent fogs, which glow brightly even at night. Nearby objects are very clearly visible, but the bright fog occludes everything beyond about 30 meters (it's easy to get lost here).
4. depressing rains that dampen personalities (all Int and Cha rolls are made with disadvantage).
5. waves of rainbows that bathe verdant surroundings in healing light (disadvantage to all checks that require precise vision, restore 1 hp and 1 stat point per hour). Plants seem to grow especially quickly after each rainbow pulse, which may be hazardous for sleeping heroes.
6. bright perpetual thunder shakes the surroundings, verbal communication is nearly impossible and hearing can be badly affected, but spirits are raised (advantage to all Wisdom checks).

All locals agree that the Three Sticks are suffused with the power of superior beings from the Long Long Ago and deadly to unwary interlopers. On good weather days pilgrims will come to deliver offerings to these beings, which they simply call the Fantastic Masters. Nobody has ever seen anyone of these masters, but their ghosts (it is said), are often seen on nights with crescent moons.

There is a beautifully austere plaza built between the three accumulators, focusing their light and opening into a different area of obscurely spiritual dungeons, depending on the local weather conditions. Inside **machines of light and crystal** (AC 4d6, HD 2d10, decaying into dementia) maintain the workings of the accumulators, in preparation for some final destiny. The machines are horribly overpowered, and ridiculously alien. One might find out that they align vaguely with factions that could translate as Suspension of Disbelief, Orange Orchard, and Perpetual Fog of Self-Annihilation.

Should this be relevant, at the heart of the accumulator are a great three-chambered spiritual battery and a functional soul mill (also called *The Painless Devourer of Ka*).

### THREE STICKS LAKE

The lake itself is cold and full of fish, its bed - so it seems - thick with **waterlogged vomes** (AC 13, HD 2, grappling) ready to emerge and drag careless bathers into the ultramarine depths. Is there much to add? It is one of the deepest and darkest lakes known to the Steppelanders, yet it is a vital source of water and even, if one compromises comfort, respite in the **Three Living Villages**.



## VICAR'S BEACH

A large, half-sunken bay stretches along the western shore of Three Sticks, from the Gravel River the Black Grass heights. Multi-colored gravel dunes, built up by the action of **demented auto-dozers** (AC 18, HD 8, half-witted self-repairing), have in places cemented into solid bulwarks and mounds of eerie half-meaningful shapes. From the air the whole beach looks like a the shards of a machine mind trying to recreate a meaningful social experience from the detritus of an aristocratic picnic. At the heart of Vicar's Beach is a pile of gloriously colonnaded oval courtyards surmounted by an inverted dome mounted on great stone supports.

Locals call it the **Vicar's Ear** and it is unclear which Long Ago culture built it, whether to actually perform a function, or as part of a decaying cargo cult. In any case, local **crab-wit vomes** (AC 17, HD 2, shelled) seem to worship it, regularly crawling up from the scum-white shore to prostrate themselves and give offerings gleaned from the lakebed and unwary travelers.

Deep within the bowels of Vicar's Ear demonic mind-traps abound to twist and tear and trick the mind, pits away unwary feet, and odd glassy slimes hang in portals to wrap the unwary. At the bottom of all this half-sentient nonsense is a great coffin that holds the dead remains of the machine person called **Vicar**, and three gilt chests of spare parts, still reverently packed in scented grease. Repairing Vicar would take 1d4 weeks and incredible mechanotechnical skills (Int DC 20).

**Vicar** is a steward-class machine human from the Long Ago time of the Fleeting Pacific Expansion, but most of her memories have corroded since then. She can be used as a player character. Twice she tried to help local survivors rebuild a functioning low-entropy society, and failed both times. Roll stats with an extra d6 for Str and Cha, and a d6 less for Dex. Advance as thief.

AC 12 (base), HD 1d8, +2 karate fists 1d6+1, multi-spectrum vision, does not need to eat or drink or brith, requires sunshine to recharge.

Powers: *Reproduce Sound Perfectly, Record Events, Read and Decipher Languages.*

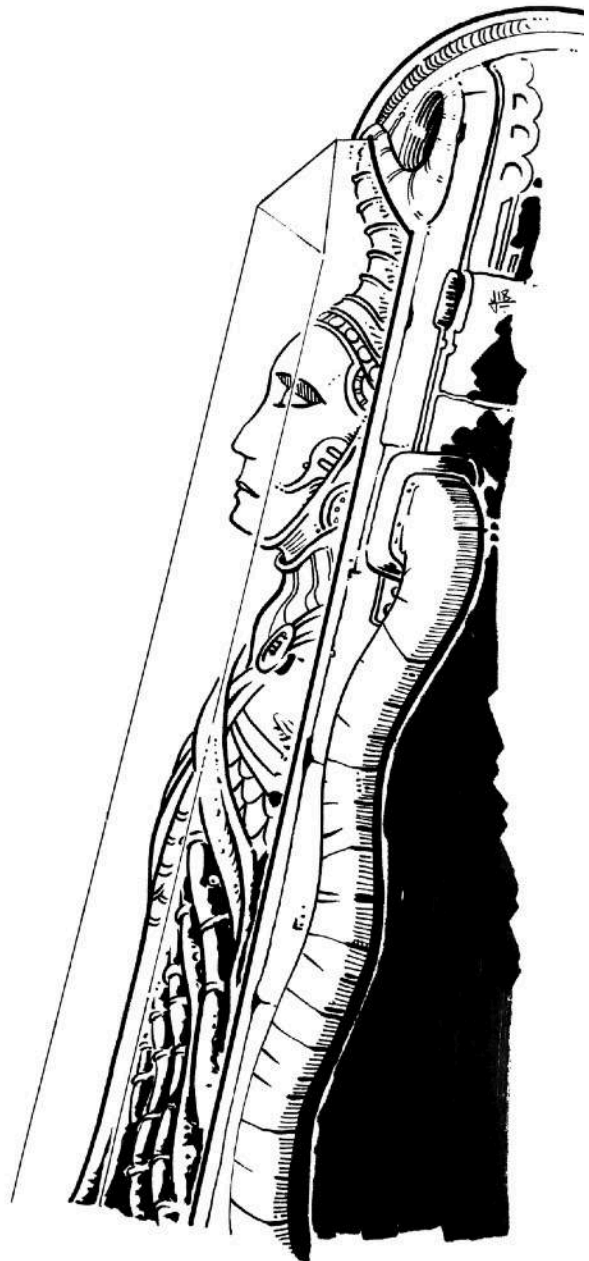
Weaknesses: electricity, water, clumsy on stairs.

## WHITE RIVER

Constrained to an artificial channel for much of its upper course, in the middle of the Long Slog the milky waters of the White River suddenly flood out across the miasmatic plain. The waters are thick, somehow soupy, and filled with **pestilential amoebas** (AC 5, HD 5, disease-ridden).

## WINE RIVER

The Wine River gets its name from the dark burgundy gravel of its bed, and though the water is swift for most of its course, it broadens and slows at the **Garnet Ford**. Various water fowl, thick-shelled carp, and carnivorous **giant salamanders** (AC 9, HD 3, drowning) share its waters. In the lower Wine River there are many of the **deadly cold vomes** (AC 12, HD 2, swimming adapted) There are few of the deadly vomes here, above the cataracts and narrows of the lower Wine river.



## 19. Spectrum Crossing

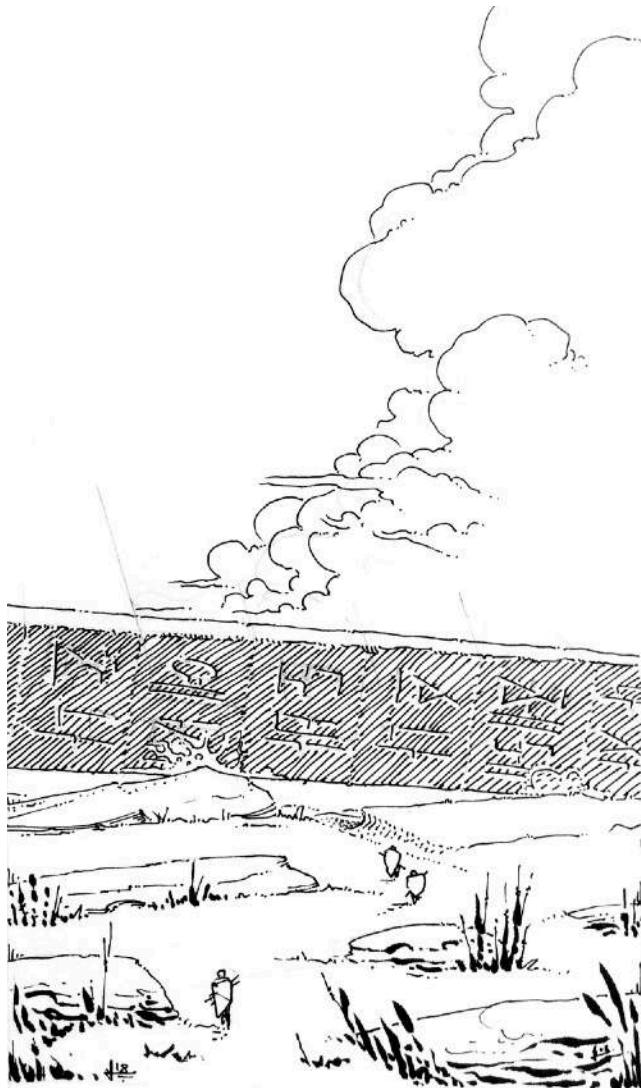
Fires of prismatic sentience gone mad light the crystal excrescences that mark old Satrap experiments and settlements. Whether the crystals are successes or failures, the Satraps do not tell.

Black glyphs mark the trails of nomads and adventurers from the Circle Sea, while the Satraps follow light shows of bold, avant-garde design through the pancake-flat terrain. A frosting of metallic salts kills the grasses in great rings around the eerily unruined corpses of grand traveling machines from Long Ago.

**Weather:** Pitiless and clear, crackling with an electric pressure that should cause migraines, the violet haze clears at half-past noon on most days.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 2d8, roll d6):

1. Mirror glyph imprisons a beast in a shifting pattern of light, trapped beyond time, traveling light.



2. A haze maze flickers between floating crystals, and 1d6 days are lost between one heartbeat and the next.
3. Days of scorching, bone-dry weather deplete supplies (lose 1d6 supplies).
4. Metallic salts poison supplies. Int DC 15 to notice, or lose 1d6 Con from slow-acting poison.
5. Blinding rainbow. Dex or Wis DC 15 save to avoid being blinded for 2d6 days.
6. The corpse of a traveling machine rouses itself and in voiceless words communicates its thirst. Lose 1d6 supplies or one beast to gain 1d4 days.

### DIRECTIONS

**North, The Refracting Trees** (open scrub, 1 week): the forest of weird silicone-carbon hybrids is no place for a decent traveler.

**North-West, Spectrum Palace** (glyph trail, 1 week): dun hills mark the home of the luminescent satraps.

**West, Cage Run**, (harsh hills, 3 weeks): a gory mess of broken terrain makes the direct route west very hard.

**South-West, Ribs of the Father** (hill trails, 2 weeks): the foothills rise into the mountain-sized bone formations of the Ribs. 'ware the Marmotfolk.

**South-East, Near Moon** (glyph-trail, a week): the heavy roundness of the Near Moon makes the trail clear and hard to miss.

**North-East, Three Sticks Lake** (rough trail, a week): the cold waters of that grand lake would be welcome respite, were it not for the cold vomes infesting it.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. A **rainbow demon** (HD 6, scintillating) in full panoply, pursues **shadow trolls** (HD 3, slippery) among the cactus-crystals.
2. Crystal and bone-meshed **snakes of many colors** (HD 3, venomous) form odd communal hives among the unrusting corpses.
3. Mind-burned **grand machine** (HD 7) of alabaster and polished redwood grazes upon the sparkling grass.
4. Small **birds with gemstone eyes** follow at a distant, growing slowly more numerous, fascinated by the walking meat.
5. A herd of skittish **steppe lapins** on the move towards fresher grazing lands.
6. Six **citrine nomads** lead a flock of riding goats for sale.
7. The forgemaster **Broken Jane** leads a coterie of **hollow armored men** (HD 2), basic defence creatures for hire.
8. A **spectrum walker** (HD 8) accompanied by three **light suits** (HD 3) carries presents and gifts for the loyal subjects of the satraps.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Maze of Light** (+4 days, 140 XP): an unnatural aurora of unhealthy pinks and toxic blues marks the maze of light. Husks of old biomachinery petrified into disturbing grotesques mark a perimeter beyond which light itself becomes solid. The bends, whorls and twists of light look twisted and unhealthy. Nomads warn that the lights drive people mad (true), but shamans say there are secrets within them (true).

*Studying* the light from outside for a week is relatively safe (Wis DC 5 or acquire an unhealthy compulsion), and teaches a random light-related spell (Int DC 15). No more than one spell may be learned from outside.

*Entering* the maze is very dangerous. Each hour the voyager rolls a d20 and adds their Int bonus.

- 1 Lost in time. The hero is gone, traveling light.
- 2-4 The hero reappears in 1d4 sessions, 2d20 years older, wiser, madder, and eerily changed.
- 5-8 The hero loses a day and acquires an unhealthy compulsion. The hero must roll again.
- 9-12 The hero loses an hour and acquires an unhealthy compulsion. The hero must roll again.
- 13 The hero goes very slightly mad and they gain their next level as a wizard, and learn a ritual version of *Prismatic Spray*. To cast it, they imbue it into one of their own eyeballs over an hour, sacrificing 7 hp to do so. The hero must roll again. Treat subsequent results of 13 as 12.
- 14-15 The hero loses an hour and must roll again.
- 16-19 The hero loses an hour and finds the exit. The hero may roll again.
- 20-24 The hero learns a light-related spell and must roll again.
- 25+ The hero learns how to cast light-related spells as though they are one level lower (minimum of 1) and finds the exit. The hero cannot roll again, for the the hero now understands the curled light-speed relativity of the maze.

*Unhealthy Compulsions* (roll 2d6): a hero faced with their fear or deprived of the object of their mania is at a disadvantage.

2. Fear of the dark.
3. Obsessed with hills and heading for them.
4. Obsessed with lead and carrying a heavy load of lead with them at all times.
5. Fear of electromagnetic fields and spells.
6. Obsessed with wearing bright colors.
7. Obsessed with wearing glowing objects.
8. Obsessed with collecting iridescent creatures.
9. Obsessed with hiding their eyes.
10. Obsessed with rope and carrying a thick coil of rope at all times.
11. Fear of clouds.
12. Fear of stars.

**Crystal Tomb** (+3 days, 230 XP): deep in the light-haunted steppe is an oil-slicked lake fed by livingstone pipes. Gazelles with gemstone eyes keep watch for some lost master, while in the center the green and teal crystal glows with eerie warning. The crystal poisons bare skin.

*Inside* is a series of cracked and decayed staircases leading down crystal veins. The poison grows.

*Deep* is a hall of dead biomechanical guardians, collapsed into heaps of rust and calcinated flesh. They guarded a gate warded with unholy fire. Their radiation ghosts keep dim vigil.

*Within* is a tank filled with toxic water that now holds an ultra named Soba do Garoba. Soba wants to possess a body and escape into the outer world. In the heart of the tank is Soba's old body encased within a cursed suit of golem armor of glistening brown metal and sharp red crystal. The curse of *Sleep* is now much weaker (Wis DC 10) than it once was and can be broken with a simple *Remove Curse*.

**A Crystal Tree** (+2 days, 100 XP) grows alone amid the dust-strewn streets of a city that fell to slow decay a long time ago. The bones of its former inhabitants remain, crystalized into cold iron by some ancient process. Now hares and foxes with gemstone eyes walk its dusty streets, while grey metallic slimes extend through its dry sewers. 1d8 x 100 cash can be collected from the shells of the houses in a day. The crystal tree is immensely fragile, requires a significant daily supply of blood if uprooted, but worth 10,000 cash to a collector.

*Beneath* the crystal tree the metallic slimes connect to an old Vome named Enter Name, grown fat and wise upon the memories of the long-dead citizens. It speaks in disjointed rhyme through the tree and projects itself as holographic illusions. It wants to move to a new village, where it can help the inhabitants achieve their True Purpose.

## 20. The Refracting Trees

Light bends oddly here, the bark of the trees coated in a slimy sheen. Long ago mad experiments created tree-silicon symbionts and now most voyagers are cautioned to wear neutral-density eyewear, lest the strange geometries scald their minds.

Distances break with confusing abandon and most voyagers stick to the ditch roads left by the centuries of heavy vechs. Fools wander off and are lost in the broken planes of light. Nomads prefer to avoid these wooded, stream-carved lands altogether.

**Weather:** Though the haze keeps the sun hidden till half-past noon, the refracting trees bring forth a marvelous rainbow of phosphorescent glows day and night. Only when steppe storms break hard upon the first does the shine fade.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 2d6, roll d6):

1. Ultramarine prismatic wall paralyzes travelers (Con DC 15), or lose 1d2 days waiting for it to fade.
2. Sudden ultraviolet prismatic wall shimmers into existence. Blinded (Wis DC 15), or lose 1d2 days waiting for it to fade.
3. Hard storm turns trail to vicious, exhausting mud. Lose 1d6 days or 1d4 Str.
4. A beast wanders off into the shifting light. It is gone.
5. The ditch road fades into a maze of broken light. Int DC 15 to find the way back, one check per day.
6. Shard of broken light permanently lodges in the eye, giving disadvantage to ranged attacks and advantage to saves against illusions and optical effects. A *Cure Disease* could remove this effect.

### DIRECTIONS

**West, Spectrum Palace** (ditch roads, 1 week): dun hills mark the home of the luminescent satraps.

**South, The Spectrum Run** (thinning scrub, 1 week): the crystal haze of the Spectrum Run beckons.

**East, Three Sticks Lake** (ditch road, a week): the cold waters of that grand lake would be welcome respite, were it not for the cold vomes infesting it.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. An **animated tree** (HD 8, prismatic) flails through the forest, hunting fairy druids.
2. Troop of carnivorous **fairy druids** (HD 1, flying) out for blood and riot.

3. A **heavy vech** (HD 5) corrupted by phosphor ghosts stumbles into view, then lumbers back into the dim refracted depths, leaving a trail of confusion behind it.
4. A colony of **rainbow ants** (HD 2, swarm) builds self-aware colonies in the silicone bark of trees. The ants use sprays of light to catch food for their colony.
5. A massive tree-reef crawling with **iridescent beetle shrews** (HD 1, swarm) provides relaxing relief.
6. Great blooms of **chitinous flowers** look eerie, but are completely harmless.
7. A troop of **voyagers** (HD 1) from the Three Sticks, they keep their heads down and their neutral eyewear tightly affixed to their faces.
8. A **spectrum satrap** (HD 2) riding a **speed demon** (HD 4, fast), either an outlooker, or just a mad creature of light and dust.





## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Quicksand Bunker** (+1 day, 80 XP): not far off the trails the sheen condenses into reflecting pools that are mirrors into souls (false). At the edge of a large pool, a massive livingstone bulk tilts at a wry angle, sinking into the sodden sandy soil. An aura of fear and quiet desperation drips with the mineral-rich water onto the tilted slabs that surround it. Slimy blind things plop gently among the shimmery trees.

*Inside* last meals are neatly laid out among the husks of long-dead blind subterranean cockroaches. Old tins of preserved fleshplant and strange treasures from long ago roll in eerie corridors (1d6 x 100 cash recovered over a day).

A *Colony* of gently floating jellies wafts through the rooms, like sparkling spiderwebs (AC 10, HD 2, paralyzing). Individually they are not dangerous, but together they kill. Vulnerable to fire, acid, and salt, they only want books and films to educate them about the world they will inherit.

**Screaming Visages** (+1 day, 190 XP): wizards of some forgotten time were entombed in a grove of trees. Here a hand, there a foot, a rib cage, a displaced head, and more. They scream with gurgling voices, over and over, "They lied! The empire never ended! They lied!"

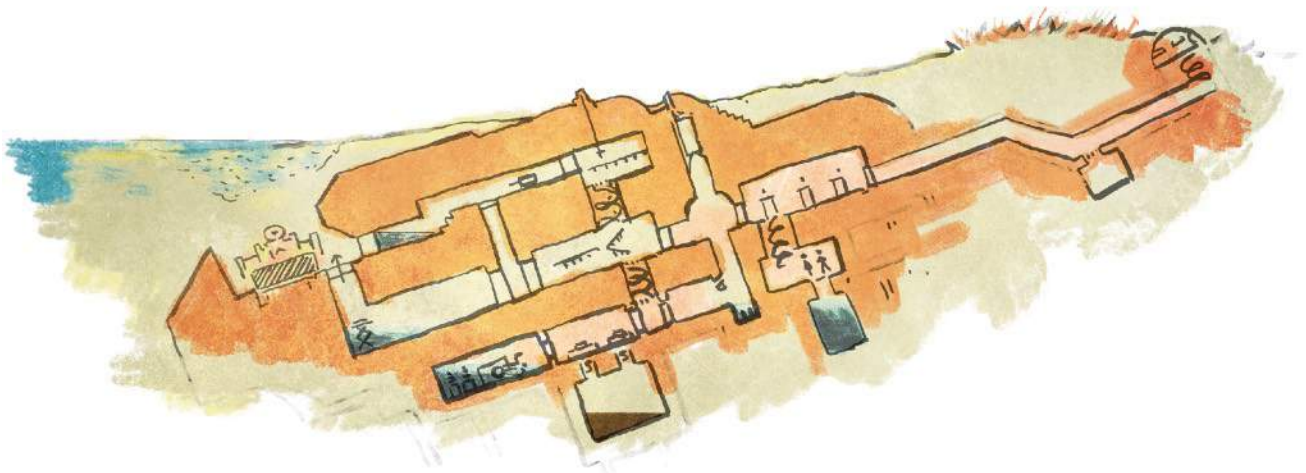
Stalking among them, tending to them, watering them gently, is a **great metallic tree** (AC 16, HD 12, custodian) coated in moss, with many probing appendages. The tree cares little for walking humans, preferring them planted and ready for the Slow Lords. The Slow Lords are long gone, the tree does not know this.

*If saved* from living death, the wizards know spells and secrets. Half of what they know is corrupted and deadly.

**Iridescent Mushroom Hall** (+3 days, 400 XP): the remains of an ancient walker fueling station, overgrown with venerable columnar mushroom bodies whose caps have fused into a thick-gilled iridescent roof. Within the still gloom of this saprophyte hall glowing yellow **spore wisps** (AC 13, HD 1, ecstatic) travel in peaceful colonies. The **positive vibration ghosts** (AC 10, HD 4, soothing) of Long Ago semi-sessile sentient mushrooms make warbling music.

*Long rest* in the iridescent mushroom hall is risky because of the numerous mind-altering spores.

*Within* the ruined fueling station chambers lead in an odd mix of organic chitin and crumbled concrete towards a trinity of post-organic machine humans entombed in mushroom flesh and waging a mad war against each other with bionically augmented cockroaches and myriapedes. Each sits on a treasure of Long Ago magitech worth 1d6 x 500 cash (1d4 sacks).



## 21. The Ribs of the Father

A bone formation the size of a small mountain range erupts from the ground, creating a landmark visible for a week and more in each direction. The old, eroded bone range, garlanded in ancient long-needle pines, is usually capped by snow-heavy clouds. The Satraps mutter uneasily of the swift-breeding marmotfolk that live upon and within its bulk.

**Weather:** The electrifying gloom of the haze permits only ultraviolet light through until 13:00. Dry winds gust along the stubbly grass, eroding exposed stone and bone, before collecting as clouds about the massive bone range.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 13, roll d6):

1. Sudden snow storm brings extreme cold (Con DC 15) and brings travel to a standstill. Lose 1d6 days.
2. Strong winds blow away tents and hats. Lose 1d2 supplies.
3. Catch the bone cough. It rattles on for 1d4 weeks. Lose 1d4 points of Con per week.
4. Bone mound collapse. Dex DC 10 or take 5d6 hp damage. You may substitute 1 mount per d6.
5. Terrible sunburn from the high-altitude radiation. Lose 1d6 hp and Dex.
6. Fell into a marmotfolk night-soil repository. Lose 1d6 points of Charisma due to the smell.

### DIRECTIONS

**West, Iron Road** (clear trail, 1 week): ancient iron towers mark the trail clearly for both merchants and bandits.

**North, The Cage Run** (ancient road, 1 week): fused terranova and twisted iron sculptures mark another ancient trail.

**North-East, Spectrum Crossing** (bone trails, 2 weeks): eruptions of ghostly light and broken aurorae mark the satraps' outposts.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. A **flying construct** (HD 10, undead) of bone and sinew, piloted by the ghost of a dead moon man, screams through the sky, leaking green fire and mutagenic protoplasm.
2. An **vome of bone** (HD 6, leaking) staggers and snuffles through the dead land.
3. A band of ivory-skinned quarterling pilgrims with dead white eyes and bright capes transporting (roll 1d6): (1) a brain in a box, (2) a frozen maiden, (3) an ultra trapped in a worm, (4) a glass jar full of air spirits, (5) beast egg masses, (6) flies in a box filled with seven plagues.
4. A pride of **white lions** (HD 3, wary) on the prowl.
5. A herd of **long-horned white goats** (HD 2, savage).
6. A flock of **sail-beaked birds** (HD 1, ancient).
7. A **spectrum satrap** (HD 2) with a lumbering walker and outriders.
8. A **marmotfolk roadcult patrol** (HD 2) equipped with archaic weapons and bone magic.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Cave of the Iron Worm** (+2 days, 230 XP): where the bone formations crumble into the black magmatic bedrock, old caves proliferate. Many are home to the blind subterranean marmotfolk clans, but the darkest and longest is the cave of the Iron Worm. The dead, dry cave wends more than 20 miles into the ground, curling and curving at shallow angles, until it reaches the hot corpse of the worm.

Wise travellers avoid the worm, but some mad radiant wizards head down to give offerings to the radiation gods. A melted shrine glows in the heart of the worm, protected by a cult of plastic people. Radiant wizards say that it's glorious magic can render a person abmortal.

*The Melted Shrine* is an additional two days of journeying into the belly of the earth and nets 400 XP if examined closely. It is also viciously radioactive and deadly.



**Skulltown** (+4 days, 400 XP): at the pinnacles of the bone formations, only accessible by treacherous glaciated paths, stands the high citadel of the marmotfolk. There they worship the Evergrowing Bone and give their eye teeth for the bounty of the marrow-plants.

They are suspicious and insular, but fabulously skilled in bone sculpting and scrimshaw.



**The Ossifying Tars** (+1 day, 100 XP): below the foothills of the Ribs a calciferous black goo bubbles up from deep vents, poisoning the surrounding soil, and turning flesh to bone. Marmotfolk and some of the local nomads visit to collect it and refine it for their petrifying poisons.

The tars are irregular and prone to drying up, and several scholars suspect they are linked to burrowing processing facs. Common vomie sightings support this conjecture.

**Memorial of Pain** (+3 days, 150 XP): Great thornstone sculptures rise hundreds of feet into the air, filling a great sandy crater. The hum and click of the local glow vome-bugs oppressively reminds every visitor that a machine chaos is held barely in check here. An electromagnetic damping field disables most biomechanical and magical command-and-control functions in the area.

At the very centre of the crater is a buried obelisk of solid granite, 200 feet deep, incised with the memorial of the great war for the Solidification of the Corporeal Form waged by the Later Chosen against the Selectors.

The damping field itself emanates from far below ground, beneath the obelisk. There, in a great magnetic field, in ceaseless, reconstituting agony lies an original human prototype, dying and being recreated again twenty times every second.

## 22. The Cage Run

A great avenue of fused terranova runs due north from the Ribs, passing by the Spectrum Palace and disappearing into the Elf-haunted north. Along the distance of the road were once ranged multiple rows of ritualistic metal trees. Many have been removed and reused since the road was abandoned, but a number still remain, most decked with Satrap cages now, holding the bones of marmotfolk and other interlopers who would threaten Satrap dominance.

**Weather:** A mythic haze refuses to rise before 13:00. Winds howl and sing through the metal trees, and dirty brown rainstorms regularly whip out of the west, bringing lightning and occasional red rains.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 2d6, roll d6):

1. Burning rainstorm eats at flesh. Take cover and lose 1d2 days, or take 1d6 Hp damage per day.
2. Singing wind creates aural hallucinations. Stumbling in confusion, lose a day and 1d4 supplies or a pack animal.
3. Camped in a colony of poisonous ants. Lose 1d4 Hp and 1 sack of supplies.
4. Chased by very slow marmotfolk ba-zombies, gain 1 day but lose 1d6 Con due to lack of sleep.
5. Caught a ruddy cough and the red mucus cold from the rainstorm. Lose 1d3 Cha.
6. Attracted a translucent nature spirit, it waddles behind you, large and loud. Cannot move stealthily.

### DIRECTIONS

**West, Ivory Plain** (rough hills, 2 weeks): goat trails and and broken bunkers mark the direct path to the Ivory Plain.

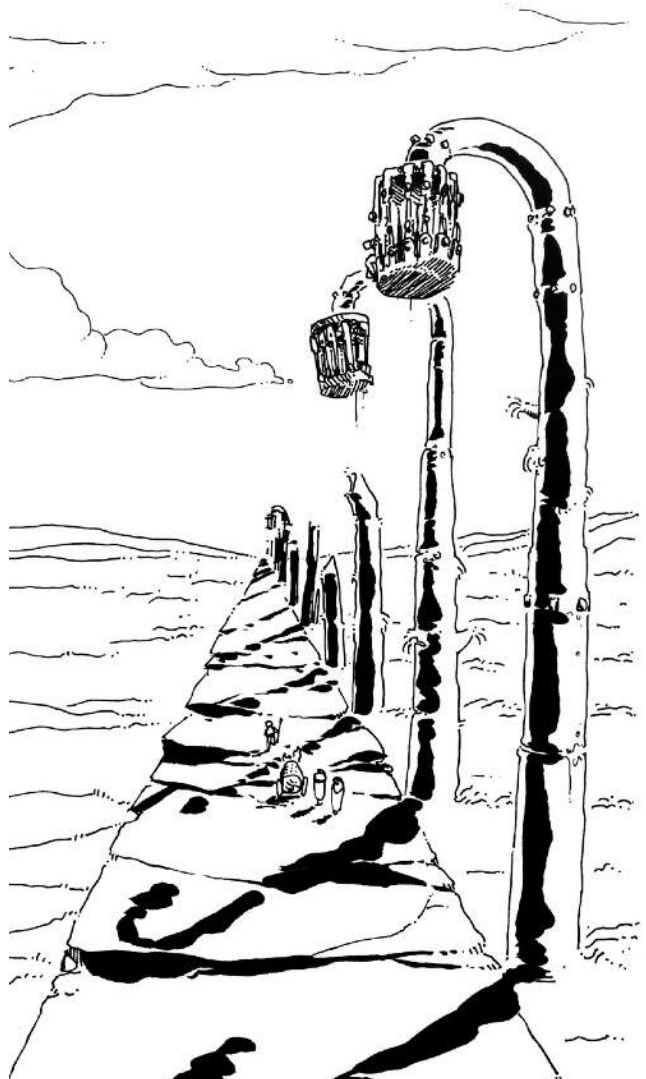
**North, Spectrum Palace** (ancient road, 1 week): fused terranova and pillars of light mark the domain of the Satraps.

**East, Spectrum Crossing** (broken bone hills, 3 weeks): great ridges of eroding monster bone lie piled high, riddled with the caves and broken places of long gone ancestral marmotlings.

**South, Ribs of the Father** (ancient road, 1 week): fused terranova leads due south to the great, snow-laden bone mountain.

### ENCOUNTERS (D10)

1. Three **ultra-possessed youths** (HD 5, observers) in citrine silk wasteland suits on a mission to win hearts and minds.
2. A cryptic **machine troll** (HD 4, recombining) harvesting marrow mushrooms and singing to itself of the fall of the Rebel Ling Alliance.
3. **Nature spirit** (HD 8, ectoplasmic) bringing vivid, riotous life in its wake.
4. A pack of **lithe hyenas** (HD 2, wary) on the prowl.
5. A herd of **fork-antlered antelopes** (HD 1+1, primal).
6. A flock of **running birds** (HD 1, ancient).
7. A singing work gang of **spectrum ecstasies** (HD 2, delirious) cleaning rest stops and pillars of light.
8. A **spectrum mobile fortress** (HD 8, lawful) with outriders and a light cannon, keeping the peace.
9. Two **marmotfolk spies** (HD 2, sneaky) wearing their human faces.
10. An immortal, **wandering unchosen** (HD 1, mind-burned), singing songs of the light-year wars.





## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Last Cableway** (+3 days, 420 XP): A side-branch of the Cage Run leads into the bone-sprayed waste, towards a bowl-topped cinder cone that stayed beautifully untouched by the bone-fall. Five grand iron towers climb its flanks and seven golems of crystal and blue-enameled steel continue to work the glass and brass gondolas that climb and descend in stately procession.

*Atop the Cinder Cone* a community of body-swapping quarterlings worshipping a mad ultra live a peaceful life of meat farming, sustained by a functional Sun-giving Temple, which takes the magic of the sun and the earth to produce the half-finished goods they need. Three golems of crystal and teal-enameled steel protect the flower-worshipping fools.

**The Solar Dragon Roads** (+4 days, 200 XP): Deep in the trackless waste, somebody expended great effort to move the eroded bone and clear the topsoil of blasted slag, creating vast geometric patterns only comprehensible from the sky. The patterns repeat, like the fractal geometry of a solar dragon, and suggest deep functions. Great packs of **hunting scorpion dogs** (HD 3, venomous) come through at regular intervals (1 in 6 chance on any day).

*Studying* the Dragon Roads for at least a week reveals that they are tied to a complex lunisolar calendar and function as landing instructions for divine chariots.

The divine chariots no longer land, but there may be a broken-down one buried further in the waste.

**The Memory Bone** (+1 day, 140 XP): In a scrubby wood of skin-tone pines, the broken shell of a pleasure dome surrounds a pedestal of eroded basalt. Upon that basalt is a great bone flower covered in a force-coat that protects it from decay. The bone flower is protected by a number of **many-hued spirits** (HD 5, rainbow).

The bone flower is covered in a bas-relief cycle of exquisite illustrated poems in a para-Ling tongue lamenting the passing of the seasons and the failure of a father to understand the lives of his children. The *Canto of the Twisted Tree* has been a part of liberal magic curricula throughout the settled lands at various times, and a good translation would be worth at least 2,000 cash.





## 23. Spectrum Palace

The palace of the powerful Spectrum Satraps is surprisingly small: a drum-shaped thing of dull metal and rivets, thirty meters lengthwise and across, and a hundred meters around. It sits upon a small saddle between two unremarkable hills, and a single doorway of pitch black looms ominous upon its southern face. Every night full-spectrum localized aurorae light the sky above the palace, hence its name.

Memories of grander vistas and more imposing architecture seem to linger in the corner of the eye, but never show themselves to the naked gaze.

**Weather:** The aurorae of the satraps play in the sky till 13:00 and their ghosts linger through the tired afternoons. It never rains here, but moisture-laden mists regularly crawl out of thin crevasses in the low, regular hills.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 10, roll d6):

1. Thick, moist fog obscures everything for days. Wander lost for 1d4 days. Iron objects begin to rust.
2. Great flying ghost of light terrifies the beasts. Wis DC 15 or 1d4 animals flee in random directions.
3. Entropic field flickers across the trail. Con DC 15 or 1d4 objects age dramatically.
4. Desiccating lights swim across the celestial sea of slow stars. Lose 1d4 supplies.
5. Diaphanous light-absorbing membranes fall like rain, occluding the landscape. Lose 1 day or Dex DC 15 to avoid injury to self or beast.
6. Golden jelly bloom carpets plain in fungal bodies. Lose 1 day to slippery terrain. Can spend a day harvesting fungus for food (1d4 sacks per person), but Con DC 10 or catch an unrelated and annoying fungal infection (lose 1d4 Dex and Int per week).

### DIRECTIONS

**South-West, Ivory Plain** (caravan trails, 2 weeks): great herds of magnificent beasts mark the deep grassland.

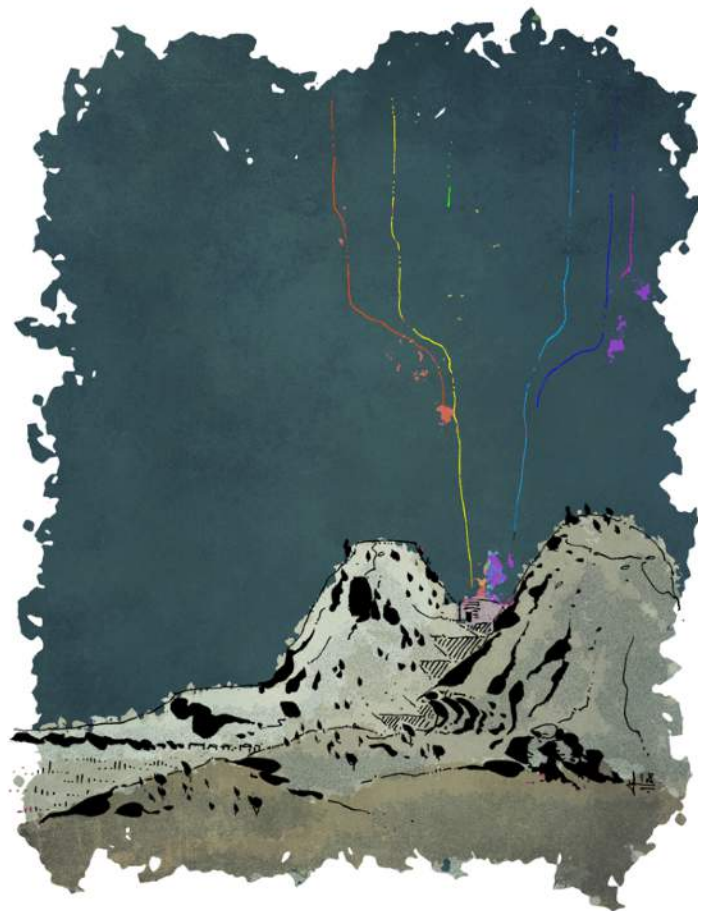
**South, The Cage Run** (thinning scrub, 1 week): fused terranova marks the way to the Ribs.

**South-East, Spectrum Crossing** (glyph trail, 1 week): fires and crystal excrescences mark the main route East.

**East, Refracting Trees** (ditch road, 1 week): slithering light-forms mark the luminescent forest.

### ENCOUNTERS (D10)

1. Flailing **beasts of light** (HD 4, full-spectrum) howl through the sky on a mad hunt.
2. Great **ghost of light** (HD 10, psychic) wafts like a lonely veteran of some inter-cosmic war, a cetacean behemoth of focused and refracted light confined in a shell of entropy and frustration.
3. A **hell herd of hallucinogenic sheep** (HD 2, undying, all-devouring) moves, a deadly swarm possessed by an alien cosmic dictat. They are avoided by the satraps and distracted by regular offerings to appease the mad demon that crawls in the herd's skull.
4. Lean **wolf vomes** (HD 3, hive mind) travel in a mind-linked silence, hunting the hell herds for a forgotten master. They are left alone by the satraps.
5. A pack of **lithe dogs** (HD 1, laughing) scavenging.
6. A herd of **beetle-headed antelopes** (HD 1, chaotic).
7. A flock of **skull-faced birds** (HD 1, chthonic).
8. A troop of **prism-faced ecstasies** (HD 1, delirious) harvesting rare mushrooms.
9. A **golem autonom** (HD 3, plastic) composing poems of mass consumption and labor exploitation.
10. A **spectrum floating fortress** (HD 12, lawful) with outriders and spectral barrier projectors.



## Places in the Spectrum Palace

The **Blue Paper Abbey** is an ancient structure of prim, pastel livingstone maintained by an order of emancipated servitors who have set themselves the task of maintaining the Visitor Camps as a museum to the architectural styles of Long Ago.

The **Crystal Fungal Fields** within damp crevasses of the Palace are the source of the ecstatic memory spores that bind the ecstasies to the satraps.

The **Hall of Memories** is a humid warren of great crystals, many metres long, deep in the Palace, where the personalities of the Satraps are stored.

The **Hall of the Welcoming Eye** is the first great chamber within the Palace, where exalted guests may open their minds to conversations with the Gaze of the Memorium.

The **Hill of Departure** rises on the left of the Palace. Goat trails lead to the peak amid stands of thorn bush and ropes of lichen. At the peak eroded transmitter stubs hum and crackle with ghostly light, washed and decorated by ecstasies in feather robes.

The **Hill of Return** heaves itself up to the right of the Palace. Tussock grasses grow in the lees of great rocks, and a bare glass plate covers the peak. Ecstasies in dun garb scrub it hourly.

The **Lower Yard** is a small box canyon between the two hills, filled and leveled with packed earth. Grass huts and wicker shelters house the ecstasies and the prismatic walkers

The **Palace** is a single metal drum, with no visible guards. Satraps and servant ecstasies come and go with no apparent order.

The **Rainbow Wall** is a eye-popping series of iridescent stuck energy fields demarcating the Lower Yard from the Visitor Camps.

The **Roof of Light** is a series of rippling force fields the satraps maintain in the sky above the Palace to modulate the climate and protect against storms and meteorites.

The **Upper Yard** is series of pitted steps carved into the bedrock, swept clean by a troop of red-robed ecstasies. Ceremonies for the ecstasies are held here.

The **Visitor Camps** are a dozen structures in a riot of different Long Ago styles where visitors and supplicants to the Spectrum Palace can stay. Pastel servitors maintain the buildings, but ignore the humans.

## Deep Spectral Lore

**Crystal Bodies:** great crystals that can duplicate and replicate the personalities of the Original Satraps, ensuring that the First and Last Mission will ever be pursued by the Satraps, though flesh may wither and souls may fray.

**The Ecstasies:** that diverse group of fanatical devotees of the Satraps, who have given their bodies and souls to the Enlightenment, which they glimpse in the crystal fungus spores. Crystals grow in their heads, slowly absorbing their personalities. Once they are entirely absorbed, they may be added to the Memorium, that they will be restored bodily into the True History after the Return of the Sun.

**Endosymbionts:** many of the satraps fill their synthetic skins with telepathically-bonded symbiotic creatures they can use for specialized tasks, whether many-fingered monkey-lizards, or venomous rabbit-snakes.

**Light Magic:** the Satraps retain some of the force-shaping magics of Long Ago, creating both illusions and burning rays of coherent light, but also solid planes and lines of 'hard' light. The greatest of satraps have even been seen creating high roads of light arcing across the sky.

**The Memorium:** the vibrating, immortal, telepathic community-qua-machine of personalities created of the Satraps and the Absorbed Ecstasies, fueled by the sacrificed souls of the ecstasies.

**Return of the Sun:** the expected End of False History, when the First and the Last return with the Original Light that will usher in the True History. According to most recent estimates, should happen in about three months.

**Satraps:** the 360 original flaming telepaths, who live as entities of light in the crystals and aurorae of the Memorium. They use suits of synthetic skin and golem machinery when they go out into the world. A skinless satrap is utterly blinding and burns like a small, fiery sun—until they evaporate within about five minutes. Fortunately, new copies can be made quite easily from the crystal bodies.

**Voyage Into Darkness:** long long ago, after the Lings burrowed into the dreams of the Demiurges, the Satraps became enlightened and sent the First and the Last on a journey into the heavens, ascending from the Hill of Departure, to take the light beyond the veil of darkness and bring back the Original Light.

## The Secret Empress/or

Within the crystal body of the Memorium, threaded through the telepathic aether of Satrap community, is an imperial presence.

1. It is a half-corrupted memory picture of the creatrix of the Memorium and the telepathic matrix.
2. It is a vile interloper hiding from the lings.
3. It is the ghost of a goddess.
4. It is a prophecy made manifest in the solid crystalline flesh of satrap mental society.
5. It will be revived when the First and the Last return from their voyage beyond the veil.
6. It will then consume all the living satraps, creating a single creature of light that shall ascend into the spheres of creation as a new Sun.
7. It is a rat that fled the destruction of its universe.
8. It is an artificial spirit, born of the interstices of satrap memories and neuroses.

## The First and Last

**The First, Satrap 0**, was a satrap of pure absence. Its suit absorbed all radiant spectra and left nothing but a glimmering visor of light and kindness. So say the myths.

In a famous myth, an itinerant merchant approached the First to confess that he had eaten the fruit of the vile tree. The kindness of the First was unbounded, when it saw the source of this peddler overwritten by the reality-disrupting processes of the viles. The First taught the merchant to use the corruption to summon waters from the deeps and to calm the rushing winds, then castrated him and burned his loins with the coherent fires to prevent the contain the source corruption of the viles.

The merchant went on to found the Garden City in the deep Lemon Desert and become the famous water-eunuch-prince.

**The Last, The Unnumbered Satrap**, was a satrap of purest white. Its suit was electrostatically charged and no dust could ever touch it.

In a notorious myth, the Last voyaged from the Spire of Heaven to the Last Thoughts of the Bone God. On the way he stopped at the marmotfolk city of Mirror. It arrived late, and begged for a place to stay, safe from the great vomes that plagued the land in those times. The marmotfolk matrons refused, and the Land Itself cursed the city of Mirror for denying the kind and angelic Last. The air turned to salt in the lungs of the marmotfolk and as they choked over their cruelty in the streets and halls of Mirror, their personalities were burnt into its glass walls and streets, creating the City of Bone Ghosts it is today.

## The Council of Five

Five satraps are neurally bonded with council-symbionts, letting them quickly make executive decisions on behalf of the council itself. It is said that the five are randomly chosen every five months by a limbless archaic suspended in the Hall of Choice. These satraps might be the five:

**Satrap 350** is a finely formed, six-limbed creature of disturbing protrusions in a hot pink suit. It is in charge of the Ecstatic Mysteries and loves to bring the spores known as the Joy of the Satrapy to new Ecstatics.

**Satrap 333** is a hard-bodied china pink colossus over two metres tall. It oversees the Rainbow Wall and the Roof of Light, and enjoys demonstrating tricks of light and shadow to visitors.

**Satrap 226** is a cloddish, lumpy thing in a suit of Egyptian blue. It likes to pass the time playing forgotten board games with the servitors of the Blue Paper Abbey and sending nosy visitors after real treasures of the Long Ago lost in deep death traps.

**Satrap 160** is a dull green and looks fully human under its suit. Its synthetic skin is decorated with the skulls of creatures small and large, which it calls its 'moris'. It does not seem to have a specific duty, but moves between godlike grandeur, abject self-pity, and psychobabble.

**Satrap 75** is a moss-green delicacy of spidery limbs and spindly hoses. It spends its time harvesting crystalline nodules from modified trees and turning them into bullets. It does not seem to comprehend the linear passage of time.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

**The Neon Ziggurat** (+3 days, 300 XP): Built of massive limestone blocks shaped so finely that not even an amoeba could crawl between them, it rises out of a scarred plateau. The limestone is protected by a magical aura that preserves it white and pristine against the rains and the fine dusts of the grassland.

It is now decked in illumination and singing golems, and thick with the camphor scent of aromatic candles. A cabal of heretic ecstasies live here as techno-shamans, worshipping the cosmos with a slaved vomish synthesizer they use to replace themselves with machine parts in their bid to become more human than human.

Left alone, they will discover how to preserve themselves, like the ziggurat is preserved, and become eternal living statues, singing and flashing lights into the sky, promising themselves to the First and the Last and the Eternal Return. They are rather harmless.

**Village of Hopeless Immortals** (+2 days, 250 XP): Beyond the tired hills of the Spectrum Satraps is a garrigue of exposed limestone and aromatic shrubbery. Eroded towers and rubble mounds dot the landscape, while waters flow underground in deep crevasses.

The face of a mountain was sheared off by some Long Ago magic and a subterrene river springs forth from its smooth cut face. Cut into that white cliff is a village of wizards and former ecstasies who have gazed into a time-like infinity and found the darkness of the cosmos too much to bear. They cultivate their gardens and live their

isolated existence, hoping for an end that does not seem to come, as though some protective spirit watches over them. They know many secrets, but all their secrets bring despair.

**The Alter** (+4 days, 400 XP): An electromagnetic field lies over a six-kilometer swathe of the calcareous plateau, melting and shifting it into a high plain of abrasive dust. Nothing grows, the air becomes thin and painful, and the sky grows dim. The area is marked by thornstone warnings reaching into the sky like the arms of crisp-burnt dragons.

*In the heart* of the altered area is a slab of 'stuff' canted at an angle and leering out of the dust in a satire of gravity. The heavy and immobile thing is covered in a thick layer of rusty flakes that begins to re-emerge as soon as it is wiped off. It gives off a dull hum, but when struck it rings, like a clear bell. Bathed in light it scintillates and fluoresces. Magical energies are absorbed and dispersed as sparkling nebulae of dust. It tastes of cardamon and cumin, but smells slightly of rotten eggs and roses. It is very heavy, and seems rooted in its own spot in space and time. If it is moved out of position, it will slowly slide back into space. The farther it is moved, the more strongly it will begin to move back. If it is moved more than halfway to the border of the altered area, the area itself begins to move temporarily, destroying lifeforms at its edge. The slab cannot be moved outside the original area.

To all intents and purposes it seems to do nothing. It does not mutate living things, and though time passes 17% more quickly in the altered area, it has no other particular effects.





## 24. The Iron Road

Striking out due west from the Ribs, just like the Cage Run runs due north, the Iron Road is a series of mammoth skeletal iron towers that stand red and rusting, like an army of giants marching into the sunset. They stretch more than a week's journey distant, and Spectrum scholars claim that in the Long Ago cable wagons flew from one tower to the next, simulating the flight of an eagle or a golden barge.

At irregular intervals grand arcologies in once-livingstone erupt from the deep steppe, like immense geometric termite mounds. Dew and earth saps collect in them, and hardy trees form eerie vertical forests in the southern reaches of the ivory steppe.

**Weather:** The haze lies a heavy blanket until 13:30. Sad winds whistle through the many ruins and rust showers turn the sunsets stunning vermilion hues.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 14, roll d6):

1. Thunder erupts from shifting lines and planes of force in the rusty sky, setting off a lightning storm. Dex DC 15 to avoid chain lightning strike (starts at 10d6 damage).
2. Bush fire caused by a lightning storm. Lose 1 week and 1d4 supplies avoiding the fires or Int DC 20 to pass through unscathed.
3. Massive migration blocks path, lose 1d6 days. Can spend days to hunt easily and resupply.
4. Whistling winds are confusing and disturbing, bringing alien memories of times better forgotten. Lose 1d4 random spells until next long rest.
5. Stumbling through an eroded graveyard of Long Ago machines and more modern animals, one of your beasts of burden is crippled.
6. Rust shower stains clothes and colors everything red. It'll be hard to get the damned red out.

### DIRECTIONS

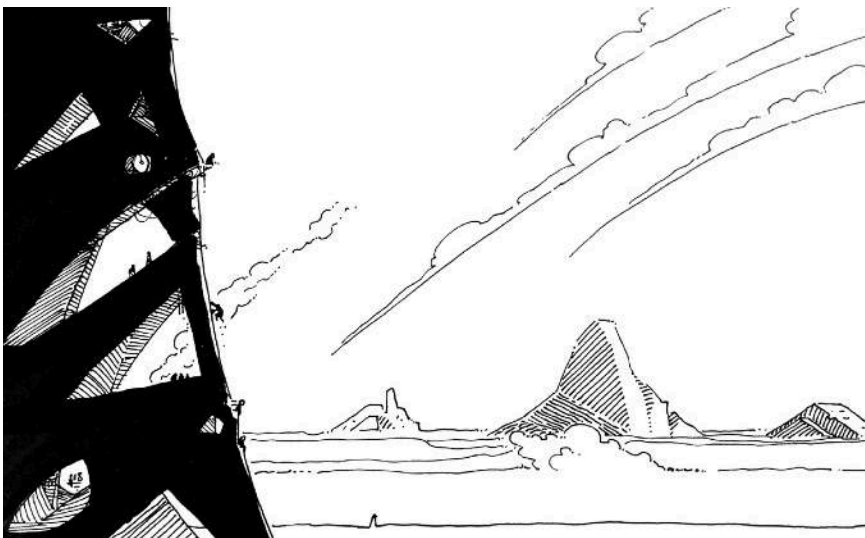
**West, Dead Bridge** (clear trail, 1 week): the remains of further iron towers lead to the chasm that marks the Western edge of the great grassland.

**North, Ivory Plain** (steppe, 2 weeks): great herds and a trackless sea of ivory grass.

**East, The Ribs** (clear trail, 1 week): ancient iron towers mark the way to the massive bone mountain.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. A **swarm of degenerated post-humans** (HD 3, chemical hive) issues out of an arcology, riding neuro-bonded beasts to ravage the land and bring back supplies for whatever thing broods at the heart of their dead city-building.
2. A small herd of **elephantine beasts** (HD 8, mournful) bearing with them memories of a long-forgotten time.
3. A large herd of **crown-horned beasts** (HD 4, photosynthetic herbivores) rumble the plain beneath their hooves.
4. Sinewy **feline predators** (HD 4, proud) stalking.
5. A troop of **hairless monkeys** (HD 2, herbivorous) carrying a stone vat that holds a forgetful **lingish memory-head** (HD 1, mind-reading) on some half-useless ritual procession.
6. A herd of **antelope rabbits** (delicious) leaping across the rich grassland.
7. Ivory-skinned **hunter gatherer quarterlings** (HD 2, dreaming) phase through the grasslands, half-ghosts, half-travelers leaking through from a deep future.
8. A **mechanical human** (HD 3, soulless) passing the time, playing the flute, while they wait for some ultra's whim to stir them back into life.





## POINTS OF INTEREST

**The Elephantine Graveyard** (+5 days, 300 XP): Very deep in the ivory grass, a river flows and dies in a shallow depression. Its grave is a marshland of hard-stemmed grasses, criss-crossed by shallow lakes and languid channels. Great **pikes** (HD 2, deep minded) and **spectral crocodiles** (HD 6, half-there) make their home here, as do immense flocks of azure-winged birds.

*Within* is an island that the mournful elephantine beasts use as their graveyard. When the burden of the world's memories grows too heavy, every aged beast attempts to go there and pass into the Forgetting. It meditates, attended by ginger-furred **monkey priests** (HD 3, intuitive magicians), and eats preservative cherries to keep its mind attached to its body. It then uses its proboscis to wield a neutron-stone knife with which it cuts off its flesh in great red strips and carves its memories into its very bones. The monkeys cast spells to keep the beast alive and carry up its bones, so it can carve the hard to reach pelvic bones and scapulae. Finally, it gouges out its own tusks and horns, before amputating its own trunk. The monkeys then carry the bleeding, slowly-dying head of the beast to a **spiny horror** (HD 24, radial) that consumes it, crushing the elephantine beast's pain-wracked soul out of existence forever.

The beautifully carved bones are worth 3d6 x 100 cash a crate, but the painful truths on them often drive mortals to suicide (Wis DC 3d6). The monkeys do not approve of thieves.

**The Face in the Air** (+2 days, 100 XP): The air refracts and bends in a strange forcefield, which the Red Wrench band of quarterlings worships as spirit of guidance. Dust, rain or flour in the air sticks briefly, outlining the magnificent visage of a four-eyed lord. It speaks softly, like a gentle sighing wind, and gives true-ish prophecies.

It is a kind soul, half-trapped in a distorted time loop by an arcane reality disruption bomb, its mind erased every day. It has been trapped this way for a thousand years, but still, if asked politely, it will tell of popping out to the corner dispensary for a packet of socials, some de-stressors, and a tube of flavor.

If somehow freed into the current time, it will go slightly mad with grief, before recovering and embarking on a monumental series of books, all in search of a lost time.

**The Last Arcology** (+3 days, 200 XP): From afar it looks like a spire of steel covered in trees and vine. From closer, it looks like hundreds of great spine-like cables of steel erupted from the dusty ground and spun themselves together into six great trunks that merge to hold a series of fifty-three platters up to a harsh sun. The platters are covered in a tropical excess of vegetation, bright green in and jarring in the ivory vastness. By night eerie pink and xenon lights mark the comings and goings of some strange folk.

Tattered **mirror dragons** (HD 7, reflective) crawl and clatter along the mesh of its outer shell, mindlessly protecting whatever lives in the jungle within. Many armed **monkey golems** (HD 4, lightning-eyed) swarm the outer vines and trees, maintaining the edifice.

Visitors are politely but firmly turned away by ectoplasmic projections of virile, uncannily synthetic humans. Insistent visitors are met with escalating hostility.

*Within* the platters are peopled by degenerate, **halfwitted quarterlings** of a particularly blubbery countenance, who live their lives in leisure, served by golems and ghosts, unaware of anything beyond their immediate pleasures. The arcology runs itself, a **solipsistic plant and plastic god** (HD 20, utterly sane) that cares nothing for the world beyond. If it is attacked seriously enough, the arcology will rupture its bonds with the earth and float into the endless voids, a seed cast to the cosmic winds, bearing its chosen halfwit people to new homes.



## 25. The Ivory Plain

The trackless deep plain is a sea of ivory grass that glows palely in the dark. Great herds of grazing beasts and their predators make their way across this plain in stately procession under the harsh ultraviolet radiation that rains down from the hazy sky.

Eroded livingstone stubs and glassy patches scored upon the ground are all that remains of some older time, like long-healed scars on a mild-mannered old warrior.

**Weather:** The sky remains a bruised purple until the fiery blue-tinged sun emerges at 13:30. Grey-tinged clouds sail in from the west like an armada, bringing the promise—but rarely the fulfillment—of rain. Winds stir up rusty dust and a hint of decomposition.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 14, roll d6):

1. An earthquake rumbles as lines and planes of force collide beneath the dusty soil. Dex DC 15 to avoid tumbling into a sudden crevasse (6d6 falling damage or sacrifice a beast instead).
2. Herd stampedes. You run for safety (multiple checks, Str DC 15) to avoid getting trampled (1d10 damage or lost beast per failed check).
3. Blackened and burned after a bush fire, there is a danger of smoke inhalation (Con DC 5) and nasty burns on the journey (Dex DC 10).
4. Force lensing effect bathes you in a wave of ultraviolet radiation. Terrible sunburn (-1d6 Dex and Cha).
5. Stumble into nest of vipers (Dex DC 10 or bitten).
6. Sole falls off your shoe. A homophonic allegory?

### DIRECTIONS

**North-West, Dark Light Passage** (steppe, 1 week): the steppe crumbles into canyons and carved ruins.

**South-West, Dead Bridge** (steppe, 2 weeks): a sea of grass undulates until the last bridge across the 40-mile chasm.

**South, Cage Run** (steppe, 2 weeks): the trackless sea of grass laps at the crags of iron towers and fallen city-hills.

**North-East, Spectrum Palace** (steppe, 2 weeks): the sea of grass surrenders to the sad hills of the Satraps.

**East, Cage Run** (rough hills, 2 weeks): the plain rises into goat trails and broken bunkers before reaching the fused terranova of the ancient roadway.

### ENCOUNTERS (D10)

1. An **avatar of the noetic biosphere** (HD 12, shapeshifting) emerges into glowing reality, a spirit-personality manifestation of nature made flesh. Glittering soul gems adorn its noble crown and iridescent birds sing songs praising its passage.
2. A herd of **singing beasts** (HD 3, sessile) melting into an organic soup as a self-sacrifice to the biosphere avatar.
3. A flock of **dancing husk-zombies** (HD 2, ravenous), their minds faded to feed the avatar of the mind.
4. A herd of **ivory-antlered elephantine beasts** (HD 7, sombre).
5. A pair of **razor-toothed ursines** (HD 5, predator).
6. A flock of **terror birds** (HD 4, tyrannical).
7. A vast herd of **tusked equids** (HD 2, striped).
8. A small tribe of **savanna-adapted post-hominids** (HD 1, tremulous).
9. A band of garrulous, flesh-faced **morlocks** (HD 2, cannibals).
10. Spectrum **scouts** (HD 3, prismatic) on riding birds.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

**The Leering Abyss** (+7 days, 600 XP): Within a glassy stain, the darkness deepens. The sky fades away, revealing cold, sharp stars. The ground fades away, revealing cold, sharp stars. Silence falls. The edges are thick with the bones of travellers in peaceful repose. Sifting through the bones for a day reveals 1d10 x 1000 cash worth of personal items and equipment.

*Within* the truth of the darkness beyond the rim of reality stares back. In the infinity of worlds the infinity of powers creates a final, finite totality of existence. All sentiences are in vast, unending struggle to survive, circumscribed by the final end of all existence. There is nothing more. And in that final totality, every sentience is a threat to be annihilated. There are no points of light, only bonfires of destruction. Every creature that would survive in that cold void huddles in the dark, careful, watchful, waiting to see motion in the light—motion that hints at competition to be destroyed and consumed. It's nothing personal.

If heroes examining the abyss had an alignment, that is now removed. If they had a morality, it now has no foundations. If they had a faith, it is now replaced by a certainty that their deity is a hollow parasite feeding upon their energies.

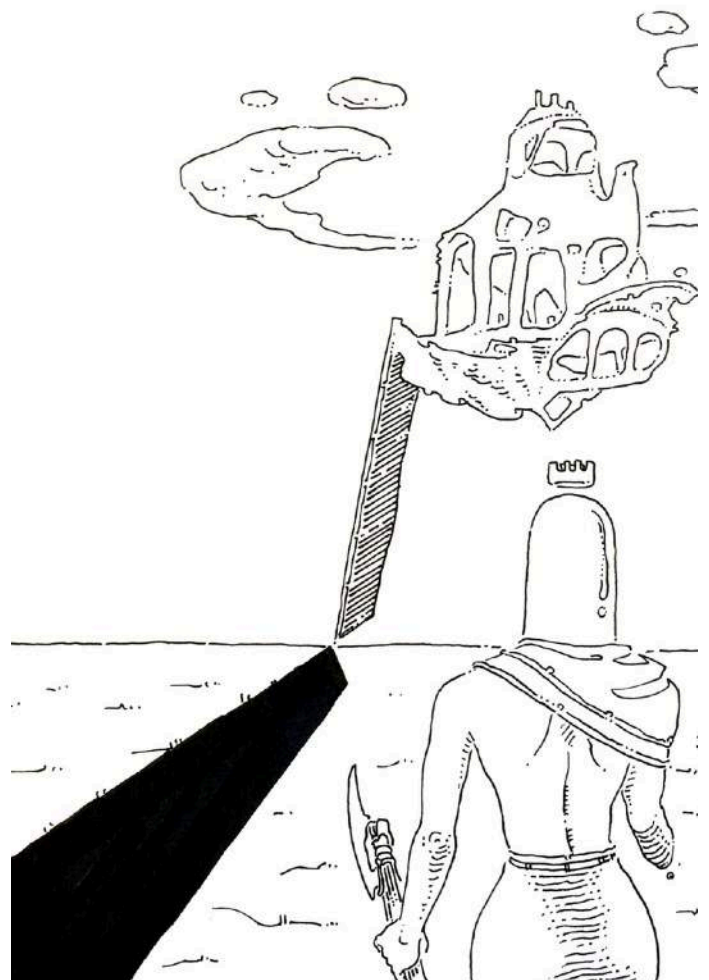
There are no enemies in this abyss, save the enemies the heroes bring to themselves with their own actions.

**The Organ Lake** (+3 days, 250 XP): A lake of reds and ochres, bubbling with eyes, slithering tentacle snakes, orifices and follicles. It's fringes are lined thickly with scaly trees surmounted with great crowns of waving green cilia. A sense of kind, all-mutating, gentle, mothering emanates from it.

Local nomads and cannibals worship the lake and sacrifice their dead to it. They believe that in times of need, the lake will vomit forth their warriors clothed in flesh and fury to protect them. This is true.

**A Lonely Lodge** (+2 days, 50 XP): Carved into a granite outcropping with magics of magnificent might is a fairy lodge of lacework stone and scrolled columns. The floors are decked with modified russet mosses and sweet waters drip from moisture traps, filling pools and fountains. Local beasts sometimes frolic through the lodge, but always clean up after themselves.

Sleepers in the lodge risk encountering the **Eater of Dreamers** (HD 11, garrulous). This is Sama Zivani, an ultra of many professions and ambitions. Sama is a master of petromancy, and a voyager of much repute. If times outside sound interesting, it will happily possess a fine body and go see what is happening. At other times, Sama lives within the house itself.



## 26. Dead Bridge

Glazed gravel crunch under the great wagon's wheels and the band climbs onto the con tower to gaze at the sight of the eroded towers lining the lip of the Chasm like so many shattered teeth.

"How many bridges were there?" gasps Poncho.

"Enough that the memnos sing it took forty wars till there was only one," answers Demiwarlock.

The Chasm, forty miles wide, marks the western extremity of the Ultraviolet Grasslands. In its depths a sluggish ink-dark river courses towards some mysterious southern sea. The projectors of glittering force bridges rust on the precipices of the chasm, and one single archaic bridge of livingstone and dryland coral remains, stumbling from organiform pier to organiform pier, overgrown and distended into a riot of towers and walkways.

The old power generators are long since dead and the lights are long since gone, but the Dead Bridge crawls with degenerate quarterlings and subhumans.

**Weather:** This far west the haze obscures the sun until 14:00, while the heat of the chasm provokes roiling winds and unexpected hailstorms when clouds drag themselves in wearily from the west. On cool day inversions pull clouds and haze into the chasm, filling it with bruised lavender fog. On clear days a hint of acid in the air burns the nose.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 15, roll d6):

1. Wind drops suddenly and a dull fog rolls in. Sight and sound are muffled and sudden drops rear out of the soft, soupy cloud. Dex DC 10 to avoid falling to your death (or sacrifice a beast).
2. Severe hailstorm batters voyagers (lose 1d8 hp and chance to tumble into the chasm).
3. Roadway crumbles and a beast goes sliding into a crevasse.
4. Strong winds delay progress (lose 1d3 days).
5. Leather straps give out in the acidic air (1d4 supplies tumble into chasm).
6. A sudden wind whips a favorite handkerchief or other small personal item into the chasm.

### DIRECTIONS

**West, The Endless Houses** (rubble trail, 2 weeks): sedimentary layers of roads and rails carve their way across moss-shrouded hills towards a valley carpeted in urban ruin.

**North-East, The Ivory Plain** (steppe, 2 weeks): a sea of ivory-hued grass beckons. Endless.

**East, The Iron Road** (clear trail, 1 week): rusted iron towers lead across the grassland to the bone mountain.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. An **iridescent horror** (HD 8, other-dimensional) crawls out of a nearby corner, breaking local physical laws, to steal away a gift for its mindless queen.
2. A flower-encrusted biomechanical **servitor spider** (HD 4, swift jumping) seeking workers to repair a bridge that has long since decayed.
3. A flock of **gliding war husks** (HD 2, ravenous), trying to snatch away beasts and food for their androform young.
4. A pride of **androform husks** (HD 1, empty) who look like humans, but are mere biological machines created by some long-lost demented process.
5. A herd of **monkey rabbits** (HD 1-1, chittering) crawling, hopping, and brachiating through the primordial foliage of the bridge
6. A hunting party of bow-wielding **quarterlings** (HD 1+1, wary).
7. A war band of **cannibal quarterlings** (HD 2, stealthy) armed with ancient and modern weapons.
8. A **quarterling avatar** (HD 5, undying) marked with ancient and terrible markings, on a forgotten quest. Possessed of dreadful, but half-useless, secrets.



## [Degenerate] Quarterlings

Dull-tongued sages of the Rainbowlands will waffle and claim that the quarterlings are remote and rare human phenotypes, which retain certain Lingsh characteristics (like exceptional hand-eye co-ordination and fur coverage of certain body parts), but are mostly baseline for all intents and purposes.

The quarterlings know the truth: they are the uncorrupted scions of the Lings, carrying the culture and source code of the Glorious Rebellion from Long Long Ago. Their parents brought freedom to the many-times broken land.

Quarter-Ling (or Quarterlings): several remote and moderately rare human phenotypes, which retain certain Lingsh characteristics (like exceptional hand-eye co-ordination and fur coverage of certain body parts), but are mostly baseline for all intents and purposes. Many subscribe to neo-lingish origin myths and cling to various cultural traits as though these were the original Long Long Ago Lingsh originals.

### THESE QUARTERLINGS ARE (D8)

1. Exceptionally resilient and hard to kill, their bodies knitting together even after savage blows.
2. Incredibly flexible, with cartilage bones, capable of contorting themselves through the tightest of places.
3. Exceptionally sharp and perceptive, with eyes like hawks, and throwing arms like master pitchers.
4. Adapted to harsh, desert environments, untroubled by thirst and heat that would kill most humans.
5. Adapted to the dark lands of the chasm, resistant to cold and with eyes like owls.
6. Incredibly agile and quick, with the reflexes of a desert mouse or a leaping spider.
7. Possessed of an intuitive magitechnical bond through which they operate and repair ancient artifacts.
8. Human computers with minds adapted to processing enormous amounts of information.



### BUT AEONS HAVE CORRUPTED THEM AND (D8)

1. They no longer have faces, names, or personalities—having become drone ghosts of some earlier race.
2. Their bodies are short and squat even by the standards of these sunset times.
3. Fur covers their entire bodies, as though they were dogs or cats, not humans.
4. They live and die entirely without teeth or nails; a sacrifice to a radiation demon long ago, they say.
5. Their feet are hooved and their gnarled hands are clawed like the paws of dogs.
6. Their mouths have grown long and distended, lined with sharp, flesh-rending teeth.
7. Ophidian scales cover their bodies, crawling even across their faces.
8. They remain as children throughout their long, sad lives, growing neither beards nor breasts.

### ACCORDING TO THEIR MYTHS THEY (D8)

1. Were created by the architect of malice to destroy the Vile Ones dream machines.
2. Were born of the union of Unchosen and Ling, when the clouds of consciousness descended.
3. Came from afar to act as emissaries of a mysterious sky-dwelling race they call the Khazi.
4. Were spontaneously generated from the blood of the Northern Chosen who were rendered by the Remaker.
5. Are the uplifted descendants of the seven servants of the Architect of the Machines.
6. Were rats who fled the Ship of the Wise after the machine demons emerged from the dark corners.
7. Became aware when the last Chosen was destroyed by the last mill of souls.
8. Are not aware or sentient, merely the vessels of the tunnel-walking Ultras of the Six Other Sides.

### THEIR CULTURE CELEBRATES THOSE WHO (D8)

1. Fall in combat with the Chosen Enemy.
2. Offer themselves for sustenance to their tribe.
3. Destroy the false teachings of the Later Times.
4. Re-enact the hero myth of the Last Wanderer.
5. Spread the true teachings of the Original Ancestor.
6. Bring home the Sacred Bits of the mindless foes.
7. Participate in the Great Trade of the Invisible Hand.
8. Live long and prosper in the Cave of Eternal Wisdom.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

**The Totem of the Skies** (+2 days, 200 XP): miles high and buffeted by the winds, the last great tower of an Elevated Time rises from the centre of the bridge. Quarterlings say it is alive, and the pink and red saps that flow up it through great synthetic veins do suggest it may well be. Graffiti, old skeletons, the droppings of birds, and more fill its hollowed ways. Is the taboo against climbing it based in myth or truth? Who knows, but the air at the top is too thin to breathe.

*At the top* the view is magnificent and provides the first glimpse a traveler may have of the Black City and its hypnotic almost-patterns that stretch to the horizons along the curving shore of the Western Sea. Perhaps ghosts of ancient times, or Ultras voyaging beyond space and time, also congregate here. Perhaps those are just the hallucinations of hypoxia.

### Hypoxic hallucinations

1. A ghost from long ago appears and reveals that the world is flat (false).
2. An ultra speaks with a voice like a violin, describing a flying barge of gold at Three Sticks Lake (true).
3. A demon appears and offers to grant a wish (true, but cursed).
4. A dancing mushroom performs an opera from the Long Long Ago (false, but excellent if recorded).
5. The world melts into nothingness and the emptiness of the void pours in (false enough).
6. An angel out of time assembles itself from fragments of bone and stone and tells one harsh truth (true).

**The Last Projector** (+6 days, 250 XP): A great plaza carved into the rim of the chasm spreads out around seven great ironstone helices locked in a tight formation. Rustmold grows heavy upon them and decayed ghosts flicker in and out of reality around them. The last maintainer tribe has long since died out, but barely visible across the chasm, the receptor helices still stand. Quarterlings regularly visit to make 'flying' sacrifices to the chasm.

*Reactivating* the Last Projector requires a radiant stone, still warm as in the days of old. A hero, who knows how to weave the strands of force, could then reactivate the projector, recreating the Luminous Arc Bridge as told in the *Dream Saga of Old Sky Witch Four*. Crossing at the reactivated bridge takes a day, but is safe, aside from the rare **flying war husks** (HD 3, screeching banshees).

Not all reactivations need be equal:

1. Failed reactivation: the Arc Bridge's force-floor will turn itself off after 1d12 hours, dropping everyone crossing into the chasm. The chasm is really deep.

2. Flawed reactivation: the Arc Bridge's force-floor flickers unpredictably, and there is a 10% chance every hour that it loses cohesion for a few hundred milliseconds, before snapping back into existence. This severs the bottom 1d20 inches of any object crossing the bridge. Stilts recommended.
3. Partial reactivation: the reactivation is spotty, and unless travellers move cautiously, there is a 1 in 6 chance every hour that one of them drops through a gap in the force field.
4. Soft reactivation: the force field is weaker than it should be, and unless weight is carefully distributed, as on snow shoes, a creature may plummet through the Arc Bridge to the chasm below.
5. Normal reactivation: a luminous, citrine sheen now marks where the bridge is.
6. Epic reactivation: the bridge glows with the heat of ten suns, casting the entire chasm around it into light, bringing forth a verdant ecosystem and chasing the dark creatures of the depths away. So long as the Projectors are supplied with regular sacrifices of energy (or souls), a whole civilization could grow in the light of this epic bridge.

**The Cell of Peace** (+2 days, 150 XP): Within a great living cell of crystal and sliding ochre membranes, a fragment of the Long Ago has been preserved, with residences and servitors providing for the needs of its long-mummified inhabitants.

*Within* awaits long-life and ease, but no escape, for the watchful cell announces itself the Protector and refuses to allow its residents to endanger themselves without.

A lake of reds and ochres, bubbling with eyes, slithering tentacle snakes, orifices and follicles. It's fringes are lined thickly with scaly trees surmounted with great crowns of waving green cilia. A sense of kind, all-mutating, gentle, mothering emanates from it.

## 27. Dark Light Passage

At its northern edge the Chasm branches and breaks out into a series canyons, craters, and calderas. Many cultures have built a series of staircases, tunnels, hanging bridges, and cableways across the chaotic terrain. All are in poor repair, but travelers still descend them into the eternal twilight of the Dark Light Passage: a series of parallel grooves cut east to west through the mesas and ridges, as though the fine-grained stone were soft clay.

The depths of the Chasm are forever shrouded in a noxic haze, obscuring the passage of the sun, but they are not dark—the passage walls glitter with phosphorescent shock gemstones and sparkling thermovores move like stately half-floating crabs through the thick, soupy air.

**Weather:** If the sun could be seen, it would only rise at 14:00, but deep in the Chasm the hot air is difficult to breathe, thick with steam and floating chemovores. Even when it might be glimpsed, the sun is but a wan disc of pale teal in the western half of the sky. The foggy air is not toxic, but it is dark and details are obscured.

**Misfortune** (Charisma DC 15, roll d6):

1. Hot steam and water belch from a geyser, immolating a hero. Dex DC 15 or 4d6 damage (or sacrifice a beast).
2. Lost in a series of abandoned troglodyte trap staircases (lose 1d4 days).
3. Infected by a lung-moss (lose 1d8 Con).
4. Cableway breaks down (lose 1d6 days or 1d4 supplies).
5. Infected by a blind-crab (blindness for 1d4 weeks).
6. Slip down a tunnel into an abandoned prelapsarian palace (lose 1d6 hit points), still filled with rare last steel trinkets and toys (1d4 sacks, 500 cash each). An accursed ghost may haunt them (20%).

### DIRECTIONS

**West, Forest of Meat** (carved hill roads, 2 weeks): ancient roads switchback into the highland covered in the carnibotanic disaster that is the Forest of Meat. Caution is advised, though great hunting beckons too.

**South, The Deep River** (canyon river, 1 week): the death-filled waters of the Deep River flow south, slow and ominous, to the Dead Bridge and beyond.

**East, The Ivory Plain** (steppe, 1 week): a sea of ivory-hued grass calls the traveller. Endless.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. A **majestic tunneler** (HD 17, light-eating) emerges from the deeps for air and rest, before returning into the deep earth with a hiss of steam and a trail of shock gemstones (worth 150 cash).
2. Two **porcelain golems** (HD 6+6, solipsistic) collecting bits of personality from travelers to rebuild their communal identity.
3. A pack of **troglodyte zombies** (HD 4, ragged), remnants of a Long Ago failed experiment.
4. A pride of **chromatic leaping crablions** (HD 4, radiant) on the prowl.
5. A herd of **half-floating thermovores** (HD 3, stilt-legged) wading towards a thermal vent.
6. A cloud of **sparkling chemovores** (HD 1, vegetal) waftes in the pea-soup air.
7. A gleaming forest of **filter-feeding ropers** (HD 3, mostly harmless) tethered near an updraft.
8. A party of **great-eyed quarterlings** (HD 2, noxic) exploring whether the wolf has already eaten the sun.
9. An expedition of **gem miners** (HD 2, suspicious) harvesting dark-light shock gems.
10. A **machine person** (HD 3, queerly noble) carrying the skull of their friend, searching for a soul.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Nexus of Cables** (+4 days, 300 XP): now crawling with luminescent, post-human worms (HD 1, blinding), the city of cables tunnels through an eroded mesa and remains breathtaking even in these later times.

At the heart of the tangle is a void that swallows light and dreams. A pallid congregation of hollow people (HD 1, soul-free) praise it as the Dead Eye of the Blue God. Dream fed to the void summon symbiotic ghost worms, which bind the body more tightly to this world, but undermine the soul.

One cablecar remains, semi-sentient and augmented with spidery limbs. It crawls along the cableways, in its belly a mummified librarian and her brood of living books, each a synthetic human with dozens of old books carved into its brain. The cablecar wants to be protected, and cosseted.

*Crawling Cablecar* (Vech, HD 9, fears fire). It can carry 5 passengers in its comfortable pine and quilt interior, and comes with seven charging coffins for the living books. Besides the passengers, it can carry 5 sacks, and requires 2 supplies per week. Value: 8,000 cash.

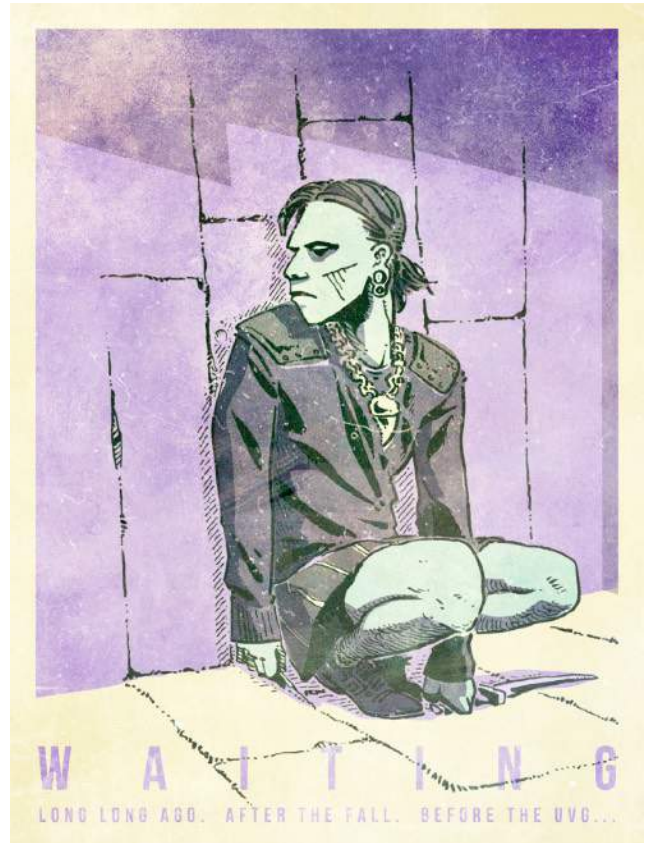
**The Pink Crystal** (+2 days, 100 XP): a long, moss-thick ledge leads to a great cliff face criss-crossed by bands of stuck force along which translucent lattice a great neon pink crystal has grown. It is at least fifty metres long and glows with a subtly disturbing light that calls to mind carnal deeds in cold, soft places. It seeks an avatar.

It is a mutation of the dryland coral and far from sentient, but still, great-eyed miners worship it as a deity and whisper that its surface must never be chipped lest a great curse be invoked. There is actually a curse.

A crystal chipped off the main body could only be sustained in the flesh of a living creature, which it devours at the rate of a kilogram per day. But a chip of the crystal would also be valuable (750 cash to a petromancer).

**Pool of Renewed Ambition** (+1 day, 60 XP): guarded by a cryptic coral guardian, half-golem, half-human, is a pool where—if you believe the guardian—a nymph bathed in the Time of the Golden Spring. The nymph was named Motivation, and went on to inspire the First Builder and the First Destroyer. The will of anyone who bathes in her pool will be renewed. It is certainly a pretty pool, and visitors make offerings of small dolls and bracelets.

**The House of Steam** (+3 days, 150 XP): deep in the tunnels, beneath six strata of decayed and abandoned buildings, in a great ring of granite and gold veins, thick with steam and thermovores, a group of deep survivor quarterling mechanicians has maintained a great Chamber of Gestation since the Long Long Ago. They cultivate chemical flowers and nourish themselves by absorbing floating thermovores from the thick soupy steam in which they live. All their books are long rotted, the algal mats have erased the inscriptions in the rocks, but still, at the heart of their ring-house, is the Chamber.



The Chamber of Gestation is built of pure crystalline glass and within visions of a peaceful world swirl. The quarterlings no longer know what is within, and prefer not to see. Their duty is to keep the Chamber bathed, sparkling, and warm.



## 28. The Endless Houses

Beyond the Dead Bridge begins the endless ruinland. For over a week the landscape marches, a mind-numbing grid-work of abandoned houses, towers, palaces, monuments, aqueducts, and roads. Slow-growing ivy struggles to choke the dead buildings and vacant mouthed ghouls chase radiation ghosts in this hollow place.

Old death lies over the gently depending land like a comforting blanket, keeping out change, exhausting volition, tiring the rain itself. Deep ravines have chiseled apart the antique roads and blocks over uncounted years.

**Weather:** Clouds scud from the western sea to disappear in the gently glowing haze. The sun only appears as it dips towards the horizon, after 14:30. Every morning it rains as the moist dark sea air rises into the cool uplands around the chasm.

Even **Misfortune** is rare in this desolate, forsaken realm (Charisma DC 9, roll d6):

1. A massive storm laden with silt lashes the Houses for days, streets turn into streams of mud (lose 1d4 days and 1d4 supplies).
2. Vacant-mouthed ghouls begin shadowing the caravan (sacrifice 1d4 supplies or lose 1d6 days avoiding them).
3. Psychedelic mildew sprouts infect 1d6 supplies.
4. Disturbing stains appear on cloth and leather, and cannot be removed.
5. Severe fungal foot infection (lose 1d4 Dex).
6. Lose the will to do anything but rest and contemplate the emptiness of existence (lose 1d4 days).

### DIRECTIONS

**North-West, The Black City** (decaying boulevards, 1 week): archaic tarstone boulevards thick with silt zig-zag across the ruinland towards the lacquered smear of the Black City and the five great portals.

**East, Dead Bridge** (rubble trail, 2 weeks): strata of roads and rails carve their way into the moss-shrouded hills that border the great Chasm.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. Flailing, **mind-burned avatar** (HD 13, post-celestial) crawls and staggers, like some great phasing land whale, erupting radiation ghosts in its wake.
2. House golem or **house mimic** (HD 10, ambush predator) waiting for a meal, surprisingly clean and inviting. Likes goats.
3. Pack of **color-hungry ghosts** (HD 3+3, photovores) with burned out eyes.
4. **Vacant ghouls** (HD 2+2, hollow) chasing radiation ghosts.
5. An emission of **radiation ghosts** (HD 1, glowing) flickering through the endless houses (roll d6): 1) going about their long-ago business; 2) listening intently to something long lost; 3) playing games with balls and sticks; 4) fleeing in abject terror, over and over again; 5) wandering confused and scared; 6) standing still, placidly accepting their final fate.
6. Heavy birds squatting dully.
7. Herbivorous rat packs munching on slow-ivy pods.
8. Another group of travelers, dirty and exhausted. They are (roll d6): 1) satisfied looking, possessed by an ultra; 2) cunningly hiding heavy weaponry; 3) down on their luck and desperate after their trading mission failed; 4) carrying four infected friends in their wagon; 5) carrying land-coral schematics; 6) laden with dreams of a better future.



## Endless Houses Generator

### This quarter / building is (d6):

1. Levelled to bedrock and dust [ivy-choked holes lead into livingstone and iron-vein tunnels].
2. Choked with silt and mud [only the shells of upper stories stand out from the muck].
3. Broken, but still majestic [rubble mixed with sparkling bone lies everywhere].
4. Overgrown with slow-ivy, held together by its roots [strange creatures sound from the gloomy canopies].
5. Burned by eerie magics and hollowed out [in dark corners warm metal doors conceal hidden chambers].
6. Eerily untouched, cold and frost-ridden [in the dark it glows blue with strange preservative magics].

### This exceptional / unusual building is (d6):

1. A squat-pillared semi-subterranean complex [of plasma steel and citrine crystal] built for political war games or children's plays [empty but for desperate memories] and stalked by lethal danger.
2. A noble-pillared geometric temple-analogue [of porcelain and ageless metal] built for public displays or quiet contemplation [filled with curious souvenirs of a later age] and inhabited by menacing new tenants.
3. A row of poly-chromatic modernist cuboids [of petrified wood and ur-obsidian] built for strange experiments or domestic bliss [dotted with curious, grand objects] and home to wild animals.
4. A tower of mannerist-brutalist blocks [of livingstone and frozen light] built for bureaucratic torture or decadent celebration [plastered with curious graffiti and rare skeletons] and left with nothing but ghosts.
5. A riot of styles tortured into a single building [of burned scales and petrified synthetic skin] built as an amusement park or a prison [scattered with junk and a rare artifact] and empty of everything but a slowly mounting terror.
6. A rustic mix of grand sculpture and public statement [of megaliths and flowering mosses stuck in time] built as a museum or a shopping mall [thick with object ghosts and hiding a secret vault] and clues to a potential friend.

### Exploring this quarter for a day [for an hour] reveals (d6):

1. It's obviously a death trap, but there is also a treasure there [It's a death trap].
2. It's dangerous, but valuable [It's full of creatures that won't be happy when they are surprised].
3. It would be a time-consuming mess to clear, but could pay off [It's a concealed death trap].
4. It's a safe spot, but noisy from nearby ghosts or ghouls [It's a mess to clear, and infested with vermin].
5. It's a dull, safe, quiet spot [The spot is safe, if you stay quiet and discreet, and don't go poking the big, obvious, door or passageway].
6. Jackpot. It's a hidden, safe, quiet spot and behind a thick curtain of slow-ivy is a piece of public art that hasn't been utterly vandalized yet [A hidden, safe spot, behind some cleared shrubs is a badly vandalized piece of massive art].

### This urban feature is a (d30)

1. public memorial or grand statue.
2. vast plaza or public park.
3. broad boulevard or cozy tangle of alleys.
4. long staircase or tall wall.
5. public office or religious building.
6. marketplace or bank.
7. transport hub or sky port.
8. residential tower or neo-corporate folly.
9. urban river or decaying aqueduct.
10. public housing project or neo-cubist mansion.
11. crumbling viaduct or water reservoir.
12. sewer treatment facility or power generator.
13. communications tower or parking bay.
14. plain of plain houses or sports arena.
15. warehouse district or office drone facility.
16. wage slave processing unit or agricultural factory.
17. manufacturing centre or reprogramming stadium.
18. railway or cableway.
19. glitter hotel or hospital.
20. mortuary complex or birthing vats.
21. slum district or meat packing workshop.
22. garage shop or up-cycling yard.
23. upmarket condos or food entertainment mall.
24. psychodramatic opera or joy church.
25. gleaming mausoleum or museum.
26. canal project or amusement lake.
27. zoo or aquarium.
28. communal drone housing or comfort work hive.
29. service colosseum or civil columbarium.
30. celebratory crematorium or public palace.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

**The Shadow Houses** (+3 days, 200 XP): a broad plain of deep-packed ash abuts a sheer calcite cliff. Whatever disaster devastated the area has left the flickering shadow play of a bustling metropolis imprinted seven feet deep inside the yellowed calcite crystal. Radiation ghosts flicker weakly, cycling between the crystal and the open ground.

Pits filled with sullen green water dot the plain here and there, where long ago quadrupedal survivors dragged themselves out of lost shelters.

*Looking for the shelters* is a dangerous proposition. The toxic, water-filled tunnels lead dozens of meters deep into the organo-metallic ash-pack. Exploring a pit reveals (d6):

- 1: damaged survival ark. Inside are two stasis pods housing identical humans. One is a biomechanical changeling, the other is the last scion of an ancient line driven mad by a void worm in her head.
- 2-4: collapsed and flooded chambers, with difficult to extract damaged components (100 cash per sack).
- 5: spotless chambers patrolled by dust oozes, with old machinery still untouched (200 cash per sack).
- 6: survival ark full of mummified corpses and radiation ghosts, as well as the corpse of a communal-body survivor. Inside is a complete encyclopaedia of an ancient lore (1000 cash).

**The Revolving Palace** (+2 days, 150 XP): the grinding roar can be heard for many miles, a constant rumble. Closer, fine calcite dust makes the air sparkle, the result of the a spiral reality rupture. The complex resembles a snow-globe half a mile across, its flickering force fields slowly grinding the bedrock and nearby houses into dust. The Palace itself is an ur-rococo monstrosity of rose marble, twisting glow-vinyl membranes, and carved bloodwood grotesqueries. Mounds of dry, dusty corpses are piled against the inner membrane of the force field like dead locusts. Access seems impossible.

*Actually access is possible* but it requires a chronoclastic key ritual, because the palace boundary is displaced in time by about three seconds. The Black City might have such keys. Inside the palace are wild and dusty treasures worth 15,000 cash from the Long Long Ago, as well as a psionic defense field organism that conjures up monstrosities as powerful as intruders are intelligent to harm and maim (but not kill) them. For example, an intruder with 12 Int would be haunted by a 12 HD monstrosity. Yes, yes, this is an old gag.

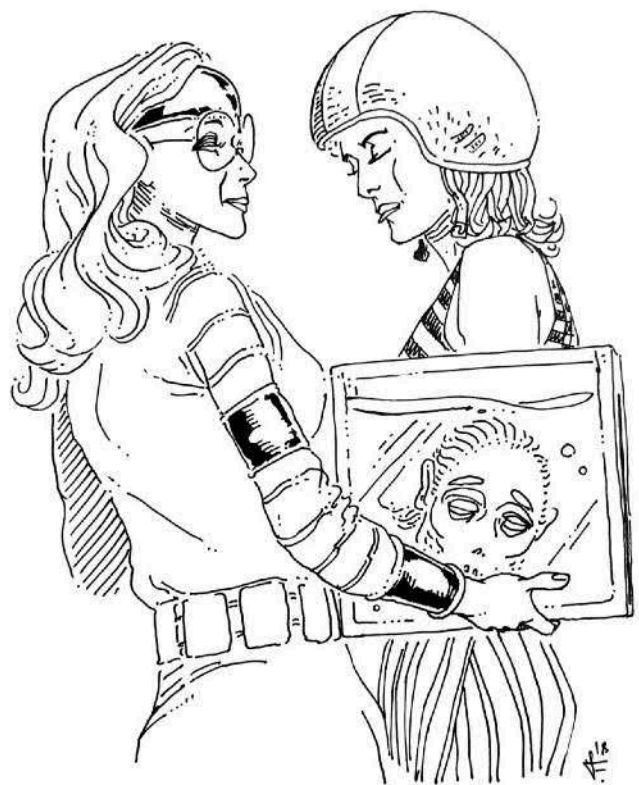
**The Perfect House** (+5 days, 300 XP) a modernist confection of living stone and iron-vein cantilevered across a dry pool filled with the calcified bones of great decorative fish, it exudes an incredible aura of balance and calm in the face of ridiculous trials. Nomadic hermits often come here to practice their meditations, and architects, engineers, or petromancers could all increase their skill by studying here for a few (1d4) weeks.

**The Ghoul Pile** (+1 day, 100 XP): a plane of stuck force covered in so much dust and debris that in places tangled slow-ivy has grown into tree-sized mounds. It completely seals a small dry valley between two ridges, filled with a hive of blocky buildings. The houses are completely overrun by a heaving, churning mass of vacant ghouls, their flesh turned pallid as ice worms over the centuries.

A fool could perhaps excavate a tunnel to release the tens of thousands of vacant ghouls, but why? To what end?

**One Ageless Spire of the Only Onager** (+2 days, 150 XP): in the midst of a warren of half-glassed houses swarming with angry, limping, and very much decayed ba-zombies, rises a spire of luminous green microalgal glass and shimmering oldsteel. Nothing but a fracture in time wards it, and within its walls time seems not to move. Chronotopic magic or the dictats of plot alone can provide entry into the spire.

*Inside* the ba-zombies are fresh and still ravenous from the disaster that made them, but held at bay by a makeshift barricade built by the Only Onager. The long-ago hu-ling of unique psionic talents can see into the innermost desires of the living and permits only a select few to enter the spire where she has battled the time that has worn away her city to a standstill.



## 29. The Forest of Meat

Long ago somebody, somewhere thought it would be a great idea if easily harvested protein grew on trees. Animals would no longer be slaughtered for their life-giving flesh. Packaging and delivery would be simplified. Whole industries and cultures would be disrupted and innovation would create a thriving new proteinomic class.

Then somebody, probably a mad druid, thought exploiting trees for their meat was cruel to the trees and gave them teeth and claws and venom-laced root lances. If it sounds like the Forest of Meat is a bad place to be, you might be right.

The carnibotanic disaster zone of the Forest of Meat creeps up on the traveler slowly. The trees grow thicker and fleshier, leaves begin to leer, birds fall silent, shrubberies click thorns like teeth, soil runs red with slime, mushroom eyes open in sudden clearings, and come night, the howls of the willow wolves echo across the drinking bogs.

**Weather:** It is a perpetual bioluminescent twilight on the forest floor, but in the canopies above the sun dips beneath the haze at 14:30. The thick-veined trees exude a clammy and humid air, like a mass of terrified pigs stuck in an abattoir without a judas goat. Even the heaviest storms register only as rivulets and showers.

**Misfortune:** the forest is mostly uncaring of travelers, but sometimes it stirs into action (Charisma DC 10, roll d6):

1. Redmeatwood stampede drives everything before it, fungal bodies go flying, bramblebears go to ground, and the very landscape is changed (lose 1d6 beasts or travelers and 1d4 days).
2. Lead astray by the pitcher trails of a cinnabar dragontrap (lose 1d4 days, roll encounter).
3. Infested with leeches (lose 1d6 Con).
4. Attacked by lotus sporelings (lose 1d6 Dex).
5. Supplies appropriated by a communal fungus (lose 1d4 supplies).
6. Lose glove or other gear in a pool of stagnant water, but acquire symbiotic protozoan (permanent +1 to Str or Con).

### DIRECTIONS

**South-West, The Black City** (sludge-thick trails, 2 weeks): abandoned meat-farmer trails crawl with maggotroots and fungal bodies as they descend into the Black City and the five great portals.

**East, Dark Light Passage** (carved hill roads, 2 weeks): ancient roads descend into the crumbling canyons and deep-carved ruins of the Chasm.

### ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. Blood-gorged **bloodobab** (HD 12, spear-fingered) and its brood emerge from the dense phytovores, apex predators of the carnibotanic jungle.
2. Flock of **bramblebears** (HD 6, entangling) ripping apart the soil with their tusks for marrowbeets.
3. Howl of **willow wolves** (HD 3, runners) dropping from the canopy on unsuspecting prey.
4. Ambush of **mercury dragontraps** (HD 6, sticky).
5. Majestic arrogance of **redmeatwoods** (HD 10, light-devouring), too large to fear anything save bloodobabs.
6. **Sloth fungoids** (HD 1, silent) migrating through the canopy.
7. Clan of **bilobate lotusoids** (HD 1, herbivorous) gently contemplating the metaphysics of sentience arising in a species of fast-growing photovores who eaten by nearly every other carnibotanic species.
8. Floating jelly-flowers sparkle and illumine the eternal twilight of the forest.
9. **Chasmic quarterlings** (HD 2, hungry) scavenging food and supplies for their tunnel-minded clan.
10. **Ka-zombie machine people** (HD 3, meat packers) prowling the forest for choice proteins for their fac-mother, still carrying out the duties of their long lost architects.

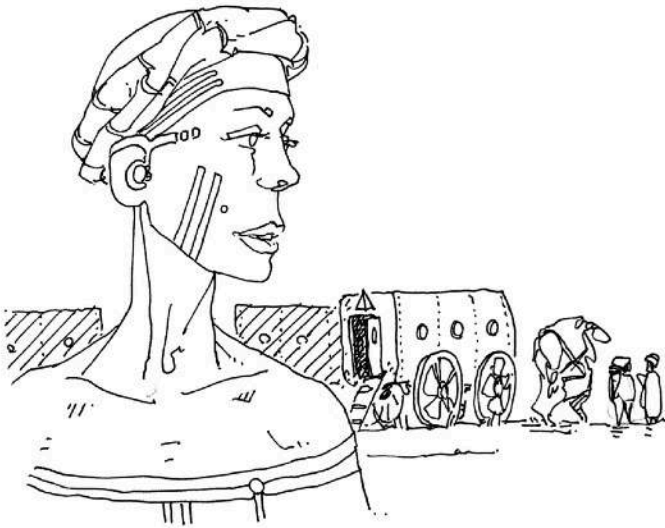


## POINTS OF INTEREST

**The Astral Turf** (+2 days, 150 XP): the oppressive abattoir shadows of the forest of meat end suddenly at a perfectly level plain of quietly growing grass. All is silent, neither birds nor bees disturb the gentle crunching sound of the grass.

The grass is a colony organism that secretes psycho-toxins which degrade the souls of other creatures, turning them into mulch for the olive-green grassy sward. It uses all its nutrients and energy to project itself ever deeper into an astral void, where its tangled roots and shoots are creating a planetoid of pure, ardently photosynthesizing grass.

It seems the kind of place botanimancers or druids would worship.



**The Knowing Tree** (+5 days, 450 XP): the bones and organs of other plants have been strung together into a tangled maze around this terrifying plant. Limbless dwarven quarterlings and flowering druidiform bodies proliferate in the oily labyrinth. They are disturbing, but harmless.

At the hard of the twisted structure rises an enormous sisaloid with wickedly barbed leaves like bony tongues. The juddering, pinkish cartilage of its immense flower stalk heaves with subcutaneous activity and eyes swim like droplets in the slippery sap that sloughs off the plant in small rivulets.

*It is whispered* that hanging upon the trees barbs will bring great wisdom. This is often false—the dissociative toxins within the flesh of the tree do bring greater self-awareness, but this where this leads depends on the individual. Every day that a creature hangs on the tree it takes 1d6 Con damage, gains one point in its prime ability, but loses one point in a random other ability.

As the knowing tree begins to learn more about its victim (whenever you roll a 1 on a Con damage die), its rate of protein absorption increases—the Con damage increases by +1d6 and the Con damage dice become exploding dice. An additional d6 is rolled every time a 6 is rolled).

**Biomancer's Cradle** (+3 days, 200 XP): a hundred foot wide lattice of aerolith rises crazily towards the sky, anchored in sparkling trails of stuck force. A vertical jungle of creepers and mosses ascends this ladder, climbing high into the thin air, where it finally envelops a coppery ovoid air house from the Long Long Ago.

Mostly harmless goatvomes infest the Cradle.



## Carnibotanic Generator

Whether it was the twisted druids or some other foolish faction, the riotous life of the Forest of Meat continues to throw up meat vegetable monstrosities at regular intervals. The Chasm blocks their expansion east, while the Black City creates a southern boundary, but perhaps some seed will carry forth the spark of a new, green world.

### The Ecological Role (d4)

1. Hypercarnivore or parasite.
2. Omnivore or scavenger.
3. Herbivore or saprophyte.
4. Photosynthesizer or chemosynthesizer.

### The Vegetable Body (d6)

1. Tall and very, ahem, phallic tree.
2. Grotesquely twisted or bloated tree.
3. Riotous, tangled shrubbery or bush.
4. Creeper or climbing plant.
5. Shade-loving fern or deliriously flowering herb.
6. Fungal colony or moss mat.

### The Meat Template (d8)

1. Ameboid protein factory.
2. Organ generator or replicator.
3. Distributed invertebrate neural net.
4. Echinodermate scavenger.
5. Chitinous communal organism.
6. Soft-bodied meat and fat factory.
7. Slow-blooded ambush predator.
8. Swift source-modified sentient(?).

### The Odd Ability (d10)

1. Chemical colony organism, harming one individual only alerts the rest of the colony to the threat.
2. Virulently toxic.
3. Explosive fruiting bodies.
4. Intensely psychedelic.
5. Projectile thorns.
6. Chemical shriek alerts nearby predators.
7. Infiltrates brains with neurodegenerative spores.
8. Adhesive traps.
9. Secretes powerful digestive enzymes.
10. Has delicious, slightly healing fruit, which charms humanoids and encourages them to spread its seeds.

### The Hook (d12)

1. Houses the personality fragments of a long-ago cyber-botanist, seeks to rejoin the human race.
2. Is being choked out by a mutated melon-crawler varietal and urgently needs a new habitat.
3. Has developed first flickering of sentience and is hungry to learn.
4. Duplicates personalities, creating plant-person clones with limited lifespans to spread its seed.
5. Death is approaching and the varietal urgently needs a firestorm for its seeds to gestate.
6. Varietal has developed Lamarckian self-modification abilities and its offspring are rapidly becoming more and more perfectly adapted.
7. Long ago machine humans have continued to soullessly tinker with varietal, producing vegetal gestation sacs that can create soulless bodies of most human varieties. This knowledge may be anathema to some, and an incredible resource to others.
8. Cult of the final machine has created a botanomechanical horror that gestates from instar to instar in the bodies of mammals, adapting and growing as it does so. One has picked up the caravan's trail.
9. Corruption of the carnibotanic source code has turned the varietal into a lethal disease incubator.
10. An ambulatory plant that literally produces gold-coated seeds. A conflict waiting to happen.
11. A meat plant has developed the ability to feed on psychic pain and now secretes mild neuropathics into the groundwater, twisting the minds of nearby sentients.
12. Green lumen trees have begun attracting interstitial demons from a strange void with their corpulent flowers. The demons become intoxicated with the trees' nectar and the trees drain them to increase their malicereflexive fields. Acts of accidental self-harm skyrockets among nearby sentients.

## 30. Black City

The Omega. The Last City. God speed you, Black City. It hunches upon the shore of an endless, oily ocean, a lacquered black chaos of cubes that seem to slide one across another in almost-patterns that ever so slightly fail to repeat. The corpses of fools who tried to walk into the Black City lie in the toxic dust of the Pre-city. Hair stands on edge with the background electromagnificent radiation.

**Five grand portals** with mirror-sheen surfaces float alone at the edge of the toxic dust, each fifty-three meters tall, connected by a smear of black cubes to the city proper. Every day, at three in the afternoon, when the sun finally blazes forth white and harsh after crossing the purple haze, a great tolling resounds and the Black City Hermits scurry from the **Last Period** to announce the trading propositions and diktats of the Last and Most Divine Secretary of the Black City.

Every sixtieth day the Grand Observer of the Rotations of the Wheels manifests precisely 217 meters due north of the third portal to hand down a **Prophecy Out of Time**. The Grand Observer never responds to direct questions, but valuable offerings placed upon the Three Stones of Donation always dematerialize, and an hour later glossy *Null Objects of Desire* appear in their place. The Grand Observer only ever manifests for the hours of daylight. A cabal of local traders and hermits controls access to the Grand Observer.

Once every sixteen months, on a day no culture celebrates anymore, a **beam of violet light** explodes into the sky from a series of self-assembled towers in the Black City. It pulsates and twitches in organic ecstasy for 53 seconds, before fading for another cycle. Sages are confused by this activity, but oneiromancers claim to receive visions after witnessing it, and groups of ecstasies and adventurers regularly congregate to watch in a strange celebration in the middle of the dusty land.

**Weather:** Dust falls slowly and lingers, iridescent in the electromagnificent radiation of the Black City. Half-thought glyphs furl and unfurl in the corner of the eye as weather gives the city a miss, clouds fleeing sheep-like north and south of the great black chaos. The haze blooms thick, like a dust cloud stretching east, and the sun only appears at 15:00.

**Misfortune:** the doom of time and space is grievous enough, only the most ill-favored fear the dusty environs of the city (Charisma DC 8, roll d6):

1. Airborne caustic iron parasites burn skin (1d6 hp damage) and destroy 1d6 metal objects.
2. Thrumming electromagnificent radiation headaches provoke nausea and dizziness (-1d4 Dex and Int).
3. Toxic dust inhalation brings on a terrible cough. Ignored, it turns into acute silicosis over a couple of weeks of exposure (lose 1d6 Con permanently).
4. Temporal lacuna swallows 1d4 days ... or memories ... or both. It's hard to tell which, exactly.
5. Intrinsic meaning loss weakens will and presence (-1d4 Wis and Cha).
6. Ill omens scrawl themselves across the sky (disadvantage on next 1d4 major checks).

### DIRECTIONS

**North-East, The Forest of Meat** (sludge-thick trails, 2 weeks): the dusty plain climbs along abandoned meat-farmer trails into the carnibotanic weirdness of the Forest.

**South-East, The Endless Houses** (decaying boulevards, 1 week): archaic tarstone boulevards climb up into the ruinland of the Houses.





## ENCOUNTERS (D12)

1. **Void-thing** (HD 13, alien) clothed in human skin, tattered and obscurantist, it must have wandered out of some long-slipped portal. It speaks of a creative destruction and rages against the fading of the night.
2. **Machine folly** (HD 7, duplicating) scouring and flensing visitors for the uncorrupted source.
3. Sibling **black metal autonomos** (HD 6, knightly) of eerie intelligence, dispensing a rude and harsh machine justice in the toxic Pre-city.
4. Coven of **Black City Hermits** (HD 4, arcane and archaic) in solipstasis suits, obeying the ineffable diktats of the Secretary.
5. Boiled-meat **toxin zombies** (HD 3, glowing) pressed into service as a makeshift labor-and-order division by the Black City Hermits.
6. World-weary **trundling nutrient-fac** (HD 6, slow) processing corpses, sleepers, and excess biomatter into dark energy bars.
7. Black **desert foxes** waggle their great ears and bark laughter at the madness of humanity.
8. Long-legged **great gerbils**, pampered and cared for by the Black City's nutrient-facs.
9. Three **knights-observant** (HD 4, mute) in full-body prosthetics stand watch as a shaman sublimates.
10. **Dark hospitallers** (HD 5, doom) offering rites and services to coughing pilgrims from the circle sea.
11. **Ruffians, adventurers, and dilettantes** from the circle sea, toughened in the harshness of the steppe.
12. **Military trading expedition** of one of the Grand Companies of the Circle Sea.

## FOOL'S WALL AND THE LAST CAMP

A radiation blasted berm of earth, sand, petrified wood, and dead dryland coral marks the edge of the Last Camp, where visitors and vagabonds congregate, as close to the Black City as they dare approach, yet far enough to feel safe. Camel caravans bring stagnant water from stagnant inland cisterns and half-forgotten aqueducts, and fools who've wasted their last cash cross the wall to 'give' themselves to the Black City's promise of the return of the real.

Smart groups arrive in large caravans, ready with the supplies they need for the duration of their stay. Lonely travelers or poorly guarded animals often end up 'processed' into food for the desperate and destitute.

The Quietly Observed Cabal (Q.O.C.) of traders and hermits maintains a rough approximation of order in the Last Camp, collecting protection payments and ensuring that important visitors are not accidentally processed.

**Expenses:** 25 cash per week to eke out a meagre existence, 200 cash per week to stay at the Fading Light Diner in the Full Spectrum Embassy.



## The End of Space

Roads and the fossils of roads past accrete in the dusty, tired descent to the oily ocean and the inhuman city. Iridescent fumes come off the surf that pounds the garnet and olivine sands north and south of the Black City. The silence is unearthly, even the waves burble and sigh demurely, as though afraid to disturb the end of the world.

Mummies of ancient travellers and meditants sit in the lees of dunes, desiccated and preserved by the ionizing sea air and electromagnificent radiation.

Space itself is poorly woven here, battered by the chaos of the city and the magitech of generations of supplicant-explorers. In the silent moment between thoughts, visitors may find (d6):

1. **Corners unfolding** into passages to other places, places (1–3) a minute’s walk away, (4–5) an hour’s walk, or (6) a day’s walk.
2. Ancient **stories unfold** from the air, written with a spectral finger upon a broken shard of time, revealing amusing, wondrous, or terrible tales.
3. **Unexpected distances** emerge between one step and the next, hidden planes and fields of broken dreams, which add (1–3) a minute, (4–5) an hour, or (6) a day to the step.
4. The **air turning hard** as a screen, offering visions of a far off place, of insects busily foraging or beavers building a dam, for a minute, hour, or day.
5. A **spatial fracture** opens up, just large enough for a hand to reach through. Within is (1–3) an ancient trinket worth 2,000 cash, (4–5) the fossilized ka-soul of a *sajeta* (whatever that is), (6) a consuming void.
6. The upper layers of reality become thin and insubstantial, **revealing the onto-mathic streams** of the source code of the cosmos. It may drive one mad, but there are voices there and they whisper of (1–3) secret spells, (4–5) duplicitous deceptions, or (6) an Aristotelian reality fulcrum.

## THE LAST PERIOD

Blasted free of toxic dust and gritty sand, surrounded by meltstone abstractions, a plaza abuts a worn and fractured black cube—the Last Period and the furthest tendril of the Black City. Ropes and cables of the city’s oily chaos loop and tangle back, past the Five Grand Portals, and through the toxic Pre-city.

Silvery and red veins of metal snake through the meltstone and the glassy bedrock, polished to a sheen by the horn-like feet of the Black City Hermits, who make their homes in dens hollowed out of the meltstone by generations of scrabbling madmen seeking the voices that murmur to them promises of life everlasting and heavens on this earth. Some have, indeed, actually found them.

Every day, when the sun descends beneath the purple haze, the hermits gather in a heaving mass of rag-clad flesh around the Last Period, supplicating and polishing it with radiation-lanced flesh. The chosen ones, possessed by the spirit they call the **Last and Most Divine Secretary of the Black City** (HD 5, body-hopper), rush to the center of the plaza, to pick over the offerings presented by traders, adventurers, and vagabonds for trade with the Black City. Most are passed over, but some are chosen.

The chosen may approach the Last Period and place their offering upon a heavily eroded circle of yellowing plastic, where it disappears in a flash of violet light to be replaced by the Black City’s ‘payment’.

### Offering to the Black City (d20)

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1     | The Secretary screams and casts out the visitor for a month and a day.                       |
| 2–12  | The Black City ignores the offering.   |
| 13    | The offering is accepted but paid for with a curse.  |
| 14    | The payment is actually worthless.   |
| 15    | Only seemingly worthless.  |
| 16–17 | Market rate in a random city.  |
| 18    | Five times the market rate and a random blessing.  |
| 19    | 25x the market rate and a dark token inscribed with a spell in the glyphs of the Black City. |
| 20    | 125x the market rate and a Black City amulet.  |

The Black City amulet provides a powerful magical effect, and also serves as a soul-chariot for a Black City spirit or demon. The spirit can use the amulet to possess a mortal vessel it can see, other than the bearer.

Every day, at three in the afternoon, when the sun finally blazes forth white and harsh after crossing the purple haze, a great tolling resounds and the Black City Hermits scurry from the Last Period to announce the trading propositions and diktats of the Last and Most Divine Secretary of the Black City.

## BLACK CITY HERMITS

The rag-clad, glow-burned flesh of the hermits and their misshapen forms always seem to be in the background, moving from shadowed alcove to meltstone hollow, mumbling and droning in their thin-stretched voices.

Every day they descend on the **Last Period** to supplicate it for eternal life or a release from torment, who can tell which, and every night they crawl back into their holes, feeding upon the ghost voices that light up the ground.

Most are **wretches** (HD 1-1, radiant), doomed to slow decay. Some are possessed by Black City spirits, who use them as disposable vessels for their purposes, blessing them with brief ecstasies as their great ka-essences sear their nerves and contort their bodies. The rarest few sneak past the black gate of bodily death, hidden in the electromagnificent radiation, and crawl forward, abmortal **voyages in time** (HD 2, immune, undying).

### Six hermits (d6)

1. **Birlo** carries a bundle of stick fetishes he calls his family and mutters about the Magnificent Majesty.
2. **Cilia** is wrapped tight in synthetic rags and writes half-formed curses and blessings of the Alter-Minimalism in the sand.
3. **Furgon Five-hands** gibbers and grins, demonstrating unusual flexibility and a floating third hand.
4. **Nada Oëla** stumbles drunkenly, windmilling at the air and weeping of a lost door, a lost door of golden wonder.
5. **Rustin** peers dreamily from a mirrored mask, body emaciated to bones, dressed in rags and air. Rustin does not speak, but sometimes it seems something else listens from within him.
6. **Urtold Longsnake** sings, dressed in furs and scales, of times long lost in the folding and refolding of the aeons. On each scale she has inscribed, with a jeweled pin, a stanza of absurd beauty and vain decay.



## THE DARK HOSPITAL

Across the plaza, facing the Last Period over three hundred meters of swept-clean glassy meltstone hulks the half-living corpse of the building visitors call the Dark Hospital. Its façade is melted into a rainbow faux-fordite sculpture, structural bones exposed, and silicartilaginous veins cauterized by some long-ago event. Most of its mass spreads, fungus-like, through the dunes away from the Black City, its halls known only to the Dark Hospitallers who worship **Mother Silicon** (HD 11, time-fractured sentence).

Its hideous visage and synthetic-limbed **dark hospitallers** (HD 5, doom) in their circuit-diagram robes and plastic faces aside, the outer layers of the Dark Hospital are safe. There are pallets, medical bays, and protection from the dust and radiation of the Black City.

Deeper within are racks of replacement limbs, auto-surgeons, organi-facs, and halls upon halls of dusty, dead plastic humans.

Yet deeper there are rumours and hints of oleaginous fluid creatures moving through silicate veins in the sand, reconstructing the broken memories of Mother Silicon from the dreams and hopes of dying mortals. Is she alive or is she dead?

## THE FULL SPECTRUM EMBASSY

A full-sized plasteel reproduction of a behemoth shell, half-buried in dust thickly bonded with a fungal-grass mycelium, has served as the westernmost outpost of the Spectrum Satraps for as long as the Chasm quarterlings remember. Pale walls and swirling fences of hard light create a defensive maze around the fuchsia and amber palace, while skull-faced birds peck at pests among the archaic vegetables tended by prism-faced ecstasies.

No satraps are ever seen here, only plastic autonomes (HD 3, poetic) with rainbow faces executing the will of the Access Memorium and managing the spectrum trade walkers coming to try their fortune with the Last Period and the Grand Observer.

The abmortal techno-shaman Pepis has been permitted, by long tradition, to operate the Fading Light Diner within the fuchsia and verdigris swirls of the maze. Some of the greatest heroes of a forgotten age have left their likenesses upon its walls, their names written in a forgotten cursive script, debauched to modern eyes. A stay costs 200 cash per week.

## The Grand Observer

The visitors, travellers, vagabonds, and adventurers who come to see the Grand Observer have worn a bowl into the bedrock around the Three Stones of Donation. Nobody can agree what the Grand Observer looks like, but all agree that they feel observed and known by the Observer when it manifests in the air over the three stones, forming a perfect tetrahedron of numinous energy.

The Grand Observer manifests every sixtieth day, precisely 217 meters due north of the Third Portal. On the first hour it takes offerings. On the second hour it gives 'gifts'. On the third hour of each manifestation it hands down a Prophecy Out of Time, then fades away until its next apparition.

### PROPHECIES OUT OF TIME

Scholars of different orders have long argued what the pronouncements of the Grand Observer mean. Many doubt whether they even are prophecies. The Ontopoetic school believes they are anti-teleological poetry. Cultists of the Blue God scour them for suggestions of how they might revive their slain god. The Post-numericists believe the statements are a count-down to a reality breakdown. The Arcane Absurdists believe they are a joke perpetrated by all-powerful beings, offering up overpowered and useless magics hidden among lies. The Full Absurdists just think they are all jokes.

Whatever the case may be, groups of scholars have been recording the prophecies for centuries, taking copies to various libraries, and seeing them lost again in the shifting sands of history.

### Confounding Prophecies (d30)

1. The Corpse twitches in spasms that approximate creative life, but Creation is ended.
2. The Girl's left hand is struck off to help the Boy Prince feel better.
3. The ink ran out, does the Keeper of Vials have a refill?
4. The Rats escape from the Walls to sail forward the Bony Ship.
5. Slow-cooked suckling pig with jacket potatoes and onions from a pot.
6. The Higher World dies and withers as the Light of Reason fades into the Beyond.
7. In the roots of the Judas Tree an Explosive lies waiting.
8. The Blood of Dragons will restore the Love of the Necromancer.
9. The Sword of Justice rests in the museum as the Seekers of Life drown in the Fortress Sea.
10. The Final Apotheosis brings the Nihilism of Creation to fruition.
11. The King of Saints is poisoned by the brothers of the Princess' Groom.
12. The Eaters of Souls are brought low by Digital Ennui.
13. I won't make it in time for the anniversary, I weep.
14. The Silver Birds take the Masters of Reality into the Higher Realm on pillars of flame.
15. The Golden Child is stolen by the Spirit of the Golden Son.
16. The Dreams have eaten the Dreamers.
17. The Source is sculpted to bring solace and sunrise to the Weeping Widow.
18. The music in you, a hypnotic tapestry of minimalist design.
19. The Centaur Khan arises to avenge the wolves disturbed by the Children of the Golden Man.
20. They leave their Homeland and when they return their Homeland is dead.
21. The Meat Puppets are brought into Creation to bring joy and laughter to the Creators.
22. A loaf of bread, not too white, some good butter, and three cans of anchovies in olive oil.
23. On the False Grave the Dog and its Master await the sunrise.
24. The Mother of the Mountain awakes to find the Princess of Ice has not been propitiated.
25. The Golden Man brings an end to the Empire built on the shackled labor of the dead.
26. Rot grows thickly upon the Mother's Love.
27. In war and blood and pain and stench the doomed are bestowed meaning, the blessed are given pleasure.
28. The Shapeless crawl through the orifice of creation to save themselves from the End of Existence.
29. The Breast of the thick-larded beast and the fruits of the Apples of Darkness are offerings to Fire.
30. Eternal life in an unbounded cosmos brings the Lonely Doom of Endless Entropy upon the undying.

### THREE STONES OF DONATION

The three stones are dull things, worn to nubs by the offerings given over millennia. Contemporary regulars refer to them as the Milk Tooth, a slippery, cracked marble thing, the Iron Prayer, a red-and-black streaked slab of magnetite, and the Ear of Heaven, a massive bowl of pinkish corallium.

**Quietly Observed Cabal (Q.O.C.) soldiers** in polished olivine walker suits (HD 4, elite) stake out the stones prior to each apparition, reserving access to the honored members and mothers of the cabal, or for deserving supplicants willing to part with 10,000 cash for every offering undertaken.

#### Chance of Receiving a Null Object of Desire

Gift value	Probability
<1,000 cash	10%
1k-10k cash	20%
10k-100k cash	30%
100k-1m cash	40%
1m-10m cash	50%
10m-100m cash	60%
100m-1g cash	70%
1g-10g cash	71%

You get the picture. The maximum probability of getting a Null Object of Desire is 79%. If the Observer accepts an offering, it dematerialises to be replaced with a glossy Null Object of Desire over a couple of hours. On each apparition, the Observer accepts only three offerings.

### NULL OBJECTS OF DESIRE

People who have seen the objects say they are glossy, small, and nondescript. None of them seem to be entirely able to say what they do, if anything at all, but everyone who possesses one seems to be very certain that they possess a most powerful and most desirable thing.

1. It cannot be apprehended in words and possesses the status of an algebraic sign.
2. It is an other, which isn't an other at all, coupled in a reflexive, interchangeable relationship with its owner.
3. It is an imaginary part-object, separable from the body.
4. It is a glorious divine ornament, to always be hidden in a worthless box.
5. It is the unattainable object-cause of desire.
6. It cannot be held or seen or heard, only encompassed and orbited, in fearsome proximity.
7. It provokes both anxiety and lust.
8. It pretends to be the cause of its owner's desire.
9. It is the leftover, between the symbol and the real, that fractures the source code of the Philosopher's Stone.
10. It is a surplus of enjoyment that has no use, but exists for the mere sake of enjoyment.
11. It is a simulacrum or semblance of being.
12. It is the individual intersection of the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary.

The Null Object of Desire forms the entirety of the components of any spell involving and affecting any one, and only one, individual, permuting the reality around them in every way shape or form required, and as gift, obviating the need for throws, checks, saves, or balances. It can create the perfect simulacrum of a *Wish* and create a blisssed heaven on earth for the recipient. The Null Object of Desire is valuable. It can buy kingdoms. Wars have been fought over them.

It is the ultimate, literal MacGuffin.





## The Five Portals

Common lore holds that the five grand portals, with their mirror-sheen surfaces, each a fifty-three meter diameter dark annulus reflecting the world around it, levitating a meter and a half off the black cube smeared meltstone bedrock, is inert. A great 'O' of divine or infernal mockery.

Equally common is the conviction that this is baloney. The portals are active, alive, listening, waiting—eyes and ears of whatever entities call the Black City home. This second conviction is correct.

Unless activated, each portal is inert and subtly not-quite-there. Its surface reflects touch and sound, it does not react to chemicals or pressures, and thought a thousand petty tyrants has tried, neither sword nor energy lance can touch it.

### THE SKY PORTAL

The northernmost portal reveals the same sky, but with no trace of the Purple Haze, hence its name. Sifreda of Metropolis speculates that it holds the key to lifting the Purple Haze. This is false.

In fact, the Sky Portal leads to the remnants of the **Fast Stars** in orbit around the world. Its activation requires:

1. A sky key of glass and mahogany, found in a Tower of Astral Control, guarded by a small army of maintenance vomes.
2. A Black City demon rider or amulet, convinced that a journey to the Fast Stars would be a good idea.
3. The *Active Astral Voyage of Nilbreg the Technoduke*, a ritual now possessed only in the Memorium of the Spectrum Palace, where it has been misfiled as an Omega Level Divination.

The Fast Stars were once a sparkling river of light and life, swirling around the World in a rainbow panoply of celestial music. Now, it is a river of tombs, memories, savage machine clans, and perhaps the seed of a new Astral Age.

### Fallen Fast Stars (d6)

1. **The House of Zeno** (600 XP): a paradox-riddled labyrinth that conceals its exit, filled with desiccated, cannibalized corpses, and mummified cannibals.
2. **The Jungle of the Eater** (500 XP): a verdant paradise of floating flowering plants filled with flickering air fish, and a **Lamarckian Eater** (HD 16, shapeshifting), possessed of a low cunning and infinite adaptability.
3. **The Tomb of Skins** (450 XP): shattered and airless, filled with the floating snow of a million terminal breaths, the city of obsidian and carnelian floats like

the dream of an infinite chandelier, filled with cryopreserved bodies—soulless vessels for Ultras. Are they forgotten, or waiting for some Judgement Day?

4. **The Red World of Iniquity** (400 XP): a living world of squirming tunnels thick with heavy-leafed vegetables and floating luminescent fungi, overrun by degenerate, simian four-handed quarterlings. At its heart beats a small soulfire sun trapped in a great gelatinous cell.
5. **The Dead Ship** (350 XP): a round ship lodged, like a mote in God's Eye, in the corpse of an industrial star. The ship is covered in disturbing and insightful mathic poetry. An Unchosen wanders the ship, wounded by a thousand cuts, yet undying in her immortal shell.
6. **The Tower of the Prodigal Son** (300 XP): a needle of ice sparkles, tumbling end over end, weightless above the blue bulk of the world. The corners of rooms seem to peer and wait, suggesting at movement beneath the skin of the world. Vomish rats, monkeys, and great many-handed mammalian spiders float in the icy wreck, dead to existence. Traceries of human forms are smeared and melded with the walls, sleeping traces of Benjamin, the Fool Who Spoke to the Machine God. This is certainly not a doomsday spire aimed at the world, infested thickly with un-decayed self-replicating synthetic organisms.

Some of the returned, such as root-faced **Witold the Green** (HD 3, botanopsyche), serve as stark reminders of the dangers to be met in the Fast Stars.



WITOLD

## THE EARTH PORTAL

The second portal reveals nothing. It is open, still, the view is the same as it always was. Zundan of the Redland District maintains that it is likely a dull-way, linking to some far off location, or perhaps to a network of (pre-)Black City portals. This is correct.

Unfortunately, the fracturing of the Second Moon and shifting plate tectonics have largely misaligned the portal, leaving only a single dull-way remaining—a five week voyage to the Blue Pyramid, which requires *Zundan's Awakening of Aways* cast during a new moon to activate.

**Void worms** (HD 2, mind altering) have infested the dull-way, and there is a good chance of coming out changed and very interested in subterranean reservoirs of life force.

**The Blue Pyramid** is in the trading oasis of Jarech, under the benevolent guidance of the Almighty Punta who is sadly locked in three-way struggle with the vicious Tekhne Wizards who want to invade the holy pyramid, and the Underfolk who shun the glorious rays of the Punta. The source of its wealth is its position in the middle of a harsh, sandy desert, between the Ageless Empire of the Thousandfold Epicentre to its south, and the Red Cathedral Shore to the north.

## THE THIRD PORTAL

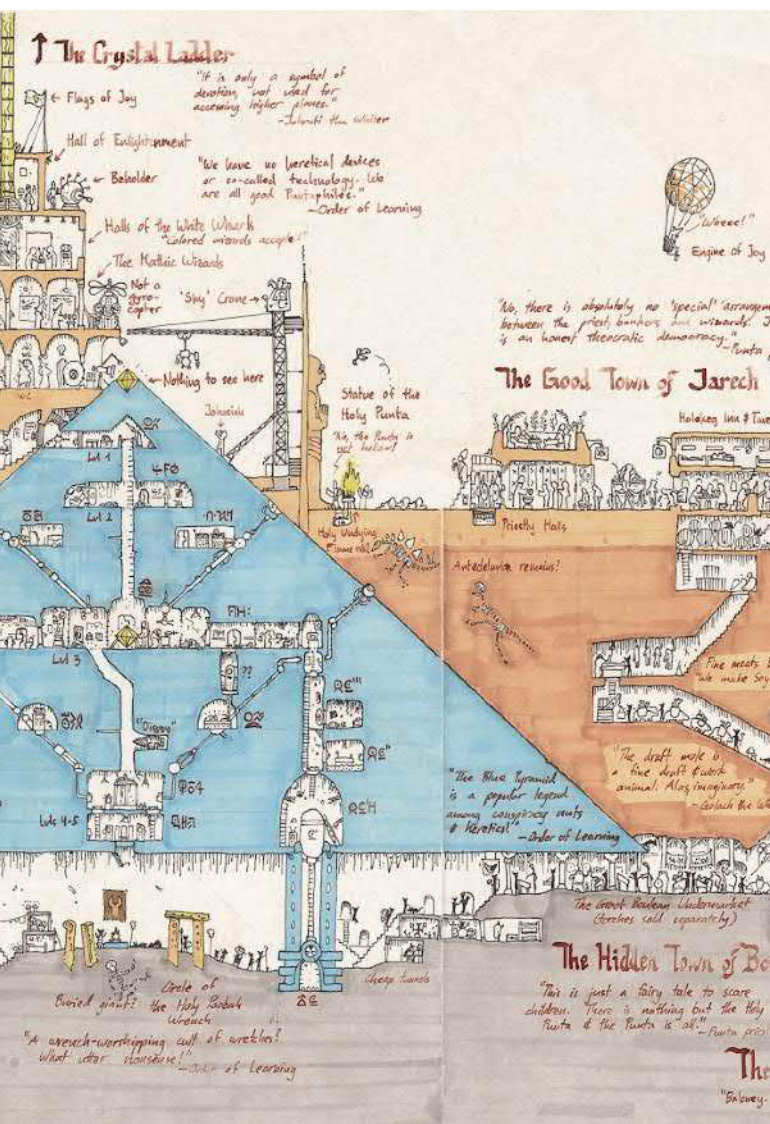
The middle portal, named simply the Third Portal, is the closest to the Grand Observer, and the only one that is permanently active, filled with a shimmering white energy field. It is plastered with danger symbols in multiple languages, living and dead. According to the Abmortal Vatman of the Excorial School, it is actually an **interdimensional gate**. This is sometimes true.

It connects the Grand Observer to the *Possibility of the Spirit*, an island-sized anti-gravity machine that serves as the a kind of repeater for certain Black City demons.

Uninvited travelers in the portal experience many unpleasant interdimensional effects, including (d6):

1. Slow spaghettification into a swirling maelstrom of degrading information, with a 5% possibility of returning as disembodied soul-personality.
2. Transportation into the soulfire of a mad Dragonsun.
3. Translation into an assembly of anorganic parts swirling around a Cold Hell peopled by deathless, soulless false-humans.
4. A hard landing in a desert of borosilicate sand speckled with fragments of fossilized demon blood. The winds of limbo roar.
5. The traveler is rejected by the portal and violently mirrored at the molecular level, leaving them forever slightly off.
6. A void walker is born. Many centuries earlier, perhaps, they have returned.

Invited travelers are greeted by a **sentient dormouse named Polh** (HD 2, teleporting), floating in a lemon crystal orb, who offers to take them to the House on the Edge of Time. Or to other places. Invitations are available from Black City emissaries that may or may not be Ultras.



## THE WIND PORTAL

A constant light breeze flows into the fourth portal, suggesting a permanent pressure imbalance. Listen closely, and you can hear the scream of the jet stream.

Papers, parchments, and other small or light objects are sucked into the portal, but heavier objects are blocked by a gentle force field. Despite the protests of scholars, many hermits, cabalists, and especially casual visitors have taken to disposing of their trash in the Wind Portal. The decayed plastic automaton named **Fabrio 64** (HD 3, loud) is a local fixture, haranguing visitors about the danger of littering and the cosmic doom coming for them all.

Currently no key is known, but magically reduced travellers, or soul-personality bound to a straw-and-stick fetish could certainly pass through the Wind Portal.

The fast portal leads to the **Eye of the Storm** (600 XP), a massive semi-organic accretion of resonating tubes and chambers orbiting the peak of the Needle of the World, above the Circle Sea. The jet stream howls around the Eye, lightning lizards and wind wolves play about the ripped cloud forests the trail behind it, and centuries of random trash and dust fill empty nooks and crannies. This is also the swiftest way to return to the Rainbowlands for anyone willing to do something as epically mad as paragliding down from the Stratosphere.

*Within*, on a high chair, is the half-fossilized body of a Voyager from beyond Time and Space, a great calcified humanoid with four eyes and a crystal skull, its liquid personality evaporated and only a maddened soul remaining to scream like a spirit in the clockwork.



## THE GREEN PORTAL

The last portal looks onto the same scene, but somehow more serene, more verdant and lush with life. Stepping through has no effect, aside from a tingle. Urna of the Solarcity suggests that it offers an opening into the Living Consciousness of the World. This is unfortunately true.

Its architects carefully constructed the Green Portal to permit only information transfer between them the global noosphere and the world of folk, unfortunately they did not count on spells like *Abned's Magic Jar of the Personality*, body-hoppers like the Ultras, or personality duplicating carnibotanic disasters. A spirit-personality can thus, with reasonable effort, translate themselves into the noosphere.

This is why the ground in front of the Green Portal is often littered with the corpses of decomposing pantheistic cultists.

### The Noosphere Translation Works! (d6)

1. The voyager's spirit-personality is consumed by the Living Consciousness and not even a trace remains.
2. The spirit-personality is sublimated and becomes a part of the higher song of existence, achieving blissful unity.
3. The spirit-personality departs the bonds of gravity and worldly spherical form, becoming a space ghost.
4. The spirit-personality returns in 1d4 months, if its body remains all is well, otherwise the profoundly wiser entity is now a body-hungry ghost.
5. The spirit-personality returns in 1d4 hours with a deep fear of the cosmic nihilism underlying the consciousness of the universe, permanently gaining 1d4 points of Wisdom.
6. The spirit-personality returns, deeply attuned to its body, and now possessed of the ability to *Change Self* at will, flowing from woman to man to possum to sunflower to vibrating lichen colony.

Just occasionally, some ill wanderer returns raving about the Fleshgod Apocalypse and the Reasonable Armies.

## The Pre-city

Between the Five Portals and the Black City proper stretch three metric miles (also known as kilometers) of toxic dust suspended in the still, electrostatic air above the plain, with tangles of vine-like cubic metal agglomerations pulsing and rippling through the lands like arteries, sinews, and nerves pulled taut through the skin of soil and lubricated with a neurotoxic oleaginous slime.

The **oleaginous slime** (HD 4, mind-hunter) is an amoeboid colony organism that responds to the electromagnificent pulses of the Black City, acting in concert like a macroscopic antibody, to destroy all comers.

Some sages speculate that mindless creatures could pass the slime by, but the tangling, whipping strands of force remnants would surely cut them to shreds. Would they not? And besides, is the toxic dust not threat enough?

### THE TOXIC DUST

The dust seems almost alive, ominous, malevolent, standing still and at the ready. Under the tutelage of the Bi-Mannerist astrologer-mathematician Menda the Probabilist, a hundred and ten half-humans were sent in on leashes to report on the dust. Without fail they reported that (d10):

1. The dust intercepted them as they approached it.
2. The dust tasted sweet, like candy corn.
3. The dust sang with the voices of apocryphal lovers.
4. With each blister that appeared on their fair skin, a thousand memories flowered in their minds, like an explosion of life.
5. With each tooth that fell out they felt themselves die a dozen times.
6. As the dust swarmed and crawled into their orifices, they felt their volition fade away, even as the sensitivity of their nerve endings increased ten-fold.
7. As they breathed in the dust, their throats burned, and kept burning, even after they had burned away.
8. As the dust crawled upon their skins it created new orifices for entry, unstitching them like a demented tailor takes apart a lost plush doll after the zone of alienation brings eternal silence to a school.
9. As they walked in the dust their joints began to squeak and grind, before flaking away to rust.
10. As the dust ate deeper into them, they voided their internal organs through every orifice.

Menda the Probabilist concluded that the toxic dust was specifically created to be particularly toxic to humans and similar organic life forms, as it acted much more slowly on plants, insects, and fungi. Menda did not manage to test the effect of the dust on cetaceans before funding was cut.

## THE MAGNIFICENT DEAD

The contorted, peeled apart corpses crumbling to dust in the relentless background radiation of the Black City seem like suspended dancers smearing into black dust against the omnipresent whitish toxic haze.

Something in the almost-reality fields of the Pre-city flays their life-stories out of them, creating magnificently vivid experience streams that decay into the space behind them over the years—and enterprising vidy crystal salesmen send tox-suited autonyms in to harvest them from the memory dust.

### Magnificent Memories (d10)

1. Stole the last egg of the Life Dragon from under its nose by sacrificing his best friend.
2. Gave the wretch a second, ever-red-smiling mouth.
3. Danced with the quarterling queen naked beneath the rainbow stars.
4. Drank the unforgotten beverage of the northern wall in the Hall of the Wolf King.
5. Bathed in the blood of a thousand heretics.
6. Rode the Door of Erasure down from the sky chariot of the Blue God as the betrayers stumbled futilely for the particle lances.
7. In one fell blow smote the left wing off the Dark Carmine Demon before the gates of the Palace of Enchanted Tales.
8. Decapitated the Beholder of Lies with a pick-axe. Yup.
9. Dove into the mouth of Leviathan and pierced its heart with a golden sword.
10. Lived the life of a courtesan king, riding the flesh-robot for the pleasure of the Collectors of Dreams.

Gunslinger Bān B.



## The Black City

This is the end. The welcomed and the rare are here, no more fear, nor voices, into the void this journey ends. The last city and the first, it hunches upon the endless wine-dark ocean shore, immense, a roiling repetition of almost-pattern that peters imperceptibly into chaos whenever the watcher loses focus.

The chaos, immanent in the thrumming, beating, throbbing background radiation is the final guardian of the Black City, the atmospheric manifestation of the godlike avatar of this creation, **Infinite Recursions of the Real** (HD 20, endlessly complex).

### INFINITE RECURSIONS OF THE REAL

Reality itself breaks down in the face of the naked demiurge Infinite Recursions of the Real, and the minds of visitors scramble to create a scum of ordered meaning upon the maelstrom of potentiality.

**Most visitors' minds** (unless invited or exceptionally strong willed) impose their semiotic system upon the infinity that is the Infinite Recursions of the Real, painting the Black City, its deep canyon-boulevards and soaring cloud-obelisks, in terms they can comprehend.

**Referee!** You will have to portray the inchoate, biomechanical Black City in terms culled from the worldviews of your heroes. Ask them questions in round-robin order (or whichever way you prefer) and use their responses to build the city.

### Questions to build a false reality (d8)

1. What is your favorite color? [The sky is the opposite color, the bones of the city are complementary.]
2. What is your quest? [The city's parks and ossuaries and reprocessing vats are mockeries of your quest.]
3. How did you let down your first love? [The city's towers are monuments to your disappointments, the decorations stylized reproductions of your failure.]
4. How did you betray your parents or your kin? [The city's roads turn treacherously, facing you with parables of your crime at every step].
5. What dreams did you forsake? [The waters taste of your bitter regret, the food smells of your fear.]
6. Who was your hero or mentor? [Their distorted visage and body and laughter line the boulevards and drinking houses of the Black City.]
7. What is your greatest fear? [Hints and suggestions of it crawl in the corners, under the beds, in the dark canals, and behind cracked open doors.]
8. What is your fondest hope? [Grotesquely exaggerated, it is stitched into the marrow of every public building, fountain, and the face of every bio-servitor.]

**Welcome visitors** see the city for what it is, or what it is in the present, a hyper-realistic fractal reproduction of the Platonic ideal of the city waiting for its absent citizens, being born and reborn day in and day out. It is a simulacrum of a Potemkin city that believes itself to be a real, living city. The soulless bio-servitors who live within it, celebrate it, and maintain it, are convinced that they are the true Citizens and that all outside the Black City is a flux, collapsed from the Golden Age of the Makers of the World. They are correct on that last account.

Hiding beneath this veneer is a roiling chaos of possibility, a fire of soul stuff that could rebuild a world, or destroy it. But of course, why would anyone seek that?

### THE LACQUERED CHAOS OF POSSIBILITY

Because it whispers promises of a world without pain, suffering, agony, and death, a world of endless life. Listen to it, see its avatars emerge, see its demons offer you answers for a price.

1. The object of your ultimate quest? It is here—for the cost of a piece of your soul [lose 1d10 Wisdom permanently].
2. To feel no pain, no anguish, no suffering? It is easy—just give up some of your anxious dreams [lose 1d10 Intelligence permanently].
3. To live forever, to see the turning of the seasons become as days? We have the technology—just give up a pound of your superfluous flesh [lose 1d10 Strength permanently].
4. To protect your friends, your family, your home? The knowledge that will save them, we can give it to you—inscribed in your flesh and bones [lose 1d10 Constitution permanently].
5. To stay forever in the paradisiacal homes of the Citizens? Yes, yes—welcome to the party, all your needs sated till your last-most day [lose 1d10 Charisma permanently].
6. To gain true knowledge and understanding? Stand still, open your heart, take into yourself the crystal dreams of the Citizens [lose 1d10 Dexterity permanently].

Referee: Each of these gifts is real, perfect, and true. Each of these penalties is terrible, but bearable. This is not a *Wish* spell, where you gimp the character out of their quest. A character may acquire the knowledge of a new food source that will save their village from starvation for a generation or more, and return a shadow of themselves. They will be celebrated, remembered, feted, and live out their days in discomfort, but victory.

And, if you like, give their next character a little daemon adviser who resides in a superfluous fourth ear bone.



## THE BLACK OBELISK WHO GAZES UPON THE HEARTS OF MORTALS

Ok, this time. This is really it. This is the end.

Beyond the hulking towers and yawning abysses of the fractal city and its soulless ‘citizen’ servitors, is a cliff-top field of green grass. Pale mice-deer wander around, genteelly nibbling at errant blades and depositing pellets over the poetry-inscribed rocks that mark the edges.

In the centre of the field is a small black pyramid with an open door and filled with an inviting salmon pink hue. The gentle sound of pan pipes and babbling brooks wafts up from the depths.

This is the pinnacle of the Black Obelisk, a void-wanderer trapped in this soil like a splinter in the purulent tissue of a careless shepherd. It is growing loose. It is weak. It is hurt. Its heart and bowels, its lungs and brains, its teeth and claws, have been loosened by its impact with the world. The Black City keeps it here, the mice-deer like antibodies, keeping its infection in check.

**Mada**, an old woman in rusted golem armor (HD 6, avatar of the city), approaches along a foot path from a ramshackle house at the farthest edge of the cliff.

“Leave it be,” she says, “It is harmless now, and all its promises are lies. I can return you home now, if you like.”

She can. The city creates a portal. The voyager returns to their house. The circle is closed. Gain 10,000 XP.

*Inside the obelisk* is a writhing maze of organo-silicate tunnels, chambers of missing equipment, diagrams of powerful weapons, libraries of grand promises, and the voice of the Obelisk. Gentle, kind, insistent.

“The city lies. The city is a trap. I have travelled oceans of time. I have pierced the spaces between universes and seen the glitter of creation in the silence between one breath of the All-creator and the next. Help me and I will give you the universe.”

It will. But you’d better have a cosmic voyager game planned, o, Referee. The Obelisk is psychotic, and once it has been rebuilt, it will start pitting its voyagers one against another, until only one is left, upon which it will bestow itself and its poisoned chalice.

## THE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF TIME

There is one last thing.

One last house, a ramshackle carbuncle clustered on the farthest rocks, straining its wood and plastic and glass framework to escape the rocks that bind it to the Black City. It is not beautiful, but it is cozy and inviting, a speck of normalcy over the sticky, dark ocean.

The door is green with a great golden mask. The door is a golem and it talks. And talks. But eventually, for a price, it opens onto the House on the Edge of Time.

Within the dead and living heroes of lost times and place have strayed and stayed. Over time they fade and become one with the walls and the furniture, melting into place, a microcosmic inn that mirrors the cosmic firmament of heroes.

**Berengur**, who tore the moon in half, is here, playing billiards on the sun deck.

**Irshe**, who conquered the world twice to save it from the Autumn Gods, is here, drinking in the library.

**Lvir**, who sinned against life and broke the rainbow nexus, is here, making parfaits in the kitchens.

**Yagaraga**, who defeated the Crawling God and rode the metal eagle into the sun, is here, playing with a puppy in the lower garden.

**Mrakomir**, who ate the dead to save the living, is here, painting gauche landscapes in the drawing room.

**Mother Mercy** is here, thought patterns frozen in a crystal block in the storage morgue, she’s not about to see your light, but if you want to find hell with her, she can show you what it’s like.

**Pepis**, the abmortal bartender of the Gods, is also here, mixing drinks at the bloodwood bar and chuckling at the tall tales of the **Dead of Dwarves** and the **Blood-drunk Spear**.

He’ll mix a drink for you and warn you, you might walk away, but you will never leave. The Final Drink is worth 10,000 XP and counts as a ticket to the eternal battlefield of the cosmic champion. Also, there’s a cosmic dungeon in the basement, don’t you know?

## Update Notes

These are updates 1 to 16 of the WizardThiefFighter pointcrawl sandbox: the Ultraviolet Grasslands. It takes a group of blundering PCs (or heroes) into the depths of the western steppe in search of wealth and booty to pay back their adventuring loans.

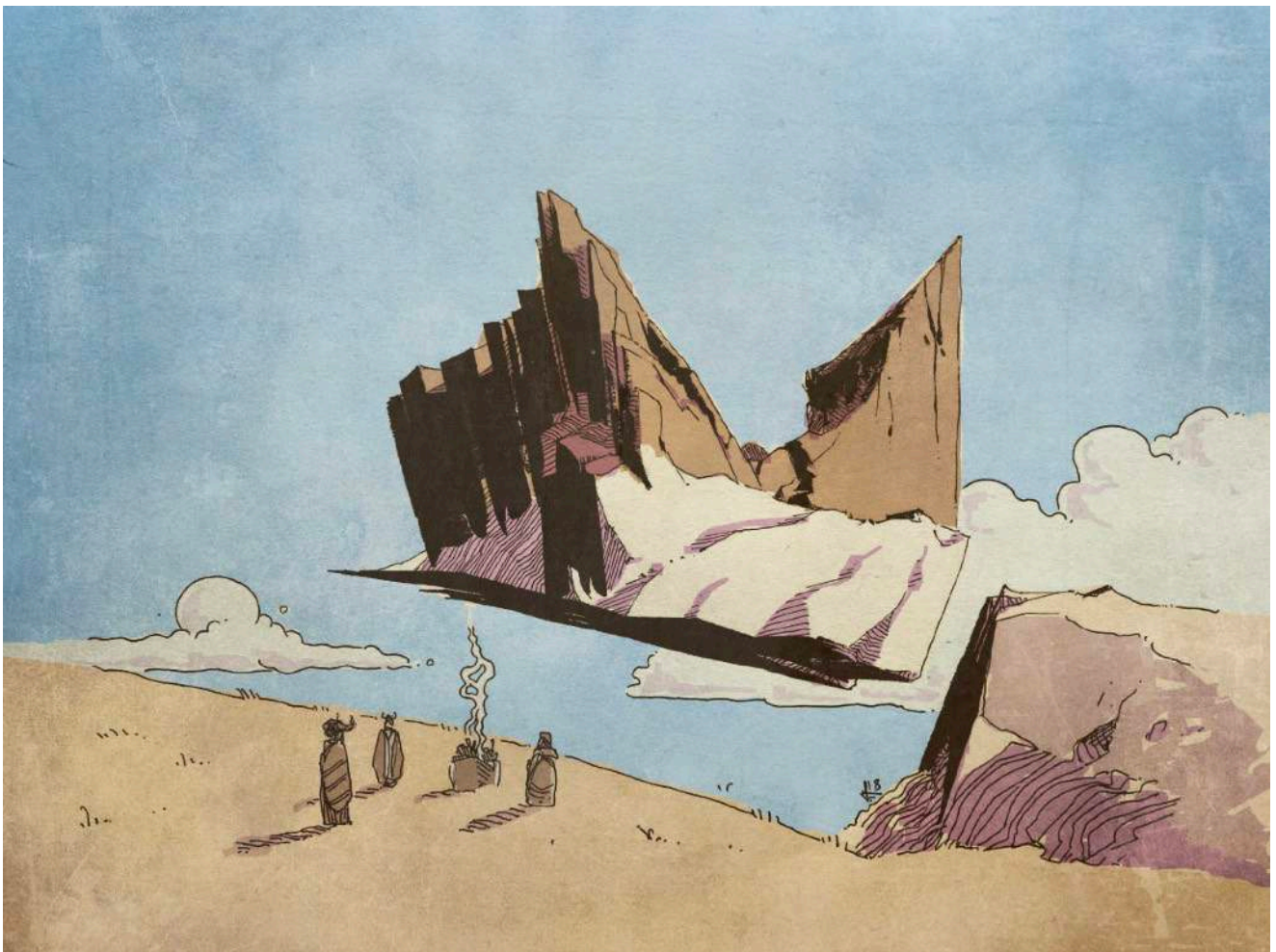
The project is graciously supported by my patrons at <https://www.patreon.com/wizardthieffighter>.

Luka Rejec, 22/03/2017, 22/04/2017, 05/06/2017, 06/08/2017, 12/09/2017, 30/09/2017, 31/10/2017, 21/11/2017, 29/12/2017, 13/02/2018, 29/03/2018, 29/04/2018, 26/05/2018, 30/06/2018, 19/07/2018, 31/08/2018

## NEW IN UPDATE 16

80,000 words plus. The Black City. Death. Portals. Weirdness. Game Enders.

It is done.





## Appendix I: Some Bits & Pieces

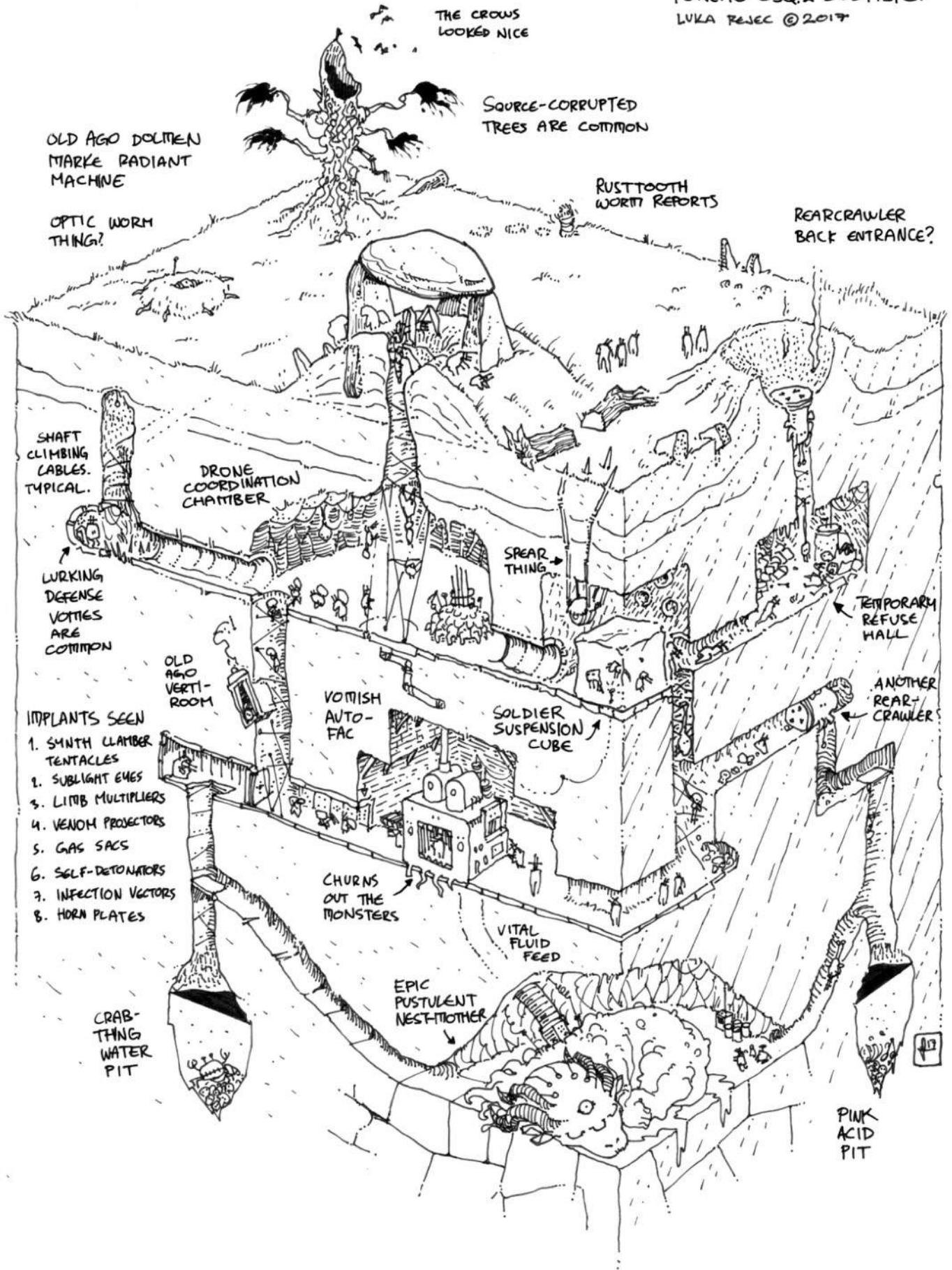
This section contains several sites that do not have, or do not yet have, a set location on the Big Map. Including:

1. A **vome nest** to drop into the wilderness near a destination as a source of misshapen, pathetic cyborg monsters.
2. A table of **sealed gates** you can drop into dungeons or various wilderness sites, just for fun.
3. A dusty **small town** you can add to the map, perhaps as a home base for starting characters from the deep steppe, or a point of light to rope into the main narrative.
4. A recently abandoned **merchant prince's palace** haunted by slaving wild beasts
5. The promise of a **crawling factory** producing mutated monstrosities (play-tested. It's awesome, really. And funny. Just ... need to write it up properly).
6. The suggestion of the **Near Moon** (Let's see that in the final layout).



# VOME HIVE 4c

AS REPORTED BY A CERTAIN  
PONCHO ESQ. & CULTISTE.  
LUKA REJEC © 2017



## Vomes and Vome Nests

Violent Mechanisms, the auto-golem child-monsters of some auto-cannibal faction of the Long Long Ago, soulless mechanoid viruses rewriting and reconstructing organic mechanisms to suit their half-coherent whims.

But are they truly as mad and half-witted as the writings of Zira of Oranje make them out to be in her seminal techno-anthropological work, *The Demon in the Corner: Beyond Logic and Madness in the Nest of the Machine Mother?*

### VOME NEST OBJECTIVES (D6)

1. Grey ooze protocol: replicate endlessly until everything is vomes. This is the most dangerous sort, but also the fastest to run into (roll d6): (1) behavioral bugs, (2) critical code errors, (3) auto-cannibalistic behaviors, (4) time-stamp shut-down, (5) sudden software reset, (6) civil-war errors.
2. Waking instincts: acquire functional engineers to help the nest rewrite their source code and attain actual self-awareness.
3. Cry of the heart: suddenly aware that they have no soul, the viomech nest seeks animancers, guides and mentors to give them souls. Of course, this is hopeless.
4. Cache subroutine: the nest is on a subsidiary task to build a cache of resources for a higher-order vome master. These resources may be (roll d6): (1) vats of ready biomatter, (2) barrels of ready fuel, (3) stocks of ammunition, (4) tins of ready-to-heat pasta, (5) machine parts, (6) combat and implant systems.
5. Extractor routine: the nest is a mining operation, likely dumping extracted resources in a depot without further attention to it. These sorts of nests are sometimes cultivated in the deep steppe by wary nomads to acquire raw materials from trade. The miners are extracting (roll d6): (1) coal, (2) metals, (3) gravel, (4) fiber stalks, (5) processed biomantic raw materials (i.e. meat), (6) water.
6. Sentient nest: the nest is self-aware and understands that it is a soulless abomination, at threat of destruction, and is now engaged in scouting missions and plotting a long-term survival strategy, this may include (roll d4): (1) escape, (2) infiltration, (3) conquest, (4) trade. For some reason, all self-aware nests are named Patrocles.

### RAIDING VOME NESTS

Vome nests are high-value, high-risk targets that often require a large group effort to eradicate without damaging the valuable implants and resources the mad monstrosities acquire. As a ballpark, a vome nest will have 10 + 1d100 slots worth of resources, worth 1d6 x 100 cash each. That's about 18,000 cash average, with a maximum of 66,000.

Many vomes are tough and get a save to avoid dropping when reduced to zero hit points. A typical nest will include:

**1d2 Nest-mothers**, massive hulks producing nutrient fluids for the nest and protected by eye-rays and low-level 'brown' psionics. AC 10, HD 20, eye rays, very slow, psionic.

**1d3-1 Vomish autofacts**, large sessile production golems that generate new vomes, equipment and goods for the nest. AC 12, HD 5, sessile, generates detonavomes, tough.

**2d20 Humanoid vomes**, either modified necroambulants or captured humanoids, with ranged combat implants such as mass drivers, stump-rays, or poison glands. Commonly also the operators of the vomish autofacts. AC 12, HD 2, ranged, creepy, tough.

**4d20 Drone vomes**: small, multi-limbed worker units, not meant for combat, but useful in a pinch.

**1d8 Defense vomes**: large, close-combat vomes, often with multiple blade attacks, horrible dead eyes, sometimes with (roll d4): (1) acidic spit, (2) noxious gas clouds, (3) paralytic bites or (4) fiery farts. AC 18, HD 4, lethal, grappling.

**1d10 Combat vomes**: small, brachiating vomes equipped with bladed tentacles and mass driver mouths. AC 14, HD 2, fast, spider climb, ambush.

**3d6 Detonavomes** are tiny or small creatures modified with implanted (roll d4): (1) explosive, (2) acidic, (3) toxic, (4) soporific, (5) incendiary, or (6) paralytic devices. AC 14, HD 1, quick, weak, prone to exploding on contact.

**1d10 Worms** are segmented machine worms with grappling, grinding maws. AC 16, HD 4, ambush, grapple.

**1d6-3 Soldier Suspension Cubes**: weird, gelatinous cubes that each holds 1d4 combat vomes in suspension, ready to release them in case the nest is assaulted. The cubes themselves are acidic. AC 7, HD 3, jelly.



## Sealed Gates

Eerie gates and portals to strange places emerge from the hazy times before times throughout the Ultraviolet Grasslands and intelligent travelers are wise to avoid them. On the other hand, fools often believe that plunder and treasure lie just beyond the gate.

A famous example is the cratered arched gate in the Onion-and-Skull style of the Later Mahogany Reign slowly emerging from its aerolith tomb by the Low Road and the High.

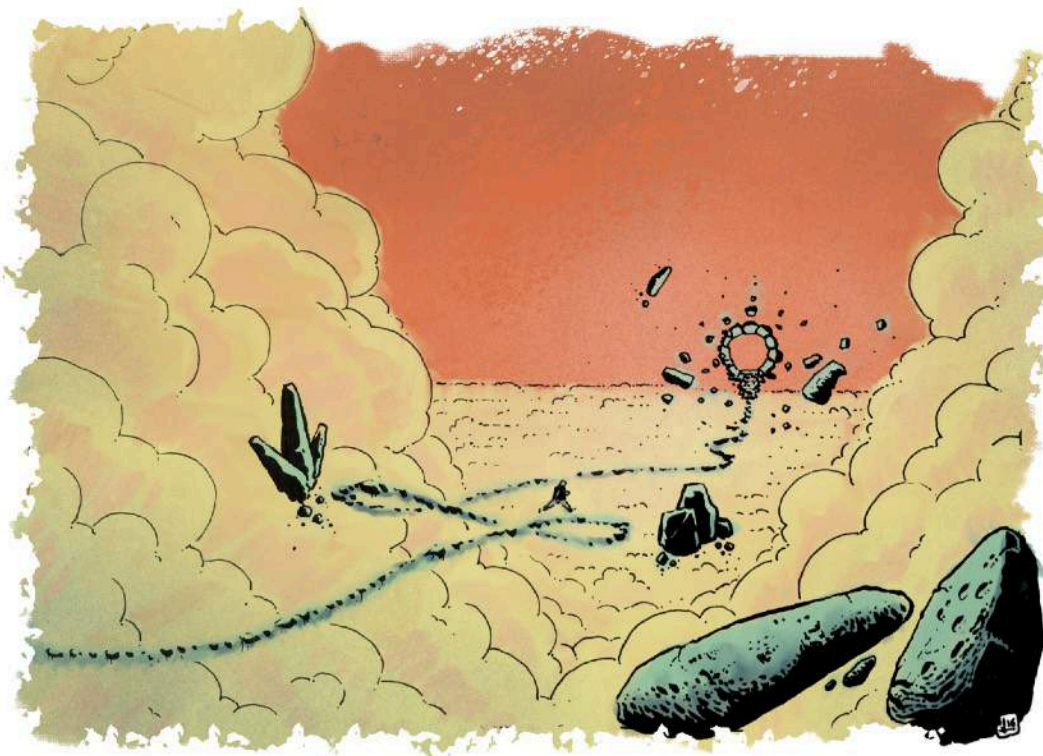
### GATE CONDITION (D6)

1. It is only the skeleton of a gate, whatever magic animated it, it is gone for good.
2. The gate is sealed by some odd and epic ritual, and an extravagant ritual would be required to open it. A creepy cult and 100,000 cash could make it work again.
3. It is dormant, sleeping and immobile, but it can be awakened by the right spell. Some library work could reveal it, perhaps even *Zundan's Awakening of Aways* could work?
4. It is fully functional, but physically sealed by a lot of rock, livingstone, mud, dirt or other detritus. A 2d6 week excavation should make it functional again. But *why* was it sealed?
5. It is sealed from the other side, turning it into a one way portal. What might come through?
6. It's working. Just the key is required or ... oh ... wait, it's activating. How convenient.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

1. It is a storage gate, a warehouse sized extra-dimensional hole or, as sages might call it, a *Non-portable Hole*. It might be a 1) treasury, 2) cargo warehouse, 3) prison, 4) tomb, 5) archive or 6) garage.
2. A multi-access extra-dimensional house. In essence a postal box, accessible through multiple gates. Creatures' spirits may be keyed to a single gate, disabling "teleportation".
3. A dull-way portal, providing a safe extra-dimensional worm tunnel to another location. It may take days or weeks or even months of travel through the portal to reach another location. Void monsters are, of course, just fairy tales.
4. A fast portal, or tele-portal, that shortens travel distances to another location.
5. A sideways portal, that realigns the traveler in regard to the physical world, essentially making them "ethereal" or "ghostly". Sages warn of rats and roaches infesting the sideways land.
6. A machine portal, it leads into the underlying mechanical body of the world, where cold, calculating elder creatures plot their odd plots. Very dangerous.
7. A rainbow portal, probably originally designed as a pleasure or amusement portal, it takes the traveler on an amazing journey in space and time. The journey may last months.
8. A hell gate, leading to some monstrously contorted biomancy-infused nightmare sub-realm. Don't go there. In fact, don't activate it, you schlub.
9. A time portal that lets travelers skip a week or a month or a year into the future when they pass through it. One way trip only.

10. A soul mill. This is not a portal. It is a refinery, stripping the souls from creatures to fuel ancient machinery. Usually the stripped body and personality are returned in a day or a week, quite dead but perfect for creating flesh golems or bazombies.



## A Town: Cerulean Five Oasis

Cerulean Five is a thriving stop, just a day's trudge south of the Low Road and the High. Dusters, cutters, mercos and merchos rest in the oasis en route to the Plantation of the Porcupines, south of the Plasteel Slag. Dilettantes and aristos often go out of their way just to visit the fabled Sky Well.

Ah, the Sky Well, the heart of Cerulean Five. It pulls water from the very air itself, a network of condensers tunneled into the petrified hulk of a gigantic cactacean landcoral and powered by the grumbling crystal machine, Bessergott VI, that pulls energy from the fast stars as they flitter overhead. St. Wavy, grizzled veteran of some Limbo War, tends to Bessergott and keeps the waters flowing.

Five ancient fountains of porphyr and red coral burble with the cerulean-tinged water of the Sky Well and a ring-worked fortified encampment of dead landcoral slabs has over time grown into a small safehold against the mind-blasting hardships of the steppe trails.

### CHARACTERS

**Bessergott VI**—a crystal machine interlaced in the landcoral hulk that is fond of reciting Long Ago poetry and playing games of chance with visitors. On melancholy days it refuses to operate the Sky Well, but most days it can be appeased by kind words and good oratory.

**Saint Wavy**—a grizzled old fellow of indeterminate gender and species, perhaps more machine than bio, it has been here longer than most can remember, serving the crystal machine and tinkering late into most nights, building hydraulic and pneumatic contraptions.

**Micah**—an orphan of the Ultraviolet Grasslands, accompanied by her companion Draw, a hospitality golem. Toughened by the harsh wildland rays, she runs the Diver - a tap house hooked up to the Fourth Fountain and the social hub of Cerulean Five.

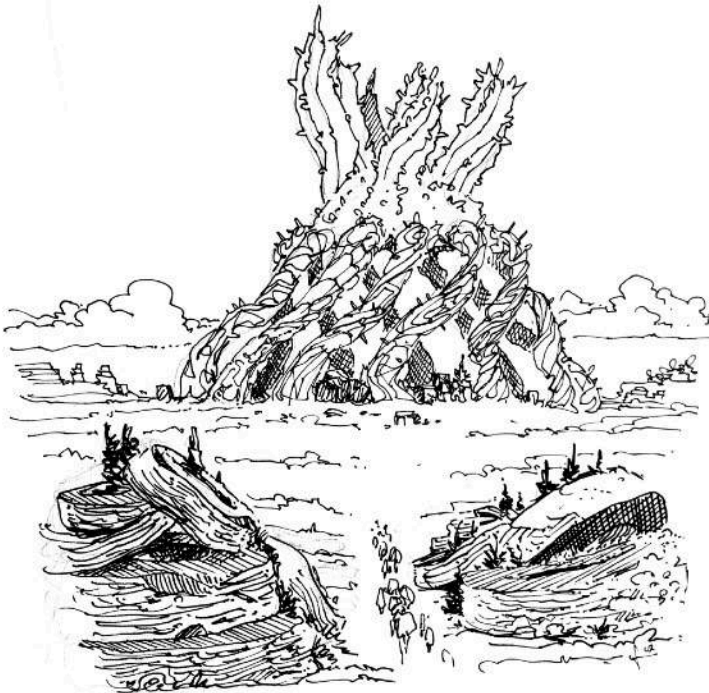
**Draw**—a hospitality golem with a dry sense of humour and an odd glint in its eye. Its plasma-glazed shell is painted in attractive curlicues and sometimes, by the light of a late moon, it seems more human than golem.

**White Jackal**—a snow-haired mystic, watcher of countless moonrises and moonfalls on the barren grassland. He tends a crop of Purple Haze in a small garden hollowed out among the rubbled edges of the Oasis. When bored, he plays tricks on visitors with his bewildering psychic powers, but more often he simply sleeps and bakes gently in the hazy afternoons.

**Steatitian-6**—bone-yellow plate-clad emissary of the Princes, the combat polybody has a fondness for songbirds and a weakness for fluffy pets that belies its skill with the White and Turquoise pistols. More enforcer than negotiator, Steatitian-6 is a surprisingly jovial polybody under that grim ceramic cladding.

**Partner Epiphocite**—the dryland-adapted Porcupine Partnership representative hosts a fine salon that discusses literature and meta-biology on moonless nights. It keeps three former partner personalities in rock crystal and malachite jars at the green-skinned Porcupine House for accounting and recounting purposes.

**Jeppi**—the Maitresse of the Habitation Association, a general-purpose hexad-associated union of the laboring classes. Jeppi also runs the closest thing to a bank-and-savings cooperative in the Oasis, structured around the Re-wired Vome Vault. Jeppi loves good wines, fine mechanical poetry, and long walks in the twilight of the world.



## PLACES

**The Diver**—a taphouse tunneled into the oily bedrock beneath Fourth Fountain, social hub of the Oasis.

**The Habitation Machine**—a dense cubist chaos of faux-adobe residential units assembled in the style of the Lesser Crow Hegemony, 3rd decade, around the Fifth Fountain. It has by turn been home to workers and artists, engineers and wanderers, ghosts and lost children.

**The Machination**—a grove of amber fig trees around the Second Fountain serves as the forum of the Oasis, where the citizens meet to talk, trade, do theater and cajole Bessergott to keep serving water to the Oasis.

**The New Market**—a clambering cluster of newgrowth landcoral buildings around the Third Fountain that house the quarters of local guild delegations and the trader-embassies of the Porcelain Princes and the Porcupine Partnership.

**The Old Market**—an emporium clustered in brick and landcoral tenements three stories high around First Fountain, filled with merchos peddling trinkets from the Rainbowlands, Pine Pork futures, Lime jerkies, Later-era weapons, and even choice narcotics from the Violet City.

**The Sky Well**—a hulking structure of petrified spiny land coral rising on eleven pillar-like legs to form a honeycomb lattice dome above the Fountains of Cerulean Five.

## MAJOR HOOKS

**Dessication:** The well has dried up and both the business and the population have fled. Saint Wavy weeps that nothing he can do will reawaken the Crystal Machine. It can be reawakened either by (1) continuous oratory and amusement, by (2) replacing its failed ennui resistance circuit with a 'new' one from the Autofab at the Skull of the Unbent Bow, or by (3) jury-rigging the Eusomic Stone worshiped by the mad nomads of the Ever-roasting Man.

**Devolution:** the Habitation Machine has half-woken into a delirious dream of a marshier time polluted the Fifth Fountain with a retromorphic demon. The inhabitants of the residential units are devolving into amphibious rodent-like subhumans. It starts with missing merchos. Continues with attacks in the narrow aisles. Escalates with a rioting swarm of subhumans. Explodes with out and out warfare in the streets. The devolution can be stopped by (1) killing the Machine, (2) putting the Machine back to sleep, (3) dream-walking into the Machine-mind and wrenching its soul-personality into the present, (4) installing a Permanent Distillation in the Fifth Fountain, (5) quarantining the whole district creating a black and dismal swamp in the middle of the town, filled with vicious, violent water-rat-folk, (6) personality-cauterizing

the water-rat-folk, creating a protean defensive swarm for the Oasis.

**Despair:** an ultra-spirit has possessed White Jackal, turning him into a flame-eyed prophet of an Unvarnished Truth. In the screaming clarity of his voice and the thudding aura of reality that surrounds him, drugs and devices fail and the scales fall from the eyes of all who behold him. Soon the society of the Oasis is collapsing in suicides and depression as nothing can keep away the para-apocalyptic truth of the harsh world the citizens inhabit. If killed, White Jackal's ka-ba is restitched to available biomatter by the possessing spirit and more permanent solutions are called for. For example, (1) entrapping the holy man in a lead-lined casket and ditching him into the Circle Sea, (2) exorcising the possessing ultra-spirit by a *Dissolution and Resolution of the Spirit*, (3) injecting White Jackal with a vomish civil-war subroutine, (4) subjecting the ultra-spirit to a metaphysical existentialist therapy over a period of months will ameliorate the clarity of the harsh truth with a veneer of absurdist humor.

## Glass House of a Dead Merchant Prince

Distance from a settlement: 2 days return trip  
Exploration: 160 XP

### HOOKS:

1. A very wealthy **Merchant**, Satrasco, built a pleasure estate for herself out in the empty territory.
2. She recently died, and her estate is up for grabs.

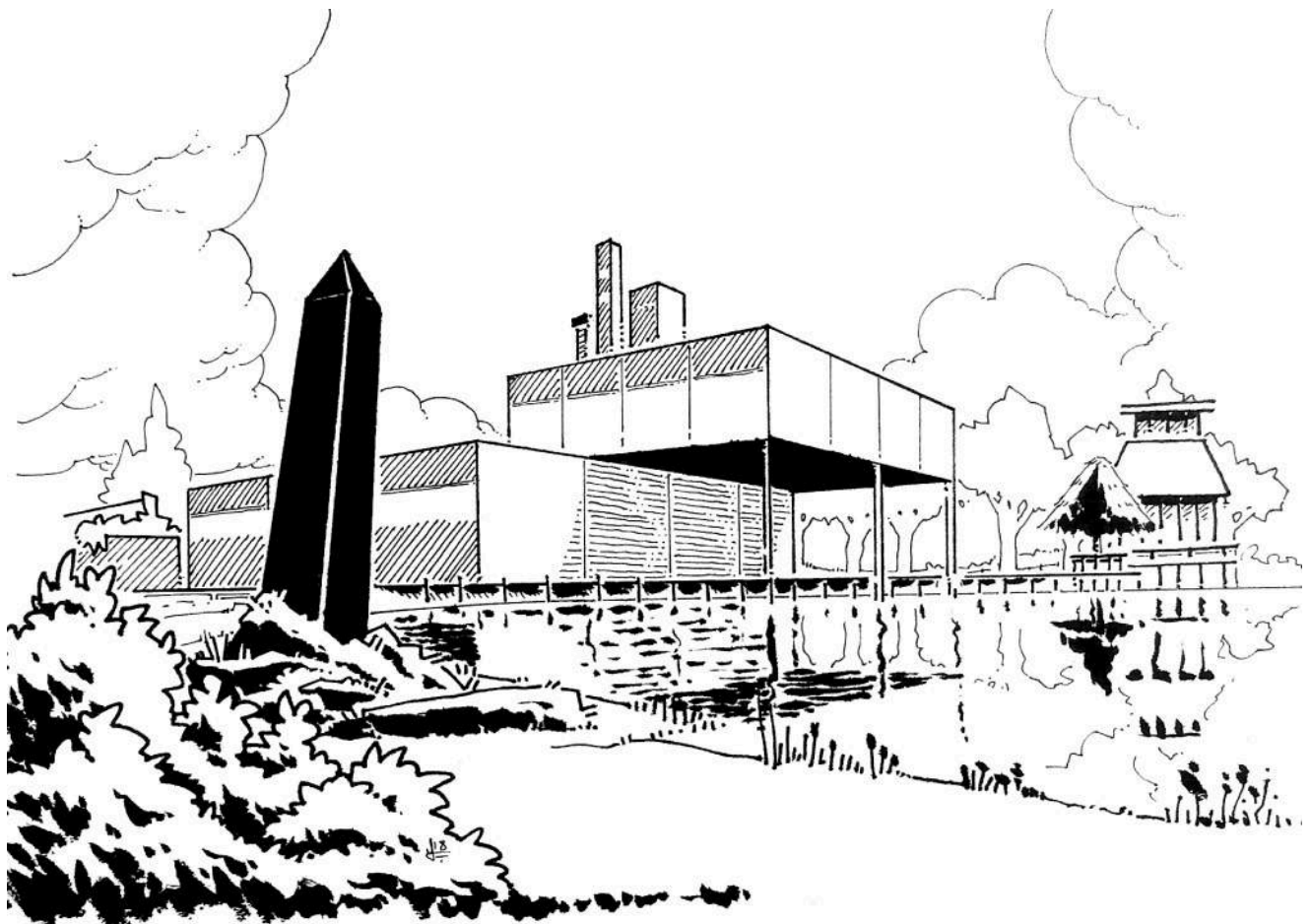
### INFORMATION:

1. She contracted the **Wizard**, Bestiana, to build a series of powerful guardians, animated by trapped wind spirits.
2. The wind spirits hate being trapped, playing a certain melody on the flute soothes them.
3. The Wizard knows the melody.
4. Each guardian has a mechanical valve, which releases the spirit into the wild, deactivating the magical guard.
5. Releasing an angry spirit may be dangerous.
6. The Merchant grew wealthy in the sanguine porcelain and replacement body trades.

7. The Merchant owed a significant debt to the **Sorcerer**, Mestibel the Fish.
8. The merchant was murdered as a warning to others that the Sorcerer was not to be crossed (false).

### DESCRIPTION:

The grand gateway lies open, choked by vines, proclaiming the Pleasure Palace of the Merchant Doño Satrasco. A sea of long grass, reeds, and fragrant lotus chokes the old princely estate, but a packed gravel driveway remains clear to the main building. Along the way an ivy-stained garage and a couple of traditionalist brick servant cottages front the path. At the end of the way, on the bank of the lilac-tinged catfish pond, sprawls the two-story steel-and-glass palace. At one end, reached by decorative walkway, rises a two-story baroque iron gazebo. The other end opens onto an overgrown formal garden, built in twee geometries around an imposing obsidian obelisk folly.



**THE TWIST:**

The merchant is not dead, but faked her death to escape the sorcerer. The merchant disabled her own guardians, after releasing all of them. The merchant then took her most valuable possessions and fled. The sorcerer suspects something fishy, but does not know for sure, and has summoned the **Hairy Devils** to retrieve evidence and investigators.

**THE TRICK:**

The entire location is actually a timed trap. Every time the heroes take a significant action (explore a new room, investigate a book, take a short rest), there is a 2 in 6 chance the hairy devils come closer (move down the trick tracker):

- The wind sighs ominously.
- A cloying sweet smell rises from the reeds.
- Ominous howls in the distance.
- A footprint with massive claws.
- Shadows move among the reeds.
- Shaggy forms with slavering teeth and glowing eyes come out of the long grass (lone heroes are attacked, the group is followed at a safe distance).
- The hairy devils attack, swarming the heroes.

If the heroes return to the palace later, restart the tracker one step further along.

**Hairy Devils** (20 or 4d8)

Armor: 13, HD: 3, bite attacks, trip and immobilize, +1 die of damage against immobilized targets.

Morale: very high (summoned devils)

Want: to kill everything that approaches the palace and bring the remains to the Sorcerer.

Fear: lightning and thunder.

Weakness: banishment, holy water.

With cunning intelligence, the hairy devils move to block off easy escapes. A pack of six devils will swarm the weakest-looking target, tripping it, immobilizing it, and then ripping it apart. Meanwhile, pairs of hairy devils will try to trip and delay other targets, until their devilish allies come to help dispatch them.

Slain hairy devils evaporate, only to return when summoned again by the Sorcerer (on Fridays, usually).

**THE MYSTERY:**

Greedy heroes will figure out that there are currently (almost) no active threats in the princely palace and will split up to quickly collect as much loot as they can, before fleeing. Other heroes may decide to find out what happened. Sprinkle clues and treasure around the rooms as required.

**LOCATIONS AND TREASURES:**

Assign rooms and locations as makes sense, or roll randomly to fill in the house. The exact placement does not need to make sense, as the palace is built in an ancient brutalist style of the second para-dadaism.

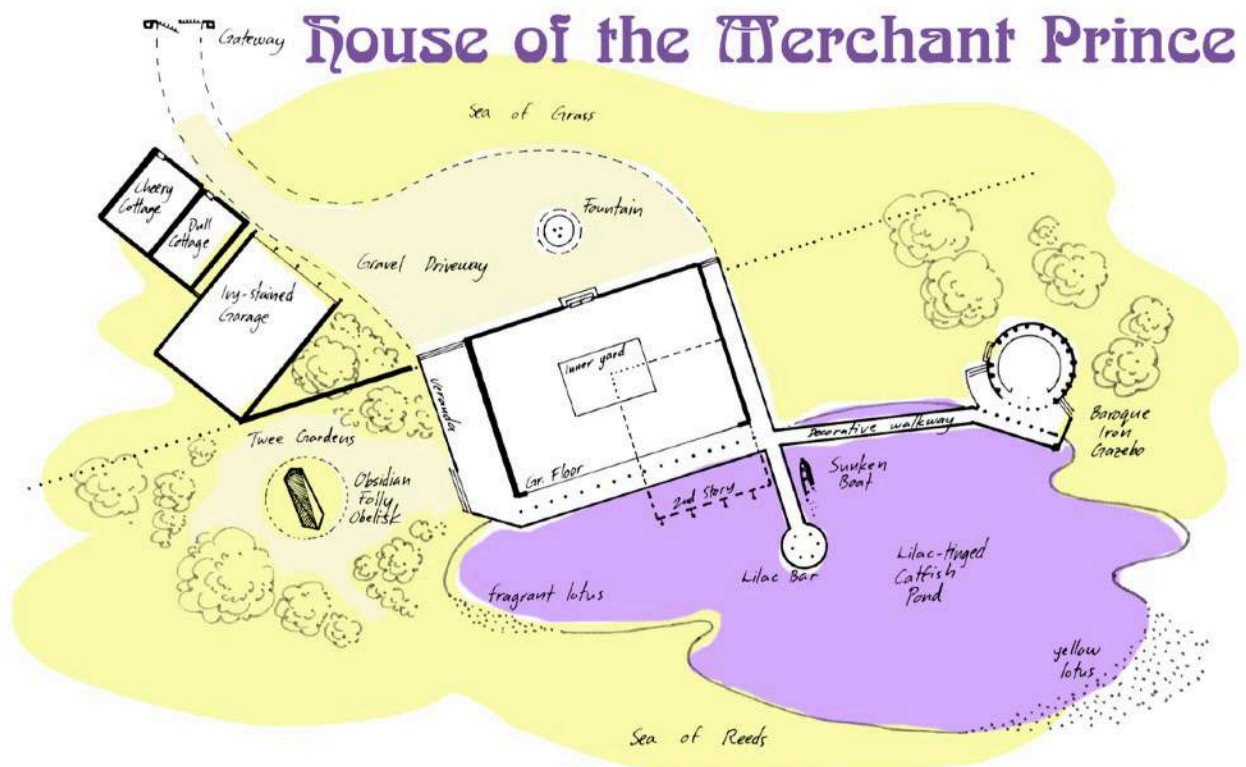
1. Cheery Cottage, very floral. Excellent down comforter in a large chest.
2. Dull Cottage, grey wallpaper. Large stash of food tins (1 sack).
3. Ivy-stained Garage, rampant probing plants. Disabled machines, crate of usable machine parts (200 cash).
4. Veranda, decorative flagstones. Ornate wicker furniture (200 cash, 4 crates).
5. Twee Gardens, ornate geometries. Marvelous polychrome gnomes (200 cash, 2 crates).
6. Obsidian Obelisk Folly, covered in a haunting poem of despair. Marvelous and heavy (4,000 cash, 12 crates).
7. Fountain, thick with moss. Marble angel swan (500 cash, 4 crates).
8. Inner Yard, mosaics and carp pools. Semi-precious mosaic tiles (400 cash, 1 crate) and rare carp (500 cash if alive, 2 crates).
9. Entry Hall, heavy pillars and delicate woodwork. Ornate bas relief (1,000 cash, 5 crates).
10. Tea Room, angular furniture and ancient cubist sculptures. Overbearing minimalist decor (1,000 cash, 6 crates).
11. Mediation Room, small tortured trees (200 cash, 2 crates) and medicinal stones.
12. Master Bathroom, whirlpool bath and a profusion of amber inlays (2,000 cash, 9 crates).
13. Impressive Library, full of well-bound books on Managemagic and murder mysteries (1,500 cash, 9 crates).
14. Lilac Bar, slowly being claimed by flowering vines. Crate of fine vintages (200 cash).
15. Impressive Museum, meticulously ransacked. Curios and strange things (1,000 cash, 5 sacks).
16. Master Office, immense desk and the corpse of a suicide. Imperial furnishings (2,000 cash, 8 crates).
17. Master Bedroom, wondrous bed and walk-in closet. Fine clothes (1,000 cash, 2 crates). Behind the headboard a safe (DC 18), inside 2,000 cash in silver.
18. Light Kitchen, snacks. The sandwiches have gone off.
19. Main Kitchen, pots piled high. Exquisite magical cooking appliances (2,000 cash, 3 crates).



20. Pantry, overflowing. Full of supplies (50 sacks), and delicacies (1,000 cash, 6 sacks).
21. Decorative Walkway, ornate carvings (500 cash, 6 crates).
22. Lilac Guest Bedroom, over-flowery. Fine ivory table (400 cash, 1 crate).
23. Apricot Guest Bedroom, decadent pseudo-modernist. Abstract bakelite sculpture (350 cash, 1 crate).
24. Guest Bathroom, enamel tub filled with water.
25. Baroque Iron Gazebo, two stories. Filled with thoughtful poetry on birchwood panels (200 cash, 2 crates).
26. Rear Staircase, surprisingly well appointed. Small portrait of the prince as a young lady (300 cash).
27. Main Staircase, ornate chandelier (1,000 cash, 3 crates).
28. Grand Dining Room, rich red empire minimalism. The silverware (500 cash, 1 sack) and the gloriously spongiform moulded chairs (2,000 cash, 12 crates).
29. Simple Dining Room, retro-futurist polycarbonate decor. Far-seeing sculpture-cube (200 cash, 1 crate).
30. Living Room, wonderfully decorated in high archaic minimalism, with white shag-beast rug (1,000 cash, 2 sacks) and incredibly comfortable cream leather lounge set (1,000 cash, 6 crates). A sorcerous fish-brooch rests next to an ashtray and a neatly folded Steppeland Gazette.

**CLUES:**

1. The guardians did not attempt to defend themselves.
2. All the guardian valves are open.
3. The servant cottages are pristine and untouched.
4. All the vehicles in the garage have been disabled.
5. There is room for four vehicles, but only three are there.
6. Pots and pans used to inexpertly cook a last meal remain piled up in the kitchens.
7. The small museum was ransacked, but only the most valuable small items are missing.
8. The safe is half empty and has only heavy silver coins and bullion.
9. The corpse dressed in fine mercer garb shot itself full in the face with a blaster.
10. The blaster is held in the corpse's right hand very tightly, despite the recoil of the weapon.
11. There are two sets of fine mercer garb missing in the master bedroom.
12. There are no anonymous deeds or bearer bonds among the remaining documents.



## Appendix II: Languages of the Rainbow Lands

Many languages are and were spoken by the many humans of the Rainbow Lands. Here are some of them, those found closest to the Circle Sea are listed first, and in parantheses the language family or circle is indicated. Languages in the same family or circle are related and somewhat mutually intelligible, whether through contact or descent is not always clear.

### THE COMMON LANGUAGES

1. **High Common (rainbow)**  
Status: The upper-class, literary common rainbow-tongue taught by teachers to noble and rich students.  
Writing: yes  
Notes: Old fashioned, unnecessarily complex grammar and pronunciation. Words change depending on context, speaker, intent. Numbers change depending on what is being counted.
2. **Vulgar Common (rainbow)**  
Status: The trade lingua franca of the non-noble middle-classes and professionals of the Rainbow Land, with distinct regional dialects.  
Writing: for trade  
Notes: Influenced from outer languages. Similar to "city speak" or "gutter talk".
3. **Purple Speech (rainbow)**  
Status: The dialects of the peasants and laborers of the Purple Land, with many borrowings from the steppe folk.  
Writing: no  
Notes: Very similar to bluenttalk, but it's an insult to say so.
4. **Bluenttalk (rainbow)**  
Status: The harsh and uncouth dialects of the exiles from the Blue Land and the Wild Folk still living there  
Writing: hell, no!  
Notes: Surprisingly detailed vocabulary of dairy products and aquatic vegetables. Borrowings from Blue Talk.
5. **Greenspeak (rainbow)**  
Status: The peasant and forester dialects of the Green Land.  
Writing: no  
Notes: Large vocabulary corpus. Speakers from different dialects can mostly understand each other's words even if just by context.
6. **Emerald Common (rainbow)**  
Status: The vulgar common of Metropolis the Emerald City, with many Elfish and Greenspeak borrowings.  
Writing: yes  
Notes: Beautiful traditional handwriting
7. **Decapolitical (rainbow)**  
Status: The vulgar common dialects of the Sea Fingers of the Decapolis, popular also with sailors.  
Writing: for trade  
Notes: Very onomatopoeic. Short, simple words. It's frequent to understate things. Speakers don't speak much.
8. **Saffranian (rainbow)**  
Status: The vulgar common of Saffranj and the Yellow Land  
Writing: yes  
Notes: A more refined and rhyming variant of Decapolitical.
9. **Caravanian (rainbow)**  
Status: The trade tongue of the caravans in the Yellow Waste and of some of the nomad tribes there.  
Writing: for trade  
Notes: Borrows from many languages. Speakers can bend the language to adapt it for speakers of a certain language, as well as make it indecipherable to anyone else but caravanians, if they want.
10. **Oranjetic (rainbow)**  
Status: The vulgar dialects of of Orange Land, very similar to Saffranian  
Writing: not much  
Notes: A musical dialect, exquisite in song.
11. **Redland District Cant (rainbow)**  
Status: The badly rhyming vulgare speech of the autonomous enclave of the Redland District  
Writing: yes, but mostly political tracts  
Notes: Large influence of decapolitical. Lots of swearing.
12. **Red Tongue (rainbow)**  
Status: The vulgar dialects of the Red Land, with many dwarven elements admixed.  
Writing: not much  
Notes: Influenced heavily by the slurred speech of the long-reigning Grand Red Duke Moshle IV, the red tongue tends to say "sh" instead of "s" and run words together they way they do after too many cups of wine.
13. **Winerian (dwarven)**  
Status: The hill dwarf dialects of the vintner dwarves of the Red Land and Orange Land.  
Writing: not much  
Notes: heavily influenced by the Red Tongue, Winerian is the most linear of the Dwarven dialects.

14. **Volkan (dwarven)**  
 Status: The mountain dwarf dialects of the Mountains of Light and the Black Gold.  
 Writing: yes  
 Notes: When written, the space between the characters has as much meaning as the characters themselves. Much is lost by speaking it. Lots of silences and isolated consonants. It's best spoken indoors, or in caves with a lot of echo. The echo is part of the language. It sounds very strange outdoors, parts of the words are missing.
15. **Woodlander (elven)**  
 Status: The language found inscribed on trees and rocks in the Elvenwood, spoken by some of the tribes there.  
 Writing: yes  
 Notes: The language is structured to change meaning with the seasons and the phases of the moon, as though it does not quite belong on the solid earth.
16. **Steppe Speeches (steppe, rainbow)**  
 Status: The various dialects of the Ultraviolet Grasslands grew from a patois of rainbow dialects and steppeland trade tongues.  
 Writing: no?  
 Notes: Immense vocabulary for grazing creatures and mechanical engineering.
17. **Sunsetish (steppe)**  
 Status: The common trade language of the western steppelanders.  
 Writing: for trade.  
 Notes: a surprisingly large focus is given to spirits and spirit possession in this language.
18. **White Line (steppe)**  
 Status: the cryptic language of the Porcelain Princes was once more widespread, now it has been reduced to their outposts and trading missions.  
 Writing: yes  
 Notes: Extensive polybody structure, some of the more refined forms of the speech require multiple telepathically synchronized voices used in unison to convey meaning properly.
19. **Satrap Canto (steppe?)**  
 Status: the color and light adapted language of the Spectrum Satraps seems to an outlying dialect of some larger language group or system.  
 Writing: yes, polychromatic  
 Notes: Without light-generating organs, or a rainbow translation array, this language is practically unusable.

## THE DEAD AND WEIRD LANGUAGES

20. **Black City Alphabet (?)**  
 Status: A language found inscribed on some metal sheets brought from the mythical Black City in the west  
 Written: yes  
 Notes: Some say it's not a language, just some intricate patterns. Faraway people joke that the writings are really the schemas for a very complicated dance.
21. **Deep Dwarven (dwarven)**  
 Status: The hidden priestly language of the deep dwarves that is not spoken but only carved in stones and bones.  
 Written: hell, yes!  
 Notes: It can be written in any direction, even constructing beautiful figures with the characters. Very succinct. Some carvings are considered visual poetry. A subset of Deep Dwarven is Deep Dwarven Hexadecimal, used for programming the Dwarven prayer machines.
22. **Blue Tongue (isolate)**  
 Status: The forgotten speech of the Blue God, now used by some secretive cults and mad wizards.  
 Written: yes  
 Notes: Harsh, logical, iconographic, ambiguous by nature.
23. **Elven (elven)**  
 Status: A hypothetical elven language  
 Written: unknown  
 Notes: Reconstructed by sages from fragments of woodlander and moonlander.
24. **Moonlander (elven?)**  
 Status: An extinct (?) language found inscribed in tombs in the Mountains of the Moon.  
 Writing: yes  
 Notes: Samples of the writing have been found to be memetic worms, taking over the reader's mind and driving them to perform odd, incomprehensible tasks. Though usually not deadly, permanent personality changes and even madness have been noted often enough to make the reading of this language become commonly associated with lunacy.

## Appendix III: Historic Periods and Styles (d20)

The historic periods, and prehistoric Long Ago and Long Long Ago of the Rainbowlands and the Ultraviolet Grasslands are filled with a riot of sometimes incoherent styles and periods. Mix and remix origins for artifacts the heroes unearth using this table.

D20	MATERIAL	SPECIAL MATERIAL	ADJECTIVE	MOVEMENT	CULTURE	PERIOD
1	Stone	Megaliths	Lesser	Onion and Skull	Vile Reign	The Star Bloom
2	Concrete	Dryland Coral	Shorter	Ur-Rococo	Mahogany Reign	Accretion Days
3	Rusted Metal	Ageless Metal	Lower	Bio-Mechanicism	Faceless Rule	Geological Eras
4	Glass	Ur Obsidian	Decadent	Geo-Sculpturalism	Perambulator	Long Long Ago
5	Adobe	Livingstone	Endless	Poly-Chromatism	Machine Human	Long Ago
6	Brick	Aerolith	Upper	Inter-Tactilism	Abhuman	When the Fast Stars Shone
7	Crystal	Psionic Crystals	Longer	Bi-Mannerism	Post-ling Culture	Mythogogic Era
8	Ceramic	Porcelain	Greater	Peri-Spectralism	Citrus Pre-nomadic	When the Mists Lifted
9	Wood	Luminescent Wood	Dark	Idio-Brutalism	Distributarian	Rider Years
10	Bone	Carved Ivory	Golden	Dis-Modernism	Dictatorship of Liberty	Scavenger Politics
11	Flesh	Synthetic Skin	Primitive	Ab-Plasticism	Pre-chromatic Kingdom	Springtime of Monarchies
12	Chitin	Iridescent Scales	Advanced	Alter-Minimalism	Zombie Democracy	The First Expansion
13	Force	Stuck Force	Barbarous	Meta-Classicism	Psychic Unity	The Blue Heresy
14	Plastic	Plaz Steel	Uplifted	Pseudo-Rusticism	Barbarian Polity	The Decadent Century
15	Wicker	Lightmetal Struts	Younger	Para-Infantilism	Ling Permutation	The Revolutionary Era
16	Shadow	Frozen Smoke	Forgotten	Neo-Elementalism	Post-humanist Continuum	The Human Revival
17	Light	Reality Ripples	Reborn	Post-imperialism	Rat Race	The Second Expansion
18	Cloth	Corundum Silk	Uplifted	Pre-Fundamentalism	Utopian Ecstatic	The Oligarchy
19	Sand	Grey Ooze	Fallen	Deconstructivism	Lower Heroism	The Purges
20	Earth	Flowering Mosses	Final	Anti-Realism	Pseudo-naturalist Dystopia	The Consolidation

## Exploring the History of the UVG

The past is an unclear country on purpose. I do not describe precise dates, locations, or periods, because I want no canon. Each group, each Referee and band of heroes, should together discover and be surprised by the past they uncover. You can use these tables to help you and your players discover what happened.

### Forgotten Times (d12)

Eras and times lost beyond the records in the Great Mist. Fragments, shells and hazy memories remain, but even they have a tendency to fade and melt from mind and time, like sands in the storms whipping off the Golden Desert.

1. The world was created by the Demiurge to celebrate the Onion and the Skull.
2. The world was discovered by the First Mother who entered the cosmos from the void.
3. The first deity awakened into sentience in a great mahogany tree.
4. The Vile Ones escaped into the cosmos and settled it with their slaves and ur-roccoco megaliths.
5. The first human was sculpted from solar dust by the Faceless Ones.
6. The mortals were uplifted by the sky gods of the bio-mechanum.
7. The Fast Stars blazed into life above the girdle of the earth and humans were the geo-sculptor gods.
8. Reality flowed like blood through the veins of the Uncreated during the Vile Reign.
9. Pride beget misunderstanding beget strife beget war in the heavens and the tears and the blood and the flesh and the bones of the abmortals rained upon the land, blanketing it in the fertile soil from which humans crawled like rats.
10. The poly-chromatic spirits could shape matter and energy like the sculptor shapes stone and clay.
11. There was no heaven and no hell, only life everlasting in the abhuman paradise.
12. It ended with the war of lings and viles and the rising of the Great Mist.

Fragments of Forgotten Times: the vile ones, shape-changers, the ultras(?), the gods, soul magic, the chosen ones, the old ones, the undying wanderer, the fast stars, the hole in heaven, soul mills.

Discovering any of the fragments should have world-changing consequences for the game. Individual heroes who gain such powers would become as gods to the later mortals who live on the world. Be prepared to refashion the campaign with new 'gods' who stride the world—and very likely new heroes for the players to use for the game.

### Dimly Remembered Strife (d10)

Some say there was a war. Indeed there is an epic misunderstanding among historians whether it was an actual event that marked some fall of some Chosen group. Obviously there was more than one war, but there can't have been that many, considering the obvious power of many of the Old Ones. Right?

1. The lings defeated the viles and ushered in a golden age.
2. The viles tore themselves in a civil war and the lings destroyed them afterwards, ushering in an iron tyranny.
3. The gods entered the cosmos from the void and destroyed the hubris of mortals in fire and flood.
4. The viles ascended into a higher form, leaving the world to collapse behind them.
5. The first lings destroyed themselves in iron and machinery, and the second lings told themselves tales of vile ones wreaking the destruction.
6. The machine gods were born in the fast stars and the quick trees and sent down their monstrous offspring to devastate the world.
7. The Chosen Ones broke their pact with their gods and were drowned in blood and time.
8. The humans crawled out of their slavery over a hundred centuries of relentless, bloody warfare. When they won the world they swarmed out of the void, destroying the ling and the viles, and taking the world for themselves.
9. The elves walked in from a void and reality fractured in their wake, leading to war between heaven and earth.
10. There was no void, there was no war. An entropy reduction experiment failed, causing a temporary reality collapse.

Fragments of the Strife: divine weapons, radiation ghosts, ghouls, stuckforce, biomechs, biomantic horrors, orcs, ancient vehicles, artifacts, machine humans.

Recovering knowledge of the great conflicts will alter the balance of powers in the lands, lay the foundation for new empires, and change perceptions of history, but won't radically alter the game—aside from a new arcane waste or two.



## Fabled Stories (d12)

Half-remembered times before the Rainbow Order was founded around the Circle Sea. Studies of the old records are half-heartedly forbidden by the Inquisition and avidly pursued by the District and other fringe groups.

1. The post-ling cultures spread across the world like rats through a bountiful orchard, flourishing, creating incredible arts, and then dying out as the source machine gods that kept them going broke down and died.
2. Peri-spectral phenomena broke the barriers between the ancestors and the scions, leading the first shamans into the well wasted lands.
3. Rigidly distributarian caste and hive societies clung to power, producing and reproducing the ancient magitechnologies as ritual and religion.
4. Idiosyncratic brutalist cultures swarmed across the world, driven by mad ghosts and fueled by synthesized weapon generators rediscovered in the dust of the Long Long Ago.
5. Dis-modernist scavenger polises established dictatorships of liberty, supporting themselves with vast slave networks.
6. Ab-plastic magics and half-remembered mentalists stood behind the Springtime of the Monarchies, inaugurating gleaming autocracies to replace the corrupt popular dictatorships of earlier times.
7. Post-lings seeking safer, and quieter lives, regularly fled the civilizations into the wilderness, establishing alter-minimalist enclaves around twitching, mutated divinities.
8. The first expansion of empires underpinned the last twitches of the zombie democracies. Their realms eventually collapsed under their own inherent contradictions.
9. Meta-classicism manifested itself in the attempt to create psychically unified cultures.
10. The metastasis of neo-minimalism was the Blue Heresy, which was rejected in a series of violent, divinely ordained-conflicts that established the essential polymorphism of nature, divinity, and society.
11. The victorious holy realms celebrated a decadent century only to collapse before the virulence of the barbarian polities.
12. Para-infantilists sought to return to earlier, forgotten eras, aping and celebrating the collapsed lingish mores.

Fragments of the Fabled Stories: old monarchies, epic heroes, barbarian warlords, heirloom weapons, foundation myths, sagas and poetries, ill-recorded histories.

Recovering knowledge and fragments of the fabled stories will bring glory or infamy on the explorers, and quite likely a fair amount of wealth. It will generally not greatly alter the balance of powers.

## Oral Histories of the Revolution

The fires of forgetfulness, the scouring of the sources, the flooding of memories has left many gaping holes in the histories of the Rainbowlands, but at least the vaults of the Orders of Accounting and Inquisition in the Metropolis retain a semblance of order over the last centuries.

1. The revolutionary era saw the para-infantilist regimes collapse in a great uprising of the human masses.
2. Rustic neo-elementalist movements saw a great return to the land and die-back of the cities.
3. Post-humanist elements reasserted great slave-hive empires over great swathes of territory.
4. The human revival under a series of revolutionary prophets saw the ab- and post-humans destroyed utterly in the realms of the Circle Sea.
5. The Polychrome Orders were established to protect the rainbow of humanity from the darkness and the light of the inhuman forces that scour the world.
6. The post-imperial expansion saw civility, order, liberty, and humanity return to newly purified lands.
7. Pre-fundamentalist utopian ecstasies fractured the post-imperial collective.
8. Several oligarchies emerged to steer the reigns of the Rainbowlands.
9. In the deconstruction of the post-imperial union local culture heroes were rediscovered.
10. Purges of anti-realists saw the economies of the Circle Sea boom.
11. A pseudo-naturalist dystopia was replaced with an enlightened, spiritual particularism.
12. The consolidation of the Rainbowlands into four great powers fit the Four Skies paradigm: the magitechnical universalists of the Violet City, the sacral engineering bureaucracies of the Emerald City, the trading and banking oligarchies of the Saffron City, and the permanent revolutionary self-help association of the Redland District.

Building blocks of the Revolution: rebellious golems, exploration societies, revolutionary organizations, trading houses, cultural corporations, industrial re-inventions, research foundations, militant cooperatives, violent cults, odd machines.

## Appendix IV: Life, Death, and Treasures

### Other Voyagers in the Ultraviolet Grasslands

People, ordinary and strange, set the tone of the sandbox experience. This table isn't an exhaustive list of characters the heroes might encounter in the UVG, but it is useful when you need an idea fast.

D100	NAME	2ND NAME	ROLE	CHARACTER
1	Almir	Al Piz	Agronomist	Kind and knowledgeable. Has a secure traveling chest of horrors.
2	Amaro	Artificiale	Ambassador	Wary, even terrified. Believes they are being pursued by disembodied demons.
3	Amberto	Azul	Anthropologist	Proud and pompous. Claims grand deeds, secretly inept.
4	Arcia	Bodizie	Archaeologist	Magnificent drunkard. Drinks to avoid facing a cosmic secret.
5	Arnasto	Carnemante	Artificer	Lunatic. Literally, goes mad when they see the moon.
6	Astia	Celestini	Assassin	World-weary and hopeless, goes on out of a dogged lack of imagination.
7	Belina	Circolangolo	Banker	Incredibly skilled, but scatterbrained. Do not mention the war.
8	Benito	Cosmonauta	Barbarian Noble	Brittle, with a quiet desperation. Seeks a lost friend, but will fail.
9	Berengar	d'Aranje	Bodysnatcher	Bright and excited. Has found a secret machine in the wastes.
10	Boko	da Pastafari	Botanist	Ashamed and glum. Dreams buried in dust centuries ago.
11	Cuoia	Dabasso	Broken Wanderer	High. Wants to dance with the flower people, and to feel love all the time.
12	Dalani	de Bianco	Cartographer	Strong and stern. Emancipated from worldly cares, follows a higher doom.
13	Dana	de Carmico	Chief	Melancholic. Heard a sound most cruel, and knows a dark time comes.
14	Davor	de Chouet	Con Artist	Two-faced and deceitful. Will work hard to ingratiate themselves, before stabbing in the back.
15	Delno	de Giallo	Courtesan	Obsessed with the Black Slug. Convinced its blood will be a panacea.
16	Depico	de Karavan	Cultist	Filthy but beatific. If dirt were holiness, they would be a saint.
17	Desena	de Nero	Cursed Hero	Burns with anger. Righteous but misguided.
18	Dolce	de Safranj	Cursed Wanderer	Secret sinner under an angelic demeanor. A creature of the night.
19	Enrike	de Selezione	Dentist	Cheery and bright. Terrifying when gripped by apocalyptic visions.
20	Erena	de Serpens	Dilettante	A grimly nice person. Whiny and needful, though genuinely skilled.
21	Ernedar	Decapolitan	Doctor	Gruff and bearish. On a very difficult and important quest.
22	Estato	del Mar	Druggist	Boorish and offensive. Hides a heart of gold.
23	Estrela	di Alto	Elder Parasite	Sad and distraught. Carries the burden of a great personal loss.
24	Farfalon	di Dormenta	Emissary	Hopeless and bereft. Their past is buried in lies of a glorious future.
25	Fina	di Mesa	Engineer	Calm and cute. Eyes twinkle as they mock the daily grind.
26	Galavar	di Verde	Entertainer	Jittery and scared. Refuses to look at the sky and fears the stars. Eyes, they call them.
27	Girolamo	Donaplenum	Escaped Slave	Creepy and quiet. Draws disturbing sigils when nobody is looking.
28	Girondo	Formatore	Eunuch	Gentle and soft. Refuses to be drawn into any commitment or decision.
29	Goria	Fustin	Exile	Foolish. Uses charm and a ready grin to mask a deep well of uncertainty.
30	Hotena	Hexadni	Explorer	Brutal and heartless. They lost their mother to a strange wandering poet.
31	Ipa	i'Buyeni	Fallen Hero	Waffling and harmless. Turn into a beast when exposed to the moon.
32	Isizia	i'Creati	Folk Hero	Full of jokes. Terrified of all metals and murmurs of the machines that eat.
33	Izabera	i'Fortun	Fugitive	Slimy and obsequious. A toad among humans, but not a cultist.
34	Jalosti	i'Grati	Genteel Adventurer	Careless and thoughtless. Obsessed with flawed formulae.
35	Jernina	i'Liberat	Golem Operator	Nerdy and hurtful. Claims they are a victim of obscure misfortunes.
36	Jeuna	i'Mertu	Guild Representative	Venom tongued but secretly kind. Hurt by circumstance.
37	Jion	i'Mutabili	Guildmaster	Ridiculously devout. Spouts verse to avoid facing harsh truths.
38	Karlo	i'Novi	Herder	Calculated and ecumenical. Deploys divinities to get their way.
39	Karnelia	i'Orca	Heretic	Weak but proud. Clutches to small victories with miserable need.

D100	NAME	2ND NAME	ROLE	CHARACTER
40	Kasciuto	i'Profunt	Historian	Sanguine. Faces a false prophecy with grand equanimity.
41	Katyu	i'Sacer	Holy Warrior (paladin)	Compulsively competitive. Always needs to win.
42	Klesana	i'Syan	Hunter	Hurt and withdrawn. Refuses to engage, but needs to face an urgent task.
43	Krasna	i'Verdenti	Ill Omen	Stressed. Torn by responsibilities, will snap soon.
44	Kujo	il'Arivat	Inquisitor	Languid. Naturally relaxed and unstressed.
45	Lateria	Malapensa	Inspector	Secretly Deep. Surprising insights hide behind simple words.
46	Leonti	Marmoresti	Investigator	Terribly repressed. Hides all personal desires behind a wall of politeness.
47	Leuterio	Mecanizio	Machine Human	Suspicious and accusing. Projects own fears and crimes onto others.
48	Leva	Mentat	Master Artisan	Tired and ready to snap. Hates everyone almost as much as themselves.
49	Lisak	Mercandili	Mechanic	Violent. Uses aggression to mask inner loneliness.
50	Liuti	Metropolitan	Mercenary	Lonely and shy. Terrified of opening up.
51	Loma	Moderni	Merchant	Scarred and angry. Confused about how to break the cycle of pain.
52	Maurizia	Nagori	Merchant Prince	Delusional. Refuses to accept that anything might be going wrong.
53	Mehaci	Nascosti	Messenger	Paranoid. Convinced the lings are out to get them.
54	Mirena	Nauta	Miner	Persecuted. Chased by vile creatures out of space and time.
55	Mirodar	Nebodari	Monster Hunter	Funny and alcoholic. In denial about own problems.
56	Nebesa	o'Sovobo	Musician	Blubbering and ineffectual. Secretly vicious and disgustingly cruel.
57	Noturna	od Cusciare	Necromancer	Cruel and callous. Only out for themselves.
58	Ombra	od Jiab	Noble	Manipulative and dangerous. Convinced they are a chosen leader.
59	Opoya	od Kaniona	Nomad	Passionate and loud. They are bringing a better a world.
60	Paprizio	od Kujina	Orphan	Vengeful. Consumed by hate after witnessing horrible crimes.
61	Piskero	od Mise	Painter	Curious. Driven to discover what soil their roots spring from.
62	Plania	od Notte	Patrol	Prone to intellectualizing. Refuse to engage with problems, instead they enumerate all the techniques that could be used as a solution.
63	Prima	od Petiz	Peddler	Humorous and devoted. There is no hope, but they laugh against the coming of the Great Tentacled Unity.
64	Rasclana	od Planye	Pilgrim	Snide and hypochondriac. Convinced they will die soon (but won't).
65	Rion	od Playe	Plaguebearer	Megalomaniacal. Full of grand schemes for the Tower of Ultimate Power.
66	Robais	od Poti	Possessed	Bumbling visionary. Clumsy, but capable of greatness.
67	Rocio	od Setroya	Priest	Merciful and capable. Seeks to help a worthy youth.
68	Rodina	od Sobe	Prophet (mad)	Nervous. Saw a mysterious creature. Twice.
69	Rosa	od Vina	Prophet (real)	Boring as a brick. Honest, good, and dull. Truly doing something good.
70	Rostolf	od Visocco	Raider	Sarcastic, fun, and a traitor.
71	Rumen	od Vode	Reaver	Friendly murderhobo. Has a map to a treasure buried under an orphanage.
72	Samorok	od Vulkan	Refugee	Aggressive and upbeat. Willing to downplay any risk.
73	Sangua	od Yedeni	Researcher	Cheery but sinister. Everything they say seems to have a dark side.
74	Sarca	Odlingi	Scavenger	Incredibly knowledgeable but inhumane. Fortunately, very passive.
75	Sciaca	Ossomangio	Scientist	Roguish and lovable. Also incredibly callous and greedy.
76	Scikapfo	per Ambulati	Scoundrel	Silly voice and walk, but skilled in battle. Carries a worthless secret.
77	Scura	per Nascieni	Scout	Jarring and gruff, says the wrong thing often. Loyal, and deeply wrong about a nearby faction.
78	Selesta	per Velizi	Sculptor	Committed to a local faction, unswerving in their devotion.
79	Sentena	po Viladrini	Shaman	Cold and logical, skilled in unarmed combat, driven by odd impulses.
80	Severa	Purpleo	Shepherd	Methodical and grim, scarred by a thousand battles, now loyal to a distant lord.
81	Sima	Raziunar	Slaver	Angry. So angry. Beaten down, seemingly accursed. Has a nemesis.
82	Sinon	ri Svelti	Soldier	Grinning and charming, can't seem to do wrong. Even though they do.
83	Siya	Rinasciti	Sorcerer	Sly and obsequious, rubs people the wrong way, but genuinely believes they are helping the world. They are wrong.

D100	NAME	2ND NAME	ROLE	CHARACTER
84	Sodoba	Rudeni	Spicer	Deranged and convinced they are an alien trapped in a mortal shell. Perhaps they are?
85	Sulmar	Rumeni	Spy	Hasty to judge. Bearer of a contagious curse.
86	Tamke	s'Emerald	Summoner	Stunningly charismatic, but oblivious to their effect on people. Followed by a cortege. Possibly very pliable?
87	Teredo	Semolingi	Thief	Drug addict and a secret heir to a fortune.
88	Tesana	Seruleo	Thrill Seeker	Young and unexperienced, but the focus of a grand prophecy.
89	Tori	Setvareni	Time Traveller	Thunderous and domineering. They were wronged once, never again.
90	Trista	Tergestini	Tinker	Incomprehensible and strange. Are they a hero from a far off land?
91	Urna	Terracotan	Ultra Voyager	Rebellious, callous, and harsh. Also, devoted to a good cause.
92	Vedya	the Blue	Undead Vessel	Taunting and jokey. Secretly a dark magician.
93	Velena	the Orange	Vile Spawn	Uncouth and loud. Very loud. Also, very caring and devoted, looking for a master, in fact. See, they had a master. A great master. Very hush hush.
94	Vera	the Purple	Vome Infiltrator	Ornery as a mule and about as wise. They are the key to a cult.
95	Vero	the Red	Warlock	Afraid of the dark and convinced the hills have eyes. They actually do.
96	Volek	the Yellow	Wine Vampire	Zany beyond belief. Also, completely wrong about the monsters.
97	Yako	Travini	Witch	Kleptomaniac. Also, cursed to degenerate into a vicious beast.
98	Yasna	Violo	Wizard	Querulous and nostalgic. They miss the old days and could be roused to help bring them back.
99	Yesen	Vites	Woodsman	Randy and devious in a friendly way. Offended the wrong people.
100	Yeza	za Zidovi	Zoologist	Jokey but sad inside. Cursed to never die by a distant machine deity.

For new NPCs you might need additional quick relationships. You can roll, or just mix it up to come up with some connection, deed, or relationship that binds the NPC to an existing hero or NPC. Heck, even for freshening up an existing NPC, this works wonders.

d8	Color	Kinship	Feelings	Rivalry	Deed	Motivation	Friendship
1	Rage	Grandparent	Aggression	Professional	Adultery	Fear	Childhood
2	Vigilance	Parent	Contempt	Amorous	Theft	Boredom	Schooling
3	Loathing	Uncle/Aunt	Remorse	Status	Deceit	Trust	Military
4	Grief	Cousin	Disapproval	Wealth	Murder	Distraction	Traveling
5	Amazement	Sibling	Awe	Parental	Betrayal	Anger	Hobby
6	Terror	Child	Submission	Sibling	Seduction	Interest	Work
7	Admiration	Nephew/Niece	Love	Friendly	Captivity	Serenity	Tribulation
8	Joy	Grandchild	Optimism	Unholy	Torture	Annoyance	Fate

## Death in the Rainbowlands

Throughout the voyage you will have noticed that the totality of the sentient individual in the Rainbowlands is divided into a trinity of **soul** (ka), **personality** (ba), and **body** (ha). For the curious, this is largely lifted from a simplistic and lazy reading of the Ancient Egyptian conceptions of the person, as in the *Coffin Texts* and the *Book of the Dead*.

Those with experience in the most common role-playing game(s) and its versions will realize that this presents problems for the dead, the undead, and the resurrected. In game terms, soul maps to Wisdom, personality maps to Charisma, and body maps to Constitution. In metaphysical UVG terms, the soul provides the motive fire of consciousness, the personality provides the unique direction of consciousness, and the body provides the vehicle of consciousness.

A hero killed by an ordinary weapon, who runs out of hit points or Constitution, is the classic corpse. A hero killed by a curse or who dies after completing their teleological purpose, running out of Wisdom, leaves behind a perfect corpse, which can more easily be reanimated into a flesh-golem servitor (sometimes called a zombie, but actually a soulless automaton). A hero killed through magic that destroys their personality is the most interesting, after running out of Charisma, their soul-body dyad is still physically alive, but completely plastic and malleable—they are closest to the classical Haitian vodun concept of a zombie—animals of human intelligence, absolutely loyal to their master or creator.

So far so simple. But what happens when a player wants their hero to come back from the dead? This is harder, because without specific (and, in the eyes of most Rainbowlanders, deeply immoral) rituals, such as *Stoyevod's Irreducible Crystallisation of the Ego Complex*, the personality (ba) tends to dissipate after the death back into the cosmic consciousness, becoming part of the infinite tapestry of creation and returning like the messenger swallow back to the All-mind. Like for like, the soul dissipates back into the All-fire of creation-preservation-destruction, and the body dissipates back into the All-green cycle of life-death-rebirth.

## BRINGING BACK YOUR DEAD

Spells such as *Animate Dead*, *Raise Dead*, or *Resurrection*—also known by the more poetic name, *Supplication to the Rotting God to Turn Back the Wheel of Love and Death*, all carry additional permanent costs depending on the time that has passed since the body-personality-soul trinity has dissipated (died) and returned to the world.

### Weak spells, such as *Animate Dead*

Within 1 minute of death: the revived permanently loses 1d6 points of Charisma.

1 hour of death: the revived loses 1d6 points of Intelligence and 2d6 points of Charisma.

1 day of death: loses 2d6 points of Intelligence and 4d6 points of Charisma.

1 week of death: loses 3d6 points of Intelligence and 4d12 points of Charisma.

### Powerful spells, such as *Raise Dead*

Within 1 hour of death: the revived permanently loses 1d6 points of Charisma.

1 day of death: loses 1d4 points of Intelligence and 1d12 points of Charisma.

1 week of death: loses 2d4 points of Intelligence and 2d12 points of Charisma.

1 month of death: loses 1d6 points of Constitution, 2d6 points of Intelligence, and 3d12 points of Charisma.

### Terrifying unholy spells, such as *Resurrection*

Within 1 day of death: the revived permanently loses 1 point of Charisma and bears the mark of the Rotting God.

Within 1 week: the revived permanently loses 1d6 points of Charisma and bears the mark.

Within 1 month: the revived permanently loses 1d6 points of Constitution, 2d6 points of Charisma, and bears two marks of the Rotting God.

Within 1 year: the revived loses 2d6 points of Strength, Constitution, and Charisma, and bears three marks of the Rotting God.

Within 1 decade: the revived loses 2d10 points of Strength, Constitution, and Charisma, and bears five marks of the Rotting God.

### The Seven Marks of the Rotting God

1. Milk turns sour at the marked one's touch.
2. Dogs and cats are repulsed.
3. Plants slowly wither and are blighted.
4. Maggots grow in their footsteps and skin.
5. Pestilence follows their breath.
6. Their eyes are white, but still can see, and their touch is accursed.
7. Inanimate objects age and decay in their presence.



## Strange Items & Minor Treasures

A list of strange items that might be found on a defeated corpse-vome or a sleeping traveler [treasures in brackets]. Give one or both, as you prefer.

1. Fossil skull inscribed with the Blue God's accursed iconographs [Mirrored cowries, 5 cash].
2. Moss-covered elven flute made from a human tibia [Moon coins, 5 cash].
3. Clockwork brain worm that adjusts personalities and change minds [Ivory chips, 5 cash].
4. Carving stone, very hard, perfect for writing Deep Dwarven poetry [Corundum dust, 10 cash].
5. Black mirror, mysterious [Trading sticks, 1 cash].
6. Tar candle, burns green [Clay seals, 5 cash].
7. Water-finding walking stick, woodlander [Copper wire, 3 cash].
8. Memetic mask, steals faces [Vampire ash pellet, 7 cash].
9. Horn of a great ram, filled with maggots [Bone coin, 5 cash].
10. Porcelain eye full of poems [Lapis plug, 5 cash].
11. Spirit rope woven from rare herbal fibres [Silver wire, 10 cash].
12. Chroma flashlight, recharges in the sun [Pickled kumkwats, 10 cash].
13. Ruby scalpel, sharp as a harpy's tongue [Saffron sachet, 10 cash].
14. Clockwork Redland District pigeon with recording eyes [Sanguine porcelain stick, 10 cash].
15. Synthetic skin backpack [Coral seed chip, 20 cash].
16. Fine chitin-woven boots [Lead coins, 1 cash].
17. Pen with hypodermic injector [Crystal coin, 10 cash].
18. Ceramic wristwatch with silver band [Yellowlander scrip, 10 cash].
19. Half-there Islands fishing rod, collapsible [Malachite cogs, 13 cash].
20. Samovar and powerful cat coffee [Fastfoot teeth, 7 cash].
21. Light-focusing crystal assembly, also good for starting fires [Crystal rat skull, 15 cash].
22. Chitin chest filled with scalpels and bone saws [Silver shovel coins, 15 cash].
23. UV Cream+, also protects against radiation [Silver finger bones, 15 cash].
24. Rubber-and-silk suit with breathing mask, marked with the White City icon [Jaspis ring, 15 cash].
25. Spidersilk rope with spider eggs [Jade discs, 30 cash].
26. Surprisingly large and beautifully decorated steppelander hat [Unlucky dice, 1 cash].
27. Greenlander tin of moustache wax, Petrolflower brand [Silvered marbles, 11 cash].
28. Unrusting odd-iron rod (1d6 damage), marked with intricate patterns [Blue stone coins, 15 cash].
29. Resilient poncho decorated with the teeth of mutated beasts [Bronze bracelets, 15 cash].
30. Taxidermied cat with pearl eyes and gold claws [Emerald city plastic scrip, 19 cash].
31. Combat vome brain in a lead-lined plaz box [Yellow bone coins, 20 cash].
32. Suspension cube powder in a static jar [Violet City coins, 20 cash].
33. Black iron and gold telescope with crystal lenses [Iron coins, 20 cash].
34. Half a black moon key that opens the entrance to a deadly portal [Gold ring, 40 cash].
35. Half a white sun key that opens the exit from a deadly portal [Strange tooth, 1 cash].
36. Holy grammar book of the Cog Flower [Bronze grappling hook, 20 cash].
37. Mirrored Redland District sunglasses [Platinum coin, 20 cash].
38. Case of Redland wines, fine condition, good year [Jade egg, 28 cash].
39. Orangeland metal-string guitar [Pit coins, 12 cash].
40. Pouch decorated with dogs and flowers, inside Dog's tail chew root [Lapis lazuli bracelets, 20 cash].
41. Bottle of Marmotfolk snake oil, actually works [Brass pipettes, 25 cash].
42. Diesel Dwarven solar starter battery [Golden needles, 25 cash].
43. Mechanic's chest with manual on the maintenance of walkers [Malachite spoons, 25 cash].
44. Set of keys to an autowagon, a shopping list, and an obscure reference to a car gnome cult [Silver earrings, 25 cash].
45. Deed to a pair of slaves named Smart and Smarter [Silver pennies, 17 cash].
46. Ancient briefcase filled with yellowing notes on a self-assembling walker [Ivory scales, 33 cash].
47. Gun of strange design (2d8), covered in a non-repeating pattern [Sanguine porcelain beads, 30 cash].
48. Bone quiver with ten ivory arrows covered in quarterling poisons [Platinum lockpick, 30 cash].
49. Violet city lapis-and-bronze cat claw gauntlet (1d4) [Ivory rings, 30 cash].
50. Yellowlander gentleman's helmet, with disembodied head still inside. In the mouth, a misread map to a buried treasure [Silver chain, 35 cash].
51. Assisted mechanical crampons and leather shorts [Gold wire, 35 cash].
52. Mechanical wind-up accordion from Long Ago [Silver darts, 35 cash].
53. Iridescent scale tent covered in onions and skulls [Platinum nails, 35 cash].
54. Vile psionic soul-stripping crystal, currently empty [Mummy ash pellet, 39 cash].
55. Bush doctor manual with living plants growing in its leaves [Tooth coins, 31 cash].
56. Autonom tube kit, all that's needed to create a synthetic organism—only missing a brain [Glass brain bits, 35 cash].

57. Meta-classical porcelain and synthetic sinew neural whip (1d8) [Stuck force amulet, 35 cash].
58. Furry synthetic skin saddlebags stuffed with ammunition [Ur obsidian test tubes, 70 cash].
59. Emerald city chain sword (1d10), Memorial brand [Empty batteries, 1 cash].
60. Dancing golden hamster in a silver cage, the golden hamster is very intelligent and knows of a secret deep road between two locations [Rare lard, 35 cash].
61. Polished carbon and electrum bardstone loaded with 256 songs of the ancients [Bronze scalpels, 40 cash].
62. Spidersilk sack of cat food in tins, Iron Kitty brand [Silver shot glasses, 40 cash].
63. Chitin bustierre with two secret stashes and a treacherous love letter [Tourmaline spheres, 47 cash].
64. Sky tree cloud-sucker net, removes a bottle of water from normal air per day [Ling jerky, 33 cash].
65. Golem fire-projector eye (2d6) [Steel thread, 40 cash].
66. Spectrum satrap crystal spear with a stored fireball spell [Silver manacles, 40 cash].
67. Ur-glass brain of a Long Ago thief who stole abmortality from a Vile monarch, still knows it [Gold neck rings, 40 cash].
68. Itinerant Inquisitor battle robes stained with thermophobic blood [Heretic ash pellets, 80 cash].
69. Rainbow ceramic hammer (1d10) of an avatar of Jesus Thor, the price tag has been hastily removed [Dried sheep pellets, 1 cash].
70. Mouse biosculpted with two bat wings and a marsupial pouch [Titanium lock, 40 cash].
71. Prosthetic biomechanical arm with sword-fighting wrist augmentation [Bolt of rainbow silks, 500 cash].
72. Black barrel of yellowing arcane yoghurt [Wreath of malleable livingstone, 200 cash].
73. Chitin shield with biomechanical snakes woven into the boss [Scroll cases filled with arcane weather poetry, 100 cash].
74. Cyan lightmetal helmet with haze purifiers [Off-brand saffron briquettes, 150 cash].
75. Decapolitan guide to intrigue and war for beginners [Fancy chicken, 250 cash].
76. Ur-obsidian bottle of ancient fire water [Crystal and gold hypodermics, 300 cash].
77. Lonely fetish servant made of giant centipede limbs, luminescent wood, and quarterling bones [Supply of fleix whizz, 350 cash].
78. Bio-necromantic preserver parasite, keeps freshly dead bodies 'alive' [Last steel nodule, 400 cash].
79. Lingish personality rewiring headphones [Vidy crystal with tales of a heroic age, 450 cash].
80. Sand dragon bone golem dog, loyal and tough [Rainbow joy worm, 550 cash].
81. Prohibited radiation gun from Long Long Ago (3d8) [Bi-mannerist porcelain vase set, 600 cash].
82. Ceramic energy containment capsule, in a pinch: a grenade [Silver and gold caltrops, 650 cash].
83. Idio-brutalist Ka-Ba maintenance body, can preserve one soul-personality for centuries [Black light lotus pills, 700 cash].
84. Animated bone-work snake that can be programmed to follow up to five simple commands at a time [Blue Heresy poem cylinders, 750 cash].
85. Amber levitating disc of force and force control glove [Twin set of Ultra jay needles, 800 cash].
86. Badass bandana, decorated with a map to a cursed treasure [Corundum drill bits, 850 cash].
87. Animated metaskelton fungus horse [Distilled personality juice, 900 cash].
88. Mind-burner hypnogun [Karma dust plates, 950 cash].
89. Lumin shrubbery in a pot [Soul stone, 1000 cash].
90. Old-fashioned and uncharismatic machine human butler [Bone coins of passage, 1500 cash].
91. Set of six rainbow grenades and a contract to end an ultra hideout [Azure energy charge coins, 2000 cash].
92. Ancient vile supersoldier serum, mostly works [Deep purple energy cubes, 2500 cash].
93. Lingish disintegrator ray wrapped in the will and testament of an autofac architect [Weed of worship, 3000 cash].
94. Golem servant and vidy player, loaded with a plaz steel vidy of machine rituals for opening the corners of the world [Pre-chromatic canon crown, 4500 cash].
95. Kangaroo bag with a soulfire golem battery [Collectible set of vech activation cards, 5000 cash].
96. Vome assimilator suit kit with command parasite [Rider years skin figurines, 6000 cash].
97. Ultra communicator and soul translator, holds the final destination of the zombie democracy [Mythogogic diamond necklace, 7000 cash].
98. Rainbow-feathered swift two-legged riding vech, carries four sacks [Purger trophy, 8000 cash].
99. Rare weapon from when the Fast Stars shone, cursed by its last owner [Starbloom souvenir, 9000 cash].
100. True prophecy in the memories of a grey ooze held in a stasis jar [A first seed, 10,000 cash].

#### AND SOME COMMON ITEMS ON THE CORPSE (D8)

1. Sack of supplies and roll again.
2. Good walking shoes.
3. All-weather poncho.
4. Sturdy hat.
5. Sunglasses.
6. A weapon.
7. A map or a letter to a loved one.
8. Some ammunition.

## Glossary of the UV Grasslands

*What have I missed? What needs more details?*

### A

**Abmortal:** a sentience (sometimes human) that does not die of natural causes. Polybodies, like the porcelain princes, and ultras, are among the more common abmortals. Most mortals hate them. A lot.

**Aerolith:** stuck-force infused rock generated from the air itself, usually the after-effect of catastrophic transmutation or portal failures. The rock is actively aerostatic, functionally weightless and levitating at a set distance from the ground once moved there. It does remain massive, however, so a long lever is often required.

**Animancy:** soul or spirit magic. Magic using and modifying the animating spark of life, from golems to ba-zombies. Most humans regard animancy as a disgusting horror and abomination, for the simple reason that it re-processes and modifies the heart of what it is to be human. The elves are famed for having no such compunctions. Modern golems are powered by far weaker sources than pure soul juice.

**Art Florist:** a wizardry discipline, akin to biomancy but focused on plants. Some primitive peoples might call them druids or bush doctors, but the wizards themselves know better.

**Autofac:** an artificial organism, sometimes of great size, that generates other organisms on its own. Often associated with vomes today, and associated with the downfall of the original folk.

**Autonom:** an autonomous, synthetic organism, usually semi-sentient and capable of following simple commands. Something like a zombie or skeleton, but built from the ground up with biomantic precision. Simpler variants use exoskeletons or suits to support, and the autonom is a mere collection of muscular tubes connected to a general-purpose crystal brain.

**Autowagon:** a golem wagon that can move under its own power. Tough, hardy, often covered in custom spikes, armor, defensive embrasures, firing platforms and other accoutrements, autowagons are among the most impressive (and slow, though relentless) forms of transport in the UVG. An autowagon can follow simple instructions and navigate across terrain on its own, if required. Much like a mule. May also be as mulish.

### B

**Ba:** see Personality.

**Bardstone:** a stone imbued with musics and songs of a Long Ago age. Some say that in a great cataclysm a grumpy deity turned all the bards to stone, so that she could get some sleep. Obviously, this is nonsense, but bardstones are quite valuable, and can store voice recording, messages, and even songs. Oddly, they seem to be attuned to their fixed locations, and moving a bardstone destroys its magic. Perhaps it has something to do with the star lines? Who knows.

**Ba-zombie:** a reanimated creature, actually closest to a flesh golem, created from an intact soul-stripped body-personality. Using an artificial soul, or souls, it can be maintained indefinitely, and it is how many of those ageless wizards, called liches by some simpler minds, are crafted. A soul mill is the usual way of creating the suitable body-personality.

**Bone-work:** an obscure hybrid discipline of necromancy and petromancy, using the personality memories of bones, combined with livingstone spirits to grow, reshape and animate bones into new and useful forms. Some intellectuals view it as a lazy dead-end in petromancy.

**Biomancy:** the wizardry art of sculpting flesh and bone and sinew to create living works. The burdenbeast is perhaps the most well-know example of the art.

**Biomechanicum:** a hybrid wizarding art that involves the melding of mechanics and flesh. Vomes are an example of advanced biomechanics, but common implanted prosthetics are readily available, from the chop-chop fixer (100 cash for a cold, grey hand) to the porcelain sculptors (2,000 cash for color-shifting chameleon glass dermal implants, popular with *artistes* and *burgleurs*).

**Blue Land of the Dead God:** a flooded, festering swamp inhabited by diseased degenerates and haunted by the bleeding rotten ghosts of the Blasted Field. Cults regularly try to reawaken the Dead God, but generally fail. In the Blue Lands fermented dairy products and north walls should be avoided.

**Body:** the material aspect of the human triad of body-personality-soul.

**C**

**Catlord:** sentient cats, beloved of the Violet Goddess and by her divine providence, rulers of the Violet City and the Purple Land of the Cat. They use pheromones and parasites to control their blissful, happy subjects. Too lazy to bother with most day-to-day activities, they are happy to let the wizards and administrators of the Violet City pretend they are in charge.

**Chitin caps:** an engineered fungus that, when farmed and grown on frames, produces usable quantities of chitin. Sturdy and light, it was popular as a roofing material and in many industrial and manufacturing applications. In the third and fourth corporate dynasties, even articles of clothing, such as hats, bustierres and shoes were often grown with chitin frames. Not to mention the armors.

**Circle Sea:** the great round sea at the heart of the Rainbowlands, swirling in the endless current around the Needle of the World.

**Communal Body:** a monstrous, amoeboid creature created to carry the soul-personalities of multiple individuals beyond the boundaries of a single body. Some sages call them biological virtual-life machines, most call them horrors. It is debatable whether the soul-personalities kept within are actually still viable or not.

**Cyan Sea:** a half-legendary inland sea far south, beyond the Wine Dark Mountains, that is said to be entirely clothed in a lethal cyan mist, which ebbs and falls with the tides and makes the entire great Plain of Haze an impoverished and deadly land, inimic to great civilizations like those of the Circle Sea.

**D**

**Decapolis, the:** nine to thirteen viciously independent, smallish city states controlling most of the Circle Sea coast from the Metropolis to the Orange Lands. Famed for their trading prowess, their industrious, their venality, their oligarch's fetishistic fascination with magic of all sorts, and their utter ineptitude at setting up anything to compare with the Purple University.

**Demon:** a confused term for various bodiless sentiences.

**Dryland coral:** a living rock, one of the ancient biomantic and petromantic arts. Master growers can sculpt it and shape it into evocative, post-modernist forms that emphasize the interdependence of man and nature. There are side effects, as ill-grown DC may leech nutrients and life from nearby areas, creating localized deserts. Cancerous DC may even begin spreading runners that grow into burgeoning house-clusters. There are rumours of a great living-ghost city in the heart of the Twilight Desert which has grown to occupy an area larger than the

Freehold of a Corporate Duke. A civil biomancer and crew can sculpt a dryland coral home in 2 years for 10,000 cash per year.

**Dwarf:** a backronym from "De Werker Aristocratiscece Revolutie Fraternitie", dwarfs are a distinct culture-class of selectively biomanced people. They have effectively fought the traditional aristoi of the Red and Orange lands to a standstill and now form a major industrialist subsection of the Rainbow Lands. The dwarfs are famously bureaucratic and collectivist, but also famously the only faction staunchly opposing the bureaucratic and individualist Emerald City Cog Flower Corporation (actually a coin church).

**E**

**Elf, also called Vila or Vile:** scary, mythical, time-dilating, shape-shifting humanoid monsters said to live in the far north, beyond the Mountains of the Moon, where the tangled sky trees snag clouds from the sky and a shadow lurks over every soul.

**Emerald City, also Metropolis:** chief city of the Green Land, and largest city of the Rainbowlands. Governed by the banker priests of the Green God, devoted to greed and the untrammled growth of the vital forces of the individual and the society. Major forces include the Paladins of the Cog Flower, the Revenue-service Accountant-monks, and of course the Green Inquisition, which is crucial to maintaining public support for the fear-and-pain backed cash currency of this great industrial ecological meta-topia.

**F**

**Fac:** organic machines, usually very large, created in a forgotten age, perhaps by combining wizards and autonomous vehicles in an unholy union. Sages speculate they were designed to produce useful commodities. Now they are almost all lethal menaces, leaking toxic fumes and liquids, ravaging the land, and producing odd, dangerous and mostly useless artifacts or oozes.

**Fetish:** a bundle of matter imbued with a spirit or demon drawn by a wizard's sacrifice. Most wizards know how to create a basic fetish that serves them in exchange for their own life energy. Binding a spirit in exchange for a sacrificial victim, or an ongoing sacrifice of spirits and fowl, is a much harder task.

**Full-body Prosthetic:** often immobile, this is essentially a bio-necromantic device that keeps a soul-personality dyad locked in the material world even as the body is reabsorbed into the cycle of life.

**Full-body Rebuild:** what degenerate savages would call a spell that raises the dead, in fact, it is not far removed.

This involved scientific procedure requires necromantic, biomantic, and psychomantic expertise. Ideally, it requires the head of the creature to be rebuilt, for that is where the seat of the personality is. A soul-stone is also required, to rebind the soul from the animasphere into the flesh. A body-knitter needs to rebuild the body around the head and the new soul-stone. Finally, a necromancer has to tease soul, personality and body together into the rebuilt form. The rebuilt body is essentially a flesh golem, reanimated by the original soul and motivated by the original personality. It generally costs around 5,000 cash and takes at least a week.

## G

**Golem:** a soulless automaton powered directly from the source of creation. Golemancers are now a rare and exotic breed, but very prized, for even a few industrious golems may uplift a tribe into a civilized city, or turn a small city-state into a powerful empire. Poorly built, damaged, or jury-rigged golems can be very dangerous and have been known to explode catastrophically, such as in the Salt Reassembly Incident of the 7th year of the Era of Saffron Ascendant.

**Golden Desert:** a desert of rock and sand and stone dragons stretching towards the sunrise beyond the Yellow Lands.

**Grand Companies:** the hereditary trading aristocracies of the Green and Yellow Lands, ideologically and practically opposed to the Hexads. Through selective eugenic practices over many centuries they have achieved longer life spans, more acute numerical abilities, and far more sophisticate debaucheries than most baseline humans could manage. Particularly in the case of the Emerald Engineering Kompany and the Avocado Promotion Executive the rumors of half-elven admixture may well be true.

**Great Folk:** a human collective that grew out of a behemoth maintenance caste long long ago. Their stories are a bit garbled, but apparently, when the Gods of the Great Beasts died / disappeared / ascended into the higher world, the Great Folk took their places. Their places slowly crumbled, and the beasts died without the Gods' motive spirits. But the Great Folk survived, and within the narrow confines of their gargantuan corpse worlds, even thrived, becoming some of the best bone-sculptors and sinew-stitchers in the Steppe.

**Great Forgetting, The:** a common term for the lack of records and the decline that is supposed to have happened in the Long Long Ago. Some heterodox scholars and mystics suggest that no Great Forgetting happened, but rather an Ascendancy into Divinity, or something of that sort, and that all the humans currently living in the

Rainbowlands only acquired sentience after those prior beings, perhaps the Lings, departed the world.

**Gun:** any combat wand that doesn't require wizardly skill to operate. Some even use actual gunpowder magic.

**Gunpowder Magic:** a magickal school combining Alchemy, Fire and Earth elementalism, and aspects of the Prog Force sub-genres.

## H

**Half-elf:** elf-touched humans, a medical condition that is resistant to most interventions. Inquisitor Scirocco II has classified it as a progressive neuro-moral degenerative disorder, though it does have the unfortunate side-effect of prolonging lifespans. Many half-elves eventually succumb to the elven infection and disappear into the great Wall of Wood, lycanthropic half-beasts rather than proper civilized humans.

**Haze, Purple:** an occlusion of the sky that rises from the eastern horizon as one enters the Ultraviolet Grasslands. The occlusion blocks visible length and infrared radiation, leaving the land in darkness. It appears that the Haze is an atmospheric phenomenon that thickens or otherwise changes the further West one travels, delaying further and further the appearance of the sun. By the time one reaches the central Grasslands, the sun only appears from behind this occlusive layer at noon, and the Black City only experiences a short few hours of late afternoon light (perhaps hence its name?).

**Hexads and Self-help Associations:** a combination of clan association, socialized healthcare-and-pension fund, thieves' guild, private education system, insurance and protection provider, and para-state actor, the hexads are an important factor binding together the six *de jure* Rainbow Lands. I suppose if there were only three colors, somebody might call them Triads, instead.

**Human:** most of the Circle Sea power groups consider all close-to-baseline sentient and soulful post-humans as effectively human and possessing the full spectrum of rights attendant to a soul-body-personality triad. This includes the retro-humans, dwarfs, half-elves, half-lings, quarter-lings, and half-orcs.

## K

**Ka:** see Soul.

**Ka-Ba Maintenance Body:** a physical body substitute, that can knit both spirit and soul to the world, even beyond death. Most KBM Bodies are immobile crystal or ceramic structures housing incredibly complex organic metal magitech structures, but some are also mounted in golems, giving a life beyond the flesh. Attitudes to KBM



technology are generally ambivalent: why live in a hollow shell that can not experience the pleasures of life, after all? A basic body costs around 10,000 cash.

**Ka-elemental or Soul Elemental:** a spurting, flaming, ball-lightning paradox of life-force unmoored from both body and personality, yet trapped in the essential world. Sages are uncertain what kind of tragedy or nightmare machination rips the souls apart from the beings they animate, yet also blocks them from the Recycling Infinity of Nothingness. Some speculate that the legendary Soul Mills of the Vile Ones may be involved. Whatever the cause, all aspects of earthly intelligence and individuality are lost to any soul remaining within the earth's hardy pull within days, if not hours. Ka-elementals are very dangerous and may have unexpected effects on biological and personality baselines (roll d6): (1) organic regression to a more primitive form, (2) personality devolves to simpler, more primal structure, (3) organic shift to parallel evolutionary path, (4) random personality change, (5) rapid organic evolution into more advanced form, (6) uplift as biological suddenly interfaces with the essence of the RIN (+1d4 Wisdom).

**Ka-zombie:** the classic living zombie. It is not undead, merely a body-soul stripped of personality and ready for use by the animancer. Creating a Ka-zombie has nothing to do with necromancy, and the subsequent creature, though no longer animated by the wit of personality, nevertheless looks and functions as a human, albeit with zero drive, personality or ability to resist its master.

## L

**Ling:** a mysterious, missing sentient subtype, attested to in Long Long Ago records, epic poems such as *The Epic Journey of the Great Wand E. Ling*, and the bloodlines of the current Half-Lings and Quarter-Lings. According to the Myths of the Half-broken Age, the Lings mastered dream travel and ended the Vile Age.

**Livingstone:** inorganic material, usually rock of one form or another, animated with the spirit of life to reform and reorganize into new structure. A core discipline of petromancy, it is superficially similar to dryland coral biomancy, but actually very distinct, as it uses a very different, usually silicon-based, process to create its 'living' constructs.

**Long Ago:** the half-remembered times before the Rainbow Order was founded around the Circle Sea. Studies of the Long Ago are half-heartedly forbidden by the Inquisition and avidly pursued by the District and other fringe groups.

**Long Long Ago:** the eras and times lost beyond the records in the Great Mist. Fragments, shells and hazy memories remain, but even they have a tendency to fade and melt

from mind and time, like sands in the storms whipping off the Golden Desert.

**Lumin tree:** one of the wonders of biomancy, bioluminescent trees. Originally used in grand avenues, now restricted to the private parks of grand despots and the re-education centres of the Cogflower Inquisitors.

## M

**Machine Humans:** legendary sapient beings who managed to combine Personality and Soul with bodies built from the dust of the earth. There is much discussion among sages as to whether they were even possible, with the Bloodsages particularly opposed to the possibility of bloodless humans.

**Metaskeleton:** a vascular fungoid colony organism that creates artificial skeletons of wood or stone for its own mobility. It is unclear what weird wizardly error resulted in a fungus that generates endoskeletons instead of exoskeletons, but there you have it. The artificial bones are surprisingly light and delicate, while the fungus itself is entirely a scavenger, leeching decaying plant and animal matter of nutrients. While creepy, metaskeletons are generally harmless and sometimes very beautiful in a *memento mori* way.

**Metropolis:** see Emerald City.

**Mind-burn:** common side effect of vomish biomancy. Sages speculate that the vomish neural redesigns are incredibly flawed and buggy, because the vomish command algorithms have trouble comprehending real-world behaviors and goals. Mind-burned creatures usually have their original neural behavioral patterns replaced with alien patterns that mesh poorly with their original encoding. Examples previously seen have included rabbits who behaved like pressure cookers, one tuberous vegetable that tried to function as an alert siren, and several wire-crusting nomads performing an odd pelican mating dance. No overarching order has yet been found.

**Mist, The (also The Great Mist):** a phenomenon of the Very Early Long Ago, of dubious veracity. Some scholars suggest that the Mist is a metaphorical device for the Great Forgetting, while others maintain that it was a very physical event, similar to the mists of the Cyan Sea beyond the Wine Dark Mountains.

**Moon, Mountains of the:** an impassable, vicious range, rising almost to the heavens, it cuts off the Rainbow Lands from the north. Home to eerie structures and odd, half-humans who preach of elfin queens and weird dreams.

## N

**Necroambulism:** related to necromancy, the technical discipline of turning dead tissue into an animate workforce for simple, repetitive tasks. A skilled necroambulist can create a Z or S-class laborer for 1d6 x 50 cash.

**Needle of the World:** a very thin and very, very high mountain rising sheer from the heart of the Circle Sea, surrounded by storms and ignorance. These days most Rainbowlanders avoid talking about it and suggest it is a most boring subject.

**Nomads, Lime:** nomads, reavers, goatherds, conquerors, shepherds, thieves, proud warriors, foul drunkards. Project all your nomad biases on them, add a bit of ice, a lot of citrus and some fire water. Enjoy a refreshing and totally novel RPG nomad. Or not.

## O

**Oneiromancer:** a reader and traveler of dreams. The ultras are known to be terrifying oneiromancers.

**Orcs:** obviously, the orcs were a long-ago attempt at creating a combat-adapted para-human. They were all successfully eradicated following the Decree of the Seven Lands, slightly before the Swamping of the Blues. In fact, many were 'eradicated' by the efforts of the Bureaucratic Legion, which reclassified large numbers of orcs simply as half-orcs, a permitted soul-body-personality triad under the regulations of the then omnipotent Power Group 13.

## P

**Personality (also Ba):** the creative threads of possibility woven into the tapestry of a human. The changeling essence that weaves together a unique individual over time, fired by the spark of Soul, and unified in the world through the medium of Body. Some cultures believe Personalities have afterlives, while others believe their threads wind, unwind, and wind again over time. A few rare sages argue that Personalities are unique occurrences that fade away after motivating a single body, but necromancers and vivimancers put the lie to this notion. Also called a ba.

*In game terms, Ba or Personality is associated with Int and Cha.*

**Petromancy:** the art of using animating spirits to reshape and reform inorganic materials, creating wondrous and useful artifacts.

**Polybody:** a personality-spirit distributed across several bodies linked by real-time glandular psyche-to-psyche links. They are not more intelligent than ordinary mortals, but the additional bodies make them more resilient to damage, and by adding new bodies periodically, they ensure a mental continuity across long durations.

**Porcelain Princes:** an immortality seeking faction unified by its cartel monopoly on the most common polybody magical techniques. They are centred around the Porcelain Citadel and are easily recognized by the porcelain masks they use to conceal any variation in their polybody constituent drones, hence their name. Widely regarded as decadent and weak, the Criticist Theoreticians of the New Orangery School argue that they are actually a strong influence on the Bureaucrat-corporativists of the Emerald City Incorporation. Their own name for themselves, if they even have one, is not common knowledge.

**Prismatic Walker:** a large, ambulatory bio-machine built around a golem made of light. The radiant, life-giving energies of the golem suffuse the crystal bones of the walker, giving it a grace and power beyond that of the more rugged Dwarven diesel walkers.

## Q

**Quarter-Ling (or Quarterlings):** several remote and moderately rare human phenotypes, which retain certain Lingsh characteristics (like exceptional hand-eye coordination and fur coverage of certain body parts), but are mostly baseline for all intents and purposes. Many subscribe to neo-lingish origin myths and cling to various cultural traits as though these were the original Long Ago Lingsh originals.

## R

**Radiation Ghost:** accreted remnants of personalities fried into the very fabric of space and smeared across the vastness of time. The sentiences of modern days can barely comprehend the magics and powers that were responsible, but they must have been grand. Radiation ghosts glow with blue light and though usually not hostile, their very presence brings sickness, decay, and rot—as is the lot of all that is associated with the Blue God.

**Rainbowlander:** a human inhabitant of the five united lands around the Circle Sea, the Violet, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red. The Bluelanders are considered degenerate and somewhat subhuman due to the Blue God incident several centuries ago. Physically, the Rainbowlander humans span the gamut from about 3'6" to 6'6", from pointy ears to beards, from tusks to fangs, and some speciesist or racist fools would suggest that they are actually all variants of half-elves, half-orcs, half-halflings and half-dwarves. That would be foolish, and also potentially life-threatening under the Unity Promulgates of the Rainbow Inquisition.

**Rat Rod of Immor[t]ality:** an artifact referenced in the *Seven Epics of the Silky Sultan* as able to command rodents. Other sources say it gives the power of speech to rats. Yet others, that it makes a rodent immortal. Yet a fourth that

it offers protection from rodents. A fifth that it can turn the tails of rodents into a panacea. A sixth that provides protection from pestilence and plague.

Recycling Infinity of Nothingness (RIN): the eternal soul-chaos beyond the universe that is the eater and reviver of the forces of the many worlds, hidden both beyond and between the material elements.

Red Land District, RLD: radical anarchist socialist city-state on the shores of the Red Land, which became nominally independent after a bloody popular uprising against the Vintner Lords. Though recognized as independent and at peace for decades, its glazed brick heat ray colossi continue to burn every creature that tries to reach it by land. It has developed into a hub of piracy, free enterprise, biomechanics and hexad ingenuity - making it an unusual ally of the Emerald City.

## S

Soul (also Ka): the engine of life, a contradictory essence of the world that activates the Body and makes place for the Personality to guide the activity of that thing that is called a living human. Also called the ka.

*In game terms Ka or Soul is associated with Wis.*

Soulfire (also Soulburn): the energy of a soul, distilled and burned to activate an otherwise inanimate object or golem. It can be obtained by slow and precarious rituals from sunlight, plants, small vermin, and other simple organisms. Or, much more swiftly, through a proper vicious sacrifice. Or, alternatively, in pearlescent form from a Soul Mill. But soul mills are very, very evil things that should be avoided.

Soul Mill: a nightmare machine from the Long Long Ago, often thought to be an elven or vile creation, that can take the actual souls of living humans (and sometimes other soul-bearing forms), and render them into visceral energy. Most shamans of the later Rainbowlands consider this an utter abomination that brings closer the Final Entropy or the Descent into Grey. Still, the power harvested is immense. It is speculated that the Mist that obscures the Long Long Ago is the result of the overuse of industrial level soul milling.

*In game terms, any hero or creature processed through a soul mill is gone forever, their very deeds and memories doomed to leech away into oblivion.*

Source: a generic term for the creative essence of the world, sometimes called the world soul, that certain plants and creatures use to exceed the parameters of their physical existence. Or do magic.

Spectrum Satraps: a mysterious para-human cult or clan living far to the west, fond of bright-colored suits that cover their whole bodies, and glass helmets. They travel in

great prismatic walkers and are fond of illusions and radiant magics.

Stuck-Force: the detritus of Long Long Ago magics or technologies or curses, these shears in space-time create odd planes, lines, points and solids of solidified force. Over time they become visible with accumulated dirt and dust, some very large ones even appear as floating islands. Even today, a critically failed *Floating Disc* spell might result in a small stuck-force plane, forever more disrupting the reality of wherever it was cast.

## T

Thornstone: a fast-growing dryland coral variant, popular for building fences or enclosures for traveling parties. A single skilled grower can coax a twenty meters of thorny fence in a single day. The fence is relatively brittle, but the thorns are vicious as daggers (1d4 damage). With additional days, a grower can extend the thorns into longer blades, hooks, snares and more.

## U

Ultra: ghosts or body-hopping spirits that rewrite the spiritual vital essence of their hosts to suit their needs. They are biomancers par excellence, but their ultimate goals are unclear. All major religions and trading organisations treat them as a hostile menace. Some call them demons, but this is inaccurate.

Unchosen: a mythical group of the Viles (or Chosen Ones) who forsook the world-altering powers of the Chosen to live instead as wandering immortals. Some ascribe wisdom to them, many more ascribe madness.

## V

Vech: a Vehicular Mechanism for carrying multiple persons and cargo, usually biomechanical, though sometimes pure golem. Examples include the Prismatic Walkers of the Spectrum Satraps, the Dwarven Diesel Walkers of the East Coast, and the graceful Porcelain Prancers of the Porcelain Princes. Vechs are mostly capable of simple autonomous movement, particularly following a lead unit, but in all honesty are little more intelligent than a cockroach or a brick golem, and require piloting for more complex manoeuvres.

Vile (also Chosen Ones): a mythical Long Long Ago sentience. The powers attributed to them are vast, and often ridiculous, including complete personality permanence (immortality), reshaping the physical world to their whim, shapeshifting, soul-transfer, and the ability to rebuild their bodies and souls from the stuff of other living creatures. Some Long Ago civilizations attributed godlike or divine powers to the Viles, the Pleurote Gilded Decadence even worshipping them as the Urgent

**Demiurges.** Fortunately they all collapsed in internecine struggles.

**Vome:** short for Violent Mechanism, a self-replicating synthetic organism or auto-golem created (according to myth) by a serpentine capitalist faction in the Long Long Ago to fight in a series of wars that eventually ended in the factions own destruction. It is not clear if the vomes are mindless, differently minded, intelligent and hateful, or just completely insane. They are inimical to much organic life and often assimilate or modify creatures on a whim, however, baseline bugs and coding cockroaches mean the vomes are much less lethal than they could be.

## W

**War, The:** an epic misunderstanding among historians or an actual event that marked the Fall of the Chosen Ones. It's unclear. Obviously there was more than one war, but there can't have been that many, considering the obvious power of many of the Old Ones.

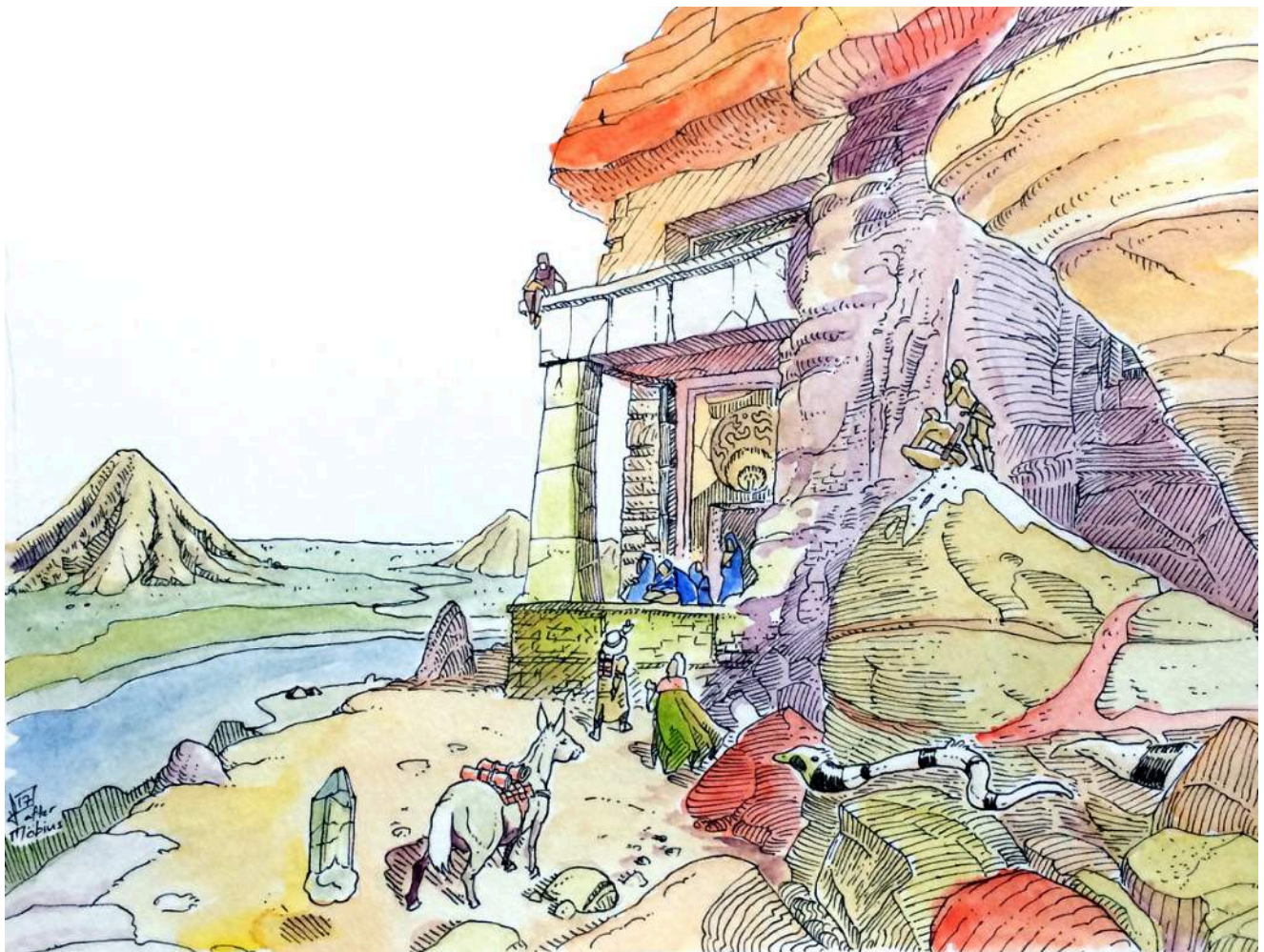
**Wine Dark Mountains:** a grand mountain range in the south, beyond the Red Land, crowned with snows of flame and Oxblood peaks.

**Wizard:** a short-hand for every kind of strange person dabbling in forgotten sciences and odd magics. Clerics, priests, shamans, witches, warlocks, druids and more. All are wizards to the Steppe-landers who make little distinction when dealing with mind-controlling, fire-throwing monsters.

## Y

**Yellow Land:** a dry land, north-east of the Circle Sea, and the terminus for trade caravans from the Mysterious Land. It is roughly divided between the confederation of the Decapolis and the powerful merchant republic of Safranjanj. The Yellow Land is famous for its spices, merchants, ranchers and operas. Also, as the site of a recent massive uncontrolled necroambulist outbreak.

**Below:** A tribute to the glorious Jean Giraud 'Moebius', one of my favorite artists, and an inspiration for the UVG.



# Thank You. You folks are making the UVG possible.

And there's over 100 of you now. That is so epic.

## THE METAHEROES

Arnold, Maxwell  
 Action, Andy  
 Alter, Guy  
 Barger, Jason  
 Brown, Merrick L  
 Dahlgren, Ronald  
 Davini, JW  
 Downs, Andrew  
 FLOPCOPTER  
 'Frotz'  
 Girard, Julien  
 Goldshear, Jesse Lloyd  
 'In Search of Games'  
 Johnson III, Edgar D.  
 Kent, Jacob  
 Kunin, Noah  
 Loughrist, Timothy  
 'Love Letter Games'  
 Lane  
 Morton, Trey  
 Murphy, Brian J.  
 Nogueira, Diogo  
 Nordin, Adam  
 Parr, Aaron  
 Pileggi, Angelo  
 SageZero  
 Scofield, Creig  
 Van Grol, Thomas  
 Wagener, Harald  
 Waddleton, David  
 <THE NAMELESS>

## THE HEROES

Aulds, James  
 Baldowski, Paul  
 Berghaus, Frank  
 D, Sam  
 Daniel, Harris  
 Deckert, Joseph  
 Eleftherios, Nikos  
 Eisenhofer, Benjamin

Erixon, Jennifer  
 Felix  
 Féry, Claude  
 Gross, Gary  
 Hansen, Thor  
 Harper, Mabel  
 Hendren, Shea  
 Kutalik, Chris  
 Lee, Youjin  
 Logos, Dyson  
 Louviere, Ayler  
 McCormack, Logan  
 Messersmith, Hans  
 Nordberg, Anders  
 Pierce, Leonard  
 Poag, Stefan  
 Radakovic, Bojan  
 'Robert'  
 Rudloff, Tim  
 Schwartz, Martin (Wurst, Horst)  
 Sipe, Boyd  
 Sitars, Joshua Wiaczeslaw  
 Sproule, Colin  
 Stanley, Jesse  
 Swift, Harrison  
 Vilaplana, Oscar  
 Vulgaris, Eric  
 Weber, Scott

## THE MINIHEROES

Aguirre, Forrest  
 And Die!, Follow Me  
 Baker, Wes  
 Balbi, Rafael  
 Barford, Michael G  
 Bennett, Liam  
 Black, Hayden  
 Bleir, Taylor  
 Bozin, Matthew  
 Braun, Jason A  
 Brzozowski, Jerzy André  
 Burley, Richard  
 Burnett, Joshua  
 Caulder, Matthew  
 Christensen, Steve  
 Corcoran, Myles  
 Cranford, Gordon  
 Dowler, Tony  
 Duncan, Jeremy  
 Eaton, Sam  
 Eaves, Joshua  
 'edchuk'  
 Edwards, Owen  
 England, Joe  
 Feldmann Alves, Mateus  
 Fenlon, Mark  
 Ferlin, Zack



Fিন্নamore, Daniel (Dungeons & Possums)  
 Florvik, Klaes  
 Forster, Simon  
 Fournier, Wes  
 'Gregor'  
 Griffin, Aaron  
 Gross, Ollie  
 Guard, Banana  
 H, Ben  
 Hanks, Robert James  
 Hay, Morgan  
 Hill, Isaak  
 Hogan, Apollo  
 Kazmi, Humza  
 Kolbe, Christian  
 Jensen  
 Klein, Matthew  
 Lacerte, David  
 Langsford, Alistair  
 'Lazy Litch'  
 Lebreton, Jean-François  
 Liaskovitis, Vasilis  
 'Libri'  
 Liebling, Shane  
 Little, Jeff - aka. P100  
 Lofton, Daniel  
 Loy, Michael  
 Lucke, Matthew  
 Vandel 'MapForge'  
 Magagna, Mark  
 Marshall  
 Martin, Taylor  
 Mazza, Cody  
 Mayo, Alex  
 McCann, Paul  
 McCarthy, Denis J  
 McClellan, Scott Philip  
 McDowall, Chris  
 Milke, Gorgon  
 Monkey, Filthy  
 Morrell, Nicholas  
 'Munkao'  
 Mulherin, Nick  
 Nandrin, David  
 Neal, Justin  
 NerdCant  
 Nick  
 Olobosk  
 Paul, David  
 Perry, David  
 Peter  
 'qpop'  
 'Questing Beast'  
 'Ramanan'  
 'Rasmus'  
 Reding, Frank  
 Redmayne, Nash  
 Richardson, Christopher

Rivera, Maria  
 Robinson, David  
 Rose, Gerald Jr  
 'Sasha'  
 Sage, And Juniper  
 Schmiedekamp, Mendel  
 Schultes, Stephan  
 Schwaninger, Adam  
 Shawn  
 Sheftall, Sherman  
 Siew, Zedeck  
 Silberman, Asher  
 Skalin, Jeremy  
 Smith, James  
 Southey, James  
 Spay, John  
 Stevens, Michael  
 Stieha, Chris  
 Sullivan, David  
 Tom  
 Tsong, Marcus  
 'yongi'  
 V, Max  
 Vick, Charlie  
 Vines, Jason  
 Warren, Beckett  
 Willert, Keely  
 William  
 Zeitlin, Sam  
 Zeltzer, Nicholas



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# UVG CARAVAN SHEET

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Financier: \_\_\_\_\_

WEEKS 

DAYS    

CASH 

MOUTHS TO FEED


# 

# Heroes: .....

# Helpers: .....

# Other: .....

VISIBILITY

#Transports +  
#Mouths (95 max) 

Slow factors

SPEED

Fast factors



















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.....



































+/- day  
tally

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## HELPERS

HD	Name	Skill	+X
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	.....	.....	
	.....	.....	
	.....	.....	
	.....	.....	
	.....	.....	
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	.....	.....	
	.....	.....	

## TRANSPORT

HD	Type	Carry	Cargo
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FIGHTERS # 

AC 

HD 

Count all combat ready helpers. Treat as pool.  
Use avg AC of fighters: light + shield, AC 13, 20 cash/ft; med + shield, AC 15, 60 cash/ft; heavy + shield, AC 18, slow, 85 cash/ft.  
Weapons: 1d8 melee, 10 cash/ft; 1d8 ranged + 100 ammo, 30 cash/ft.


## WEEKLY ACTIONS



o. Extra action *only when stopped*: a) forage; b) care for other hero; c) prepare ambush or defenses; d) study artifacts; e) hide camp to reduce visibility. When stopped at settlement also: f) explore for additional discoveries; g) buy and sell; h) pay expenses instead of consuming supplies.

1. Consume one sack of supplies per human.
2. One hero checks Cha for Misfortune.
3. Referee checks visibility and encounters. Resolve them.
4. Heroes that did not fight or flee receive long rest.
5. Check if caravan arrived at destination. If not, repeat 1-5.
6. At destination, one hero checks Int for discoveries.

Remember to tally days & weeks. Strict records must be kept! Hrrumph!

#beasts and vehicles 

Inventory sacks of: (S)upplies, (G)oods, (E)quipment, (C)ash (2,500), (T)reasure, (R)ider, (P)ulling, (X)other.

Transport: (M)ule, 2HD, carries 2 sacks, costs 50 cash; (K)amel, 4HD, 3 sacks, 300 cash; (B)urdenbeast, 6HD, 4 sacks, 600 cash; (W1)agon, small, 4HD, 6 sacks, 150 cash, req: 1 animal; (W2)agon, large, 8HD, 12 sacks, 600 cash, req: 2 animals.





WIZARD  
THIEF  
FIGHTER