

THE FRATERNITY OF SHADOWS
PRESENTS



Survey on the Zherisian
Expedition
A RAVENLOFT COMMUNITY METBOOK

The City of

Paridon



Survey of Zherisia

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Survey on the Zherisian Expedition

April 1st, 2007

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Prologue

To the Fathers of the Fraternity, greetings.

I was filled with great interest and considerable apprehension when I learned that Messrs. Ray and Despadon's educated guesses place my city among the possible lairs of the Traitor, Erik van Rijn. Obviously, this is a possibility which must be confirmed or disproved as quickly as possible.

I have therefore instructed the members of our cell of the Fraternity to compile all information we have gained over the course of the last several years regarding local conditions, politics, events, and so forth, much as is being done by the cell now located in Souragne, and to make this information available to the Fraternity at large as quickly as we can.

I hope this report will enlighten my Esteemed Brothers, both in the affairs of my homeland and in possible motives behind van Rijn's move. While I can only offer guesses as to his possible reasons for flight to Zherisia, other eyes more familiar with him may find something I have missed.

Any support which other Fraternity members can offer in this effort will be greatly appreciated; as you well know, the unusual local conditions prevailing here make foreigners and outsiders rather more trustworthy than local inhabitants, and we may need such support to get as much information as possible.

Any instruction or advice which you can give in this matter will be heeded gratefully.

Yours in Shadow,

Alfred Larnier

Esteemed Brother of the Fraternity of Shadows

Paridon , 20 February 760

PART I



Paridon

Geographical Survey

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

I look out my window, and I see the face of Zherisia.

Not its muscle: its labourers, scholars, merchants, and politicians are indoors. Not its blood: all currency is kept hidden in purses and pockets for fear of theft. Not its frame: every corner teems with mist and shade, to hide the world around you. And I certainly do not see its heart. That is the best protected; the most secret thing of all.

I have lived in this city all of my life. There are things about it that I love dearly, and there are things I hope to change. It is a city of opportunity: any who work hard enough can make a name for themselves. And yet, in spite of all that hard work, one can just as easily lose everything. It is a frustrating city. In my heart I know that Zherisia is dead, and that Paridon is all that remains. But I still wear that same name, same face that all Zherisians wear.

In a city of ten thousand faces, it will require all of my skill to track down but one of them.

It may be noted here that the term "Zherisian" is preferred by folk native to her shores. "Paridoner", so in evidence in the Core, is technically accurate but mildly offensive. It callously disregards the centuries of our island's existence before the Great Upheaval. "Zherisian" is not only a reminder of the nation that we were and are, but of what we hope once more to be.

Climate

To say that Paridon is foggy is to call water wet. If the city's weather is ever noted, it is for mist. This mist gives the edges of the city a very malleable look. It touches every street and corner, envelops every building, obscures all landmarks. The fog's density may vary by location in the city, and by the time of day or year, but it is always there to obscure one's vision-and one's person.

Second only to the mist is the rain. There is a common saying in the City: "If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes: the rain may stop." Any who visit Paridon would be wise to invest in an umbrella (or three) and a good coat. Some days there is but a slight drizzle to soften the skies. On others the streets are flooded to the ankles. Thankfully, we Zherisians know how to handle a heavy rain; all streets are built with drains and gutters so floods seldom poses a threat to property. Nevertheless, if one visits the Zherisian capital, he must anticipate that he will spend most of his visit wet.

As you can probably guess, Paridon must judge its seasons primarily by the prevalence of mist and rain. Autumn is by far the season of greatest precipitation, heralding monsoon-worthy downpours. The heavy rain abates rapidly as winter comes, and then slowly rises to its autumnal peak over the course of the rest of the year. Occasionally one sees a light dusting of snow touch the streets during colder months. Other than these few indicators, it is difficult to distinguish between seasons here. Richer areas have the advantage of a few spots of planted flora, which demonstrate the seasons by their annual habits. Poor areas have been known to forget the seasons altogether.

Paridon in Short

Location: Island in the Mists

Ecology: Sparse (Gardens and Parks)

Darklord: Sodo

Year of formation: 551

Cultural level: Renaissance (9)

Population: 11,600 (98% humans, 2% others)

Main settlements: None (domain is one city with seven boroughs)

Religion: The Divinity of Mankind

Language: Zherisian

Government: Republic (Elected City Council)

Currency: Pound (gp), Shilling (sp), Pence (cp)

Geographical Survey

Fog in Paridon

Fog is an ever-present fact of life in Zherisia. Though it can range from no more than a light mist to a thick 'pea-souper' of moisture and airborne soot, it never truly vanishes. On an average day, visibility only extends to about 100'. At night, visibility commonly drops to 10', or 20' if a lantern is nearby.

At a given time, a character might gain varying degrees of concealment from the vapors. Areas close to water, such as the Docks, tend to give better concealment, while drier areas give less. If the GM wishes, fog can be determined randomly:

No cover or concealment	(1-25%)
Concealment	(26-50%)
Cover	(51-75%)
Concealment and cover	(76-89%)
Full cover	(90-100%)

Although not a part of this realm's meteorology, I will note another vital clue by which Zherisians tell the seasons: the ebb and flow of business. Summer is marked by a higher volume of trade, winter by its ebb. As I shall discuss in later sections, Paridon is very reliant on its sea trade, which meets a substantial lull as the harbors of temperate-weather trading partners seize with ice.

The Seven Boroughs

Paridon is rightly considered a great metropolis. As it currently stands, it is the third largest (living) city in the Land of Mists, exceeded only by Pont-a-Museau in Richemulot and Lekar in Falkovnia. Its entire surface is covered by what some strikingly referred to as "the urban jungle"; none of the old Zherisian farmlands from our ill-fated history survived the Great Upheaval.

In a land covering a wider expanse it would be natural to divide a survey like this one into geographical regions, and then into settlements; but in the present case it is more

Mistways of Paridon

There are no less than four Mistways into Paridon, making it a crossroads for many travelers.

The first is located in the Southshore and known as The Shrouded Way. This is a two-way Mistway of medium reliability, connected to Martira Bay in Darkon. The Newsbill has put forward the rumor that Bloody Jack uses this as an escape route after committing his crimes.

The second Mistway, The Urchin's Path, is a one-way route to Paridon and is incredibly unpredictable. It takes the form of a dark, lonely alley which might appear in any large city in Nova Vaasa; when present, it leads into the cramped streets of Blackchapel.

The third, The Royal Channel, connects the Docks to the Sea of Sorrows. It is a two-way Mistway of medium reliability, and acts as an overseas passage for Zherisian trade. Unfortunately, it passes close to Blaustein, thus making pirate raids a common occurrence.

The final Mistway, The Iron Way, is a recently discovered and little-used path between Shadewell and Nosos. It is a two-way Mistway of poor reliability.

accurate to divide Paridon in the same fashion that its local population does-into seven separate boroughs.

The names of these boroughs are the Docks, Riverside, Blackchapel, the Bowels, Shadewell, the Southshore, and King's Quarters. Once again, I stress that these are all boroughs of one city, and not settlements separated by any large physical distance.

The Docks

Hamlet; AL LN; CL 9; 3100gp limit, Assets 33,000gp; Population 160

Paridon's harbour-borough is located midway along the southern edge of the city. Maps label it "Hickory Harbour", but no one ever refers to it so; to locals, it's simply the Docks. I have yet to see a port larger than the Docks; even the harbour of Port-a-Lucine

Chapter 1

A Matter of Size

A close reader will note that some of the assigned sizes (like "hamlet" or "small town") in the descriptor of each borough aren't assigned to their typical populace. This is because Paridon is not as evenly spaced as other cities. The reader should consider what it says about a borough if it has the population of a small city, but only the space of a small town (as is true of Blackchapel). See the Town Creation rules in the Dungeon Master Guide.

falls short. The Docks are the nexus for all Zherisian sea trade.

I must confess to disliking this borough. While not the most crowded place in the city, it is by far the noisiest. At any given time there are several ships sailing in or out of the harbor. Wooden spokes of piers stretch outward as if to embrace newcomers-an image which is rendered less friendly by the foul, black pollution that taints the Nodnal

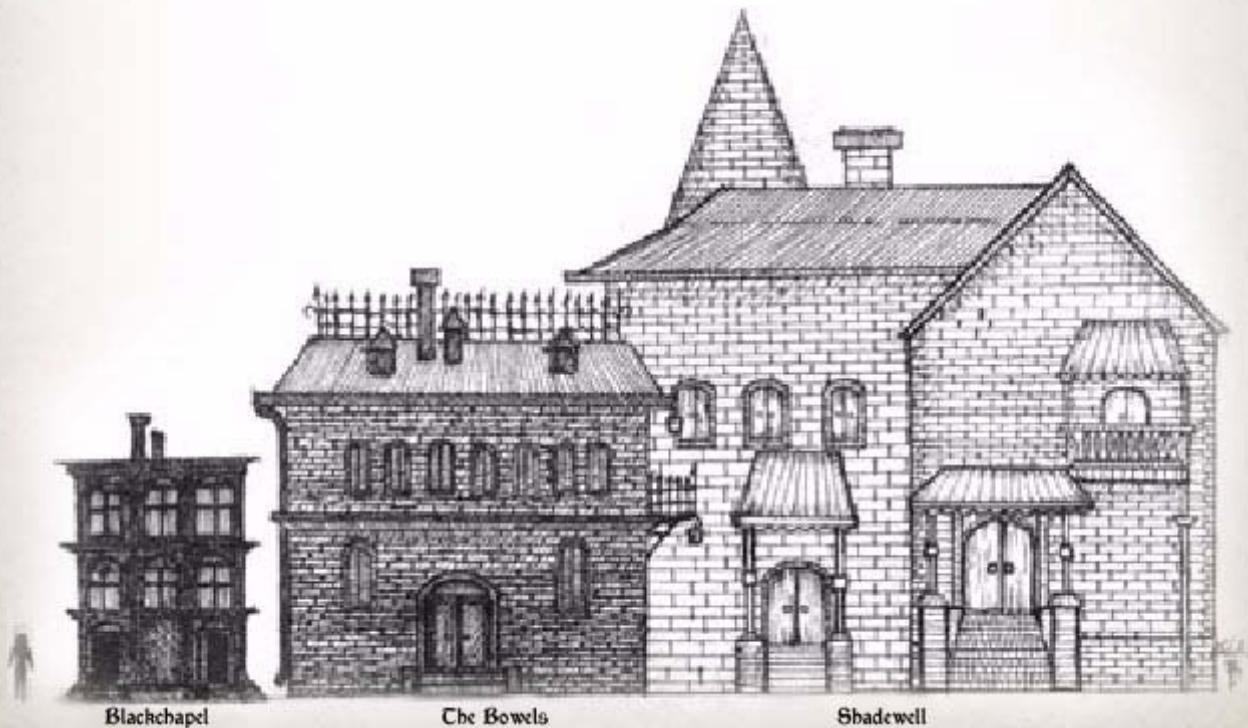
River. One knows one has 'hit the Docks' once the water adopts a black, opaque tinge.

The Docks are also the mistiest section of Paridon. Fog-blinded captains may be imperiled by maritime hazards nearby, including the fabled 'Maiden Rock': an ebony spike of stone notorious for gutting ships. Flamboyantly-coloured buoys in the water help guide vessels.

Once on land, the Docks comprise an expansive maze of wharfs, shipyards and warehouses. Construction in the area is a mix of hardwood and concrete structures; the latter are growing in popularity for both walls and pavements, as wood now has to be shipped in from other realms. Buildings here are seldom taller than two stories high. Most are commercial in nature, selling nautical supplies and even whole ships to seafarers.

Some cargos are immediately sent on to other realms, such as medical supplies and cadavers of the Hanover Brothers' Shop.

The Docks are one of the more highly-patrolled boroughs. Only the labourers, shopkeepers, and police stay there for any length of time. Loitering results in the patrolmen insisting that one "move along". Walking north, you may observe that this section functions as a filing system for visitors. Nonhumans are immediately



Geographical Survey

Weapons Checkers

Weapons that are shown to the Paridon police are peace-bonded: melee weapons are tied into their sheaths, bows must be unstrung, and muzzles of firearms are plugged. Refusal to comply will result in the weapon's confiscation.

Removing the peace-bond requires two full-round actions; this can be reduced to a single full-round action, in the case of melee weapons, with a Use Rope check (DC 20, or opposing the Use Rope check of the policeman who tied the peace-bond). Paridon policemen who see an unbound weapon will insist that it be re-bonded at once, or else forfeited.

A PC trying to hide a weapon must make a Sleight of Hand check opposed by the policeman's Search check (+5 average Search modifier). Medium and Large-sized weapons, respectively, give -4 and -8 for the PC's Sleight of Hand check.

directed east, toward the Southshore check-in point, while others move west to the check-in points for Blackchapel and Riverside.

The Docks are designed in such a way that no one enters the city without passing by the police for an inspection. The weapon checks performed at these chokepoints often catch newcomers off-guard. During the inspection, all luggage and persons are thoroughly examined, all weapons inventoried and peace-bonded; patrolmen may confiscate weapons not duly rendered secure. "Safety first" is the rationale given for this policy. This "filtration" system is commonly said to be how the city "keeps its streets a safe place to live". In many cases this process ends with the seizure of a non-compliant visitor's weaponry, or even in detention.

If outsiders are difficult about this process, the police can - and will - send them packing, placing them on the next outbound ship. It is possible to smuggle one's weapons into the city; I have done so countless times. If you should happen to be found with a weapon hidden upon your person, however, simply accept the weapon's loss and voice no objections, especially if you are not Zherisian. Once weapons have been confiscated, they are unlikely ever to be seen again.

I have repeatedly heard stories of creatures living off the pollution of the Docks: beasts that apparently hunt man in substitution for (or supplementation of) their natural diet. Investigation failed to find evidence of this phenomenon, save for a few reported disappearances in the winter, easily explained as drowning or "simple" murder.

If something is indeed living here, it must have learned to hide itself very well by now. All in all, the "Docks prowler" is best considered just one of the countless urban legends that plague the Zherisian capital.

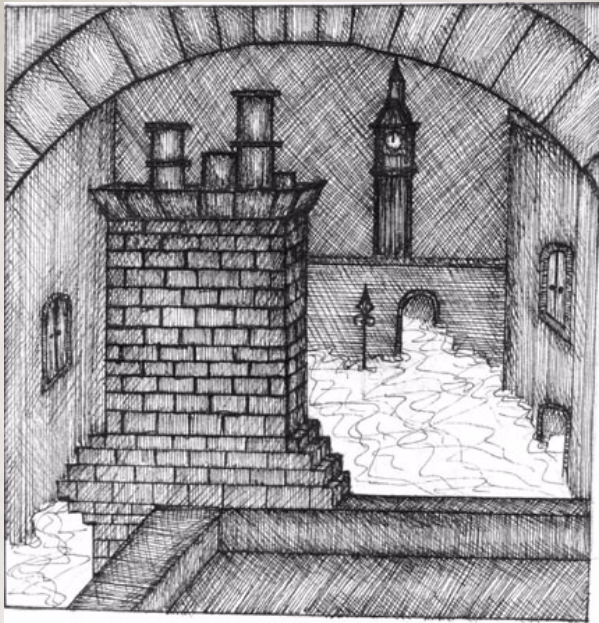
Labourers work here day and night, no matter the weather. Folk in the Docks dress according to their profession: long trench coats with hoods and high rubber boots are

Dread Possibility- The Body Trade

Paridon is quickly becoming known as one of the main exporters of medical cadavers. This is due in no small part to the Hanover brothers: Jacob and William. While Jacob takes care of the embalming and William the money, the brothers have made a lucrative business out of buying the bodies of criminals and vagrants from the city and reselling them to colleges in Mordent and Dementlieu.

What Jacob doesn't know is that soon after the business opened, William was killed and replaced by a doppelganger. Sodo himself ordered this, so his kind might discreetly dispose of victims. The spirits of William and several victims now haunt Jacob's lab, hoping to warn him of the danger. So far, Jacob has written off the strange voices and sights to his long work hours and nights spent breathing embalming fumes.

Chapter 1



most commonly seen. Property within the Docks typically goes for 200 pounds. The Docks accent is the easiest for outsiders to understand, and hardest for natives to pick up. It is clear, precise, and reminiscent of a Darkonese accent.

Riverside

Village; AL N; CL 9; 32,600gp limit, Assets 58,000gp; Population 650

There is no market quite like that of Zherisia. Anyone doubting my statement has clearly not visited Riverside, just northwest of the Docks.

This borough "brings home the bacon" for Paridon (to borrow a sample of local jargon) largely because of its outsider-oriented structure. It is a crossroads for the entire city.

Riverside, as the name suggests, lies along the western bank of the Nodnal River; it borders on Blackchapel, the Docks, and King's Quarters while facing both the Bowels and Shadewell across the river. Whereas the Docks are fairly homogeneous, Riverside comprises three different sections: Riverside Square, a factory district, and the northern Temple district.

Approaching from the Docks, one arrives in the aforementioned market, the imposing Riverside Square. Hundreds of shops are crammed together in this spot, nestling above, below, or even behind each other. It is

often said that one can find anything in Riverside Square. It would not be surprising if this is true, as shops offer goods from places all over the world, including abstruse areas such as Sri Raji or Har'Akir. No two shops are identical, and each offers something new every day. There is even a discreet trade in genuine enchanted items, if one is willing to look hard enough for them.

There is, of course, a disadvantage to this profusion. When I first moved away from Paridon, I marveled at how cheap goods from other realms were; it was not until later that I realized that the reverse was actually true: prices in Paridon are notoriously inflated. If one knows the city, it is often possible to find "back-alley" bargains; else, the cost of goods is usually doubled relative to a similar item purchased in the Core.

One must be careful in Riverside Square: it is a prime hunting ground for pickpockets and the crowds are often too thick for police pursuit. The market's buildings are mostly made of a charming light grey stone, and range from one to three stories, plus cellars. Its pavements are intricate patterns of granite and marble. By day, streets are choked with crowds churning around the square like a maelstrom. A person standing still will find himself moving involuntarily with the crowds, as their jostling propels him about the square; one can only avoid this by fleeing into the relative stillness of a store's interior.

At night, the Square is perfectly still, save for the midnight patrolmen making their rounds.

Riverside Square lies in the shadow of two of the city's greatest monuments: the Clock Tower and Paridon Bridge. The Clock Tower is a gigantic piece of modern machinery that stands some two hundred feet high, and dictates the time for the entire city. Paridon Bridge is the sole point of attachment between the two halves of the city, stretching east to the Bowels across the Nodnal. The Clock Tower is a marvel of Zherisian technology. I have only been inside once, but I recall every detail of it; it is a spectacular machine to behold, inside or out.

Geographical Survey

The Cost of the City

Riverside Square unquestionably offers a wide variety of items to buy; it could potentially give players access to nearly anything their hearts desire, magic items included. This variety comes at the cost of inflation. Goods imported from other domains have heavy tariffs laid on them; couple this with Paridon's isolation, and the cost of living skyrockets.

Any item bought in Riverside is double PHB price. A GM wishing to work in varied currencies can rule that Zherisian pounds have a 2:1 conversion ratio with foreign gold pieces. A successful Gather Information or Knowledge (Local) check of DC 24 can achieve normal prices.

The purchase of items not in the Players' Handbook (e.g. magic items) requires a Gather Information or a Knowledge (local) check at DC 25 + 1 per 1000 gp of base price. The cost of such items will never be lower than twice the listed cost of the item, and are often even higher.

The cottage-sized clock mechanism inside the tower's peak is regulated by slowly-descending weights, making it necessary to wind the clock only once per month. The weights are dragged back to the top of the tower by a team of horses and a sturdy series of pulleys. The bells, which hang from the bottom of the clock mechanism, are struck by clockwork devices, not bell ringers, and are audible from everywhere in Paridon. Outside, a ledge encircles the top of the tower, allowing the clock's faces to be cleaned. The Clock Tower's shaft is almost empty; the building is little more than a façade, supporting a narrow wooden staircase that winds its way up to the clock's mechanism. The tower has neither lights nor windows inside it, although a massive oil lantern illuminates the clock faces at night. The enormous lead weights dangle in the gloom only a few feet away from the stairs, supported by thick steel cables

In my younger days, you could get a tour of the Clock Tower for a shilling or two. On

the same level as the clock faces perch twelve ugly gargoyles with malign expressions. Urban legend has it that the gargoyles strike the Clock's bell; having been inside the tower while the bell rang, I can assure you that this is not the case. However, persistent rumors attest that close observation reveals only eleven gargoyles when the bell chimes the hour.

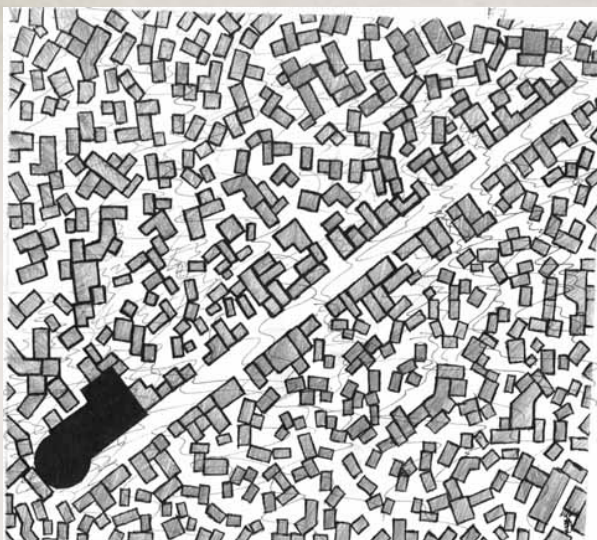
To the north of the Clock Tower is Riverside Park, the largest park outside of King's Quarters. Riverside Park was initially created as a symbol of Paridon's upper and lower classes coming together in harmony. This pleasant ideal of social cohesion is shattered every time a wealthy couple is mugged in the night by a gang from Blackchapel. Riverside Park is the closest thing that Paridon still has to its much-beloved, lost countryside. Rolling hills, cast iron statues, and even a few trees dot the area. It is a tranquil place during the day, but not somewhere that respectable persons venture during the night. Brutal violence is very rare, even after dark, but the park remains a common meeting area for crooks and dealers in illegal goods, if only due to its size.

Abutting the park is the Temple of Divine Form, which uses a small corner of former parkland as its cemetery. Near the Temple proper are subsidiary lodges, dormitories for the celebrants, and the clergy's vegetable gardens.

On the western side of the borough is the factory district. Although technically part of the borough, most of Riverside is content to ignore the factories, though it is more than happy to sell their goods.

One thing common in Riverside is an utter lack of patience: the saying "done in a Riverside minute" refers to something being done instantaneously. Maintaining a shop in Riverside is a strenuous task (300-400 pounds per month), usually ending in bankruptcy if one doesn't keep an eye on the competition. Should one manage to get the upper hand over the nearby shops, one could potentially make a fortune.

The Riverside accent is slightly different from the Docks accent, whilst still being



intelligible to outlanders. People in Riverside never use seven words when four will do; much of their slang is intended to compress the language as much as possible.

Blackchapel

Small Town; AL CN; CL 9; 750gp limit; Assets 9,250gp; Population 7,820

The Newbill's editors once wrote, "Blackchapel is the truth behind Paridon." Before this borough is described any further, I wish to compare it to an ingenious Zherisian invention of the modern era: the self-filling bathtub, commonplace throughout the city. This bathtub has a drainhole at the bottom to allow the water to escape, and (more remarkably) faucets by which water may enter. If the faucets are left on and the drain is not unplugged in time, the bath overflows. As useful as bathwater is, if there is insufficient space to contain it, it becomes the source of a great deal of trouble. The application of this metaphor to Blackchapel is left as an exercise for the reader.

Blackchapel holds two-thirds of the city's population in one-quarter of its area. King's Quarters' looming wall and the Riverside factories cage Blackchapel. The borough is built around its primary traffic-artery, Blackchapel Road, with its eponymous ebon-hued chapel resting at its southern end. This chapel is said to be a remnant of an archaic, theistic faith. It is presently used by

the Celebrants of Humanity as a soup kitchen. (There is a rumor that this church is haunted by a phantom priest of the old faith, a tale stoutly denied by the Celebrants. Oddly, the Celebrants close the chapel and leave it standing vacant for an hour each noon.) Blackchapel Road spawns endless side streets, which further split into countless more, and lastly into alleyways. Many of its streets don't even have names; it is a sprawling cobblestone maze, in which the inexperienced are bound to be lost.

I count myself fortunate that I have never lived in Blackchapel. With too few shelters for its many inhabitants, many homeless must huddle on street corners or seek shelter at the Temple's hospice. Those who can afford it reside in tiny, cramped quarters; upwards of five dwell in a space barely comfortable for one. Its buildings are long, misshapen rows of dingy matte-black stone. Most buildings have two or three stories plus a basement, and are divided into as many apartments as possible. Dotted along the streets are cast iron lanterns, balconies, and gates, all usually defaced by vandals. Visibility is limited during the day by the brooding, light-absorbing architecture; in the night, only scattered, lantern-lit circles boast of any visibility at all.

Alcoholism, gambling, narcotics, gangs, prostitution: Blackchapel presents the darkest facets of humanity's natural state to even the most cursory observer. Due to the impossible cost of privacy, 'ladybirds' often deliver their services in back alleys. Violence is normal, be it a common mugging or a brawl between rival gangs. Bodies (and it seems a night never passes without murder here) do not lie in the street for long before even they are stripped of everything.

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The Black Borough

Blackchapel is a breeding ground for taint after sundown. On a nightly basis there are murders, robberies, bribes, or other actions worthy of Dark Powers checks. The ethereal resonance flowing through the borough means that as much as one-quarter of the borough is a Rank Two sinkhole on gloomy, fogbound nights; the locations of the Bloody Jack murders sometimes rise to Rank Three. Typical taints of Blackchapel sinkholes are Lust, Fear, or Rage, although a GM could potentially use any of the taints for specific cases.

All of Riverside's factories face their doors towards Blackchapel, from which they receive their supply of cheap labour. Each factory has its own hired security forces backed up - when necessary - by units of the Paridon police. The reason behind this additional expenditure is a reactionary force known as the Zherisian Brothers of the Land. They have been vandalizing the factories in the name of human liberation from machinery.

It should come as no surprise that Blackchapel is the site of a majority of Bloody Jack's murders. Were it not for their utter inhumanity, his killings would doubtless be given only passing attention. Every location at which a Bloody Jack victim has been found is marked by painted letters reading "Jack Was Here".

Bloody Jack's fame is owed, in large part, to one industry in Blackchapel: the Newsbill. Located on the edge of the factory district, its print shop is the only non-factory building in the borough that rises four stories tall. Looking at it, one may wonder why it isn't stripped bare by the hungry populace, as the building has but a pair of guards at its front door. It is protected not by fear, but respect: people in Blackchapel love "their" newspaper.

Mugged in the Night

The average man of the slums will have little more than a pound to his name. A character in Blackchapel who is carrying at least 50gp worth of equipment on his person has a chance of being mugged. Roll percentile dice for every hour spent outdoors at night, failure means that the character is attacked by 2d8 thugs, and 1d2 gang leaders. The average chance of a mugging is 5%; several modifiers can apply to this roll:

Character is traveling in a group:	-5%
if company is armed:	-10%
Character is female:	+5%
Character appears unarmed:	+6%
Character is non-Zherisian:	+3%
For every 100gp above 50gp on the character's person:	+5%
Character is being escorted by the Paridon Police:	-12%
Character is wearing jewelry, and/or expensive clothing:	+10%
For every prior mugging the character is known to have defeated:	-3%

Thug: Human Com1; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4, hp 3; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 leather); Atk +1 melee, +2 ranged (1d4+1 dagger, 1d10 pistol); AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Gang Leader: Human Rog2; CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6, hp 8; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 leather); Atk +3 melee, +4 ranged (1d4+1 dagger, 1d10 pistol); AL NE; SA 1d6 Sneak Attack, Evasion; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

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Anyone making even a passing remark threatening to it will find themselves on the receiving end of "the power of the people".

Since locals usually cannot afford the prices in Riverside, there are a few shops in Blackchapel selling food and supplies. Cheap alcohol is easy to find here, though potable water is well-nigh impossible. These shops all huddle along the main street, and the merchants either hire their own guards or bribe gangs for protection.

The Blackchapel accent is by far the least intelligible of them all. Speech is atrociously gruff, impolite, and rife with slang. It seems almost another language altogether to foreigners.

The Bowels

Small Town; AL LN; CL 9; 7500gp limit; Assets 184,000gp; Population 2030

Walking east across Paridon Bridge from Riverside Square, one soon arrives in my own home borough, the Bowels. Foreigners often associate the name with the unpleasant biological definition, and assume this to be a filthy place, perhaps a ghetto. The envious of Blackchapel and the Southshore are not shy to play upon this prejudice in their talk. But the connotation is groundless: "Bowels", in the case of the borough, refers to nothing more than its central or interior location within the city.

The Bowels are sandwiched between Shadewell and the Southshore, and hold the second largest population of all the boroughs. The buildings are made of red brick, and range from two to four stories in height; buildings hereabouts generally lack cellars. The streets are cobblestone roads with plain designs. As you go "up the Bowels" (that is to say, upriver), the houses are larger and more luxurious. As you go

down, this reverses, resulting in smaller, more practical homes.

Although homes are not as spacious as those of Shadewell, even the poorest end of the Bowels gleams brightly in comparison to Blackchapel. That area closest to the Southshore holds the precious "chicken houses", the only commercial source of domestic meat products.

It is sometimes said that "the Bowels eat their homeless." There is rarely any rubbish on the ground, and in my entire life I have never seen a beggar staying long in these streets. Loiterers are also sparse during the day; pedestrians rush swiftly to their destinations. Wandering the Bowels after

Dread Possibility- Paridon Bridge

Due to its depth and rapid flow, the Nodnal initially proved impossible to bridge. Legends say that the materials the first citizens used for caissons were inevitably washed away.

Legends claim that, during a famine, a dark mage promised a strong and sturdy bridge for a price. The town agreed to the bargain. The necromancer secretly collected all the town's dead, using the bodies to craft a series of Living Walls for the new bridge's foundation. He then warned that if the town wished to keep their bridge intact, they would throw the bodies of their dead near these caissons. Appalled with this condition, the town turned upon the necromancer. "Kill me now, and I may die. But feed it not, and it will fall", the mage cried as he passed.

The memory of this tale mostly survives in a macabre nursery-rhyme sung only by children. However, criminals and the homeless or superstitious still fulfill the bridge-builder's ghastly 'condition', by disposing of bodies over the edge.

The Chicken Houses

Many citizens of Paridon died after the Great Upheaval because of starvation or riots. These deaths and disappearances left many houses empty. Although many are now inhabited, some were converted by the City Council into indoor "farms" for smaller livestock. Chickens are most commonly kept - hence the name - but other animals such as pigeons, rabbits, or even small pigs are not unknown.

Many chicken houses are haunted by the spirits of the former inhabitants, as most died untimely and often very unpleasant deaths. The indoor farmers are becoming suspicious, and a few are now looking for someone to investigate the matter and stop the suspected 'vandals'.

There are also rumours that those who tend swine have avoided the high cost of feed by making their own from human corpses. Blackchapel's gangs are often seen near the premises, and are among the few in that borough to enjoy meat regularly.

dark is simply not done. Everything in this borough is designed so that minimal time need be spent on its streets. This extends so far as to have sturdy, wood-roofed walkways between adjacent buildings' rooftops. Originally established for the Roof Patrol, these are now regularly used by citizens as well.

Odd things happen in the Bowels. Missing persons are surprisingly common; occasionally entire households vanish overnight. People sometimes run mad through the streets in the wee hours, screaming undecipherable gibberish; shots will ring out and echo unanswered. Neighbours are oddly silent, doing no more than to peek through their curtains and ensure their own doors and windows are firmly locked. A queer air of leery paranoia

Closest to the Shadow

Of all the boroughs, Timor's menace is most concentrated beneath the Bowels. Located several hundred feet underneath is the Hive Queen's lair itself. Where other boroughs have basements and sewer systems that still remain a part of Paridon, stepping underground in the Bowels in any way (especially via a manhole) will move someone directly across the border into Timor.

blankets the borough, giving it a subtle yet intense edge of uncertainty.

All these odd, unspoken occurrences can be illuminated by one of its by-laws: it is illegal to enter a manhole in the Bowels. Hiding in the shadow of this city is another place altogether.

I will elaborate on this further in the survey, but for now I will merely say that of all places in Paridon, the Bowels have the most intimate connection with the depths. This explains much of its strangeness, which even I, myself, once shrugged off as a local eccentricity neither more nor less odd than those of other boroughs.

It is no Riverside, but as the Bowels are home to one of the largest bourgeois communities in all the land, it has no shortage of businesses. For the culturally adventurous, the southern part of the Bowels offers foreign goods brought in by Shuttleby's auction house or from Southshore. In the north one can find expensive inventions of the modern era, passed on by those cunning hands of Shadewell. The Bowels are home to many government offices, including the headquarters of the Paridon Police, a wide five-story building perched next to the bridge's eastern end.

The Bowels accent is very malleable; its natives can easily adopt the accents of the other boroughs. It is, however, a little harder for foreigners to catch than some others.

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Houses in the Bowels sell for roughly 150-300 pounds.

Shadewell

Village; AL LN; CL 9; 9000gp limit; Assets 600,000gp; Population 210

As one walks north past the Bowels, he will discover that the borough rests at the bottom of a slight hill. Up this hill is Shadewell, or as its residents nickname it, "Euzherisia", a name that I find quite inappropriate. Here reside the elite of the middle class. I believe that this borough could topple the City Council with ease, if it could restrain both its sycophantic and backstabbing tendencies.

Not a single building in Shadewell stands with fewer than three stories and a cellar. Some boast as many as seven or eight floors, such as the Boarding House on Butcher Street or the Museum of Paridon. Architecture is impressively expansive, one building often occupying an area that would be filled by several in the Bowels, let alone by the dozens of families crammed into an equal space in Blackchapel.

The Zherisian arch is prominent, an architectural motif that the natives of Shadewell claim as their own. Civic institutions are composed of calm and charming marble masonry. Private homes are custom-made, with a variety of materials and designs that reflect the frivolous tastes of their owners. Some buildings boast entire wings constructed from precious hardwoods, alleged to give a 'classic' feel.

Shadewell is a borough of invention and innovation. Ladies can often be seen riding the newfangled bi-cycles during their afternoon promenades. Iron gates connected to a pulley system are opened by pulling a lever. Every man carries a pocket watch; to rely upon the Clock Tower is a faux pas in Shadewell. Avid amateurs conduct basic (albeit colourful) experiments in their own laboratories, in second-rate imitation of their alchemical counterparts in the Temple.

Shuttleby's

While new artwork is marketed through the city's commercial galleries, the resale of quality finished goods - jewelry, furniture, art, pottery, antique armor, candelabras, etc - is the high-exclusive purview of one business: Shuttleby's.

Accepting commissions, over the years, for the sale of items as outlandish as a live potted death's-head tree and from clients as far off (and infamous) as the late Sefeasa Camille of Borca, this venerable enterprise draws buyers and their proxies to Paridon from the far corners of the civilized world. Items of an arcane or mystical nature come up for bid only rarely, but those in the market for exotic wares subscribe to Shuttleby's bimonthly promotional listing of items on docket.

Shadewell also defines itself by its carriages; it is one of only two boroughs that actually have the space or resources to keep stables. Almost every home has a carriage and a brace of horses (as well as the aforementioned bi-cycles). It is deemed 'provincial' to ride horseback; there are even some who refuse to touch the beasts. Yet, residents of Shadewell seem to take pride in not walking, even when traveling within their own borough. Carriage riders must be careful if they do venture into drab parts of town: a horse with a broken leg makes an opportune meal for the hungry masses, who may seek to engineer such "accidents".

Crowds are unheard-of in Shadewell. This borough gives a soothing sense of confident security. This may lull visitors into an assumption that Shadewell holds no dangers, but one should not assume overmuch regarding that point. One's wellbeing need not be compromised by crime or poverty: property and privacy rights can become weapons themselves. People are very possessive and will often have a passerby arrested for "trespassing". This may range from the metaphorical "looking into a

Geographical Survey

neighbour's window" to a literal setting of foot upon his lawn.

This stringency extends to the Paridon Police, who are not permitted to search a Shadewell (or King's Quarters) home without invitation or by permission of the owner. Even then, much care and courtesy must be exercised throughout the process; many a policeman's career has been cut short by his lack of tact or by overt suspicion, even if his suspicion later proves to be justified.

Shadewell's University of Paridon is foremost in the sciences, producing the world's finest engineers, doctors, and scientists. The school specializes in both medicine and (mundane) chemistry, with many graduates in both fields. Many an alchemist has likewise emerged from the university. Some graduates emigrate to the Core, where they make a profitable living by treating the sick and injured or by teaching at mainland institutions.

Various associated medical institutes, including the Institute of Teratology, lie within walking distance, providing ready experience for future interns. This area is also home to some facilities of "remedial education", such as the renowned Dr. Longwell's School for Wayward Youth. Exclusive, very expensive, and discreet, this miraculous prep-school has a high success rate: virtually every child who attends graduates as a new person.

Shadewell has a large public sector, which even the 'unfortunate masses' are permitted to visit. Among these are the Metropolitan cultural center, the Paridon Art Gallery, and the Zherisian National Library. The chief attraction for scholars is the Paridon Museum: an architectural behemoth holding artifacts from around the world. I once examined a Museum schematic that revealed two more wings than are evident from outside; I recall noting secret doors in the museum that may lead to them.

The Shadewell accent is the Core's definition of the "typical" Zherisian accent. It is soft and difficult to master. "Your tongue is slow" is a slur natives use to refer to the dialects of other Zherisians. When a home becomes available, property in

Shadewell starts at 3000 pounds, and only gets higher. After this section of the survey, I am once again struck by how precipitously-steep the class divide is, in this city.

The Southshore

Hamlet; AL NG; CL 9; 2800gp limit; Assets 30,700gp; Population 610

A rickety, rotted wooden wall stands between the Bowels and the Southshore. Upon this wall, Zherisia's humans have carved or scrawled reams of malicious drawings, insults and threats against the residents of this borough. There is but a single, locked doorway through the wall, to which a sign has been nailed saying 'Jack's Way'.

The Southshore lies just west of the Docks, and south of the Bowels. Drywall and cement are the abundant building materials here, and most buildings are no more than two stories tall. Despite its proximity to the Bowels, the Southshore does have

Dread Possibility- Dr. Longwell

Dr Longwell's Home for Wayward Youth is a relatively new addition to the city. This sprawling three-story facility houses recalcitrant children of notable Zherisians. Many a rowdy, unruly youth has emerged as a model child: seen but not heard.

Dr. Longwell is, in fact, a cerebral vampire and a protégé of Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth. A devoted student of his terrible mentor, his conversion was not a complete success: Longwell can only feed on victims who have yet to reach adulthood. As there were few youths at Heinfroth's asylum, Longwell set off on his own. Arriving in Paridon, he quickly set up his private feeding ground, using his charm ability to entice nobles to send their troubled teens to him. Those who leave his "care" are little more than subservient shells of their former selves.

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basements, seemingly without any unwanted incursions from below.

Southshore is primarily home to humans of mixed or non-native ethnicity, particularly those not from the Core. Zherisians are competitive enough with their own; they do not welcome obvious outsiders' encroachment on their already cramped territory. The shops of these foreigners stand side by side with those of calibans and half-Vistani, and thrive because their communities are tight-knit and supportive of their members - and because they are made so unwelcome in other buroughs.

The "Shrouded Way" Mistway is located here; the area is known as 'Little Darkon' for this reason. This is rumoured to be Bloody Jack's escape route. Xenophobes take this as proof that he is one of Freak Street's residents. It doesn't occur to them to wonder why Bloody Jack would flee into Darkon, if his (presumably) safer home is near at hand, nor do they consider the fact that calibans and half-Vistani are no more common in that country than here. Every 13 years, the people of Southshore must therefore live in fear of reprisal for the actions of Bloody Jack.

Local architecture reflects the mixed heritage of residents. Although buildings are built and designed as Zherisian, they are decorated and repaired to emulate Darkonian or more-exotic styles. Signs are often written in foreign tongues, and unusual fashions fill the streets. There are human residents from as far away as Rokushima Taiyoo, Sri Raji, Har'Akir and Pharazia.

The Southshore contains this city's centuries-old ghetto for its non-humans, most notably calibans and half-Vistani. The ghetto originated as a small crescent set aside for caliban dock-workers, thus segregating them from their purer co-workers and perhaps sparing pregnant women frights which might contaminate unborn children.

The ghetto has since expanded beyond its original boundaries, and is divided between

Dread Possibility- Fate of the Jackals?

During Bloody Jack's thirteenth killing spree, a clan of jackalweres sided with Sir Edmund Bloodsworth against Sodo and his doppelgangers. After a group of adventurers defeated Bloodsworth, Sodo had the surviving jackalweres locked up beneath the Museum of Paridon. Sealing a Bone of the Jackals (VRA) in the walls alongside every entrance and exit to the building, he left the clan there to rot.

However, Sodo had overlooked a single ventilation shaft, that gave the captives a passage from the Museum's basement into Timor. The marikith, of course, are not welcoming, but the jackals have used the shaft to survive. Should one of these Bones ever be removed from the walls, by mishap or renovation, the jackalweres would be unleashed upon the city.

its two societies, but the area is still known by the name of 'Freak Street'.

Very few people wander alone into the calibans' area; they usually seek the anonymity of the mob to do so. One of the few humans to regularly visit there is Dr. Niles Patterson, who has set up a small surgery catering to calibans. The "Ellie-Mack", or Elucidating Museum of Anthropological Curiosities, is also on the fringes of this community, as are its boxing and wrestling arenas; this handy arrangement spares human visitors the taint of entering the "cursed" community. These base entertainments have proven surprisingly popular with humans, both rich and poor.

Visitors are often startled that a half-Vistani community of any size should be found in what might be considered an isolated corner of the Mists. The mystery is explained by several interleaved factors. Firstly, Paridon is a trade hub, only accessible via the Mists.

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Dr Niles Patterson

Doctor Niles Patterson of Nosos had a caliban sister who'd been hidden all her short life in the family attic. The youth's sympathy for her plight inspired his interest in teratology: the study of human anomalies. He studied at the University of Paridon, and thanks to his father's "funding" (in exchange for his silence about the family secret), he was able to fund his own establishment.

The Institute is located in Shadewell, much to his neighbours' disgust. He resides in this converted house, within walking distance of the University, to which many interns come to study and practice. He visits his small surgery in the Southshore twice a week to provide his services to his healthier clientele, often for free. He also caters to another, related clientele: the Remnants of Timor.

Secondly, in Paridon very few doors are closed to the wealthy, as which many half-Vistani traders qualify. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly of all, their heritage seems extremely difficult for doppelgangers to counterfeit. Thus, half-Vistani are often trusted more (if liked less) by their pure-blooded Zherisian compatriots than they dare to trust each other.

One prominent group of half-Vistani tradesmen, referred to as "Captains of the Mists", make their headquarters at the Crimson Club. Much of Paridon's import and export business is negotiated in its common room. Unlike virtually every other club in Paridon, it accepts females provided they meet the entrance requirements: all applicants must have successfully guided trading expeditions through the Mists. Male Captains are far more common, as many Zherisians (and foreigners, for that matter) are unwilling to hire a woman caravan leader or ship captain.

The Captains of the Mists

In past years, the Zherisian Cartographic Society was run by human nobles. Since the Conjunction and the increased need for trade, these dilettantes have been replaced by the more adept half-Vistani Captains of the Mists. Under their helm, Zherisia's trade with foreign lands has tripled.

For many Mist-captains, their quarters at the Club are the closest thing they have to a home. Unsurprisingly, the Captains are a peripatetic lot, and at any given time a clear majority are engaged in their business travels.

I believe these half-Vistani men and women may prove vital when exploring the farthest reaches of the Mists. A more detailed explanation of the group follows later. I assure you, they will keep any confidences we see fit to afford them to themselves: keeping secrets, after all, is as much in their blood as Mist-roving.

Commercially, this borough lacks the broad diversity of Riverside, but its prices are more reasonable - if you are one of their own, that is. However, Southshore boasts rarities and curiosities unavailable elsewhere. While Riverside features foreign goods, Southshore has the craftsmen themselves. I have reports of vendors selling potions of immortality, statues that come to life, creatures that reproduce through moisture, and musical instruments that control emotions.

The Southshore accent exhibits no significant differences from that of the Docks, save that one hears more slang from other realms. There are also a wide variety of foreign accents in this borough, due to an increasing flow of immigrants from those islands with which Zherisia now trades.

King's Quarters

Small Town; AL LN; CL 9; gp limit 25,000; Assets 1,050,000gp; Population 120

And so, I turn now to the last and (arguably) greatest borough of Paridon. King's Quarters are home to Zherisia's aristocracy and government. Buildings here are gigantic, of elaborate, archaic designs that date back to the roots of the Zherisian kingdom. They are constructed entirely of luxury metals and fine stone: copper and gilt iron, granite and marble. Guard-posts are everywhere; no one passes though this borough unobserved by its watchmen's eyes. Guard-shifts are rotated unpredictably, so that criminals cannot exploit a pattern in their schedule; the guardians themselves are frequently reposted, to minimize the temptation and utility of bribery.

The City Council meets in Paridon's largest and oldest edifice: the Zherisian Parliament Building. Looming up like a father over his children, this building (indeed, this entire borough) seems to rear over the rest of the city.

Yasuo Kumoda

An herbalist from Rokushima Taiyoo and a recent newcomer to Paridon, Kumoda prepares pills, salves, and other remedies from exotic herbs for all kinds of suffering, particularly his increasingly popular "elixir of youth". The old man lives with his young daughter Yoriko.

Actually a necromancer driven from his homeland for his vile practices, he kills young street urchins and buries them in his garden. Thus, he cultivates a special mushroom he calls "death's whisper". The mushrooms' powder rejuvenates the old, but Kumoda is quite selective about whom he deems worthy of this 'gift'. Kumoda has a kenku minion hidden in his attic that he sends to fetch victims.

Yoriko is always veiled because she has serpent eyes; she is Yasuo's familiar, transformed by the faux henchman spell.

The curious are allowed into the front alcove of the Parliament Building, a square sixty-foot room with countless doors into its depths; only those with both official business and written approval are ever permitted beyond. The Councilmen, their personal aides, and the elite Parliamentary Guards are the only persons familiar with the building's full interior layout.

By the use of magical persuasion, I have learned that there is a hallway past the centermost northern door, leading to a lounge. This lounge is soundproof, as is nearly every room in the facility. The charmed Guard's normal duty was to patrol one of three passages leading from this lounge. Upon releasing the guard, he returned to his post without conscious recollection of my "queries". Strangely, the man was called for "inspection" thereafter; I did not see him return to his post.

In regard to this incident, I now point to the included section on doppelgangers in the Attached Notes. Perhaps this will give more insight on exactly what goes on within the walls of King's Quarters.

King's Quarters seem less of a living borough than a monument to the larger nation now lost. Statues honouring famed Zherisian heroes of times past dot the landscape; no gardens or parks have been re-dedicated to cropland here. The Royal Zherisian Gallery hosts portraits of the realm's erstwhile monarchs, most of them all but forgotten by the populace. The borough's posh residents amble about languidly, well-fed and sleek, and interact little with the general populace save for the servants. The rest of the city, proud of its modern sophistication, look on this borough as a doddering old man, due shortly to be replaced by a younger, more vibrant heir.

The "old man" is well aware of this, of course. The high walls around King's Quarters have withstood the test of time for decades. Cast of hard black iron, they have a thin lining of lead within them to cancel any attempts to scry (I have tried). Alarms both mechanical and magical are positioned everywhere, as are stockpiles of riot shields and firearms.

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The Parasite that Lies Within

The 'Paridon in Short' sidebar states its percentage of human and non-human inhabitants. However, it does not state just how many doppelgangers currently reside within the city. Because of their imitative nature, the doppelgangers' population has instead been added into the human population.

Doppelganger society is broken up into socioeconomic classes, each generally found in different boroughs. The hub of all doppelganger activity is in King's Quarters. The recommended racial percentages for this borough's elite are 30% doppelgangers, 70% humans, but the DM should feel free to adjust these numbers as she chooses.

Regardless of how many doppelgangers are actually present, they are embedded within the very heart of the city's power structure. Should the PCs dare to boldly sneak around in the Zherisian Parliament Building, they may later find themselves beset by "accidents" or hounded by the legal authorities, even if they failed to discover anything important.

The borough's watchers are alert, and its guards quick to act. King's Quarters is forever alert for its greatest terror: city-wide revolution. And yet, though there's always been talk of revolution, an actual coup attempt has never occurred - or, if it has, was crushed so completely as not to have been recorded at all.

The King's Quarters accent is referred to as "cut-glass" by the rest of the populace, with its clipped vowels and rolling R's. Their speech is archaic, relying on antique euphemisms and turns of phrase from an earlier era. It sounds scholarly to foreigners, but more pretentious than distinguished to natives. Admittedly, I have been known to feign it during my own travels.

Flora and Fauna

Zherisia is an urban realm. During the Upheaval, the rural countryside was severed from the city. Hunger plagued the masses,

Native Horrors

Natural: CR 1/10 Bat; CR 1/8 Rat, Tiny monstrous centipede; CR 1/6 Raven; CR 1/4 Cat, Owl; CR 1/3 Dire rat, Dog, Small monstrous centipede, Small monstrous spider; CR 1/2 Medium monstrous centipede; CR 1 Large monstrous centipede, Spider swarm; CR 2 Bat swarm, Dire bat, Giant assassin bug, Huge monstrous centipede, Rat swarm; CR 3 Assassin vine; CR 4 Centipede swarm; CR 5 Huge monstrous spider; CR 6 Gargantuan monstrous centipede; CR 9, Colossal monstrous centipede.

Unnatural: CR 1 Homunculus; CR 2 Marikith hunter*, CR 3 Dread doppelganger*, Ethereal filcher, Ettercap, Shadow; CR 4 Gargoyle, Mimic, Vampire spawn, Vampyre*; CR 5 Cloaker, Wraith; CR 6 Red widow*, Wax golem*; CR 7 Invisible stalker, Nosferatu*, Spectre, Vampire, Vorlog*; CR 8 Doll golem*, Glass golem*, Shield guardian; CR 10 Clay golem, Dhampir*, Gargoyle golem*, Rakshasa; CR 11; Flesh golem*, Mechanical golem*; CR 13 Iron golem.

Variable: Animator, Animated object, Elemental, Evolved undead, Geist, Ghost, Ghost brute, Lost ones, Umbral creature.

*See Denizens of Dread

and the city began to devour whatever forage it had, even common weeds and animals formerly considered pets. This does not mean that Paridon is now completely devoid of vegetation.

Sparse areas of botanical life can still be found within parks or gardens. For some, these tiny niches of growth are lifelines, for others they are merely a luxury.

"Wildlife" has been reduced to urban scavengers, such as gulls and rats. Such creatures have been spared only because their meat is often contaminated, and the effort to capture them usually exceeds its value. Occasional vermin such as spiders or centipedes spew up from the depths of Timor. Smaller livestock and poultry are still kept in the Bowels, Shadewell, and King's

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Quarters; horses, devoured to the verge of extinction after the Upheaval, have been re-introduced by wealthier families and businesses that utilise them.

The Docks do not have any parks or gardens; gulls and rats are the only fauna found here. Only fools bother trying to fish along the polluted Nodnal; any fish that survive its dearth of algae and other life are left as toxic as the befouled river, itself. In the northern end of Blackchapel there are a few spots that once were parks, but have now been now turned to agricultural use. Houses have also been torn down there, to create more farmland. Rooftops here and in the Bowels are also converted into garden plots.

One often sees hardy, practical, and shade-tolerant crops, such as tomatoes and zucchini. In the Bowels one also sees perennial herbs of medicinal value, such as echinacea or flax-weed. In the southern Bowels, all of the parks are now converted to cropland. However, unlike Blackchapel's smog-strangled plots, these actually produce

a reasonable bounty of food, and most are farmed by Celebrants. In the north, there are still a few tiny parks left for leisure.

Shadewell has an impressive amount of land devoted to 'green space', at least if compared to the rest of the city. Each mansion boasts its own lawn, which is typically delineated by a white picket fence. Every man has a vegetable garden, and most boast flowerbeds and trained shrubs (some of which are trimmed as topiary). Backyards now serve as horse-pastures, a grudging concession to scant fodder, kept out of sight.

Estates in King's Quarters host vast gardens, and the gardeners work hard to cultivate exotic species from as far off as Sri Raji. Queen's Park in this borough is a massive, manicured re-creation of our mourned Zherisian countryside. These gardens and Queen's Park together take up nearly a tenth of Paridon's acreage.



Geographical Survey

Mundane Sights and Sounds

Backchapel

- The street reeks of excreta.
- A group of poor people glare at you with envy and hatred.
- A door is open to air out an apartment. Its tiny, fetid room houses seven.
- A man tries to sell you a pocket watch. Its owner's name is scratched off.
- A woman, face swollen by a black eye, pleads wordlessly for your help as she's dragged off by an angry, large man.
- A grubby young girl runs by, clutching a sack in which something squirms.
- An insane man mutters to himself in an alley, whilst feasting on rats.
- A scream is heard in the distance, then ends abruptly and ominously.

The Bowels

- Old ladies pause in their gossiping on a nearby rooftop to watch you.
- A vender calls out the Newsbill's latest headlines; a passerby stops to buy it.
- The Clock Tower tolls and passersby check their timepieces
- Something is felt moving in the earth, under the PCs feet.
- There is the sound of breaking glass in a house nearby.
- The Roof Patrol's footsteps thud on the wooden walkway above
- Six o'clock tolls, and the street floods with clerks and officials headed home.
- A journalist interviews a policeman outside an empty house.

The Docks

- A boat overflowing with passengers sluggishly approaches a dock.
- Locals throw bricks and stones at new immigrants, many of whom look part Vistani.
- The bustling crowd pushes an unwary man off the edge of a dock. His luggage floats in the water where he fell.
- A lost child screams for her mother, as dockworkers yell at her to be quiet.
- A family of foreigners looking for a hot meal stand in bewilderment, having no idea where they should go to find one.
- An unruly new arrival's weapons are confiscated by the Paridon Police.
- A boat whistle echoes. Men yell at each other to get ready.
- Calibans unload large, wooden crates from a boat, shoving aside several folk.
- A foghorn sounds. The dockworkers tie off a large boat.

King's Quarters

- A policeman approaches and politely but firmly asks where you are going.
- A well-dressed man pulls out a monocle to stare at you.
- A finely-dressed little girl asks her tutor why you are dressed funny.
- A group of servants trudge towards the gates of a nearby manor.
- A group of youths loll in the park with a picnic basket.

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Riverside

- A shopper casts a trinket to the ground, complaining about its outrageous price.
- A cloud of plaster dust falls on the PCs from an overhead construction site. High above, several workers balance on the support beams.
- Two shopkeepers bicker over whose produce is best.
- A man pushes one of the PCs (Ref DC 12 or fall), saying to get out of his way.
- A customer attempts to haggle, but the merchant won't budge from the item's asking-price.
- A man asks one of the PCs the time, as a pickpocket moves in behind them (Spot DC 20)
- A shop is being boarded up, its wares seized, as its owner bawls in the street.
- A shop owner tries to convince the PCs that he has the best prices in town.
- A butcher throws away a spoiled piece of meat. Immediately, a boy snatches it.
- A boy tries to sell the PCs a Newsbill (possibly yesterday's) for one pound.
- Street urchins eyeball a rich businessmen. They then scatter and vanish into the crowd.
- Someone subtly hands a wallet off to another person. Soon after, someone else yells, "I've been robbed."

Shadewell

- A boom resounds and a puff of smoke billows out of a nearby upstairs window.
- A couple pass by on their brand new bicycles.
- A policeman halts a man for dropping a wadded newspaper on a nearby lawn.
- A group of youths perform calisthenics on the University grounds.
- A governess pushes a large, unwieldy pram to a nearby park.
- A carriage passes by, the only vehicle on the road.

The Southshore

- A group of human lads dare one of their number to walk into Freak Street.
- A winking caliban invites you to see the Ellie-Mack's fine exhibits, "goblins, elves, and other rarities" included.
- A bookie is taking bets for tonight's boxing match.
- A half-Vistani flourishes a deck of tarokka cards, offering to tell your fortune for ten pounds.
- An adolescent carves a crude insult into the wooden wall between the Bowels and the Southshore.
- Non-humans eye you warily.

Sociological Survey

Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Before reading this chapter, there is one fact which must be made clear: the Great Upheaval transformed society in my homeland to an extent unprecedented anywhere else within this Land of Mists. On July 3, 740, the old nation of Zherisia diminished to just the city of Paridon. In the blink of an eye, half the population vanished, along with the country's past natural resources and agricultural self-sufficiency. The city has since teetered on the brink of revolution, undergone an industrial boom, and seen an incredible rise in the numbers and influence of its middle class.

Our first post-Upheaval generation has begun to enter adulthood. Our heirs are impeded by neither the loss of, nor a nostalgia for, a country and a way of life. Such children are the first entirely urban generation of Zherisians. One can only wonder what innovations and values this generation shall bring forth in future.

Indigenous Peoples

Zherisia's indigenous population is overwhelmingly human. We bear some physical resemblance to the Mordentish: fair complexions with rosy cheeks and a predominance of grey eyes. This holds true for the healthy citizen; however, for the malnourished majority, complexions tend to be pale or sallow and the latest generation has been plagued with rickets. Lack of access to fresh meat, milk, and produce is to blame for this. Teeth are also notoriously bad, due to insufficient calcium and scurvy.

Zherisians are of average height and medium-sized build; one can often guess at a man's wealth by his weight. Hair is straight or wavy, and rarely black. Men keep their hair short, but mustaches, beards, and muttonchops are acceptable. Women pin their hair into buns; the more elaborate, the greater the indication she is a lady of leisure.

As mentioned earlier, there are two non-human minorities that live in Zherisia. The most numerous are our resident calibans. These dress like their human compatriots in Blackchapel and, while some are slovenly, most make an effort to keep up appearances,

and not live to their stereotype. In a similar vein, while their speech patterns may be simple, "our" calibans are usually polite and well-mannered.

Soon after 740, there was a sharp rise in the incidence of caliban births, now thought to have been a side effect of the Upheaval. Their infant mortality rate, however, has always been high - at least, in human homes - and coroner's records reveal they seem to be very "accident-prone". Calibans are legally recognized as humans, but court records reveal that criminal sentences tend to run lighter if the victim is from this group.

Half-Vistani also reside in Zherisia, and exhibit an odd amalgamation of their natal and adoptive cultures. Both sexes usually wear their hair loose and long, sporting the gold earrings, necklaces and rings so often associated with the Vistani, but they take their other fashions from Zherisia - albeit with a certain "gypsy flair", often imitated by the younger and more daring of Paridon's gentry. If one sees a man without any top-hat, dark hair to his shoulders, clad in an impeccably-white shirt and dark suit, with a brightly-colored neckerchief in lieu of a cravat or bow-tie, and trousers bloused over knee-high riding boots, one instantly knows him for a half-Vistani bravo, and dressed to the nines. Similarly, womenfolk with Vistani blood will often be seen wearing demure dresses set off by a colorful scarf, and (most shocking of all) wearing their hair down.

While the calibans are oft pitied and patronized, they are spared the hostility directed toward half-Vistani. The wider Zherisian population is offended by how close-knit their exclusive community is, often charging them with apathy towards society as a whole. Critics tend to forget how very unwelcome such citizens are in other boroughs, and turn a blind eye (if not a complicit wink) to those thugs who actualised their own aggressive thoughts. Most of this resentment rises from envy: Paridon's half-Vistani are successful and well-to-do; their dwellings are clean and nicely tended; their services are highly sought. The rest is xenophobia, but that seems to be a universal burden of the Vistani and their half-breed kin.

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Recently, I encountered rumours of a new breed of doppelgangers, offshoots lacking the parent race's thought-reading ability. These "changelings" are still rare and little-known, but allegedly growing in number. While of potential interest to the Fraternity, I am in no fit position to investigate, so I have sent references to Brother Lochspeare for consideration.

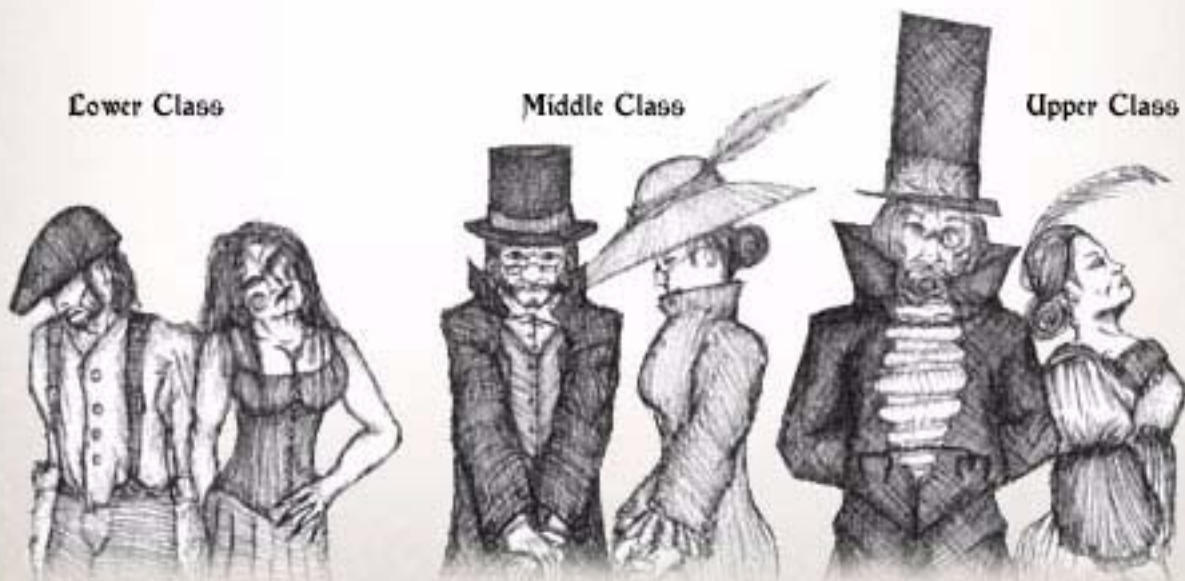
Now a quick description of Zherisia's other "indigenous people": in their natural state, doppelgangers stand about six feet tall with elongated faces. Their arms are disproportionably long, hands dangling past their knees. Their skin is rubbery and pewter-coloured, glistening with a slick grease that coats their body. Doppelgangers have calculating black eyes and are entirely hairless. Despite their humanoid stance, their anatomy is dissimilar from our own. Most notably, they lack gender although most have a preference of male or female.

Like hags, doppelgangers are bred and born in human form, first transforming at an age when humans undergo puberty. I interviewed a subject on this (My thanks again to Hazan for the techniques of persuasions. I was having trouble getting results with my usual methods.) who confirmed this and spoke of his own experiences.

Doppelgangers are born human but find themselves detached from human society, unable to fully connect with us. While their ability to detect thoughts has not yet matured, they quickly sense the duplicity, lies and hypocrisy that guide most human life. Alienated, they begin to despise people until their abilities develop and they are found by their clan. Doppelgangers have an eerie sixth sense for their maturing young (perhaps related to the "pheromones" hypothesized by Brother Reuland).

Daily Life

There are three classes in Paridon. The nobles are the richest men in the city, due not only to long-established business interests but their ownership of nearly all remaining land. A fixed network of 'old money' and two centuries of tradition nurture their conceit of superiority. They see nothing wrong in importing cream and strawberries for a wedding while the general populace ails from malnutrition. Their cosseted children dabble in the arts and University studies, whilst the family patriarch meets with advisors who tend his properties and businesses, signing the requisite paperwork, before returning to his own diversions, relying on his more ambitious peers to rule the City Council in his favour.



The Metamorphosis Gland

The doppelgangers' transformations are regulated by an organ beneath the brain called the metamorphosis gland. This modified pituitary gland triggers shape-changes by releasing hormones into the blood. These activate chromatophores in the skin and contraction by cutaneous muscles, permitting structural and color changes to take place; commands from the nervous system must then select the desired features, complexion, etc. Some practice is required for doppelgangers to master the latter skill, and adolescents of their kind transform at random. Indeed, severance of this control is the biological basis for Sodo's ever-changing state.

Removing its metamorphosis gland from a dread doppelganger's body disables its Change Shape ability. Extracting the gland intact requires a Heal check (DC 40), but the DC is halved by a successful Knowledge (Dungeoneering or Nature) check (DC 24). Once the metamorphosis gland has been removed, it cannot be re-implanted. Should a subject consume a freshly-extracted metamorphosis gland, she must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or else randomly change her shape, as per the spell *alter self*, for 2d4 days. If a doppelganger stripped of its own gland should consume the gland of another, it regains its Change Shape power for 2d4 days, fully under its conscious control.

With an appropriate Craft (Alchemy) check (DC 30), a fresh metamorphosis gland can be kept viable indefinitely in a small jar; a Heal check at the same DC can likewise preserve it within a bath of simulated (or real!) cerebrospinal fluid. Either means of preserving the gland's function in vitro costs 500 gp. Liquid secreted by the gland can be collected once a day, and used to make potions of *alter self* or an equivalent alchemical formula, which reduces their base cost by 10%. The effects of such concoctions are up to the DM. It is impossible to tell what form an imbiber will take until the mixture is consumed.

The aristocrats declare that the class divide is innately entrenched in Paridon culture, and that their role within the city is indisputable. They are, however, very insular, and spend most of their time in King's Quarters. Doctors visit homes not only to deal with emergencies but for routine examinations, as if leaving their rarified environment may be too onerous for the patient. Certain activities do require public appearances: the theatres, Temple, University, or Parliament. Yet when nobles emerge for other activities, it is often by pre-arranged and exclusive appointments. This applies not only to expeditions to a tailor, jeweler, or salon, but to the museum and galleries, where they arrange for private viewings. They expound at length about the reverence in which they are held by the lower classes, yet remain well separated from them.

The middle class has seen incredible growth in numbers since the Forties, as well as an increase in wealth and status. Theirs are the new businesses which are thriving; theirs are the knowledge and services sought abroad. They have the envy and respect of the poor, being seen to have earned their places in a highly-competitive venue. Most are merchants, gifted craftsmen, educated professionals, government officials, or clerks.

The bourgeois are great proponents of the 'work ethic', having attained their status by constant effort. Moving freely throughout the city, they are courteous to nobles, but hardly sycophantic; most are also astonishingly civil to their inferiors. Quick to mentor the needy via lodges or workplace, they recognize ingenuity and talent, and are willing to foster it to their advantage. Any setbacks suffered by this class are generally only complained of in private; more often, they will take action to correct them ("vigilance committees" are a prime example of this activism). As they struggle to improve their lot, some follow a tried-and-true tactic of marrying into respectability. Others, however, are content to put their mercantile profits to work, and "buy off" Council candidates whose stance supports their self-interest. This is not only common but remarkably effective.

Sociological Survey

Whatever their means, there is a growing feeling that it is only a matter of time before the middle class are fully integrated into the city's power-structure, and this confidence is obvious in one's dealings with them.

The lower class is the most populous, as in all lands. Their incomes are quickly swallowed up by the costs of daily living. These are the manual labourers and beat-patrolmen, street vendors and domestic servants; all putting in long hours at their places of employment. Those who have not succumbed to addictions - alcohol, laudanum, or other vices - return to their cramped quarters to spend the last few minutes of each day with their children. They take their youth to the Temple to meet lodge members or attend seminars, hoping it will provide a fruitful contact or direction for a future vocation. On their days off, the common folk tend to communal gardens, savouring a rare opportunity to be outdoors. The elderly reminisce about the meadows and fields of old Zherisia, where they used to toil.

The poor delight in a freedom which they feel their fellows around the world are denied. They openly complain about prices, their jobs, and the "posh" social classes, confident they will not be swept off to prison. They are courteous to their social superiors out of personal pride, not deference or fear. They proudly read the Newsbill, as many are functionally literate. Their children are brought up to believe that the nobility are not "better" than them, just luckier.

This proletariat believe that no other place offers them a chance to rise above their humble circumstances. Isolated by Mists for centuries, they regard the Core as medieval. Dementlieu and Lamordia are granted grudging acknowledgement, but suffer by association. Lamordians have no "soul" due to their materialistic beliefs. The "Dementos" (a pejorative slang term) are not only newcomers, but frivolous and utterly backwards in their treatment of the lower classes.

The unsaid truth is, of course, that the vast majority of the poor will never rise, due to fierce competition from their fellows. Many

fall prey to apathy and frustration, and turn to domestic violence or addiction to deal with their sense of failure. They incur too many debts or break the law, dragging their families still further down. Even when they live a 'clean' life, many fall prey to disease. While direct death from starvation is rare, malnutrition is a silent plague, favouring the contagions which bring down many of this class.

Doppelgangers' society lies cloaked within our own. It is evidently organised to advance two goals: to protect their Grandmaster, and to maximise internal competition. Each imposter has a "niche": a milieu in human society that said imposter is skilled in inhabiting. A niche will typically be the identity of a single person; less often, two or more identities will be taken by a doppelganger or, even more rarely, a single role shared among several.

A niche's status among humans will frequently reflect a doppelganger's rank, in their own society. Each doppelganger holds a rank among its own kind, dictating its place in a long chain of command; each doppelganger strives to increase its rank by pursuing tasks for its clan and engineering the demotion of competitors. Infighting is common and often spills over into the lives of their human alter-egos, such as merchants viciously competing in trade or a pair of feuding families.

There are few true changes in rank; one need only note the low mortality rate of aristocrats to realize this. It is just as difficult to rise from a low rank in their society as ours. Those doppelgangers in positions of power are typically the craftiest and have no compunction from using their role's power to crush rivals.

Shadewell is "a cherished plum" for imposters, yet there seems to be doubt -if not a sense of taboo- about the rise of the bourgeois. Doppelganger society is uneasy with the ascent of the middle class; indeed, several whose true ranks did not merit such prestige have risen nonetheless in human society, almost despite themselves.

Doppelganger "clans" are extended families, each clan being assigned to a

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certain class of niches and duties. Some clans are entrusted with securing assets that protect their race's security, such as infiltration of the police force; others are set to monitor and manipulate trends in politics, economics, or public opinion. A complicated clan hierarchy exists, with certain clans being favoured socially over others. It is impossible to move from clan to clan, and virtually impossible for a clan to drastically improve its status; falls in status are, conversely, all too easy should a doppelganger's error or negligence disappoint its superiors. The failure of one member affects the entire clan.

Historically, doppelgangers appear to have had an egalitarian society, in which clans worked together with shared goals to ensure secrecy and prosperity. Some centuries ago, this changed radically and now the clans war against each other, attempting to counter each other's schemes and gain personal power. The influence of clans waxes or wanes over the years. And within their clans, individuals squabble for influence and status, eagerly stabbing each other in the back in the hope of one day being the Clan Leader.

Language

Zherisia's native tongue is singular compared to the languages of the Core. Its vocabulary borrows heavily from High and Low Mordentish, Darkonese, and even Lamordian. However, this is where the similarities end.

Nouns do not undergo any form of declension beyond distinction of singular from plural. There is also an absence of gender in its use of adjectives, verbs and articles (e.g. the big table/the big cat, as compared to la grande table/le grand chat). Regular verbs (and there are very few irregular ones) are always the same in the present tense, save the third person singular (I/you/we/they buy; he/she buys). In most tenses, a single form of a verb is universal, exceptions being the present continuous (I am/you are/he is going) and present perfect (I have/he has gone).

Sentence structure is perforce linear: subjects must come before verbs, and the verb before the object (I hate monsters). Adjectives must precede the nouns they describe (green apples = pommes vertes). Inversions of both rules are sometimes seen in poetic or archaic writings, but to attempt this in day-to-day speech would be considered bizarre. There are also no silent subjects; one must say I love you, rather than the Darkonese *te amo*.

This simplicity of grammar stands in contrast to highly irregular spelling and a multiplicity of homonyms. Tot, taught, and taut are all pronounced the same way. Similarly, through, dough, tough, and brought become thru, doh, tuff, and braht ... none of which partake of the sounds commonly ascribed to the letters g or h. There are many elisions called "contractions" in Zherisian: have-'ve; had-'d; not- n't; will- 'll; are-'re; is- 's. The last can be quite troublesome, as this form is also used to represent possession (Greg's book), so attention must be paid as to whether a verb has been identified. Even then, there can be problems with pronunciation: do not becomes don't, but the latter is pronounced with a long o.

A Foreign Anatomy

Doppelgangers are not true aberrations, but still possess alien anatomies. What would be a vulnerable spot for any other humanoid creature may not necessarily be so, on a doppelganger.

Sneak attacks or critical hits have a 50% chance of failure, similar to the special ability fortification for magical armours. Spells dependent upon anatomy, such as rheumatism, suffer a 25% chance of failure with doppelgangers. All Heal and Profession (medicine) checks made on doppelgangers believed to be humans (i.e. those currently shape-changed) take a -8 penalty, applied secretly by the DM.

Characters with eight or more ranks in Knowledge (Dungeoneering or Nature), or who have monstrous humanoids for a favoured enemy, halve the penalties above. Those with both take no penalty.

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Blackchapel Slang

Chamber pot	Bowler
Foggy!	Strange!
The Hat Shop	The insane asylum
Hatter	Madman
Irons	Weapons, especially guns
Ladybird	Prostitute
Necktie/Necklace	Garotte
Perry	Citizen of Paridon
Robby	Policeman
Sparky	Scientist
Spike	Dagger, knife, short blade
Stargazer	Wizard
Topper	Upper-class man

To complicate matters still further, Zherisian has borrowed industriously from every language it has ever come in contact with, providing a multiplicity of synonyms, especially for adjectives, and generates an astonishing amount of slang. In extreme cases, Zherisians of different social classes may as well be speaking two different languages.

The language must be considered unpoetic and inelegant, especially in its simple sentence structures; but it is also very easy to learn at a basic, functioning level. It is not particularly good for philosophy, but its breadth of vocabulary and general fluidity make it well-adapted to technical writing. It readily lends a surprising pungency and vividness to colloquial speech.

Some scholars also use Draconic, the language of magic with which my Brothers should be more than familiar. While I do not credence the existence of actual dragons, the language named after them is known by quite a few Zherisians. Darkonians find this comical: that city-bound, mundane scribes should be fluent in the tongue of the arcane.

Doppelgangers have independent language and make use of the local tongues. Traditionally they used their ability to detect thoughts, although this doesn't allow them to project thoughts, only to read them.

Traditionally, doppelgangers had to open their minds to clansmen and fellow doppelgangers and communicated through reading each other's mind and replying through surface thoughts. This was used to show trust and the suppression of individuality for the good of the clans. However, in recent decades this has become less and less common and doppelgangers more frequently shield their minds from kin.

Fashion

The following submissions on fashion and food are presented by Brother Germaine Beauregard, Dementlieuse fop and gourmand.

- A.L.

I must say that, despite being a culturally advanced city, Zherisia has little in the way of its own fashion - much to my wardrobe's sorrow.

Men of the lower class typically own three sets of clothing: long-sleeved white or brown cotton shirts and brown coarse-woven cotton pants, with sturdy black boots; an outdated suit worn on special occasions; and a final set lined with wool, to hold back the chill of winter. Dress suits are routinely passed down from eldest to youngest and often show a patchwork of stitching and repairs that go back years. Labourers' work clothes seldom survive long enough to be passed down or outgrown.

Women fare slightly better, since most are taught to stitch and sew from an early age.



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They make their own clothes out of whatever material they can find. Alas, the quantity in their wardrobe hasn't increased their options in colour beyond black and grey; they even dye expensive discards neutral hues, to avert the charge of theft. Their fashions ape the middle-class's, to which they aspire.

The bourgeois fare much better in their choice of garments. While dress codes prevail for professional duties, one is just as likely to see them in their best clothing when off-duty. Black and earth tones are typical. Men's current fashion is a 'three-piece' suit, consisting of dark pantaloons, a white cotton shirt, a light vest made of materials ranging from cotton to soft leather or deerskin, and a thick cotton jacket with polished buttons. While commonly made from brass or copper, the well-to-do enjoy buttons of gold, silver, and pearl. Jewelry of any kind is strictly frowned upon, although affectations such as pocket watches or decorative snuffboxes are allowed.

Middle-class women (oddly) sniff at Dementlieu fashions, dismissing its many fine features as frippery. They call their Zherisian 'style' sharp, elegant and simple; what I label plain and drab. They permit themselves more colours than do the men, but remain limited to somber or deeper shades: navy blue, forest green, burgundy. Buttons are tiny, almost as discreet as their prim wearers. They wear tiny earrings, and the only rings or pendants bearing stones of any notable size are 'family jewelry' - mawkish affairs in which a proud mother sports birthstones representing her brood.

There is one item which Zherisian society is united in wearing, rich or poor, male or female: hats. No adult (save in Southshore) goes without one. Standing in a crowd, one can easily identify any outsiders present by their bared heads. Aristocratic ladies wear delicious, ornate concoctions sporting veils, feathers, and flowers. The lower classes tend toward simple bonnets and broad-brimmed hats of straw or felt, perhaps adorned with a single ribbon. Men's hats are not so distinctly separated: domestics often are gifted with old top hats, brought home to their men. Caps are favoured by the poor, but cyclists in Shadewell have taken to wearing these as

well. There is one atrocity I pray never makes its way to the Core: called a 'bowler' it supposedly resembles its namesake. I personally feel it resembles a chamber pot myself, and is about as charming.

Food

With food being in short supply, Zherisians have no concept of wastage when it comes to their meals. If it is vaguely edible, it makes its way into one dish or another. Nobles, in an obvious ploy to garner admiration from the poor, donate the leftovers of their feasts to various soup kitchens across the city.

Root vegetables (potatoes, onions, etc.) and fruits that travel well (apples or oranges) are a part of the educated man's diet. Dried legumes (lentils, peas and beans) have also begun to making their way into the Zherisian diet, as doctors promote those foods rich in protein and calcium to a people without ready access to meat and dairy products.

Despite a relative availability of such food, Zherisians seem to have a natural aversion to fresh fruit and vegetables. Everything is thoroughly cooked. When the wealthy do serve fruit slices, it is alongside a chocolate fondue. Salad, a great status symbol, is drowned in vinaigrettes and dressings.

The meals of nobles are extravagant if rather bland affairs. Large portions of meat and vegetables are served, but they are often flavored with only salt and pepper. Imported seafood is swimming in butter, with one slice of lemon for the virtuous. More common fare such as stews and casseroles are frowned upon, whilst dessert is elevated to an art form. My Esteemed Brothers, you must try the strawberry tart with whipped cream in a brandy glaze. It was the most delectable sweet I have ever had the pleasure to eat.

The middle class indulge once each week in a fillet (meat or fish), chop, or roast. The rest of the time, they favour puddings (particularly steak and kidney), stews and pies. As the most educated class, they also tend to be the healthiest in their eating habits.

The poor suffer a strange hardship in their overcrowded apartments: a lack of cooking

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stoves. The hearth is their oven, and most families possess no more than one pot and a skillet. Families tend to make stews, simply because it can be left unattended, to simmer all day, as they work. And however poor they may be, all Zherisians have a sweet tooth; those who can, indulge it with jelly, treacle, jam, or the occasional purchase of sweet biscuits. Others favour a curious dessert, suggestively named spotted dick: a steamed suet pudding with dried fruit.

With an increase in single adults and childless couples, it is quite common to see citizens purchase at least one meal a day from nearby inns and pubs. Some of their most popular dishes have boggling names: toad-in-the-hole (sausage cooked in batter), bangers and mash (sausages and mashed potatoes), black pudding (sausage including blood and fat). As you can tell, sausages are a staple, made of the cheapest meats and organs. There are always rumours - and sometimes more - about whence such meats come.

Only the most destitute citizens dare to fish along the rancid river and Docks, but there are a couple of fishing boats that trawl the Misty border. Whitefish is their treasured catch, used for the most popular of Zherisian street-fare: fish and chips (batter-coated fillet with strips of potatoes, both deep-fried). Small catches are mashed together with bread crumbs and molded into ball or stick shapes: the cheaper the price, the less actual fish the meal contains. There are some concerns about the safety of eating fish caught so close to both the polluted harbor and the Mists, but Zherisians are willing to take a chance to enjoy their favourite 'dish'.

There is a unique fourth meal here, known as 'tea'. It is held daily in every aristocrat's home, and served in hotel restaurants frequented by their peers and the wealthier middle class. The beverage tea (made by adding boiling water to leaves) is a long-favoured import from Sri Raji, and can be served as early as three or as late as supper. A 'tea' can be simple, with scones and sweets, or a veritable banquet in its own right, with a menu of meat pies, cold cuts, bread and butter, cheese, jams, fruit, and dessert. Noblewomen wear a special gown

for the occasion, and there is a certain artful decorum observed about pouring and serving the tea itself: a task which, for some odd reason, is not relegated to the servants who present it.

The alcoholic drink of choice is gin, also known as Mother's Ruin. Brewed locally and mixed with juniper berries, this strong alcohol is dry and unpleasant in its natural form. It does have its charm when infused with citrus juice, and the aristocracy favours a mixture of gin and vermouth topped with a Borcan olive or mixed with tonic water. Such watered-down gin, sometimes sweetened with berry or citrus juice, is often served with dinner among the middle class. The poor invariably drink their gin straight. Be careful to buy gin from a respectable distiller; a few unscrupulous brewers are known to add such things as embalming fluid or paint remover for an extra kick.

Beers, especially strong dark ales, are also popular with the working class. The locals display both a remarkable appetite and tolerance for this beverage, but the omnipresence of stronger alcohol hardly makes this a surprise.

-Germaine Beauregard

Outlook and Worldview

Stereotypes portray we Zherisians as stiff and dour. Often reserved with foreigners, we are renowned for being mannerly, but a visit to a lively tavern or music hall will expose a national secret: our average citizen - rich or poor - has a great appreciation for the vulgar and slapstick, as well as puns and bon mots. Our dry sense of humour is misconstrued by many as sarcasm or condescension, even as cruel indifference, when directed toward the dangerous or fatal, as it often is. Not a naturally expressive people, we sublimate tensions and fears into a wit that doesn't expect laughter, but merely ironic acknowledgement.

We Zherisians do not disapprove of emotion, as is commonly imagined: far from it. Our literature is rife with its exploration, even leaning to melodrama, and the Newsbill thrives because of - not despite - its

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sensationalism. We merely value self-discipline and due moderation in public actions and conduct. Emotional scenes are kept in the private sphere, not displayed for public consumption. As a nation which literally survives by its wits, it is important to maintain one's poise in difficulty or, at least, to appear to. Every mortal suffers defeat and loss. There is no denial of a person's right to grief; there is, however, refusal to let her make a scene, as if her loss were greater than any other's. To a Zherisian, a 'stiff upper lip' is everything.

A commonly-repeated phrase in the city is that "crisis is another word for opportunity." Ambition, and the ability to keep rising despite every setback, is considered a national virtue. Citizens believe, rightly or not, that they have a great opportunity to climb up the social and economic ladder. They point to the recent great expansion of the middle class as proof of this assumption.

Given this drive for success, the first thing which strikes outside visitors is the bustle of the city. People are constantly on the move, rushing to work or to home. Eyes are constantly drawn to the Clock Tower or to time-pieces, and steps hurry accordingly. The street peddler who just forced his wares upon you has already turned to his next customer, as he hands you back your change (which you would be wise to count). This is a city in which people are struggling either to work their way up, or to ensure they don't slip any further. There is always someone after your job; complacency is something only nobles and fools indulge in regularly.

The backlash, of course, is that those who don't rise, or worse, fall in status, are presumed to be at fault. Sloth is the greatest sin of all; unemployment is the worst fear. "If only you'd apply yourself a little more" is a constant refrain from childhood. There is a stigma attached to approaching those few avenues of public assistance which exist. Laid-off workers and folk sent to debtors' prison suffer a high suicide rate. Those born invalid or crippled by their labours are entitled to a condescending charity and pity, but there is an unspoken sense that their souls had been unworthy in past

incarnations, and are now paying the price for those sins.

If accused by outsiders of disguised misanthropy, Zherisians defend their ways by pointing to their city's social programs and relatively high levels of education and literacy. It is certain that our nation, deprived of natural resources, is dependent on ideas, inventions, and intelligence. For the price of his taxes, a merchant receives thousands of literate employees, busily working to offer ideas to further benefit his business - and thus themselves. Philanthropy can, in truth, be profitable.

Art and Entertainment

The following articles on the arts and press were submitted by Brother Crow, a bard abundantly forthcoming on every topic... except, curiously, himself.

-A.L.

I humbly submit the treatise to follow, for the edification of our brethren, upon the innovations - and cultural insights - to be found in Zherisia's Art.

-C

Performing Arts

In scholarly study of the great Triad of Song, Music and Dance, it is usual to distinguish traditional, humble "folk art" from the "high arts" patronized by men of prestige. Since 740, Zherisia has seen a rending of this barrier, as the Upheaval tore its former, age-old country customs from this realm. Signs that Zherisians feel this cultural void are evident in the growing popularity of nostalgic "folk" motifs among the upper crust. Re-scored country hearth-chants resonate as often as stately concertos in the Metropolitan's symphony hall; Dementlieuse waltzes or promenades relinquish grand ballrooms to bucolic Morris-dances and reels. That these romanticized re-creations of rustic simplicity are, in fact, adapted and edited to highly cultivated tastes, seldom seems to occur to their enthusiasts.

Secret Society: The Experts

A few young doppelgangers, mostly lone survivors of marikith-decimated clans, have recently joined forces to become mercenaries of a kind. Having acquired skills their fellow doppelgangers lack, these self-proclaimed "Experts" sell their services as "stand-ins", briefly stepping into the roles of humans whose talents cannot be aped by their usual imitators.

Half the twenty-odd Experts are normal doppelgangers who forfeit ranks in Spot, Bluff, Sense Motive and Listen in favor of Perform, Profession, Knowledge or Craft. (The latter are cross-class skills for dread doppelgangers, save Perform (act)). The rest have 1-3 levels of Rogue or Expert; the majority of their ranks are spent on "marketable" skills. Training is sought by posing as University students or manipulating humans into serving as tutors. Most Experts focus on mastery of a single skill, or related set of skills.

Despite their demonstrated usefulness, most doppelgangers regard the Experts as insubordinate misfits, and do little to mask their contempt. Sodo feigns an equally-low opinion of the Experts, but is secretly intrigued by their potential as spies within his own minions' ranks.

This rather belated affection for rural motifs likewise applies to the visual and literary arts. In the theatre, it veers yet farther afield: current plays often depict fanciful milieus, such as cloud-castles or fairy courts. Elaborate mechanical set-pieces, complex stage-trickery, lighting effects and pyrotechnics add zest to such carefree, escapist fare. Conversely, plays having gritty urban contexts or sordid, violent subject-matter have vanished from all but the seediest theatres: for that fare, Zherisians need only buy a paper, not a theatre-ticket.

Another quirk of Zherisian theatre is that actors - easy objects of suspicion, in a city of inhuman play-actors - integrate elements other than plain dialogue into their performances, both old and new, to reassure attendees that no doppelganger could display such a diversity of skills. In time, the experimental medleys that result, often encompassing fencing, song, gymnastics, and dance, may evolve into a theatrical style with its own merits and appeal, much as Dementlieu's "ballet" has done of late.

Such quests for a diversity of skills is even mimicked by the general public. Believing doppelgangers, although able actors, are unlikely to attain mastery of other practiced talents, fearful citizens adopt artistic hobbies they hope might make them harder to replace. For myself, I am not convinced: surely the creatures they fear would find some means to foil such a commonplace recourse?

Boxing and wrestling are formalised sports in Zherisia, complete with weight-classes and regimens of training based on those of indigenous monastic orders. These are remarkably popular amongst nobles, who find little active recreation, and no recourse to the blood sports of the Core. Prize-fighting has provided a lucrative, if short-lived, career for many calibans. Rumour holds that unscrupulous nobles have submitted afflicted relatives to such activities, feeling it's about time they do something to earn their keep.

While the wealthy play at "reviving" lost folk arts, the music halls of less posh districts perpetuate its traditions honestly, with jig-steps, reels and drinking-songs. In demonstration of Zherisian freedom-of-speech, as well as its dry humour, such festive places might also offer interludes of pointed banter by ensembles of comic wits: often political, frequently vulgar, yet always wryly satirical and surprising. Some routines are scripted, while others improvise their entire acts, even trading bawdy quips with audience members.

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There's no better icon of this love of tongue-in-cheek entertainment than the Elucidating Museum of Anthropological Curiosities. By name, one might expect a stuffy institution, but the "Ellie-Mack" is in truth, the Land of Mists' original freak show, vastly predating the likes of the Carnival. Founded as an exhibition of Paridon's first unfortunates to be born with calibans' deformities, its operation has since passed into these selfsame beings' hands. The oddities on display are ostensibly of an "educational" nature, arranged so as to recapitulate Mankind's grand spiritual ascent from sub-sapience to savagery to civilization. In all candour, the Ellie-Mack hosts more bunkum than book-learning, and of a strictly mundane variety. Don't expect the miraculous or inexplicable here, Brothers; it's a farce, but an excellent farce intended to be savoured as such.

Visual Arts

Zherisia's art galleries and museums, public and private, have accumulated countless painted or carved masterpieces over the past two centuries, from across the Land of Mists. Some rare pieces hold great cultural or spiritual significance in their lands of origin, and occasionally a measure of infamy. It is uncommon, but such prizes have been known to carry curses; at least three private collectors have verifiably died at the hands of ancient dead, in retaliation for overzealous artifact-piracy.

In pursuit of the pastoral trend, older artists find that re-creating naturalistic imagery from memory lends a moving, nostalgic tenderness to their works. To the up-and-coming generation, unable to summon up personal recollections, it's a motivation for travel: roughly one in five Zherisians in the Core is a starry-eyed painter, seeking the "perfect landscape".

Despite the native aversion to public displays, emotional or physical, belief in the human form's pure perfection trumps prudishness, at least in Art: hence, nude portraits and sculptures can be found in respectable galleries.

The Elucidating Museum of Anthropological Curiosities

The "Ellie-Mack" is about as mundane as a sideshow in Ravenloft can get. Its specimens are not magical and, in many cases, aren't even real; the performers in its "living exhibits" - billed as "goblin raiders", "elf princesses", "samurai", etc - are guilty only of misrepresenting their backgrounds. A few employees do have criminal pasts or connections, but apart from the odd pick-pocketing, the caliban managers strictly forbid illegal dealings.

There are, however, two key secrets at the Elucidating Museum. The first is that the museum's legal owner-of-record, Lord Geoffrey Worthington-Davis, died in the Great Upheaval. Knowing his heir, Millicent Worthington-Davis Hawke, to be an avowed bigot, the heads-of-staff are convinced she will throw them all into the streets, should ownership pass to her. They have used forged letters and a hat of disguise to perpetuate the fiction that Lord Geoffrey has emigrated to the Mordentish countryside.

The show's other, darker, secret is one the staff knows nothing of. Three years ago, several exotic beasts were added to the Bestial Sub-Sapience zoo: a gorilla, two parrots, and a pitch-black leopard. Unknown to the buyers, they are actually awakened beasts of the Wildlands, with both intelligence and a malign contempt for humankind. Rather than escape into the streets, the beasts have formed a No-Humans-Need-Apply crime ring under the leadership of "Mr. Silver", the highly intelligent gorilla. Mr. Silver's crew specialize in "impossible" burglaries, the sale of information, and the occasional ghastly assassination, contracting its jobs through written correspondence and the parrots' "trained" speeches.

However, the poses are chaste and faces turned or concealed, in deference to cultural mores regarding privacy. Artists never name such unclad works for models; rather, they cast them as anonymous archetypes, capped off by such abstract titles as Summer's Dusk, Industry, Daydreamer, etc.

Daguerreotypes: Dread Photography

Producing a daguerreotype requires the Craft (photography) skill. Three skill checks are required: one to prepare the sensitized plates, another to capture an image, and one to develop a plate after its exposure. As this is obscure, cutting-edge technology, Craft (photography) may not be used untrained.

Vampires' images do not show up in daguerreotypes, nor do other beings that fail to cast a reflection. Even stranger, some ghosts seem to appear, even if they were not manifested when the image was captured. Owing to the newness of the technology, few undead actually know of this, but life as a daguerreotypist may get far more interesting once the information spreads.

Alchemists and arcanists in Paridon have begun dabbling with the chemicals used in daguerreotypy, seeking ways to apply the effects of divinations such as detect magic to these primitive photographs. It is left to DMs' discretion whether this is possible; if so, the Brew Potion feat is a prerequisite to prepare such emulsions, at a similar cost in time, experience and funds as to produce an equivalent potion.

Early this century, one irate cadre of sculptors took to parodying this cautious style, by crafting naked figures which wholly lacked faces or generative organs: heads flatly featureless, bosoms shapely yet unequipped to suckle infants, loins without need of cloths. Circumstantial evidence implies the doppelgangers may have an ironic fondness for this style.

A more-radical Zherisian innovation has exploded into popularity since 756, and promises to revolutionise visual art on a worldwide stage. "Daguerreotypes" are true-to-life pictures generated by the reflection of images onto photosensitized metal plates. I'll leave it to Lamordians to discourse on the chemistry at work, but I'll note that exactitude in timing and lighting are essential to generate a proper image; errors may render a finished plate too gloomy or glaringly bright, or might bleach a plate's surface blank. Further, any motion by one's subject will blur the image, so the process requires its human portraiture subjects to remain stationary for prolonged periods. It's an exercise in futility to try to capture a child's image, though some parents skirt this impasse by having their offspring imaged while sleeping - or even dead, should the bereaved choose to memorialise a loved one for posterity. (How eerie!) Finished products are sealed behind glass to guard against abrasion and tarnish.

Arduous as the procedure is, when it is executed successfully, the results are breathtaking. Were examples I saw for myself not colorless and much-reduced in scale, I'd have half-expected them to spring to life! Indeed, many Zherisians found such portraits so disturbing, when first these works were displayed, as to be spooked into vacating the Metropolitan's exhibit hall. Familiarity and time have accustomed Zherisians to such uncanny detail, but I expect foreigners of fragile nerves may be similarly affected.



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Given how daguerreotypes have now nudged traditional modes of portraiture off-stage, Zherisia's paint-and-ink artists are turning to subject-matter and motifs the new "cameras" can't replicate, such as vivid action-scenes or night-cloaked settings. Innovative painters experiment with surreal, highly stylised techniques, striving to evoke emotion rather than to strictly imitate reality as the 'typists do. Sketch-artists hawk caricatures on street corners and "cartoons" in the Newsbill.

Literary Arts

Would that I could comment upon this fascinating subject: the second-hand accounts I'd heard of these "Romantics" (as local anti-materialist poets and prose-fiction writers deem themselves) sound every bit as intriguing as the "penny dreadfuls" I'd seen eagerly passed back-and-forth by young lads do, trite! But regrettably, my facility in Zherisian isn't fit to tackle literary criticism as yet, and translation-spells play merry hell with poets' euphonic phrasings: I'd as soon reserve those queries for such time as I can come by their meanings honestly.

The Press

Conventional Core wisdom claims the modern printing press emerged from the inventive workshops of Chateaufaux less than two decades ago. This is sure to raise a dry smile (or a disdainful sniff) from natives of Zherisia, who've savoured printers' handiwork for generations.

The first handbills date back three centuries, and were produced as events arose. They hadn't much actual news to offer; initially, they were just posters one could take home. Printed on flimsy rag-paper with inks that seem formulated to smudge on contact - lapses this industry has never troubled itself to correct - they tended to give secondary service as tinder or fish-wrapping. Very few such relics survive today, save in dusty attics or the care of an eccentric collector.

In 691 Parliament opted not to renew the Stamp Act, a law imposing high duties and licensing-fees on the sale and consumption of paper. Print-shops could now afford to run off broadsheets on a weekly or even daily basis; the short-run handbills gave way to true "periodicals", published on a regular schedule. By the dawn of the present century, there were five titles in circulation, including the now-ubiquitous Newsbill; in those days, however, it was lowest-seller out of four tabloids. Instead, the premier paper at the century's turn was the Monograph; only a brace of scandals would see this reversed.

The Monograph's reign collapsed in 716, due to public outrage at its curious silence as to the discernable pattern in Bloody Jack's victims (shopkeepers). In its wake, furious competition arose, in which most titles resorted to falsification, sensationalism, and libel. An avalanche of lawsuits was levied, public trust in the other weeklies evaporated, until only one newspaper arose largely untarnished from the fray: Blackchapel's own reformist rag, the Newsbill. Since 721, its reign as "the" newspaper has confronted no serious rivals. Other titles are obliged to cater to subsets of the population or to special interests; no other sells well enough to publish on a daily basis.

A more concrete threat to journalism arose in the aftermath of the Upheaval as supplies of paper dwindled. Lesser periodicals shut down, but the Newsbill's plucky staff kept on, drastically reducing the size of each issue, discontinuing its woodcut-ads and cartoons to conserve ink, and raising prices as high as 5 pence (a 150% markup). Determination, cost-cutting, and a vigorous campaign that urged readers to return old papers for recycling saw the broadsheet through the ordeal.

A growing number of reporters have taken the lessons of their industry's history to heart: an ideological honour-system of "journalistic integrity" has arisen in their ranks. This leaves them honour-bound to report only verifiable facts, and hold in confidence the identity of those informants asking anonymity. (Brothers, take note: some hold so firmly to these principles as to defy charms!)

Sociological Survey

Periodicals of Interest

Here is a brief exposé of the Newsbill, as both a business and a publication, followed by notes on a few other periodicals of special interest. Other titles presently in circulation include the commercial Advertiser; the political Vigilance (very conservative) and Clarion (flagrantly anarchistic - and illegal); and the tawdry fiction-serial Chilling Tales.

"Broadsheet" refers to a full-sized paper, whilst "tabloid" refers to compact pages seen in low-budget titles. Barring shortages, printers intentionally make newspapers as large as possible, as sales-taxes rise with page-count. The Newsbill is the only paper to take advantage of Market Day reductions with a double-sized weekly edition.

Newsbill

Format:	Broadsheet, two-page daily; four-page "Market Day" editions weekly
Offices:	Blackchapel; south corner of Ennismore Avenue & Pavilion Road
Editor-in-Chief:	Foster Randolph
Cover Price:	2 pence per daily, 4 pence per Market Day edition; 15 pence per week with subscription
Motto:	"A Shilling's Worth Of Wisdom"

Loved and hated in equal measure by the populace, this inescapable fixture of Zherisian life is respected for exposing corruption and social ills but denigrated for its shameless fear-mongering and delight in scandal. It is insatiably read by thousands each morning. Though it has always danced on the edge of gross sensationalism, actually inventing stories is one sin the current editor, Foster Randolph, seems dead set against.

A typical daily Newsbill includes concise reports of current events, new developments in previous days' stories, an occasional editorial on issues at hand, and the "Daily Bulletin". Writing-quality is geared to be accessible for readers of modest education. Rhetorical questions, fragmentary quotes (at times taken badly out-of-context), and excessive numbers of exclamation points are used to excite readers' interest.

"Bylines" are normally included to give credit to the reporters, but may be reduced to initials or omitted if space runs short. Since dismissing his last chief reporter, William Thompson, Randolph has waffled on naming a new one. The top candidates - and vicious rivals - are Donovan Hill, a tireless investigator who doesn't believe in "dead ends", and Mercy Granger, a second-generation journalist determined to surpass her father's legacy.

The weekly Market Day edition, referred to as a 'four-page spread', has the same layout as the daily on its first sheet, but subdivides its second into four half-page sections: Trade (including any foreign news), Public Affairs, Culture, and Daily Life (odds and ends such as boxing scores, recipes, etc). Whichever of the sections is deemed least essential may be replaced with a one-shot topic of momentous importance; the most recent instances of this both occurred in 755, for Bloody Jack's latest rampage and for Azalin Rex's "miraculous" return to the Darkonese throne.

While the foremost concern of our Brethren, regarding the Newsbill, should be staying out of the bloody thing, one useful part of each issue is the "Daily Bulletin": a regular column into which notes may be inserted, at a shilling per line, by anyone willing to pay. Save for profanity or blatant threats, anything goes; common entries include lost-item notices, changes to scheduled events, job offers, well-wishes, and advertisements too tardy to otherwise make it to press. As Bulletin entries need not name names, it seems a logical venue for short, coded communiqués; indeed, I'm certain many affaires-de-amour are conducted thusly.

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The Ascendant

Format:	Tabloid, two-page biweekly
Offices:	Blackchapel, Wadding Street Chapel
Editor-in-Chief:	Celebrant Alicia Farnsworth
Cover Price:	None; modest donations are expected and appreciated on receipt
Motto:	"Arise Ye Into Light"

Produced by adherents of the Beacon of Goodness, this is an ecclesiastical newsletter made accessible to a wider audience. In addition to Temple-related news, it addresses social injustices, new advancements in science, and interviews with persons from all walks of life who embody Mankind's achievements.

The latter entries may prove most interesting to the Fraternity, should information on gifted household names be sought; if I'm not mistaken, our own Brother Larnar was interviewed, some years back!

Disclosure

Format:	Tabloid, two-page weekly
Offices:	Blackchapel; Carlton Rooming House, Landsdowne Road
Editor-in-Chief:	William Thompson
Cover Price:	2 pence per issue
Motto:	"Secrets Hidden No More"

The editor-in-chief of this paper was dismissed from the Newsbill in 756, with accusations of falsifying stories about the "Shadow Killers". While former co-workers didn't jump ship with him, Thompson had collected a vast network of contacts, informants and freelance co-writers during his time at the Newsbill, and was able to recruit sufficient help to found Disclosure and keep it running for the last four years, albeit precariously.

As a former star reporter, his name still carries weight with his colleagues, many of whom quietly doubt Randolph's accusations, and freelancers. Thompson often helps young novices launch their careers in journalism, hiring them to pen pseudonymous articles for his paper, as a rehearsal for jobs at the Newsbill.

William Thompson

Thompson realises Disclosure's articles are seen as jokes by his readers, but his ulterior motives for publishing are no joke. In the wake of Jack's killing spree of 755, Thompson - who once defended the "shadow killers" out of fascination - was confronted with the proof of their malign nature, and has bitterly retaliated for this "betrayal" with an angry crusade to expose all of Paridon's monsters, though it's cost him his job and much of his former reputation.

Now, Thompson collects all the facts and rumors he can on the marikith and doppelgangers, as well as jackalweres, golems, and other menaces. Often, other reporters bring him stories the Newsbill refuses to print due to lack of evidence. Thompson hopes that others will use his stories' clues to track down and destroy the marikith who "betrayed his trust", or the doppelgangers whom he believes (wrongly; his newfound obsession was simply hindering his work) engineered his dismissal.

That Disclosure stays afloat can be attributed far more to the Zherisian taste for the unbelievable-but-amusing than to Thompson's business acumen; indeed, the more ludicrous the stories he prints, the more copies his paper appears to sell. One can think of this title as a more sophisticated cousin of the quite popular 'penny dreadfuls': the readers expect its contents to be wildly distorted rumour at best; it's the sober, matter-of-fact style with which Thompson's rag relates such hogwash that's entertaining to read.

Colonial Merchant Company of Zherisia

The City Council dislikes its enforced economic dependence on the Core for much of its food. One alternative they've begun to implement is the colonies concept. They created the Colonial Merchant Company of Zherisia in cooperation with those expatriate traders already established on 'primitive' lands. The Company establishes colonies, referred to as "trade settlements". They attempt to establish trading monopolies within the local economy, and influence local politics by rewarding supportive government officials. Still in its infancy, it has met with varied success, but the plan is still in place.

Sri Rgji

This is one of the most successful campaigns, where merchants exchange Zherisian goods for rare gems and exotic spices. Many members of the lower castes are under their sway. The higher classes distrust these influential foreigners, and there have been attacks from the cult of Kali. Cultists even seem to have found their way to Paridon, as a noble was recently found murdered in the traditional style of the Kali-worshippers.

Har Akir

This Land doesn't have many natural resources, but its ancient kings were buried with unimaginable treasures. In the name of science, many historians excavate these riches from the sands. These have been shipped back home and sold to Museums or wealthy collectors, much to the dismay of the natives. Needless to say, the number of curses in Paridon has risen. Recently, one of the archaeologists has discovered clues to the hidden tomb of the pharaoh Ankhtepot.

Rokushima Taiyoo

Whilst the warlords threatened to kill the gaijin if they tried to gain a foothold in their lands, none actually dared; each fears a possible alliance between the foreigners and his hated brothers. This rich land is still quite dangerous for Zherisians, as even minor transgressions are punished by execution. Thus, Company merchants mostly keep to the harbors and wait for native dealers to bring their wares to them. One of the warlords recently met with a leading merchant of Paridon, but it is unknown what was discussed.

So if Disclosure is a joke, why regale you with its history, Brothers? Simple. Should the Newsbill commence prying into your affairs, drop Thompson a lead or write up an article yourself; there's no better way to guarantee that Zherisians will laugh off any future allegations than to link said allegations to Thompson's muck-rag. To boot, he might even pay you for doing so!

-Brother Crow

Trade

The following article on trade was submitted by Brother Buchvold.

-A.L.

Gentlemen, I have been greatly honoured in writing this small part of this survey. Trade, as some of the Brethren reading this may know, is one of my areas of expertise.

Paridon is still a city due to the efforts of its merchants and, I am told, of a movement known as the Quiet Revolution. They are also blessed with two reliable Mistways, which provide them relatively easy access to three of their major trade partners: Dementlieu, Darkon and Lamordia. Through those they access a fourth, Falkovnia (an odd combination, but a profitable one). It is a rare day in which no ship arrives in Zherisia. The piracy from Blaustein is a common problem; however it doesn't discourage those merchants who use the Royal Channel.

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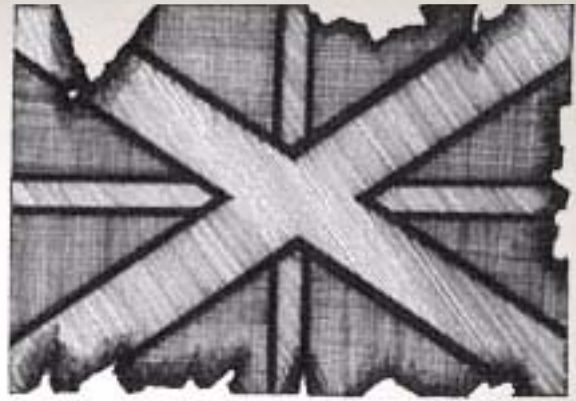
The pound is honoured throughout many realms, as Paridon trades with the majority of civilized nations; I believe that it has even had full-scale trade settlements set up abroad. Riverside Square constantly hums with the sound of people doing good business. I found it a little awe-inspiring to watch the Square at midday, when the Market is in full swing.

Paridon's principle imports are those commonplace necessities that cannot be produced locally: food, timber, ore and cotton. The city exports many hallmarks of advanced culture, such as firearms, factory-made cloth, medicine, books, art, and so forth.

The layout of Riverside market sets its everyday salesmen side-by-side with those catering to the higher classes; now and then, if they have saved up a little money, commoners even go into such shops. Do not mistake this for some type of camaraderie. Competition is fierce amongst sellers of all classes. Even a "humble" street vendor wants to ascend over his rivals, to live in Shadewell and cast his competitors down into the gutter.

The guilds common in other lands were dissolved here by The Workers Act of 600 BC, which allowed "every workman utter freedom in the pursuit of his profession." Many establishments see this as a license to sell poorly-made goods at competitive prices. The practice is seen as disreputable, and there have been ineffective (i.e. unprofitable) calls for quality control. Nevertheless, it is still engaged in, as a quick and easy way for sly artisans to penetrate the upper-middle class.

The price of goods is controlled only by the market. What a merchant may ask for his wares is limited only by what he can get the customer to pay and by what his rival is charging. It is a common stratagem to try and undermine one's opposition through price cuts. This is a risky tactic for the business that employs it, as slim profit margins means a small operating reserve, and one reverse means they potentially could lose everything, but the desired gain in market share is often sufficient to offset the risks.



- Brother Raphael Buchvold

Government

In 740, losses to Zherisia included that of its last Prime Minister, Edward Cunningham (elected two months earlier, he thus became the shortest-ruling Prime Minister in Zherisian history), several cabinet members, and many members of Parliament. During the crisis, the City Council were invited onto the Hill to participate in the drafting of emergency measures, as the city awaited the return of normalcy and its former country.

It was not long before friction arose between the two bodies, but this was carefully kept quiet. The public was in a highly volatile mood, and displeased with both governments for their inability to respond to the catastrophe, starvation and ensuing riots. Broaching the topic of amalgamation of the national and urban governments would've been tantamount to declaring that Zherisia was no more, and could have lead to insurrection.

Thus, Deputy Minister Samuel Kerr and Mayor Edward Windsor waited until Memorial Day, 741, to proclaim that, until such time as the nation returned, it was a waste of manpower and resources to maintain separate governments. The municipal elections of May 742 were the date a new City Council was established. It expanded its scope to incorporate part of the federal bureaucracy, to deal with international affairs which the Zherisian Parliament had been responsible for. The City Council would meet on Parliament Hill,

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as would the Parliament of Zherisia; privately, the politicians had agreed that closing Parliament would be far too final and explosive a gesture. The former Town Hall was quietly dedicated to the committees on trade and commerce.

Surviving members of Parliament vied with their municipal brothers for the nine Council positions available: Mayor, International Manager, City Manager, and the six borough representatives. Former allies in municipal and federal relations were suddenly bitter rivals, and the Windsor family itself was divided in the process, as two brothers ran against each other. David Windsor, the former Zherisian Minister of Trade, defeated his brother Edward, thus becoming the first elected Mayor of post-Upheaval Paridon.

The House of Windsor

Edward Windsor is still bitter towards his brother, despite his own electoral success as the King's Quarters borough representative (thanks to the loyalty of his neighbours). David's failure at re-election in 754 did nothing to abate this grudge; it merely whetted Edward's determination to see his son, Lewis, be elected to head the Council in 762.

Likewise, David Windsor has spent his time grooming his son Paul for the same purpose. Edward is now considering a dangerous tactic: spreading rumours to suggest Paul is a doppelganger. Lewis tried to dissuade him, warning this will further feed the commoners' suspicions, and possibly spark a class war.

Ironically, "Lewis" is himself a doppelganger, who replaced his teenage victim in 746, and arranged the death of his suspicious 'mother' a couple of weeks later. He has recently hired an assassin to impersonate a class war supporter and is awaiting the right public opportunity to remove his father. This would garner him sympathy, a launching pad against electoral reform, and visible proof not all nobles are doppelgangers.

Paridon is an aristocratic republic; the franchise is given to nobles over the age of twenty-one. Elections are held every five years on May 1, with the last on 757. Nobles must either reside or own a business or land within a borough, in order to run for that area or vote for its representative. A residential ballot is the only one to contain the candidates for Mayor, City Manager and International Manager, as well as the local candidate; business ballots are given for regional candidates only.

Borough candidates are involved in committees whose impact is felt across the city: taxation, commerce, property, transport, law, education, and health and welfare. The City Manager's duty is the hiring of government employees: police, firemen, hospital staff, lamplighters, city maintenance crews, teachers and clerks. The International Manager is responsible for international affairs, commerce and trade, and appointment of ambassadors to other nations. The Mayor heads the Council and manages portfolios on key events in and outside the city, as well as appointing judges and commissioners for the civil bureaucracy's departments.

Rather than trying to collect income taxes from an impoverished population (especially when debtors' prisons are already full), taxes are collected via merchants and landlords. Food prices include a municipal tax, as do medicines, clothing, and rents. Luxury taxes are imposed on items such as exotic spices, imported fresh produce, printed pages (save schoolbooks or religious texts) and musical instruments. Beyond that, there are tariffs, property taxes, and similar devices to extract money in a civilised manner.

Paridon is rightly renowned for its legal system. All citizens are granted the right to a lawyer (though whether they can afford one is another question), and the burden of proof rests upon the prosecution to find the accused guilty, not on the accused to prove oneself innocent. Civic law and minor criminal cases are decided by judges; serious crimes are presented to a jury, with the judge

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obliged to inform these citizens on the exact definition of the involved laws.

Due to the number of citizens held in this facility, the Paridon Workhouse was transferred to a converted warehouse in the Docks. Over two hundred citizens are housed here, almost half of them children. Spouses of debtors are allowed to return to their jobs, but their wages are seized to settle their familial debts. Children under the age of eleven go to school, but are placed into service after graduation. Some are given janitorial tasks in government buildings, but many are hired out for a pittance to the various warehouses and factories. For better or worse, most of these 'employees' lose their jobs once they have settled the family's debt, and are replaced by those newly fallen into penury.

The Paridon City Guard is generally seen as beneficial. The police avoid excessive force during arrests; jail cells are relatively clean and the processing of prisoners swift. The public, aware of how dangerous the streets are, know that the guards are their only line of public defense. The police force, however, is widely rumoured to be deeply infiltrated by doppelgangers; consequently their ranks, as a body, are highly demoralised, and there are constant recruiting drives to boost numbers.

Police stations are found in every borough, with the headquarters of the Paridon City Guard being located in the Bowels. The Chief Constable Inspector is Francine Maxwell, who attained her position in 756. Every patrol includes three guards, equipped with truncheons for their human opponents, as well as swords (a new addition) for 'Shadow Killers'. A guard wears dark blue coat, pants, and a bowler-styled helmet. This has a spike on its top, and the insignia of Paridon shining on its front. Officer's stripes appear on the shoulders of their uniforms, and every officer, no matter their rank, must sport their numbered badges upon their left breast.

The Roof Patrol

Most homes outside King's Quarters and Shadewell are long rows of flat-roofed apartments and townhouses. Roofs abut each other and are marked by a wall only three inches in height. Since the Forties, most of these roofs have become gardens with neighbours sometimes uniting in block-long cooperation and distribution of their harvests.

These rooftop gardens became the scene of many thefts, and the City Council, surprisingly sensitive to the numerous complaints, established the Roof Patrol. The roof patrol normally consists of rookies and elderly policemen and has earned the nickname, the 'Green Onions'. They walk above the city, protecting the gardens, but also spy on the streets below. From this angle, criminals are not as easily hidden by the crowds, and the patrol will often call their colleagues' attention to a crime in progress, or shout out directions of a suspect's movements.

Due to the space limitations, the City Council arranged for Paridon's prison to be closed in 744. A large barge, The Vigilant, became the city's first prison ship. The Vigilant is moored by a long chain to the Docks; there is both a deck watch and a shore watch set up to shoot any potential escapees. Rowboats deliver new prisoners, supplies, and the latest shift of guards to the vessel.

Doppelgangers, too, have their own power-structure. The highest rank in the imposters' society is Grandmaster. The Grandmaster is the oldest and wisest of his kind, whose orders supersede those of any lesser rank. It is unacceptable to question the Grandmaster, let alone to disobey him.

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The Grandmaster has full authority to promote or demote any doppelganger to whichever niche or rank he desires. If a doppelganger ever shows feelings of anger or discontent with the Grandmaster, the Grandmaster is within his rights to punish the offender in any way he sees fit.

Directly below the Grandmaster are the Vanguard. The Vanguard are the only doppelgangers permitted to directly seek out the Grandmaster. All others see their leader only at the Grandmaster's invitation. The Vanguard act as the Grandmaster's agents, ensuring his plans are followed and his will obeyed. All Vanguard are granted desirable positions in human society and are hand-picked by the Grandmaster himself. There are no more than six Vanguard at any time.

Beneath the Vanguard are the clan leaders. Each clan leader is issued a list of niches by a Vanguard, and is responsible for distributing these niches amongst his clan. The clan leader is permitted to govern his clan as he sees fit, provided he does not disobey orders from above. Lesser clan members are expected to follow the clan leader's orders. However, there is no punishment laid down for eliminating a clan leader, provided higher orders are followed. It is unknown how many clan leaders (and therefore clans) there are in the city.

Local History

The island of Zherisia has been a literate country for centuries, and the oldest of such to maintain links with the Core. However, many of its old historic documents, stored as heirlooms in family estates, were lost to the Great Upheaval. Very few texts still in the city date back more than three hundred years, thanks to the Great Fire and damp climate.

There is a bloody, possibly mythical, pre-history of warring fiefdoms, which were finally united under the aegis of King Fanor nearly a thousand years ago. He is credited with founding the city of Paridon, named for his daughter Parina. He married her off to his greatest rival, Myrdin, who suspiciously died not long after in a hunting accident.

A remarkably peaceful monarchy arose, that lasted many centuries. There was much intrigue and many accidental deaths, but these conflicts never erupted into overt civil strife. Instead, the royals' reign reached its end in 546, following the Great Fire of Paridon.

The exact cause of the Great Fire is unknown. It originated within the Docks, where warehouses of oil, hemp, coal and imported spirits set off several massive explosions, scattering fiery debris across the entire city. Four-fifths of Paridon burned; houses that weren't incinerated were brought down by the government in an attempt to contain the inferno, before heavy rains brought a close to the catastrophe on the second evening. The death toll was surprisingly low; it was August, and Zherisians were able to seek sanctuary outside the city walls.

Anne II, the "Virgin Queen" and a Temple devotee, had unsuccessfully prayed that her father might yet produce a male heir to the throne. Facing the devastation of her capital and pressure from her court, she chose to abdicate, her final royal decree that the nation be henceforth served by its Parliament. She ordered that the palace be destroyed and its stones used to build hospitals, offices and chapels. Today's prominent brick and stone architecture dates from this time. Royal treasures were seized for the government's coffers and would-be heirs granted plum positions or silenced (according to their popularity). Queen Anne stepped into a monastery and out of history.

I believe that this was the date when our nation emerged into the Land of the Mists. Historical records and monuments were destroyed, the former government dismantled; it was therefore a time of great confusion. There is a paucity of records for such a momentous time, and those that exist are remarkably bland, as if related second-hand, many years after the event. Indeed, there was a lull in publications of any sort, which historians attribute to concern with rebuilding the capital and economic difficulties. What remains largely unexplored is the theory that these difficulties were caused by the disappearance

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of former trade partners. Financial analysis shows many shipping companies failed and dissolved, their crews and goods reported lost at sea. My impression is that of a nationwide case of amnesia, now obscured by its distance in time.

Our own Professor Hazan had noted the difficulty in dating the real histories of our countries, and suggested referring to their first known contact with the Core's inhabitants as a definite date of a country's appearance in the Mists. The most famous of such dates for Paridon is the arrival of a band of roving Vistani in September 18, 551; this event is substantiated by handbills, police reports, and traders' memoirs. There is, of course, no call to assume that this was the actual date of our emergence from the Mists, merely of first contact with others native to the lands those Mists encompass.

This contradicts a popular theory: that our nation's emergence is bound to Bloody Jack and his murder sprees, which date back to 586. Since his first appearance, this sanguinary figure has gripped the Zherisian psyche, deeply and even eerily. Is he, in truth, the dread lord of our nation? No figure has had so great an impact upon our history, to the extent that we oft measure time by his thirteen-year cycles.

I counter the theory we entered the Mists in 586 BC with the hypothesis that Jack may, in truth, have been here since 546, but kept his murder-cycle private during its first three iterations. His first public cycle was forty years after the fire, a notable anniversary. His first cycle in this world would have occurred in 547, a mere year after the Great Fire, when death was frequent and unnoticed.

I also propose that the emergence of Zherisia was not related to the cycle itself, but to Jack's breaking with tradition - by killing at a forbidden time. He has since renewed his ritual-cycle at the "appropriate" time, killing a person each night, for six nights.

There has never been a repetition in his pattern of victims - prostitutes one cycle, scholars another, shopkeepers a third - nor in his method of dispatching them. None of his

attempts (as far as has been recorded) have been unsuccessful; no witness has caught him in flagrante delicto.

The last two cycles since the Great Upheaval have been very unusual, each with the deaths of eleven people, not six. Some Brothers espouse the "dynasty theory", suggesting these variants are a sign that Jack's mantle has been passed to a still-bloodier killer. Theories tying the higher body-count to the Upheaval's disruptions also have their advocates.

Theories abound that Bloody Jack is everything from a doppelganger to a golem, with recent speculation that he is a Shadow Killer. (Ridiculous, perhaps, but we must remember early reports that Jack may have been a vampire!) It seems that, whatever his origins, his role has certainly been assumed or emulated by non-human monsters of some sort ... if he ever was human himself.

No matter what Bloody Jack may be, however, one terrible event would, in the end, overshadow his crimes.

The Great Upheaval began on July 3, 740, a grey day of heavy rain which kept many citizens within the city walls. Around 10:30 that morning, a heavy fog seemed to descend



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upon the countryside. Travelers were suddenly unable to leave, and the gates were closed to out-going traffic. By evening, disgruntlement had turned into concern, and by the next day into panic. There was no incoming traffic, and the Mistways were rendered fearfully unstable. Citizens flocked to the stores, seeking provisions in case the "Imprisonment", as it is now known, should last more than a few days. Police records show an increase in crime, but the city was relatively calm, assuming this state of affairs to be temporary.

In the early hours of July 5th, a massive riot was sparked off by morning fog. Anxious Zherisians had mistaken mundane weather for a new onslaught by the Mists. Rumors began flying that all Zherisia was doomed, and a wave of poor citizens from Blackchapel began breaking out of the borough, allegedly to seek shelter in the Temple of Divine Form. Whatever their intention, it was not long before Riverside and the King's Quarters were swamped with desperate, hungry folk. A state of emergency was declared on Parliament Hill, and with the aid of the Temple, emergency provisions were gathered and supplied to the needy.

The Mistways resumed functioning by July 11th, but the city was unprepared for its sudden dependence upon imports of food. A week after the Imprisonment, the first crops had been planted in the city's parks. These rations, however, were pitifully meager, and riots erupted continually over the next few weeks. Wealthier citizens took the opportunity to migrate to the Core, while food prices rose exorbitantly.

By September, early crops had been harvested and regular trade for vital provisions had begun. Food supplies yet remained desperately low, and the death rate rose, including numerous suspicious deaths among the elderly, the frail, and infants. The municipal infrastructure was ill-equipped to deal with the strain; city hospitals, law courts, government offices and schools were scrabbling to replace missing employees and to function with any semblance of efficiency.

The winter of 740-741 brought more riots as the dark days, cramped quarters, and cold

weather made the hunger pangs sharper. The casualty count was low: looting and destruction of property were the main hazards. A nine o'clock curfew was established until spring. This was not difficult, as liquor supplies had fallen while prices skyrocketed; barkeepers and merchants alike were afraid of losing their lives as well as their merchandise to rebellious, frustrated customers. Many of the restaurants and inns closed at this time, and a law was passed forbidding the sidewalk sales of food and beverages, due to attacks upon street vendors.

Let me reiterate the sheer enormity of the loss. A mere fraction of the entire nation of Zherisia remains in existence. Two-thirds of our realm's population simply vanished. Hundreds of homes and millions of pounds in property had disappeared in an instant. These included vast fields of grain, vegetables, and flax; thousands of head of livestock; lakes, forests and mines. Overnight, the nation lost its natural resources and economic independence. Paridon could no longer afford its insularity.

The riots soon died out, but the class tensions remained at an all-time high. The appearance of Bloody Jack and the revelation of doppelgangers' existence caused a national uproar. Comparisons were made to the Great Fire and the idea arose that another change was due in government. The aristocrats could have made the surely-fatal blunder of reining in the complaints by force, but they were themselves in disarray and caught up in fierce internal power struggles.

In the mid-40s, civil unrest was sublimated into social reform, as the bourgeois came to realise that a city with no other resources must tap into its native intelligence to support itself. The old factories were still running, but the costs of production had risen due to the expense of importing raw materials; their products were no longer so competitive in the international market. Paridon now needed an educated society, which would be able to design innovative new products, make scientific breakthroughs, and invoke the envy and attract the currency of its technological rivals.

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The University of Paridon was at the forefront of this shift in thinking, and it turned to far-thinking politicians and sympathetic lodges for aid in promoting its plans. The movement was nicknamed the "Quiet Revolution" by suspicious nobles, and the name has stuck.

The earliest positive result of this collaboration was the Child Labour and Education Bill of 743. Children were required to attend school until the age of eleven, and the employment of any child of a more tender age was prohibited. There was some uproar by parents who relied on their children for a few extra pennies, but many adults were pleased to gain access to jobs previously filled by children. Some families and businesses sidestep the law by having their children quietly work several part-time jobs, but at present this is a very rare occurrence and generally frowned upon.

In 747, the courts officially declared dead those lost in the Mists, settling at a pen-stroke many inheritance cases and lawsuits. The "Dirty Forties" (as they were known in street slang) began to be noticeably less grim, but it wasn't until 749 that real signs of economic recovery emerged. By that year, the oppression of the Imprisonment had either dissipated or Zherisians had become inured to it; either way, there was a sense that a time of mourning had passed. On the tenth anniversary of the Upheaval, a memorial was erected on the Hill, and the island of "Zherisia" was officially no more. A fountain with an ever-burning flame was dedicated to the lost compatriots of 740.

The "Thrifty Fifties" saw our nation slowly winning back its former prestige as a trading power and the growth of the Quiet Revolution. The first beneficiaries of the Education Bill began entering the workforce, introducing innovations in equipment or procedures in a scramble for employment. Scholarship programs were graduating more "white-collar" employees: literate, highly educated, and professionals rather than artisans; many were employed to spy upon their Core rivals in commerce, engineering and medicine, and to mimic and then surpass foreigners' advances.

The true value of an educated workforce proved itself, and further laws were introduced to permit children to stay in school yet longer, and to enroll in University with government-backed loans.

In 757, the middle class had garnered enough influence (and bought enough votes) to launch a commission on future electoral reform. The most popular proposal requires a minimum salary for non-titled voters. The only question on this issue of reform is not if, but when, it will finally be brought about.

Dread Possibility- The Steam Age

Progress! The tinkers of Paridon finally make a breakthrough and unlock the power of steam: a growing number of machine-powered workshops crank out cheap goods, while Zherisian ships are equipped with steam engines, making them less reliant on the winds and improving mercantile connections. New household mechanisms proliferate in the wealthy boroughs, popular as status symbols and because they, unlike human servants, cannot be supplanted by doppelgangers.

Not everyone is thrilled with the wonders of technology. Nobles jealous of the lower classes' rising power are secretly funding the Zherisian Brothers of the Land. New war-machines are being created, and peoples of the Core question Zherisia's motives. Meanwhile, metalworkers craft automatons animated by steam, unknowingly giving rise to a new type of golem.

The Zherisian Hero

Races

Virtually all Zherisians are humans, though their accents, fashions, and personas vary, depending on their borough. All share a competitive streak. Southshore has its populations of half-Vistani and calibans, but other non-human races, such as elves or dwarves, are unheard of as natives.

Classes

Rogues are very much at home in Paridon. Whether they are quick-witted charlatans who conned their way into Shadewell, or backstabbing thieves from Blackchapel's alleys, rogues can be found nearly everywhere in the city.

Fighters are mostly employed by either the Paridon Police or as bodyguards for the bourgeois. Rural rangers are non-existent; however, urban rangers may be found in Blackchapel.

Unlike other Ravenloft domains, monks are common in, and even characteristic of, Paridon. The Divinity of Mankind trains a multitude of them. Most clerics of the Divinity of Mankind have at least a few Monk levels. Paladins are also to be found in Paridon; most are trained by the Beacon of Goodness sect.

Arcane spellcasters are rare in Paridon, and those who dabble in the Art tend towards wizardry. Transmuters, often alchemical philosophers, are by far the most popular.

Bards are uncommon, but some perform in the music halls or serve as

tutors. A few 'hit it big' performing for wealthier audiences; however, many find upper-crust society stifling once they get there, so must choose between their passions and their employment.

Druids and barbarians have no place in the city, and the majority would do well to avoid it altogether.

Recommended Skills

Appraise, Bluff, Craft (alchemy, clockwork, gunsmithing, jewelry, literature), Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Forgery, Gather Information, Heal, Hide, Hypnosis Intimidate, Knowledge (local, history), Move Silently, Open Lock, Profession (dockworker, factory worker, merchant, notary, solicitor), Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Use Rope

Recommended Feats

Alertness, Back to the Wall, Brawler, Brew Potion, Deceitful, Deft Hands, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms, blunderbuss), Investigator, Jaded, Negotiator, Nimble Fingers, Open Mind, Persuasive, Stealthy, Stunning Fist, Reincarnated, Unseen

Zherisian Male Names

Andrew, Arthur, Alistair, Baxter, Blake, Carlton, Charles, Chester, David, Daniel, Donald, Edward, Edmund, Forrester, Gordon, Hunter, James, Lucas, Nigel, Niles, Oliver, Paul, Richard, Robert, Seymour, Terrence, Warren, William

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Zherisian Female Names

Anne, Audrey, Brenda, Catherine,
Claire, Christine, Dawn, Esther, Gail,
Harmony, Heather, Helen, Holly, Hope,
Iris, Jane, Jessica, Kimberly, Laura,
Leslie, Lindsay, Lucy, Margaret, Mary,
Nancy, Pamela, Polly, Sabrina, Susan,
Wendy

Zherisian Last Names

Adams, Atwater, Bentley, Brown,
Cole, Darwin, Edwards, Ford, Grant,
Hughes, Irving, Jamieson, Lloyd,
Major, Nichols, Nickelby, Osborne,
Parker, Paxton, Richardson, Rochester,
Rutherford, Shilton, Smith, Sutherland,
Thompson, Tucker, Welles,
Williamson, Young.

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Chapter 3

The Divinity of Mankind

The following section was entirely penned by Gertrude Kingsley.

-A.L

Philosophy

There is little coherent knowledge about the Divinity of Mankind abroad. The name itself sparks two common questions: "If you don't believe in gods, why is your religion called 'Divinity of Mankind'?" and "What about non-humans?"

The answer to the first question is that the Celebrants do not deny the existence of gods or denizens of the non-material planes, as Lamordians do. Celebrants, however, study gods as symbols, principles or evolved souls. 'Divinity' is a state of being, a stage of growth attainable to humanity.

The second question often catches the average Zherisian unawares. Due to geographical and intellectual insularity, most have had no reason to consider the reality of non-humans, let alone their souls. Therefore the common answer is that non-humans are aberrations. When pressed most Celebrants admit that the non-human state is inferior and must progress to a human one.

The human soul is the doorway to divinity. In order to attain divinity, the individual must discipline her body, mind and heart, and achieve an inner balance between the three. Moderation, not asceticism, is the key to success. Moderation involves the exercise of all three faculties. Beware those who vaunt one faculty to the detriment of the others; they are imbalanced, and soon reveal their weaknesses. (Perhaps my Brothers should take heed...).

This often sounds unbelievable to mainlanders, but the Temple is not overly concerned with conversion, or the encroachment of other faiths into "their territory". As proponents of reincarnation, they do not have concepts of any final apocalypse or eternal damnation; there is no sudden need to save souls.

The Divinity of Mankind

Symbol: A highly stylised human figure within a squared circle

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Cleric Domains: Knowledge, Law, Strength

Favoured Weapon: Quarterstaff

Clothing: Charcoal gray woolen tabard with embroidered holy symbol (blue circle, yellow square, red human figure); loose white tunic, trousers, and sash. Holy symbol around neck; ring of mindshielding. Sect ring optional.

Headquarters: Temple of Divine Form, Riverside, Paridon (see SotK p 5)

Further references: RCS, VRA and SotK

There is also an unconscious streak of nationalism. To put it irreverently, as Core souls advance, they will either move or be reborn in Paridon. The Celebrants are more than happy to let the rest of the world deal with the dross until then.



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History and Traditions

Legends state that the Temple was founded over a thousand years ago. The anonymous founder was a monk who laid aside his identity in dedication to the divinity which lay in all mankind. He took upon himself the title of Brother Man and set up the Temple of Divine Form. However, his original teachings and the origins of the three traditions have been lost to time. The Celebrants state that whilst they regret the loss, dependence on original documents approaches idolatry. Teachings are guidelines, not sacred writ; there is no holy book or one true way.

The temple's history in Paridon has been relatively stable, disturbed mostly by inner schisms rather than outer forces. The Great Upheaval caused the Celebrants to lose some of their congregation to the curse of the Core: skepticism and apathy. This loss is relatively small, however, mainly due to the temple's favourable reputation. Celebrants were responsible for organizing the appropriation and conversion of city parks into fields and gardens. They still oversee this project, as well as the hospice for the homeless and other programs.

The Divinity of Mankind maintains its monopolistic hold on Zherisian faith largely because of the flexibility of its beliefs and practices. There are three traditions - monastic, clerical, and alchemical- and together they form the Triangle of Perfection. They are considered interdependent and co-equal, and are illustrated with primary colours to emphasize this point. These traditions are known as the Apex of Intellect (alchemical/ yellow); the Apex of Intuition (clerical/ blue); and the Apex of Experience (monastic/red). Officially, members of all traditions are addressed by the honorific Brother or Sister, and their title is Celebrant of Humanity (i.e. Brother Man is a Celebrant of Humanity). In casual conversation, Celebrants often name their "rival" factions as monks, clergy, or alchemists. It is useful to note when primary and secondary colours are used in sect names; they often reveal their philosophical affiliations.

The Apex of Experience

There is one prerequisite for acceptance into this tradition: memories of a previous incarnation. The man who can remember his past lives is the man who is awaking to his true divine nature, and taking the first conscious step to immortality. One's rank in the monastery rises with the retrieval of every life. These memories are recorded and studied to authenticate their veracity. Since the doppelgangers' appearance, this process has become especially stringent, with divinations used for confirmation.

Novice monks move into the Temple whilst the memories are verified, and begin the year-long intensive course taken by all Celebrants (the poor are granted a scholarship or a loan) and slowly introduced into the round of chores and duties. They are free to leave at any time, and return when they believe they are more capable of coping with monastic life. Monks are not allowed to marry; older novices must be single, divorced or widowed.

Mainlanders are often astonished by the presence of monks in the bustling city. The Celebrants have long maintained that the only true way to know the divinity of mankind is to be surrounded by it. The monks share the dormitory, cafeteria and gymnasium with their other colleagues. They have four set meditations at dawn, noon, sunset and midnight. The rest of their day is preoccupied with other activities: maintenance of the Temple grounds and the parks, cleaning the Temple, serving in the cafeteria, research and exercise.



The Apex of Experience

This monastic tradition uses memories of a past life to expand a celebrant's studies into the Divinity of Mankind.

Required Classes: Monk

Prerequisites: Reincarnation (Feat).

Benefit: Characters of this order can multiclass freely between the cleric and arcane classes.

Monks also practice a walking meditation where they go alone in the streets, contemplating the nature of man in action. Novices and low-ranking monks wear their monastic garments to identify them and guard them from harassment; they are also assigned daylight hours and the safest neighbourhoods. They talk to people, and some will intervene in situations where it seems warranted.

When a monk has recalled ten lives, he is acknowledged as an elder. He puts aside his birth name and adopts one reflective of the divine soul. These names may be principles, virtues, or symbols. There is no change in the honorific; indeed, there is no ceremony to acknowledge the achievement. The change, whilst without outward signifier is not unnoticed.

The elders continue the walking meditation but now walk at all hours in nondescript clothing, losing themselves in the anonymity of Humanity. Whether they choose to involve themselves in events varies according to their particular school of thought. Some are content with unnerving their opponents with swift reflexes and calm demeanour. Others detain would-be offenders, handing them to the authorities for prosecution. And others see themselves as the flame which attracts the foolish moth to

the light... and take it to its next incarnation, with the lesson firmly, forever imprinted.

Whilst all the traditions are supposed to be equal, temple leadership and doctrine still rest solely in the monks' hands. The elders consider each other as equals; all decisions require a majority consensus. They do not however interfere in politics -religious or secular. What few sanctions they impose concern exclusivity or discriminatory laws. Their focus is always on the eternal life of the soul, and learning to get beyond the boundaries, not in getting entangled in daily cares. The majority of monks also come from the upper classes; perhaps this also accounts for their satisfaction with the status quo.

When Brother Man dies, the elders turn automatically to the eldest member who has acquired the most recorded memories. Brother Man is not accorded any extra deference among the elders. He rarely attends public functions, and his opinions cannot override the consensus. His rank is treated as one more chore among many to the temple. He is a figurehead among the elders, but his status holds sway in the rest of the Temple and to the general public.

There is only one room in the Temple dedicated solely to the monks, and this is the Hall of Memory. The Hall is equipped with magical wards to prevent eavesdropping and scrying. The room is small and unadorned beyond cushions for sitting meditation; many monks gather here for the times of meditation. There are no decorations or windows to distract the mind. This is the room where the elders gather to discuss temple policy on existing sects, schisms and national problems. They also record their records of memories of former incarnations here; these writings are contained in a vault magically concealed within the Hall.

Religious Survey

The monk's path is focused on the spiritual evolution, and the retrieval of past incarnations to achieve it. There is little room for vanity in this practice, since it is evident that even this life will eventually be a memory. Status and possessions are put aside, and hours devoted to study, meditation and service. Physical training hones the body, helping it reach its own culmination of perfection -it becomes immune to disease and apparently even aging. While these benefits are enjoyed, the goal is to make the body a Temple of Divine Form in the flesh, the soul its altar.

Monastic Encounters

During public encounters and battles, there is always a possibility that an elder monk may be one of the bystanders present:

1-25% The elder is Lawful Good. She will side with whichever party she judges to be law-abiding. She will then escort the 'arrestees' to the nearest police station. If she is unable to judge which side to be in the right, she will try to halt the violence and then ask for details. Be aware that if there are any bystanders present, they will be ready to come to her aid.

26-75% The elder is Lawful Neutral. She will normally not involve herself with the encounter unless she herself is attacked. The only other reason for intervention is if the elder fears the encounter could extend to the general populace and cause a riot or severe public disturbance.

76-100% The elder is Lawful Evil. If she is directly involved, she will fight to kill. She will not do anything for those involved or bystanders.

Burden of Knowledge

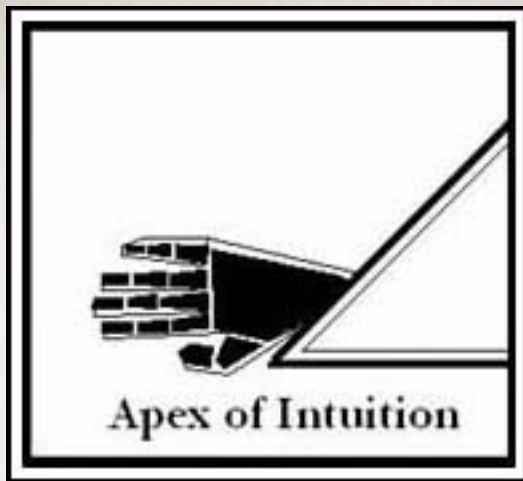
The Hall of Memory contains a collection of detailed prophecies received during time past. Most were fulfilled in that lifetime but some point to future events. Used by the elders to guide Paridon, these include a copy of Hyksosa's Hexad and the mysterious Prophecies of Leng.

Recently, several records were found missing by monks attempting to cross-reference the prophecies to the originals. The elders seek their discrete retrieval. The prophecies, dated 750 BC, describe Bloody Jack's last cycle killings in stark detail (Stitchwork changeface, vampire knife / Jack-of-Blood and stolen life). Are these records really as damning as they appear, proving that the elders had prior knowledge and allowed the attacks, or is it merely the benefit of hindsight?

The Apex of Intuition

Requirements for acceptance to the clergy are a history of regular Temple attendance, a reference by a Celebrant and the extensive year-long course. The Celebrants are suspicious of sudden conversions; zeal is not a virtue but a sign of imbalance.

Clerics are permitted to marry and the single welcome to live in Temple dormitories, but it is not required. They are expected to give a tithe to the temple, but not to relinquish their possessions. The clerical tradition is the most favoured by the lower class. This may explain why this tradition provides the most Celebrants, is the most popular and is the most focused on charitable programs.



The clerics hold services in chapels which are scattered across the city. These simple buildings are sparsely decorated and contain rows of benches. Short rites are held half an hour before dawn and fifteen minutes after sunset, giving many labourers time to attend. The cleric faces the gathering and reads the day's inspiration in a measured tone. This can be a mantra, a sacred poem or a passage; the reading is never longer than a minute. This is followed by fifteen minutes of silent meditation. The Celebrant then quietly wishes the gathering peace and invites those who are able to stay to share their insights. Interested congregants meet in the next room to talk, whilst the rest are free to either part or to remain in quiet meditation, undisturbed.

The Apex of Intuition

This clerical tradition trains celebrants to become holy warriors.

Required Classes: Cleric, Expert, or Paladin.

Benefit: Characters of this order can multiclass freely between the paladin, monk and arcane classes.

The Beacon of Goodness

Sect symbol: Blue circle containing white candle, lit, with orange flame

Required Classes: Cleric, paladin, or multiclassing

Alignment: Lawful Good

The most popular cleric today is a paladin. Reginald (Reggie the Bear) Wainwright had been visiting family in Blackchapel when the Great Upheaval occurred. He spent the next two years helping to restore national harmony, but was disgusted with the suffering of the poor. No longer content to be the brawn of the Temple, he studied to become a cleric. In 743, he and Sister Clarissa Jenkins formed the Beacon of Goodness.

The Beacon declares that an evolved soul is a good soul. Moderation is based on an underlying foundation of virtue; there can be no pretense of moderation in theft, murder and similar crimes. They also protest laws that they say encourage immoderation and greed, and call for others that benefit the entirety of humanity. They are supporters of electoral reform and laws for workplace safety, minimum wages, and workers' rights.

This sect is angering nobles with their inflammatory talk but is also bringing the laity back to the temple. Many Temple recruits and monks have been allying with this sect. Nearly a dozen paladins were marked in the past decade, perhaps the highest growth in the history of the temple. These are now recognized as Celebrants, and not Temple adherents. The Beacon has also accepted their first caliban Celebrant, Tammy Longjaw.

Religious Survey

The clergy perform most of the administrative duties of the Temple: they act as liaisons with the government and the general public, provide pastoral care and oversee various charities. Some clerics maintain their careers in health or education; their vocation is seen as an expansion of their lives, not eradication of all that has gone before. Yet there is no spiritual authority attached to these ranks; in fact, there is no status similar to the monks' elders or the lodges' adepts. Clerical spells are accessible to some in this tradition, but there is no preference based on this ability. Spellcasting is a wonderful and impressive ability, but so is the creation of a novel and symphony. Emphasis is placed on service, not promotion of self.

Paladins have always been somewhat anomalous within the temple, if a bit archaic due to their focus against evil. The monk has always been seen as the superior "warrior". To avoid friction, paladins have always been affiliated with this tradition.

Clerics are drawn to the Divinity of Mankind by a desire to aid their fellows. The monks focus on their individual spiritual growth, counting on their efforts to inspire and further the race as a whole; clerics focus on collective humanity, seeing their individual growth as interdependent with their fellows'. As the lower classes begin to call for electoral reform, the followers of this tradition are beginning to discuss the lack of true equality in Temple politics. This has been a recurrent issue throughout the history of the Temple, but it has never been as vocal as at present.

The Apex of Intellect

This tradition is very popular with the city's intelligentsia. Their many sects identify themselves as "lodges", although the majority of them have no set address, meeting in whichever room is available at the Temple. Many an ambitious youth has gained a benefactor or scholarship via these groups; Esteemed Brother Larner and I are but two. Yet the alchemists produce the fewest Celebrants; indeed, the most popular lodges are maintained by the laity. It should

Chaplains of the 7th Order

This was one of many excommunicated lodges. In 720 Joseph Cable, published *Comes the Kingdom of the 7th Chapter* and proclaimed himself Grand Vizier of the Chaplains of the 7th Order. The book opened with the quote "And the skies shall darken as warning to the ignorant. The grass shall recede into the Earth, all manner of new life will become known to the Race of Men; behold the 7th Age of Order, behold the next step in the rise of metamorphosed Humankind!"

This apocalyptic sect seemed to be obsessed with preserving the enlightened from catastrophe. To this end,

Cable had attempted to open an "otherworldly door" for the enlightened, using dying animals and a host of volunteer blood-donors. When he suddenly disappeared, the investigating police stumbled upon his journals and brought the matter to public attention. Between the loss of their leader and the public outcry at their practices, the Order went underground, and was assumed to be defunct.

The Great Upheaval stirred lodge members to reunite, seeing it as the beginning of the prophesied 7th Age. They have recommenced Cable's attempts to open the doorway. The dearth of animals however has meant that they have had to rely on blood-donors and alchemical homunculi.

The Apex of Intellect

Adherents of this alchemical tradition combine their monastic studies with arcane experimentation.

Required Classes: Adept, Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard, Expert or Alchemical Philosophers.

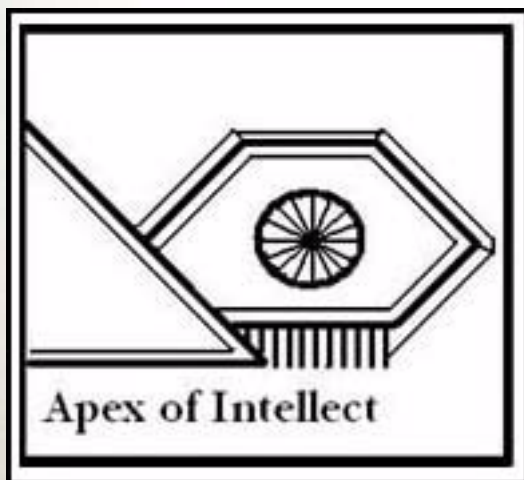
Prerequisite: Secret Society (feat, HoL)

Adept requisite: Able to fulfill formulae of all three alchemical permutations

Benefit: Characters of this order can multi-class freely between the monk and cleric classes.

thus come as no surprise that lodges are frequently splintering, dissolving, and seceding from the Temple.

Lodges meet once a week, in the evening. They present public lectures and workshops, which are the recruiting ground for their lodges. Each lodge has private requirements, but the most obvious reason to attend one is simple personal preference. Novices must attend rites regularly for a year and complete prescribed activities and assignments. If they are judged sincere, they are initiated with secret ceremonies, ritual tools, colourful robes and mystical names. To laymen or Celebrants, they are known as 'alchemists'.



The Celebrants of this tradition must have a proven record of dedication to their lodge and take the year-long intensive course. Like the clerics, they are permitted to marry and to maintain their careers. They are often involved in the Temple library, its educational programs and magical research. They are also responsible for the annual internal investigation of lodges. The alchemists examine their stated philosophy and their practices to see whether they are actively discriminating against any segment of human society, and whether they are pursuing forbidden alchemical practices. The errant lodge is issued a warning and has six months to evidence real improvement. If there isn't any, the lodge is denied access to Temple facilities and publicly excommunicated.

The Celebrants themselves are often the ones seceding from the Temple, frustrated at what they perceive to be the belittling of their own skills or annoyed with their laical brethren's use of alchemical metaphors when most couldn't identify an alembic. The loyal are aware that devotion to the Temple does not equate a promotion of status within a lodge.

One hidden outlet for frustration is indulgence of the desire for exclusivity. Agatha Clairmont, who is affiliated to all three traditions, informed me that there are a handful of lodges that consists mainly of Celebrants, which they themselves lead. The infamous Philosophy of Humanity was one of them. The rare laymen accepted are spellcasters, doctors or scientists whose knowledge pertains to their particular interests. These are always scrutinized and carefully questioned before they are approached. These are generally not known to the general public, who would certainly protest the exclusivity denied laity-run lodges. There are, however, no public records listing all the lodges, only those which have been forbidden: a clever subterfuge which enables the secret lodges to flourish.

Indeed, it is impossible to know the exact number of lodges for reasons beyond Temple confidentiality, simply because so many fall apart within a year of their

Religious Survey

Forced Reincarnation

Sister Agatha's unease stems from her knowledge of the Lodge of the Undiluted Flesh's excommunication. Its founder, Nicholas Bartello, lost his sister Sandra (742) and good friend Edward Chaswick (755) to Bloody Jack.

Unhinged by grief, Bartello continued his friend's mission in his own ghastly fashion: by murdering kidnapped demihumans and transferring their essence into humaniform alchemical children. Every attempt thus far has resulted in a Flawed Alchemical Life as the demihuman goes insane.

Sister Agatha has put many of these flawed creations out of their misery but fears she may soon need help.

creation. Sister Agatha was unwilling or unable to give me precise details on these sects. She did admit that the adepts, the alchemical Celebrants equivalent of the monastic elder, are all involved in these lodges. These adepts are masters of the three permutations of High Alchemy. She is emphatic that they are not involved in the creation of constructs, which seem to be a personal obsession of hers. If she was privy to the knowledge of the secret Philosophy's existence, is it impossible to imagine that others who disagree with her views are similarly hiding? Her unease at this question seems to lend some weight to this thought.

It is very difficult to give a general overview of this diverse group of alchemists, laity and Celebrants. "Lay aside the trappings of daily life, and become awake to the eternal soul" is the one message they seem to share. It is easy to mistake one's mundane life for the entirety of one's being. In the lodge, the senses are shaken by exotic surroundings, and new avenues open in the imagination which the daily grind obscures.

The alchemist has a regimen of daily exercises and meditations, measured and achievable states of progress, and the recognition of this achievement by a new rank in the lodge. These ranks mean nothing in the mundane world, but the lodge provides a spiritual milieu where the Zherisian can exercise ambitious urges, a temptation few can resist.

The alchemists seem closest to the monastic tradition due to their focus on the individual. Alchemists express their differences with this metaphor: the monk sees the personality as a drop of water in the sea; the alchemist, as a character in a play. The alchemists believe in the survival of the personality; the monks don't, or don't care. Alchemists respect the clergy's devotion to general humanity, but prefer to focus their energies on helping those who are willing to try to return the favour.

Holy Days

There were no holy days in the Celebrants' calendar until 741. The Temple maintains that every day is sacred, and that none should be singled out over another, encouraging a better behaviour for some temporary period. The institution of the new Brother Man, for example, is not celebrated beyond a mention in the Newsbill.

Memorial Day is the anniversary of the Great Upheaval's destruction of Zherisia: July 3, 740. There are few Zherisians who haven't lost a loved one to the Mists or ensuing harsh months. In face of the overwhelming grief and the still-riotous mood in the city, the Temple decided in the winter of 741 that a day of memorial for the missing might provide a public outlet for grief and anger. Only meant to occur once, there were calls for it to be continued and the Temple respected the laity's wishes. On this day businesses and stores close, and the city grows noticeably quieter. The hour-long noon rites are held in the streets due to the overwhelming attendance, followed by a procession towards the nearest city-gates. Songs are sung with intermittent silence for reflection, and flowers or ribbons are laid at the gates.

Chapter 3

Another annual event is on New Year's Day. It is not a holy day; indeed, it might be better known as an "open day". The traditions display their various gifts and skills in order to remind their fellows of the abilities inherent within the human race. Lodges present public ceremonies, and lectures on various topics. Clerics offer free healing, lead meditations, and recruit volunteers for their charitable programs. Monks display their physical skills and relate stories about Zherisian history based on past lives.

The Squared Circle

It has long been known that the Divine Triangle is represented by the three features of the holy symbol: circle, square, and man. There is apparently another dimension to this symbol. There are four monks who have been continuously returning to the Temple, maturing at different times, ready to manage at the death of the one who has assumed the mantle of Brother Man. They call themselves the Squared Circle. Until now their existence was known only to the elders of the Temple. Each apparently holds nearly two hundred years of memories within himself. They are able to recall memories as far back as the beginning of the sixth century BC but no farther, which interests them immensely. They call this the Great Barrier, and have been busy trying to break this wall of silence.

I was granted an audience with these elders (only three at present, the last Brother Man died in 743 and his latest incarnation should emerge soon) and was given this astonishing information among other things. Since the Upheaval, they have been waiting for the first monk who is able to recall memories of his death in 740 in the countryside. So far there have been no results, and they find that suspicious yet hopeful. They posit that the countryside may not have been destroyed, but hidden in the Mists like Markovia. They have kept quiet about this, not wishing to stir false hopes. I myself am curious to see what the results will be...and if it returns, whether its original inhabitants will still be there.

Dread Possibility

Spider's Web

Whilst the Squared Circle is careful to hide it, the Hive Queen has made an offer they can't refuse: for her humanity, she'll return their reincarnated fourth member, Francis Dawson. Kidnapped as a sacrifice for the Fang of the Nosferatu, he became a consolation prize when his mind snapped and he started babbling secrets from his past life as Brother Man.

The Circle would willingly make this trade, if they had the ability. Instead, the Circle is playing for time and hoping to rescue Francis. This may prove difficult as Francis is running wild through Timor, half-marikith and fully insane.

The Hive Queen may offer token opposition, but wants him to be rescued. She knows the Circle is bluffing and when the Circle reclaims Francis, they'll have to find a way to return his humanity. In the end, either she will know how to reclaim her own humanity, or she will have a pawn inside the Circle...

They also revealed that someone calling herself "the Queen of Timor" has contacted them. She claims to be a cursed human and, in desperation, she has turned to the Temple to see if they are able to restore her to humanity. They are investigating the matter but refused to divulge any other details. They do believe, based on this contact, that if van Rijn should be in the area, the Queen is hardly likely have sided with him when the only alternative he can offer is undeath.

-Gertrude Kingsley

Interlude

To the Fathers of the Fraternity, greetings.

I had hoped to submit our report on the workings of my homeland at the present time, but recent events have forced me to consider our efforts incomplete as of yet. Yesterday evening as I entered my apartment I was viciously attacked by a young man (as it seemed at first) who deployed a silence spell on my person and attacked me with a knife. It goes without saying that the former action, at least, is not common among the footpads of my city. I am fortunate to have some skill in unarmed combat; without it I might very well have been killed.

Having disarmed my opponent I succeeded in binding him; when the magical silence expired I proceeded to interrogate him. I soon learned that "he" was, in fact, a doppelganger; however, it was not quick to divulge information regarding its motives or ends. I called on the assistance of other Brothers and by our combined efforts we succeeded in plucking information from the creature's mind, in addition to learning something of the psychology of the creature.

Since the creature's words may have some meaning of which I am unaware, I will transcribe the conversation as closely as possible. Brother Rupert Kingsley put the questions; the answers are my verbalization of the resulting thoughts I detected in the creature's mind.

"Who are you?"

"I am a Master."

"What is your name?"

"Armach."

"What was your human name?"

"I was clad in the form of a fishmonger, a filthy thing that reeked of fish and dirt. I remembered it from my infancy, when I wore my youth-face and lived two houses down. I could feel its lusts and vices and what it wanted to do to my youthful frame, what it felt towards my female mask. It was weak and easy prey. And with it gone I could take its place and have easy access to its markets. I knew several clan-mates who regularly enjoy fish. If they were to eat a tainted meal it would allow me the opportunity to undercut their dealings..."

(Note that these impressions came very quickly, and were largely non-verbal; I have done my best to set them down as I understood them. The sense of hierarchy, desire for social advancement, and disdain for humankind were strongly manifested.)

"Why did you attack Master Larner?"

"It told me it would give me money, and power...it gave me the wand and told me to kill the man-thing. It had a picture."

"Who was this person?"

"A thing. A dead thing. It was cattle once, I think."

"Did you learn its name? Where did you meet it?"

"No, no name...It made me go down in the dark. Down where the bad things are..."

At this point the stress of the interview overcame the assassin and it expired. Although the information gained was fragmentary, it points to a possibility I had not fully considered—that the tunnels beneath the city must also be searched before we can be sure that van Rijn is not present. The doppelganger's mention of a "dead thing" hints that he might have been the instigator of this attack. Accordingly, I am arranging an expedition to the Underground and will submit that report together with the material already compiled.

Sincerely,

Alfred Larner

Esteemed Brother of the Fraternity of Shadows

Paridon, 3 June 760

PART II



Timor

Geographical Survey

Chapter 4

Chapter 4

After completing my notes and leaving them with a trusted aide I moved away from the comfort of the known and familiar and began my descent into the sewers of my fair city. As I postulated earlier, Paridon is stacked atop another land. Much like two neighboring lands of the Core or the twin lands of the Frozen Reaches, both halves of Zherisia have a separate origin and different ruler.

Entering posed some minor inconveniences. Not being so naïve as to simply walk through the first grating nor into the nearest coal cellar, I consulted those who have ventured into the black and returned. I found that Southshore seemed to have the fewest disappearances and deaths. I began my journey there and sunk into the ignored and forgotten reaches of Paridon.

(I pause for a moment to send out my gratitude to Viktor Hazan for the loan of his



lenses of darkvision. They were invaluable in the gloom below and saved my life more than once.)

Thankfully, after entering the depths, I was quickly found by the residents below. Or rather I was found by the friendly inhabitants, the ones unlikely to kill me where I stood. It is thanks to them that I survived long enough to write this. They provided me with rough maps, information and even a guide to the long forgotten Library of Timor. I doubt I would have survived for a day without brave Ybbor, my guide.

Yes, this land is known as Timor- the very same land that was once a city in its own right, very much like my own Paridon. I remember travelers there trading briefly with other lands -including my own- before it vanished again into the Mists. Now the city has been struck down and only the subterranean survives, and under Paridon!

Climate

There is no real weather in the depths of Timor. There is no wind, no rain and no snow. The entire land is underground and removed from nature.

On the upper levels, the weather of the surface impacts Timor. The constant drizzle of Zherisian weather occasionally drips down through cracks or holes. On days of

Timor in Short

Location: Island in the Mists

Ecology: Limited

Darklord: Hive Queen

Year of formation: 620

Cultural level: Savage (0) Although the ruins suggest a former Renaissance (9) or higher level of advancement. The caliban vary between Stone (1) and Iron (3) ages.

Population: Approximately 100 calibans. Unknown number of marikith.

Main settlements: The Enclave

Religion: True Form (Caliban)

Language: Timorian

Government: Egalitarian (Caliban), Hive mind (Marikith)

Currency: None

Grim Miasma

The thick musk of decomposing vegetation fills the Sewers and pipes of Timor. This halves the illumination from light sources, both bright and shadowy. The gas also tends to reflect light and shadow, casting odd shapes against the walls and creating illusions of movement.

The haze in the Tunnels is far less, only limiting illumination by 1/4, rounded up. In the darkness of the Hive the miasma returns. There, both the illumination and duration of light sources are reduced by 1/2. Even permanent light sources are affected, occasionally winking out as if they entered an anti-magic zone. Other areas act as if they had a darkness spell cast on them, not snuffing out light but reducing all illumination to shadowy.

Additional hazards from the haze are pockets of explosive gas. These ignite when exposed to any open flame, such as from a lantern or torch. The damage varies according to the size of the gas pocket ranging from effects similar to the spells burning hands or fireball (determine damage according to level of party).

Other forms of gas are toxic, replicating the effects of insanity mist poison, smoky environs or simply causing unconsciousness (treat as an inhaled poison DC 13 : initial Unconscious/ secondary Unconscious, 1d4 minutes).

heavier rain there may be small streams of water from above. Occasionally, spouts or puddles may overflow and cause unexpected showers for the residents of Timor. This is mostly an inconvenience but on days of heavy downpour it can become dangerous in the sewers.

As the rain pounds the surface it can flood the tunnels and passages below, sometimes causing devastating waves or blocking passages. Otherwise noticeable pits might fill with water and unsafe footings become invisible.

The temperature remains fairly constant throughout Timor. The upper levels change slightly with the season and weather above, but the lower reaches are consistently cool.

In the upper and lower reaches there is a perpetual haze in the air. Decomposing waste and plants are to blame in the sewers, but it is aggravated by the humidity. On particularly wet days the miasma thickens, limiting vision even more and befouling the air. On cooler days the haze sinks to the deeper reaches, rendering them gloomy and dark.

Regions of the Deep

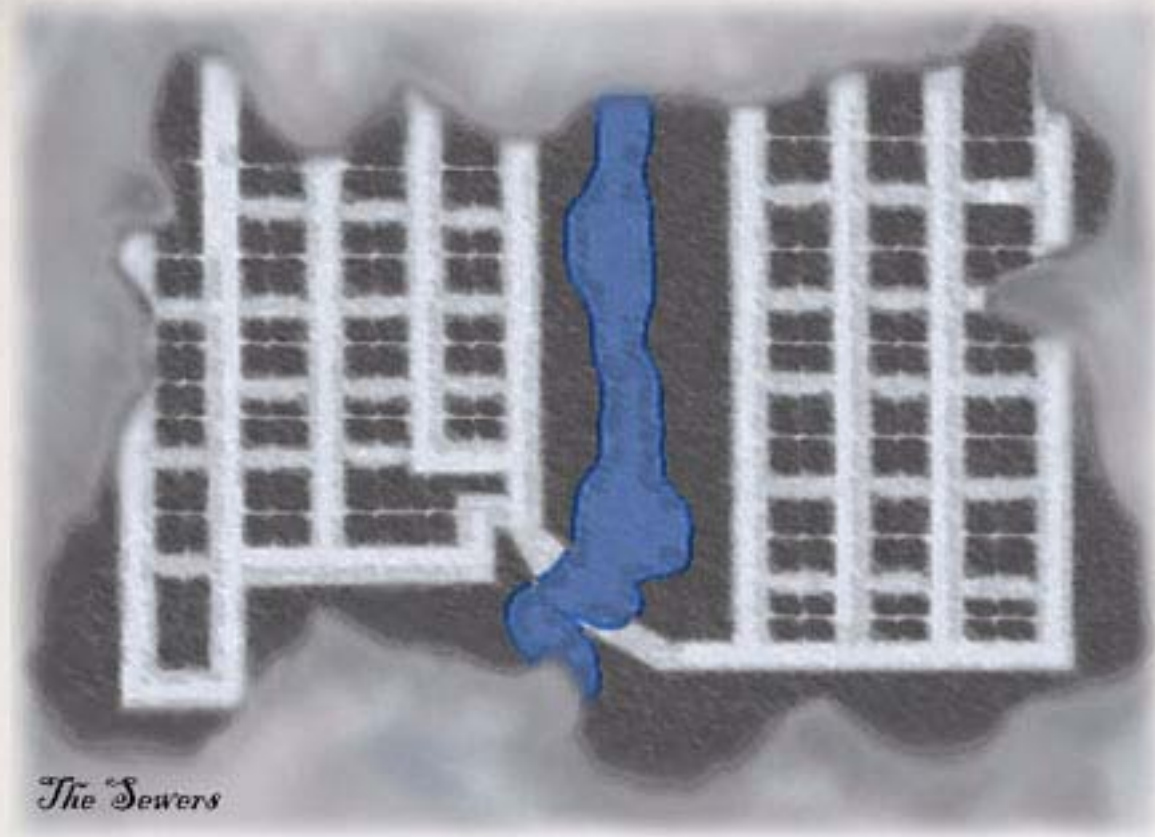
Timor itself can be divided into a number of layers. These are mostly artificial; the myriad of tunnels and levels blur together. Passageways slope up and down with maddening irregularity. In interviewing my guide and after personal exploration I feel comfortable dividing Timor into three rough layers.

The Sewers

The first layer of Timor is the brick passages immediately beneath Paridon. The sewer-workers have nicknamed it "Via Cloaca".

Having not spent much time under the streets prior to the Great Upheaval, I cannot testify how much the current sewers resemble the pipes of old. The workers I have interviewed assure me that the tunnels and passage have changed and shifted and that the blueprints no longer resemble what is down there.

Chapter 4



It is interesting then that all the drains, pipes, and manholes still lead into the tunnels. If the entire Sewer had suddenly been replaced, one would expect storm drains that lead nowhere and pipes that end at blank walls.

Therefore, I theorize that Timor did not simply replace our sewers but that the two were somehow combined. The layout -or at least the openings to the surface- have remained consistent but the larger tunnels and architecture may have shifted or been replaced.

It is clear that the design of the sewers is Zherisian. The words carved into the junctions and dates etched into the walls are in my tongue, however not all the bricks are of Zherisian stone. The rooms and tunnels also lack a consistent style. In fact, not even the refuse is entirely Zherisian. Whilst underground I found an aged boot that is clearly not of local fashion!

On average, the Sewers conform to Zherisian architecture. The ceilings are low and the passages themselves are typically rounded. Along the lower walls are twin paths with a trough-like channel for the water and refuse. The small paths are narrow so groups venturing in the Sewers must walk single-file. On rainy days the gutter has a tendency to overflow, covering the path with slick water or waste. The walls are constructed of small bricks of dark-grey stone crudely mortared together. Individual bricks stick out and the walls have a jagged or even serrated appearance.

All the smaller tunnels usually follow beneath streets, although access points are few and far between. Most openings to the surface are metal grates or drains but are these too small for a human to fit through. It is often frustrating to be so close to people and the streets (one can often hear the carriages overhead) and yet unable to leave the tunnels.

Geographical Survey



The passages are roughly arranged in grids with larger drainage tunnels every so often. Whilst much wider, these tunnels have similarly low ceilings so the tunnels resemble squat ovals. These larger drainage 'streams' join together and eventually drain into the river as far downstream as possible.

The river bisects the Sewers, dividing them into an eastern and western half. There is no way to move between the two except by moving down and through the lower levels or returning up to the surface.

Of all the levels of Timor the Sewers are the safest, and yet they have the highest number of living things. Whilst the lower levels are filled with threats, few can accurately be called animals or even labelled 'alive'. Vermin are common in the sewers: rats, insects and other scavengers. I have seen quite a few abnormally large centipedes crawling across the walls. Whilst many poisonous and deadly things swim or scurry in the sewers I would much rather face them than the aberrations that lurk below.

The Enclave

(Hamlet) : Conventional; AL LG; CL 1-3; 100 gp limit; Assets 550 gp; Population 110; Isolated (100% caliban,)

Authority Figures: Finder Morshin, male caliban Clr9; Vincen Perlan, male caliban Brd2/Rog3 (trader).

Important Characters: Ybbor, male caliban Rgr3/Brb2 (guide/hunter); Talodun, female caliban Ftr4/Rgr 7/RMH2 (hunter/guard).

Survival of the Fittest

Scavenging for food is difficult at best in the tunnels of Timor and there is always the danger of becoming lost or falling victim to natural hazards.

All survival checks have their DCs raised by 5 in the Sewers, 10 in the Tunnels and 15 in the Hive. For example, the DC for foraging for food is 15 in the Sewers but 20 in the Tunnels below. Finding food for a party of four in the sewers would have a DC of 21 (15+2+2+2).

Additionally, true north is not automatically determined in Timor with the survival skill. A roll must be made with the base DC of 10 and modified as above.

Tucked away in a nook between the Sewers and the Tunnels is the Enclave, a small village of calibans that eke out a minimal existence in Timor. These sturdy people call themselves the Remnants as they are all that remains of Timor's people. This settlement is hidden in the sunken ruins of Timor's temple district and is centered on the ruins of the Great Cathedral there. The Cathedral itself shattered as it collapsed into the tunnels. The main entrance was crushed as the bell tower fell, leaving a small side door as the only entrance. The tower itself remains and lies sloping upward, cutting a path into the Sewers above. The tower serves as a shaft between the levels and is the only entrance into the Enclave.

The rest of the settlement branches away from the Cathedral. Houses are built out of dead-end tunnels or partially dug into the tunnel walls where the earth was displaced. Rubble is often used to support or extend these homes.



Because all tunnels that might lead to the settlement collapsed with the Cathedral, the Enclave is at the end of a defensible chokepoint. The calibans also make use of a rare fungus that the marikith are apparently allergic to, so the creatures are discouraged from approaching.

So far they have survived by avoiding detection and it is possible the Hive Queen is unaware such a large and permanent community exists in her realm. While it is unlikely she does not know of the Remnant's existence, the Enclave's location is a closely guarded secret known only to the Remnants.

The Tunnels

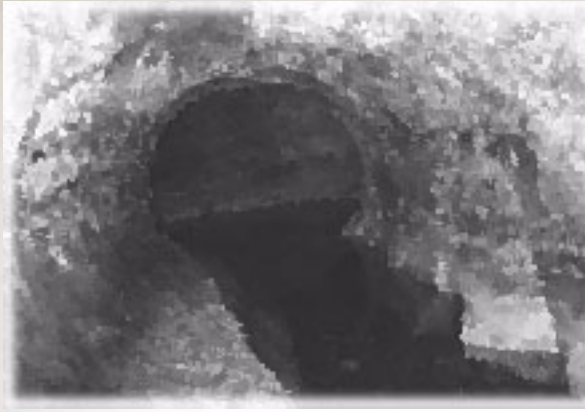
The second series of layers can collectively be called the Tunnels. These imposing passageways are all that remains of the sewers and catacombs of Timor. The sewers of that city ran far deeper than anything built by Zherisia. The Tunnels themselves are far from uniform and can further be divided into a series of sections.

The first are the ancient Timorian sewers themselves. Unlike the Zherisian namesakes, these sewers are large with high arches and domed ceilings. The walls are straight and at sharp angles to the floor which is split by a deep channel. These small canals were designed to ferry runoff, but these have long since run dry and are now filled with all manner of dirt, grim, oozes, fungi and moss. Buttresses and brick columns line the walls and hold up the impressive curved roof and the many levels above. The tunnels themselves have a curious crisscrossing layout with many sharp angles and steep slopes.

Timor was designed to be a city of beauty - even the sewers had to be magnificent. After years of abuse and corruption, they are still a wonder to behold. The larger intersections feature large fresco mosaics and oftentimes the walls are painted with elaborate designs.

Unlike the dark grey and black stone the Zherisian sewers are built from, the Timorian tunnels are pale yellow and even an ashen grey in places. The bricks

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themselves are large and smooth, placed tightly together with little mortar. Torchlight would reflect easily off these walls and light up a great distance if not for the continual moss and dark black mold that chokes out light. Decades of dust and grime have smothered the once bright stone.

The high roofs with dangling moss and mold do present a danger. Whilst not deadly in itself, the thick black choking strands are an ideal hiding place for innumerable crawlers and predators, including marikith. The Remnants warned me that they're prone to dropping from the ceilings without warning or sound.

Many of the tunnels also seem to be built atop other ruins; catacombs and structures far older than the city of Timor. Holes occasionally crack open into forgotten tombs or long-buried cairns. However, most of these are also within the borders of the Hive.

Like the Sewers, the Tunnels are divided by the river, although here it was accidental. After the earthquake that joined our two lands, the ceilings beneath the river quickly collapsed. Even now the area by the river is blocked by heavy, damp earth that is impossible to dig through and the passages nearby are prone to flooding.

The second sub-section of the Tunnels includes the ruins of the city of Timor, now abandoned and forgotten. The city of Timor once had a river than ran through it, similar to that which splits Paridon. When Timor moved underneath Paridon, their river disappeared. During the earthquakes the buildings on either riverbank slid down and filled in the valley.

I advise my readers to keep in mind the shifting of Timor. While the Tunnels were once underneath the Ruins this is no longer the case. They are now intertwined with some Tunnels well above the city's remains.

The Ruins are a channel of buildings: some upright and somewhat intact and others destroyed or on their sides. They cut an arc through the layer broken by the current river. It is in the Ruins that the Remnants scavenge for goods and items and where I found the Library and stores of Timor.

Looking over skeletal remains of buildings, some still peopled by the crushed remains of the cities' population, I wondered where the rest of the buildings went. Was it swallowed by the Earth and not yet discovered or did the remains simply dissipate into the Mists?

The Lost City

The city of Timor was not destroyed by the Grand Conjunction. Instead it was swallowed by the Mists and separated from its sewers. Occasionally, travelers wander into this empty and abandoned metropolis; sometimes they wander up from Timor and are surprised they are not in Paridon and others simply wander in from the Mists.

Timor is now perpetually Mist-bound, surrounded by swirling fog. The city itself looks as if it has been drained of all colour, the buildings and streets are grey and white. Even the vegetation is pale green. There appears to be no one in the city, as if they all dissolved in the Mists. However, at night, ghostly shades walk the streets in a grim imitation of their former activities. These are pale and colourless and seem detached from the world; it is not possible to interact with or to speak to them.

The nature of this Timor is unknown. Is it an ethereal shadow of the city or a construct of the Mists? Or is it perhaps the real city that, without a Lord, is slowly fading away? If it is the true city, or even an accurate copy, than the magical trophies and great wealth remains to be claimed.

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With the grandeur of its construction and testimony to the Timorians' talents it is easy to forget how deadly it is here, but not from the creatures of the Sewers. Rats and other vermin seldom make it down to the Tunnels. Before the destruction, Timorian sewers were reputed as "rat free" as creatures were placed there to control pests. Now all the rats are gone but the creatures remain. The corrupting effects of Timor have not left them untouched and it is impossible to tell what they once were. This is analogous to Isolde's Carnival and the hideous Twisting found there.

All manner of mutated and hideous abominations lurk here in the dark. Many were corrupted by the nature of Timor whilst others simply fell prey to the Mists or slithered in from outside. Regardless, whilst the Tunnels were once a monument to mankind, we no longer belong there. Despite the lack of sunlight, plants seem to thrive in the moist tunnels. Mosses cling to the walls and long strands dangle from the ceilings like pale green stalactites.

All manner of hideous creatures make their home in the Tunnels. Oozes, slimes, molds, fungi and other threats lurk in every nook. Unnamable beasts corrupted by dark magic or Timor make their lairs here and await the unwary. And stray undead, the haunted Timorians that fell in the Upheaval, still wander the Ruins. Thankfully, the haze lightens in the Tunnels. It is drier here, and there is far less decomposing refuse. However, the Tunnels are perpetually dark. The few isolated scraps of Zherisian day die before reaching these depths.

It should be noted that there are no Mists in the Tunnels. In the Sewers there are passages that lead into the swirling white Mists as the border descends down from the edge of Paridon. But in this level all the passages end before they reach the Mists. Cave-ins and ruins block all access to the borders. The only way out of our land is up.

The earthquake also left many tunnels and walls unsafe and many passages still threaten to collapse. There are innumerable hidden pitfalls and weakened floors that could easily send someone plummeting to certain death.

Navigating in Timor

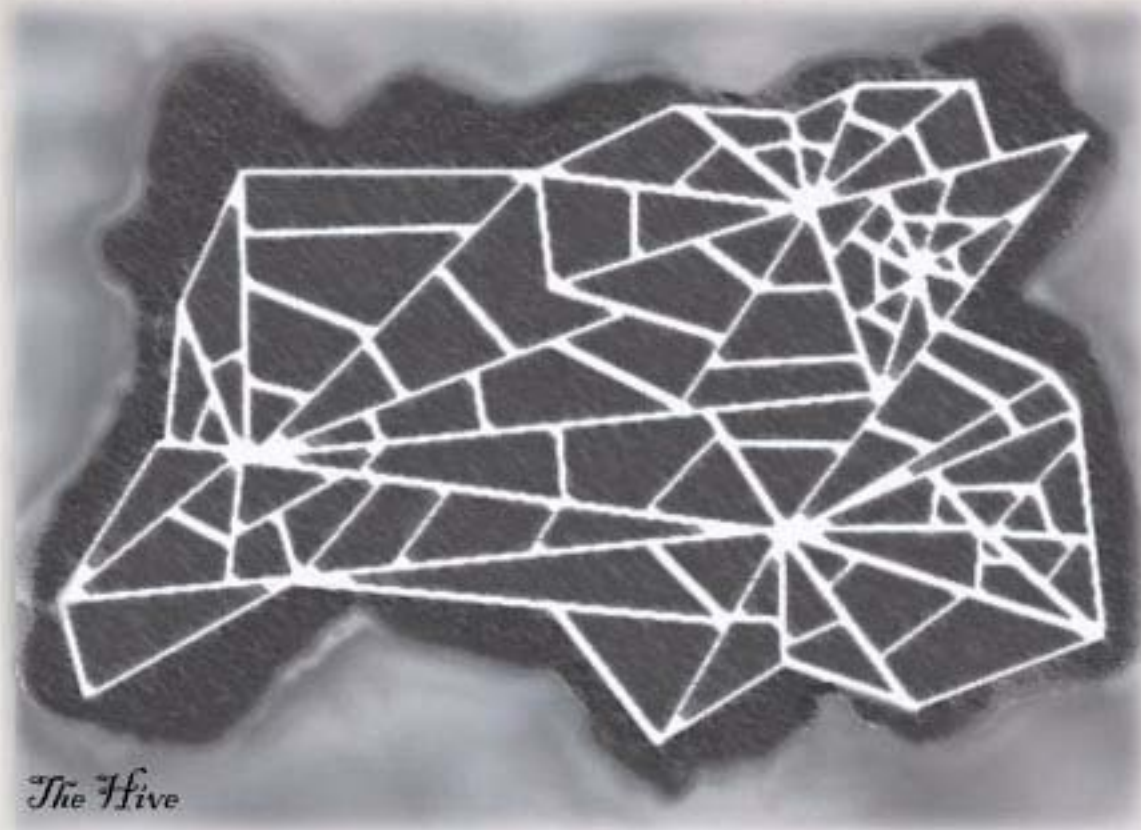
The passages of Timor play tricks on travelers, intentionally misleading them. In the Hive the tunnels seem to twist and move to lead explorers deeper and deeper into the depths.

Any time explorers try to backtrack they must make an Int check DC 15 to recall the route they took. If they recorded their path or mapped out the route they receive a +5 bonus to this check.

However, in the Tunnels the passages hide or can only be seen out of the corner of the eye. A spot check (DC 15) is needed to find turnoffs, locate markings or see small landmarks. This increases by 5 if the characters are in a hurry and by an additional 5 if they are being chased or stalked.

Navigating in the Hive is much harder. Search checks (DC 20-25) are often required to mind obscured doors or passages that have shifted. Marks quickly vanish regardless of whether they are written in chalk or carved into the wall. Spot and Int checks have their DC increased by 5.

When travelers speak of the shifting tunnels of Timor, they're often referring to this layer. Whilst the tunnels do not actually move (at least I have never seen this happen) they do seem to shift and hide. Openings seem to vanish no matter how hard one looks for them, only to reappear later, whilst new passages are discovered on commonly traveled routes. It is as if the tunnels cannot always be seen, as if the eyes look past them. It does not occur during wandering or aimless exploring; only when one is taking a known path. My guide insists that it is worse when one is in a hurry or pursued.



The Hive

The deepest layer of Timor is the Hive. Here the marikith rule and make their home. Here man is but prey, an intruder in an alien world. The Hive is composed of a series of natural caverns, ancient tunnels and passages dug into the earth. Most seem to have been burrowed without any manner of tool, clawed out of the rock and soil. The passages weave from side to side and slope in random directions. They vary in size from wide twelve-foot tunnels to cramped three-foot holes.

The walls of the Hive are dark black soil, stained dark by things better left unconsidered. The walls are rough and unfinished with large crevasses and cracks. The marikith often work their bodies into these grooves and remain undetectable, mistaken for another part of the roof or wall. Travelers have sometimes been surprised when whole tunnels seem to come alive

without warning. The marikith sometimes also let explorers walk past unmolested only to drop and stalk them from behind.

The entire layer is a maze with dead-ends, sudden drops, impossible climbs, randomly interconnecting passages and worse. The Hive was not built to accommodate people. Tunnels cut straight up and down, designed for creatures able to scale sheer walls or decrease in size so only the smallest beings (or those able to compact themselves) can manoeuvre.

These passages were also built as deathtraps. Passages abruptly end at a point where a marikith can easily move (such as a sheer drop or small hole) but a human cannot. The creatures enjoy herding victims to these points, giving them the illusion they're escaping before they reach the kill zone. Other times the walls are built purposely thin so the monsters can snatch people through them and drag them away.

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Whilst the passages in the Tunnels seem to fade from view, those of the Hive shift and move of their own accord. The entire level writhes unseen and routes never lead to the same place twice. Some of the Remnants believe the beasts reshape the tunnels personally, moving dirt and brick by hand and claw. Others believe it reshapes to the will of its Queen, twisting to fit her wishes. I believe it is some combination of both.

The haze that permeates the Sewers is thick here. Despite the dryness of the air and lack of decomposition, the air is thick and light is absorbed by the miasma. It seems to seep up from the very ground. It is as if Timor itself rejects light of any kind and tries to swallow it up.

Like the Tunnels above, no routes in the Hive lead to the Misty border of Timor. Whilst in the Tunnels this may be dismissed as coincidence, it is quite deliberate in the Hive. Passages may begin in that direction but invariably stop or turn away, leading fleeing travellers back into the Hive's heart.

What I find most disturbing in the Hive is not the alien design but the small fragments of humanity that have worked their way down. Ancient ruins such as crypts or forgotten tombs can be found in the darkest corners of the Hive. Sunken buildings of Timor are sometimes revealed by the winding tunnels. The odd statue or monument stands openly in an intersection, ruined and defaced. But these areas have been corrupted: defiled or trapped. The marikith are not above using treasure or relics as bait.

There are also the catacombs: a series of brickwork tunnels that have opened up in the ceilings of the Hive. Originally beneath the Temple Quarter of Timor and woven in between the sewers, these housed the dead of the city. Anyone of renown was entombed here along with their most valued possessions. The floors and walls of these catacombs are often unstable and open down into the Hive. More than once I observed signs of them, such as a heavy stone casket protruding from above.

Looking at the rough maps of the Hive provided by the Timorians, it is clear it's

roughly laid out like a giant spider's web. The major tunnels all head to two or three junctions: centres of the web. It is in one of these the Hive Queen dwells.

Locations of Note

There are a few places tucked away on the individual levels worthy of special attention. I have pointed these out on my crude map and hope they are of use.

The Library

The first location worthy of the Fraternity's attention was the original one I ventured out to find: the ancient Library of Timor, the accumulated knowledge of centuries and the works of hundreds of scholars and dozens of wizards. I only regret I was unable to spend longer here or bring more than a few tomes up with me.

I had to rely on comprehend languages to decipher the Timorian dialects that fill these books. Whilst I speak enough rough Timorian now to make myself understood (along with the smattering of languages the Remnants know), reading it is an entirely different matter.

All subjects great and small are covered in this massive building. Several small wings expand out from the large central room filled with the filing system and histories of the land. The building itself sits on a slant with several shelves toppled over and piles of books scattered haphazard.

Given the advancements of the land I venture many scholars would kill for a chance to explore the knowledge contained within. A single volume of engineering or architecture could sell for a fortune in Dementlieu or Richemulot. I contented myself with a few histories and a book of magic I hid from Ybbor.

Great Cistern

Deep below the Nodnal lays the Great Cistern. Tucked away in the lower reaches of the Tunnels, near the start of the Hive, is a single deep shaft plunging down. Here the

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river had burrowed down, spurred on by the collapsing sewers and tunnels, and has begun to funnel into the deep.

Whilst most of the soil around the Cistern is damp and unstable, there are a number of sturdy brick passages. These access a number of pools where the runoff pauses for a moment before churning downward. These pools are treacherous, filled with undertows and whirlpools that can drag a man down into the unknown. No one has returned from where the water drains and it is rumoured to be an endless stretch of Mists.

However, the pools themselves act as collectors for heavier objects. Much like a pan can ferret out weightier metals, the pools deposit discarded objects. The Remnants often rummage carefully through these pools, seeking relics from Timor of old or even valuables lost in the river above.

The Garden

The Timorians appreciated the natural world. Their city was a marvel, mingling trees and parks with buildings and streets. They had several large parks throughout the city filled with plants both local and imported. As the population dwindled, people shied away from the parks. They became known for monsters and death.

This garden is the last. It slid into the depression formed by the vanishing Timorian river and remains amongst the ruins of the city. Curiously, the darkness has not hindered the Garden. The plants continue to bloom despite the pitch black surroundings. The Remnants believe it is filled with much ill will at being abandoned to die. Ybbor alternatively believed it was tended by some unseen caretaker. I believe some of the Timorian magic is responsible.

In fact, the Garden does not merely survive, it flourishes. Plants and vines have crept over the nearby ruined buildings and the surroundings now resemble a temperate jungle. Still, the Remnants avoid the Garden and with good reason. The plants have grown twisted and deadly. I identified a bloodroot and an assassin vine before I was forced to flee from lashing tendrils.



Queen's Tomb

Tucked away in a corner of the Hive is the Royal Tombs. Part of the catacombs that fill the various tunnels, this is a grand structure originally located underneath the Royal Palace. As the earth shook both slid into a crevasse and sunk deep into the Hive.

Here is located the final resting place of Queen Orenia, the former monarch of Timor. She was the last human ruler of this land and was buried with honours in the final years of the land.

Whilst often mentioned in the stories of the Remnants they refer to her with so many euphemisms and titles that her true name and history has been forgotten. The Timorians themselves never speak of this tomb and avoid it, and even the areas immediately above it, as if they were cursed.

It appears that the Queen does not rest quietly. She wished for immortality through her works and now they all lay ruined and she is forgotten. Her spirit longs for both glory and revenge.

This legend has not stopped treasure seekers from attempting the journey to the tomb. All the royal riches of Timor, including the enchanted crown jewels, are enshrined here.

The Fraternity should take note of this though. There is reputed to be a sword in the royal goods, the very blade used to knight the Royal Marikith Hunters. If ever there was a weapon effective against the marikith, this would be it.

Indigenous Plants and Animals

There is a surprising amount of range and breadth of plant life growing within the tunnels of Timor. Within the separate ecosystems of Timor different floras grow, but all sharing similar qualities. For example, all share the quality of surviving in the absence of sunlight. Some also exist with very little moisture.

Inside the Sewers, many forms of molds, slimes, fungi, and mushrooms are found. The presence of so much moisture encourages growth although few of these plants are actually healthy. Large white mushrooms poke from cracks in the floor, growing in a variety of shapes and sizes, many poisonous either by nature or by the corruption of their environment. Black wet mold grows in small carpets on the walls, floors, or ceilings. More dangerous flora also grows in these tunnels, in the form of Yellow and Brown Molds as well as Green Slime. Although not truly sentient, these growths prove to be hazards to any living thing traveling across their claimed growing areas, whether explorer or marikith.

In the sprawling Tunnels of Timor, plant growth is less, but still present. The caverns have a much greater concentration of lichens, many of which are phosphorescent in nature when exposed to a light source, glowing ghostly in the dark for hours afterwards. Smaller groups of mushrooms can also be found in the caverns, though the more arid nature of the caves means that these fungi are kept at smaller sizes and clumps than the sewers.

Molds and Green Slime can also be found in the caves, though again usually in smaller quantities and much less commonly. It is here that most edible plant life can be found. Although there are still dangers in harvesting the plants, more non-poisonous varieties grow in these caverns than in the Sewers.

Finally, in the bowels of ancient Timor, very little plant life is found. Mostly consisting of molds and lichens, the dry,

dusty nature of the Hive seems to choke life out of them. Yellow Mold is still present here, and even Brown Mold can be found in a few desolate regions, the precursors of which are, of course, the chill that such a growth radiates.

At least three notable specimens of plant life grow uniquely in Timor. The first is a type of mushroom called Dead Truffles. These fungi grow in small clumps of whitish-yellow patches. The Truffles have no flavor themselves but are not poisonous either; however, they have an interesting effect on living creatures that consume them. Such creatures find that their emotions are deadened, even to themselves. Reactions, even to extreme circumstances, become almost impossible. Those under the influence of this mushroom have reported that it is useful in evading Marikith Hunters as it deadens the fear that the marikith track their prey by.

Another notable plant specimen from Timor is Grease Mold. In some of the sewer sections of Timor strange and ancient machinery is present. This machinery is non-functional, but it sticks out from the walls in large ungainly clumps, pipes and tubes leading from it right into dead walls. Sometimes a jolt to the mechanism causes the machinery to jolt to life unexpectedly, creating a loud bang and racket for a few moments before the mechanism lapses into dormancy again.

What this machinery does is unknown, but ancient Timor had many of these built into the sewers. Strangely, much of this machinery has been infested with a greasy brownish-black mold. The stuff lets off a horrible odor when disturbed, but is otherwise harmless. However, if it is collected and boiled down to a liquid state then applied to a mechanical object, it aids the function of the machinery.

Within the dark labyrinth of Timor few creatures roam, other than the ever-present marikith. Otherwise, the lightless depths are home to various oozes, vermin, and the restless undead. Of the latter, most are incorporeal, the spirits of those slain in the

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Fisora

Those consuming dead truffles gain a +4 bonus on all spells and psionic powers that detect thoughts or emotions (such as the detect thoughts spell) as well as a +4 bonus on both fear and horror checks. The victim also gets a +4 bonus on hide checks vs. marikith (or any other creature that hunts through emotion-detection). However, the deadening of the emotion centres of the brain imposes a -4 penalty to the Charisma of the affected being. The effects of the mushroom last for 1d6 hours.

Grease Mold is only effective when it's boiled down to a liquid form and applied to a mechanical object. Applying the mold requires 10 minutes to boil it down and then 5 minutes to apply. One dose of grease mold is sufficient for any medium-sized mechanism, such as a rifle. Applying the mold to a weapon is enough to give the weapon a +1 circumstance bonus to hit. Applying the mold to a mechanism that isn't related to attacking gives it a +1 circumstance bonus to any other die-related function involved in it (such as skills checks). Mechanical creatures get the bonus to both attacks and skill checks they make. The grease lasts for 6 hours once applied before it dries beyond usefulness.

Anisophilae is a mossy fungi found only in Timor and has resisted all attempts to transplant it elsewhere. It grows in rare, sporadic patches through the Tunnels with occasional growths in the Sewers. The marikith keep the Hive clear of any anisophilae they discover.

lightless depths or native to Timor prior to its destruction.

The Sewers have the largest concentration of creatures. Oozes are spawned spontaneously from the cast-off waste from above and vermin eke out a living feeding on the refuse. The marikith themselves also patrol the sewers, and spend some of their time here. Animate fungi also wander the corridors, attacking what they can, marikith or not. Centipedes are very common in the darkness, and have been reported to grow to incredible sizes.

Inside the Tunnels of Timor -where the terrain is drier- there are not as many oozes to be found, though some still prevail. Within the ruins of ancient Timor, both oozes and vermin are rare. Instead of that the spectral dead lair here, haunting the ancient dark passageways with their lamentations. Many of these creatures were the original citizens of ancient Timor killed by marikith or doppelgangers or those souls slain in the earthquake that levelled the city. As such, their knowledge of the land's history is almost unparalleled. Animators, the spirits of living residents from ancient Timor, are also known to inhabit the derelict machinery, either starting them up at inopportune times or lashing out at travelers.

Native Horrors

Natural: CR 1/8 - Rat, Tiny monstrous centipede; CR 1/3 - Dire rat, Small monstrous centipede, Small monstrous spider; CR 1/2 - Medium monstrous centipede; CR 1 - Bloodbloater ooze, Large monstrous centipede, Spider swarm; CR 2 - Dire maggot, Flotsam ooze, Giant assassin bug, Huge monstrous centipede, Rat swarm; CR 3 - Violet fungus; CR 4 - Centipede swarm, Gray ooze; CR 5 - Ochre jelly; CR 6 - Gargantuan monstrous centipede; CR 7 - Black pudding, CR 9 - Bhut, Colossal monstrous centipede; CR 10 - Leechwalker; CR 15 - Deathshrieker

Unnatural: CR 1/8 - Chitterling Marikith, CR 1/2 - Spirit waif; CR 2 - Carrion stalker, Marikith hunter, Seeker marikith, Spiderkin marikith; CR 3 - Allip, Ettercap, Gelatinous cube, Phantom fungus, Murk, Shadow; CR 4 - Carrion crawler, Otyugh; CR 5 - Odem, Man o'war marikith, Reason stealer, Wraith; CR 6 - Corpse candle; CR 7 - Chaos beast, Spectre; CR 12 - Roper;

Variable: Animator, Animated object, Elemental, Evolved undead, Geist, Ghost, Ghost brute, Umbral creature.

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To the casual eye the tunnels below Paridon appear to be home to nothing more intelligent than a variety of vermin and viscous oozes that subsist on the detritus trickling down from the City above. My investigations have proven otherwise. Two groups call the sewers their home but only one has any power. The first are the scattered survivors of the lost city of Timor, the caliban tribes eking out an abysmal living. The second are the shadowy predators that hunt them. The creatures, known to the Timorians as marikith, are inhuman and alien predators that dominate the lower levels of this beleaguered land.

Indigenous Peoples

The Timorians, or the Remnants as they prefer to be called, have a permanent settlement, called Enclave, nestled in the ruins of Timor's temple district. It is protected from marikith incursions by natural choke points and a number of anisophilae colonies. Enclave is one of the few safe havens that exist in Timor.

Records indicate that, like Paridon, Timor had a pre-dominantly human population. Whilst this may have been true, the disaster that destroyed their city also affected the survivors as they are, without exception, calibans.

The Timorians are a gaunt, misshapen people. Deformity and malnourishment mark their bodies, making them seem awkward and fragile. Appearances, however, are deceiving. The twisted forms of the Remnants disguise densely packed muscles that are well adapted for sudden, forceful movement. During my time among them I saw several clear a collapsed tunnel with their bare hands in a fraction of the time it would have taken a well equipped group of labourers. Their skin is an unearthly pale color that borders on albinism, though many are piebald with discoloured dark patches covering them. Their large eyes-well suited to the lightless world they live in-and hair run through a wide variety of colors, and it is not unusual to find individuals with more than one color in either.

Dread Possibility: The Hidden War

Ever since the doppelgangers noticed the horrors of Timor, they have fought the marikith to keep their claim on the city. Sodo has realized that the best way to protect himself and keep the populace from dissolving into fear is to stop talk of the marikith and doppelgangers. He is manipulating the government to use the recent "Bloody Jack Golem" as proof that there are no doppelgangers and is pushing for a cover-up of the marikith. This alone keeps the society from collapsing and the city less fragmented than Timor was.

The council decided to hire additional guards for the night watch, a decision engineered by the doppelgangers themselves. Most patrols have at least one doppelganger from the lesser clans among their number. Whenever an important citizen disappears he is quickly replaced by a doppelganger and often falls victim to a plausible accident within a few days.

In reaction to the doppelgangers' actions, the Hive Queen ordered her children to neutralise the more dangerous threat first. The few marikith that slip into the city seem to hunt disguised doppelgangers among all other possible victims.

Several smaller factions have begun to appear in this "hidden war". These include vampyrs, vampires and red widows. These protect their hunting grounds in Blackchapel and parts of the King's Quarter. Small packs of Akiri jackalweres are emerging and make their home near the Zherisian Museum. And there are always the lonely heroes who fight the good fight.

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Timorians seem to move with a perpetual slouch; a habit picked up from years of moving through small tunnels. They move slowly and leisurely and are eerily quiet. Their footsteps are noiseless and they seldom speak in more than a whisper. It is sad as their voice and accent have a tender softness I seldom encounter on the surface.

In the upper layers there are also scattered pockets of Zherisians. Identical to the rest of my brethren, these folk are commonly ignorant to the fact they live in another land, assuming they simply dwell in the sewers of Paridon.

These unfortunates range from small groups of homeless seeking shelter from the elements to thieving rogues hiding from the law. Some encounter and ally themselves with the Timorians but most survive alone. If they manage to avoid attention from above or below they may survive for a time, but if they are discovered by the marikith they are slaughtered to a man. Not immediately mind you; slowly over days or weeks to prolong the terror of the survivors.

The marikith are entirely different from the other inhabitants. Whilst they are as silent as the Timorians they move with the quiet of the hunter stalking its prey. They are not people though, and they delight in terrorising their victims. In stark contrast to the Remnants the marikith are black and almost shapeless. They seem to ooze through the smallest cracks and are yet firm enough for weapons to bounce harmlessly off them.

Their society is almost unlike anything else seen in the Realms. They are a hive society with every member bred for a specific purpose. There are three castes of marikith: Queens, Hunters, and Drones. It was thought that there was only one Queen of the marikith but this has since proved false. It is entirely possible for the creatures to spread into other lands.

Hunters are by far the most commonly encountered breed of marikith, as these are the creatures that range out from the nest. Drones were not thought to exist but later sightings and explorations have uncovered this caste in the nest. The Hive Queen is a singular entity in her Hive. She can give

birth to more of her kind but it is unclear whether she has control of this or not. However, as the Queen still births such eggs -which may prove her undoing- it can be surmised she has no choice.

The Hive Queen seems to have a mental bond with the Hive, directing its efforts to whatever goals she feels inclined. Of the entire Hive, only the Queen seems to have a sense of individuality.

Although the Queen is most certainly capable of looking after herself, this job falls to the Drones. Drones clean, feed, and care for the eggs the Queen lays. These creatures are small, about four feet high, with vaguely humanoid forms. Their bodies are covered in chitin, and like all marikith, very malleable. They have four arms of such length that they often trail on the ground. The lower arms can also be used in a motive manner, helping to propel the creature along when it needs. Of all the marikith, the Drones are the only ones that seem to have any climbing ability of significant skill, often traversing along the ceilings of the tunnels.

It is thought that Drones are new addition to the Hive: that this caste recently evolved due to a specific need. If this is true, then it means that the Hive Queen is capable of creating new types of marikith for new situations. It is then possible that the Queen may create even more castes of marikith as time goes on. This may be involuntary (a natural process or control system) or there may be some method unknown to me.

Hunters are the final and most common class. They act as the eyes and ears of the Queen beyond the Hive, and as her claws as well. Hunters fulfill almost every other need that the Drones cannot see to in Timor.

Daily Life

For the Timorians, daily life is all about survival. Each day is a new struggle to find food and avoid being slain. However, in a lightless world the days blur together and life is simply lived from moment to moment.

Remnants work in shifts. There is always two-thirds of the group awake at any given time. The permanent village of Enclave has a

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stable system of shifts, each just over nine hours long. As one group rises, another goes to sleep and the third begins their hunt.

Food is always the primary concern. It is growing increasingly sparse and hunters have to search farther and farther for nourishment. I can empathies with this and made it a point to offer some parcels in trade.

Food is provided for the entire village; anything killed or scavenged is for the use of the whole and not the individual. Greed and theft, especially of food, is a serious offence for such a poor people.

Small meals are continually being cooked or prepared, as there is always someone waking up or returning from a hunt. There are no set mealtimes and groups seldom eat communally. Rather, individuals find snatches of time to eat between guarding tunnels or upkeep of the village.

The exception to this rigid rotation is the sole priest of the Enclave, an ancient and thin Caliban who goes by no name. Instead he is addressed by his title: the Finder. He never allows himself the comfort of a full night's sleep but instead merely naps at irregular intervals. Thus he is always awake during each of the three shifts, and able to offer guidance whenever needed.

There are few religious observances for the Remnants; no large festivals or gatherings. Before each hunt the Finder gathers the village and leads a small meditation. Other than this, spirituality is a personal affair. An odd contradiction for such a communal society, but the Path of the True Form is seen as one that must be walked alone. Each Remnant must find their own way.

Festivals are unknown in the bleak, lightless world. There are happy times, periods of joy and celebration but these are not like the joyous events one might see on the surface. Loud and raucous activities run the risk of attracting too much attention. So celebrations are quiet and introspective.

Marriages are the happiest days in the Enclave. These are marked by feasts as large as the food supply will allow, and gifts are exchanged by all. It is a time for alliances and promises to be made or renewed and no one may turn down a just favour on this day.

Marriages are solemn but joyous, the joining of two souls that may one day become one in a single body and herald new life and the next step towards the True Form.

The newly joined pair is also given a time of rest; a lengthy period of several shifts where the others take up their chores for them, allowing them time alone. They retire to a secluded room where candles are lit, one of the few times the Remnants use light. This is so that the couple can view each other without darkvision, see the true colours of their hair, skin and eyes. These are intimate details in the grey world of Timor.

There are a few holy days for the Remnants. The first is Ascension Day, the celebration of some forgotten accomplishment. After my time researching the history of this land I believe this is both the day the grand city of Timor was completed and the land entered the Mists. Ascension Day is celebrated with lively flavoured drinks and is the closest the Remnants allow themselves to a party.

The second dominant holiday is Shadowfall, when the marikith slew the few remaining heroes of Timor and the land suffered a series of terrible tremors that drove the population underground. The Remnants observe this day with a period of fasting and silence for the dead.

Lastly is Queensbirth, which I imagine is the celebration of its namesake or a coronation; perhaps both. The Remnants observe this with the lighting of candles, hanging of decorations and the exchange of gifts. The significance of the event has been lost over the ages -most do not even know what a queen is- but they celebrate nonetheless.

Games are unknown in the darkness of Timor. All activities are based on survival. The young practice activities that prepare them to hunt or run or hide. Whilst similar to hide-an-seek the game is more difficult as the 'found' become hunters and can hide themselves whilst the hidden must change locations every few minutes.

The Remnants do engage in storytelling. These are mostly religious parables or moralistic tales based loosely on history,

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stories to emphasise the values of Enclave. Some of the hunters can be persuaded to tell stories of the hunt, both as exciting diversions and as lessons on survival. The few traders also tell tales of their trips to the surface and the sinful sights they witnessed there.

The adults play few games, devoting themselves to finding food and maintaining the village. Some engage in games of chance for baubles and found treasures. These include colourful bits of glass or shiny fragments of metal as well as small statues or simple jewellery. As trinkets have no real value (only food, weapons and tools have any worth in the Enclave) they are seen as diverting yet meaningless activities.

Despite the lack of value for found items, many Remnants collect items of interest. Some hope they will find bits of magic that can be used against the marikith whilst others simply find them pretty. Many houses are decorated with these small trinkets, dangling from strings or adorning small makeshift shelves.

I should mention that these worthless baubles are, for the most part, accurately described as worthless. Any precious stones or items of actual value are recognized for what they are and traded on the surface for food or tools. The Timorians have not been so far removed from civilization as to recognize a diamond as only a stone.

Language

The Remnants speak Timorian, the language native to their ruined city. It is a musical, lilting tongue marked by soft consonants and flowing vowels, and punctuated by sudden accents. Few outside the tunnels actually speak this language anymore, though texts can still be found in some of the better libraries throughout the Core.

The Fraternity's resident linguist, Jonothan Lochspeare, sent me a rough guide to the language he recorded from a Timorian trader who fled the doomed city before the end. It was partly due to this I endeared myself to the Remnants.

Timorian Primer

Dark	Gellap
Day	Siang
Down	Mudik
Food	Santapan
Hello	Salam
Help	Membantu
Magic	Sihir
Night	Malam
No	Tak
Old	Tua
Shadow	Bayangan
Tunnel	Lohong/ Terowong
Up	Hilar
Yes	Pakat
Young	Muda

Fashion

The tunnels of Timor are sparse in resources, leaving little time for such frivolities as fashion. The Remnants wear anything they can find that fits and does not hinder their movement; not an easy task for people who must make do with scraps and refuse. The resulting garb is a hodgepodge of items from above and crudely crafted leather put together without an eye towards style. As there is little light they rely entirely on darkvision, so colours are rarely considered. Darker hues are still favoured as a quick camouflage, although the dirt of the tunnels quickly leaves even light shades dark.

The hard life underground makes leather goods especially popular. Most are made from the cured hide of the unnaturally large rats, though the Remnants have been known to repair goods that they find trapped in cisterns. Every man, woman, and child owns a long, hooded cloak, tunic or overcoat and a pair of thick boots and gloves, all of leather, to help protect them from filth and disease, and provide a degree of camouflage. The rest

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of their clothes is either sewn from the same rat leather as their cloaks or is scavenged from elsewhere.

Long hair easily collects the muck of the sewers so men hack it short whilst women pull it back into an intricately tied bun. Men try to keep their facial hair short enough that it does not get in their way, resulting in a scraggly, chopped-looking beard.

Decoration and adornments are all but unknown. Some wear scavenged jewelry such as rings or tight pendants. Others prefer only functional items and scorn such fancies.

Tattoos are unknown for religious reasons. It is taboo to permanently alter one's appearance. Hunters use a dark paint to cover their faces but it washes away after a vigorous scrubbing. The dark paint is essential as the pale skin of the Remnants is easily visible in the darkness of the tunnels.

Food

Food is scavenged from across the tunnels. The Remnants know which of the many fungi and molds are edible and which are lethal. They also know where the few patches of plants live, including the Timorian gardens.

The Timorians also hunt the various insects and creatures of the sewers, including the rats and other vermin. My readers may remember how rodents were once a common nuisance of Paridon and how their numbers have steadily been dropping. The government was quick to take responsibility but now we know the truth.

Occasionally the Remnants also venture to the surface offering tradable goods such as leathers and hide or relics from below. However, as Paridon itself starves they can seldom buy much.

I have heard that a few of the Remnants have been known to abduct people from the surface. This is frowned upon greatly in the Enclave. They are always wary when hunters return with a bounty and observe them carefully for "corruption". However, it appears murders committed on the streets have no influence when one returns below.

Meals themselves are bland and uniform. They are utilitarian; the Remnants eat to live, not for enjoyment. Stews and casseroles are the norm as everyone in the group contributes to the meal and food is portioned out equally. Flavouring is rare and depends on which molds or fungi are found. Spices are a rarity and unknown except in legend.

Outlook and Worldview

The Remnants' overall philosophy is dominated by their religion. They follow a local faith known as the True Form or, alternatively, the Twisting Form. Roughly, they believe that their true appearance has not yet been revealed and they are slowly moving towards perfection.

This move away from imperfection was partly responsible for the destruction of the land and deaths of the rest of the population. The unworthy find themselves corrupted and become beasts, whilst the faithful will eventually be rewarded.

The Timorians believe that this cleansing will also happen to the world above and that Paridon will soon fall under the weight of sin. This is one of the reasons they remain below and only venture to the surface for brief moments.

It is a curious philosophy and effectively removes them from humanity. Like the rest of the tunnels and subterranean ruins, the Remnants were once human but are no longer. They are a memory of humanity as much as the ruins. Coincidentally, the same could be said about the marikith. Many of them were also once human.

The Remnants' philosophy is responsible for much of their laws. They permit no one to harm another and inflict severe punishments on those who violate their customs. And whilst they allow visitors and occasionally aid outsiders they will not accept anyone into the group who is human. Humans have not rejected the flaws in their form and thusly do not follow the path of the True Form.

Magic is uniformly frowned upon; it is seen as the cause of the destruction and a blight on one's soul. It is believed that magic,

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Ritual of the True Form

This ritual, one of the few the Remnants still possess, is a modification of the reincarnate spell. Like the spell of the same name it requires rare herbs and oils that are only found in the depths of Timor's Hive.

In the first use, the subject changes their race to caliban. They permanently lose any racial abilities in place of their new traits and must alter their physical statistics. However (at the DM's discretion) racial abilities that are the result of training only have their bonuses reduced by fifty percent. Similarly, whilst physical statistics change, mental statistics are unaffected. This ritual, like the spell, also reduces the subjects' level by 1.

The second use of the ritual restores a character that has been corrupted by the Fear Transformation of Timor. This can restore an individual that has become a marikith as long as the victim has not completed the transformation more than seventy-two hours prior.

This use of the ritual can be performed one of two ways. The first is for individuals who have only begun the transformation; it can be quickly completed in thirty minutes (as long as the necessary herbs are present) and grants the subject a second saving throw to resist the corrupting effect. The second method is longer and only used when the transformation is already complete. The ritual itself takes three hours to complete and requires preparations no shorter than a 24-hour period. It is similar to the other use and transforms the subject into a caliban. This transformation is extremely taxing and the subject must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 25) or the ritual is fatal.

both divine and arcane, is fuelled by one's essence. To rely too heavily on magic reduces one to an empty shell.

Despite this, the Remnants acknowledge magic is sometimes required. They make limited use of magical items -relics of the

lost city- but only in the defence of Enclave. The Finder also knows a limited number of incantations used in only the direst of situations. There are also a few magical rituals known to the village whose use, they believe, outweighs the cost.

The primary ritual known to the Remnants is believed to open the soul of a human. This will allow them to begin their journey to the True Form. It is dangerous but has a number of uses. The first, most obviously, is that it allows outsiders to join the Enclave. Their humanity is removed and they become calibans. The secondary use removes 'corruption', a taint on the soul that threatens to turn someone into a marikith. Whilst the Remnants are often hesitant to help someone who has proven themselves unworthy, they accept that sometimes people slip from the Path and require a second chance.

Trade

Exchange is limited in Timor as it can only trade with Paridon above, and both want for the same. The cost of food is steep but for the Timorians it often must be paid.

Once having an enlightened civilization, the Remnants know what is valuable and what is not. Whilst of no practical and immediate use, they still scour the ruins of the shattered city for jewelry, art and precious objects. These are traded with Zherisians for food, clothing or tools. Most trade is done with the poor or smaller local merchants who are only too happy to have something of real value.

A few collectors have heard of the Remnants and offered much for the remains of the dead city. Likewise wizards and magical scholars travel far for the knowledge of the lost city, although the Remnants are far more loath to traffic in "dark magicks". They will help uncover magical items but spells and magical books are thought best left lost. However, as food becomes slowly scarcer, the temptation to escort these seekers to the Library and laboratories grows.

I did hear rumours in Paridon of groups sympathetic to the Remnants and possibly

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more likely to trade with them- the Captains of the Mists for example. However, I can neither refute nor prove these claims.

Recently, the Enclave has been divided by the discussion of sending an envoy out of Paridon and through the Mists. This expedition would seek out trading partners and hopefully discover other lands able to provide regular supplies of food.

Government

There is no true government in the Enclave; the Remnants are all equal and contribute to the village's affairs. Whilst the local priest acts as an authority figure his role is primarily to offer guidance and aid in personal growth and discovery.

All decisions are made collectively and voted on as a group. The subject is raised before all present with the elders and experienced offering their opinions on the matter. For small decisions, the matter is only discussed with those present but with large matters they awaken the sleepers and wait for the hunters to return. After both sides of the issue are discussed the Remnants collectively reach a decision, often a compromise between the two views.

This democracy is subject to manipulation as voting is open; there is no way to hide one's allegiances. Whilst open threats (and any methods of inspiring fear) are taboo and crimes worthy of instant exile, some manipulation takes place.

It is growingly apparent that there are several factions in most matters. The first are those who believe that all outsiders are not to be trusted and that the Enclave must isolate themselves from corrupting influences. Another faction believes that they, as the ones on the path, must aid and guide others so they can one day help themselves. The third faction tends to view matters on an individual basis, choosing to help or not based on the people involved.

This infighting is growing as more and more Remnants are forced to take sides and declare their allegiance. I fear that one day

soon the egalitarian system of the Enclave might change.

The actual laws of the Remnants are simple: share what you have, cause no harm and do your part. Everyone works and contributes for the good of the community. Those that act selfishly or against the community may suffer the loss of food or be required to do the work of others. There is only one real punishment for serious offences: banishment. The offender must leave the Enclave forever and move to the surface or into the Mists. They cannot stay in Timor for, if they are ever captured, they may reveal the Enclave's location.

Remnants never harm each other, with the exception of those suffering a corrupt Change. If no rituals can save them, they are labelled outsiders and not part of the community and quickly put to death for the good of all. They are killed as painlessly as possible, often smothered in their sleep.

The marikith have a less open society as their affairs are dominated by the Hive Queen. She rules all; there is no dissent or discussion amongst her subjects. Whilst one might assume this could lead to uninformed decisions with only a single opinion and viewpoint, the Queen knows what all of her subjects know and has a wealth of knowledge to employ.

Local History

Early Timorian history came easily once I was led to the Library of this lost city. Volumes were written on the settlement of the land and conquest of the indigenous people: entire shelves about lords, nobles and kings. All this is entirely irrelevant. Whilst I doubt much of it is a false history, the true story of the city of Timor begins just over a century and a half ago.

The monarch of Timor, one Queen Orenia, declared she would build the grandest and most beautiful city in the whole world. From my best guesses this would be around the year 600 on the Barovian calendar, if not slightly earlier. This city would be the capital and named after the kingdom, with such splendour that all around would flock to it.

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I believe the future site of Timor was located on the bones of an older city, one likely smaller and dilapidated. Whilst the buildings were destroyed their basements and the like survived and now exist in the deepest depths of Timor.

Shortly after construction began, the Queen gave birth to her only child. Curiously, no name is ever given for the child in the official records. She is only ever named as "the princess". Perhaps she shared her mother's name, Orenia, and was not named to avoid confusion. Or perhaps her true name has been excised from history by an unknown force. Even more curious, there is no mention of her father, an odd matter since the king had apparently been deceased for a number of years.

The construction continued and after years of taxation the peasants became destitute and starving. The city's construction almost bankrupted the kingdom. To add to matters, the site chosen for the city was atop a hive lair of a fierce local predator, the marikith. But the Queen refused to abandon her plans for greatness.

Secretly, the Queen approached the courtly magician, a powerful wizard, and made him a proposition. He would control the marikith, keeping their population down and restraining their movements to prevent workers' deaths whilst using illusions of the beasts to frighten the rebellious.

Cowed and living in fear of the threatening illusions, the workers were easily kept in line. In a grand gesture the Queen purchased the services of a company of mercenaries to become the Royal Marikith Hunters. They acted as enforcers during the daylight hours and the Wizard made sure they were "effective" at keeping the marikith problem down. Over the years they even cut down the real marikith population to a fraction of its size. However, troublesome workers, such as those clamouring for revolution or change, still occasionally fell victim to the creatures.

Despite the progress, the marikith haunted the Queen. She was forever afraid of the Wizard losing control over the beasts, of losing control over the workers. She was afraid her dream would fail, that the city

would never be completed and that she would die and be forgotten. Her anxieties over the construction were focused on the marikith; they became the cause of all her problems and suffering.

Around 620BC Timor was completed. The city was a marvel to behold. The tunnels and illustrations do it some justice but the reality must have been breathtaking. Timor was a land that valued magic and the city reflected this. The walls were constructed with stone but magical murals decorated the walls, and the gardens bloomed with plants lovingly grown and sculpted by druids. Lamps lit the streets with the glow of continual magical light that never faltered regardless of the weather. Despite the success, all was not well. The Queen continued to worry and fret; she continued to harry the workers to improve and maintain the city. Unnoticed, the Mists rose up around the city and swept the land away.

The Princess had long thought that her mother was a poor leader and that her treatment of the workers would only end in revolt. The Princess did not care for their suffering but knew her future would be threatened by an uprising. She learned that her mother was deathly afraid of marikith and asked the Wizard to create an illusion at a grand ball, an illusion that only her mother would see. It would appear as though her daughter was transforming into the most hideous marikith of them all: a marikith queen. Practiced in the art of seduction, the Princess easily convinced him.

However, the Wizard soon saw the Princess with her true lover, the captain of the Royal Marikith Hunters. Enraged at being so easily used he altered his spell. At the Grand Ball the Princess was turned into a real marikith. The Queen died instantly of fright. The Princess, now the Hive Queen, realized what had been done, slew the Wizard, and raged through the streets. Wounded and harried by the Hunters, she descended into the sewers, pausing long enough to sting her lover and take him with her.

After the collapse of the monarchy, the long suffering workers rebelled. The city

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hastily set up a democratically elected council. The first head was one Councilman Hemlest. He organized the purging of wizards from the city, blaming them for much of the crisis. Timor, formerly a state friendly to magic-users, quickly turned on them. Hatred brought on by the court wizard was used to seize all arcane materials and items for the council. Whilst the records say the items and records were destroyed I can find no report describing when or where. I believe the council "pulled a fast one" and simply kept the arcane tools for themselves.

It is at this point I find reports of another force in Timor: shadowy killers unlike the marikith that take the forms of their victim or can appear as close friends. From the similarities to reports from Paridon I believe Timor was overrun with doppelgangers. These newcomers did not socialise well with the other predators of the land.

Curiously, the seminal event that brought Timor into our land is vague. The most obvious event is the betrayal of the Queen by the Princess, but there are contradictory reports of travelers from Timor predating this. So I believe that Queen Orenia was originally the lord of this land due to her treatment of the workers, but her daughter took power with the crown.

After a number of years of quiet the marikith began to stalk the city again. The Royal Marikith Hunters, confident they could still deal with the problem, descended into the sewers. The citizens were equally confident; though they began to feel dread as the all too human screams started. In what came to be known as the "Night of Running Screams" the city rang with the tormented cries of the dying. The City Council and Hemlest gave themselves unimpeded power until the end of "the crisis". Unnoticeably, a "Shadow War" began, witnessed by the common folk only through terrible cries and the sounds of running (and skittering) in the streets after nightfall.

It is over this time that Timorians isolated themselves from one another; behaviour that made them easy pickings from both sides. The population slowly dwindled over the course of a century, from 30,000 people to

Former Darklord: Queen Orenia The Forgotten Queen

Queen Orenia had one desire: she wanted to build the most beautiful city in the world. The city would be her monument and forever remind the world of her name; she would gain immortality through it.

In order to fund her dream she began to tax her people into starvation. As her city rose from the ground her nation's wealth was drained away until the people were on the verge of revolt. In order to keep them in line, Orenia made a deal with a powerful wizard to plague the city with illusions of horrific monsters. She told her people that their sacrifices would protect them from this menace.

Orenia was a queen of lies. She lied to her people to motivate them. She lied to them that she was protecting them. She lied to the Royal Hunters so they believed their own effectiveness. So it was only fitting that she soon began to lie to herself.

Queen Orenia was cursed through her own manipulations and soon believed the imaginary threats were real. Paranoid, she began to see danger every corner. Betrayal was on the minds of everyone she knew, save her beloved daughter and her trusted court wizard. Because of this imminent revolt she only pushed her subjects harder, terrified them more, and then reassured them that she alone could protect them from the shadows.

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5,000. At this time, many travelers also left their land and ventured into the Core.

In these "Dark Decades" the city was gripped by fear and paranoia. They knew something stalked the streets but felt powerless to do anything to save themselves. The council began to hold lotteries to determine who would be sacrificed to appease the darkness. Outsiders were regularly sent out at night and left as appeasement.

It became illegal to enter the sewers. The deaths of marikith or doppelgangers were usually followed by increased disappearances. The Timorians became timid and afraid even to fight back.

Events finally climaxed in 740 on the eve of the Great Upheaval. The marikith mounted a massive assault which, paired with the closed border, disrupted trade and destroyed most of the farms and parks. The resulting famine caused tempers to flare and people to descend into madness. An increased marikith population allowed for more night-time attacks and it became an escalating cycle; the city entered an unstoppable descent.

The surviving Timorians broke past their isolation and banded together for survival. They adopted new customs and laws that, whether consciously or not, punish those that might become monsters with banishment. The once grand culture of Timor meant less and less to them as they focused on mutual survival. It was here the books end and the histories fade. From here I relied on the oral teachings of the Remnants.

The final blow came when Timor was struck by an earthquake, the finale of the Great Upheaval. When the dust settled the survivors discovered the city of Timor itself had been broken apart by the Great Judgment and scattered haphazardly throughout the sewers, once forbidden but now the only chance of survival. Above, a new river flowed and flooded areas whilst the former city collapsed into the gully of the old waterway. The human Timorians found that they had transformed into calibans, now suited to live and hide in the sunken ruins.

Paridon suffered the very same earthquake, though much shorter and less severe. Given the chaos of the period it was seldom noticed that the sewers had changed.

The Enclave was founded in 741BC, near the ruins of the Great Cathedral of Timor. A young caliban named Morshin explored the cathedral and found a treasure trove of records and other books. He also received a vision of The Twisting Form and became the first Finder.

It is here that minor skirmishes occur between the doppelganger populations and the marikith. The Hive Queen sent out her hunters to learn more about her opponents, who did not seem to be as haphazard as the Timorian doppelgangers. From my interviews after Bloody Jack's last rampage I know it was here that the Fang of the Nosferatu began to whisper sweet promises to the Hive Queen. The Hive Queen set up plans to steal the Knife.

Timor vanished from history until very recently; the events of 755 are well known now. Bloody Jack's most recent massacre became a twisty series of plots involving the Hive Queen, a golem, the doppelgangers and a party of brave fools. In a rage, the Hive Queen slaughtered most of her brood. The Remnants celebrate this day recalling the ease they had navigating the tunnels after.

The following year a Remnant exile broke through to the streets of Paridon. Rumours began among the outcasts of a place where they will be treated as equals. Many calibans (and some desperate humans) began to search the sewers. Very few returned to the surface. Even fewer find Enclave.

Recent events have been filled with rumours and plots, most of which I have been unable to fully discover. I know the lord of Paridon is attempting to ally himself with the Enclave so as to discover more about his enemy below. Meanwhile, the Hive Queen has relocated her nest and is concentrating on rebuilding her brood.

There are other rumours spreading through the tunnels, stories of a second Hive Queen and marikith fighting marikith. I believe that the Queen has accidentally given birth to

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another of her kind and this has reduced the underground to a warzone.

The Hive Princess

The Hive Queen regularly lays eggs that become new marikith. Occasionally, one of these eggs is a royal egg that will hatch into an infant marikith queen. This new hive queen would leave with half the marikiths and form a new hive elsewhere. The Hive Queen fears these eggs and the possibility that her offspring will replace her as she replaced her mother.

In the wake of the Grand Conjunction a royal egg went missing and was allowed to hatch. Over the past several decades the new queen has slowly matured and recently established her own lair in the Hive. She knows her mother has impeded the growth of the marikith and still sometimes thinks like a human.

At the moment the new queen has not decided on a course of actions. She is building her own colony of hunters and drones and has considered moving to the surface or stepping into the Mists. Or she might decide to take the place of her mother after all, plunging the depths into a civil war.

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Corruption of Fear

The fear effect of Timor corrupts all of dark heart and deed, transforming them into shadowy marikith.

Anytime a character inspires fear in another intelligent being (human, demihuman or humanoid and not including animals or magical beasts) they run the risk of being corrupted by Timor. For every action that inspires fear he must make an immediate Fort save of DC15 (+1 for every individual over one) or begin the transformation into a marikith.

The transformation takes 2d4+1 hours to complete and can be halted by a remove curse or atonement spell as well as exposure to sunlight for at least an hour. After this time the character is lost and can only be restored by a wish or miracle spell. The Remnants' ritual of the true form can also be used to restore a tainted individual.

Additionally, when a character inspires fear the hive mind of the marikith touches him. He might become subject to the mental control of the Hive Queen. After inspiring fear, a Will save (DC 20) must be made. This DC is increased by +10 if the character has begun the transformation into a marikith. Every twenty-four hours, another roll can be made to break free of mental control.

If a character ever fails the Will save or succeeds by less than 5 points, the Queen has made mental contact and knows the rough location of the individual.

The Hive Queen can choose to slow or even halt the transformation into a marikith if it suits her. Likewise, the mental contact can take the form of commands, telapathic whispers or even subconscious suggestions. It is also possible for her to make open full contact between the minds, exposing the victim to an alien consciousness, likely prompting a Madness save.

There are no hard rules for what inspires fear. The action must be intentional and not the result of other actions. Most actions that require a Dark Powers check inspire fear, although theft, lying, the casting of dark spells and religious violations do not qualify. The fear must also be directly caused. An elf frightening someone with his inhuman nature does not count, nor does startling someone with a zombie raised by animate dead as the purpose of the zombie was not to scare someone; that was just a side-effect (unless the body was animated specifically to scare someone, in which case it would apply). Uncareful use of the Intimidate skill could also inspire fear.

The Timorian Hero

Races

All surviving Timorians are calibans. Other human or demihuman races, such as elves or dwarves, have been transformed or never lived in the land.

Classes

Rangers and barbarians are the most common classes as both can survive and feed the small community of survivors. Rogues are also common, not for their talent as theft, but for the hunting skills and sudden strikes as well as their ability to deal with hazards. There are occasional, rare druids who act as healers and shamanistic figures. Fighters are also respected for their skill as hunters and defenders. Despite the renown Timorian wizards once had, arcane spellcasters have been forgotten and literacy is rare.

Recommended Skills

Climb, Craft (metalworking, woodworking), Disable Device,

Escape Artist, Heal, Hide, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Listen, Move Silently, Search, Spot, Survival, Tumble.

Recommended Feats

Alertness, Back to the Wall, Brawler, Courage, Blind-Fight, Endurance, Feral Rearing, Hearthlore, Jaded, Self-Sufficient, Stealthy, Track, Unseen, Unwholesome Ichor.

Timorian Male Names*

Ajmal, Amirah, Bidin, Dibah, Farhan, Hajar, Hakim, Khun, Latif, Mengdan, Oradeng, Permandap, Sacalah, Wahlam.

Timorian Female Names*

Adiba, Afif, Dahlan, Dian, Nadia, Kepaka, Jusoffa, Lim, Perekala, Perkara, Safura, Saiful, Ursilan, Wardina.

*Note: Timorians use the name of their father as their surname.

Epilogue

To the Fathers of the Fraternity, final greetings.

Our research is now complete. While we do not know what van Rijn hoped to find in my land, or the reason for the attack on my person, I hope my report will prove enlightening. There may be some detail of this land that I have missed which another set of eyes might catch.

One closing point demands attention: In the last week before I finished my report there have been several knife murders in Blackchapel, which has spurred rumors of Bloody Jack—but also of other things. After the third or fourth such murder I was told that the victim (coincidentally or not, another fishmonger) had been seen with a hooded, cloaked figure, and that the figure “was cold, with burning red eyes”. The association of these characteristics with those attributed to the lich was obvious; accordingly, when I heard of the next murder I was able to get a place at the autopsy. Magical examination confirmed that the corpse had been subjected to unusually strong necromantic magic, hinting again at a connection between the murder and the traitor. There was also a small glass sphere found near the corpse; unfortunately it was not well secured by the constabulary and has since gone missing, preventing its analysis.

I am uncertain why van Rijn would stoop to such mediocre assassinations: a fishmonger and a poor local merchant. Could both be doppelgangers? Could he have some other object in mind? Or is this merely the action of another creature of the night, with no significance for our own searches?

Perplexed, I finish my assignment and pass on the torch to another. Hopefully Brother Hazan will have better luck. Our divinations have not yet provided any clue to the murderer’s whereabouts; it is probable that he (or she, or it) is no longer in this land, as my scrying is longer being misdirected and is simply failing outright. He apparently left shortly after his second killing—if he was, in fact, our quarry, we may hope he departed to some place where he may be more easily discovered.

Sincerely,

Alfred Larner

Esteemed Brother of the Fraternity of Shadows

Paridon, 16 October 760

PART III



Dungeon Master's Appendixes

Appendix I

Who's Doomed

Sodo

The Grandmaster, 'Flickerflame' *Darklord of Paridon*

Male Dread Doppelganger Rog7

Huge monstrous humanoid; HD 11; 70hp;

SA: See combat; SQ: See combat

Str19, Dex18, Con16, Int18, Wis17, Cha10;

AL NE; CR 15

Sodo's Outcast Rating is 6. 10 when he is agitated.

The hooded figure stands before you and slowly lowers his covering, revealing dusky features, cold hard eyes and a tangled mass of black hair. You stare defiantly at him and then realize his mane has subtly grown longer.

His face seems to twist and distort as you look at it; a beard quickly appears and then vanishes just as suddenly. His hair lightens then recedes to a cleanly shorn length. Even his stature moves fluidly as he becomes tall then gangly then stocky and finally muscled. Yet the expression never changes.

His sneer remains constant and he always has the same icy cold eyes. A rough worker's hand slides into his cloak and produces a pearl-handled razor; it's gracefully handled by the pale, groomed fingers. "Now," He begins in a smooth yet hard voice that slips from his sneer as if the words were oiled, "what was it you were saying about a Guild?"

Sodo's natural form is that of a Dread Doppelganger, a grayish humanoid with the ability to mimic the shape of others. He is unable to hold any one form for more than a minute and flickers through them rapidly whenever he is agitated. The angrier he is the more chaotic the changes become, such as the hands of an infant on the body of an old man, and can even cross over into monstrous forms. The Newbill took notice of several witnesses describing this and dubbed him "Flickerflame".

On paper, Sodo is subtle, writing texts with multiple, well-hidden meanings. Reading his



letters one would expect him to be a gentleman with some experience in literary studies. He is particularly adept at poetry, albeit macabre pieces. In person, he is a bully, his tone menacing. Sodo has a habit of moving his hands as he speaks.

Background

Sodo was born into the complex hierarchy of the doppelganger clans over two centuries ago. Doppelgangers were communal, with individuality suppressed as it was a trait of the lesser races. Hunting rights were granted based on position and not achievements; Sodo was stuck taking the place of poor labourers, despite his hard work, until another member would elevate him in the ranks.

Soon frustrated with the dogmatic ways, Sodo felt his ascension should be based on his efforts and not the whims of those above. Obsessed with earning his way up, he sought his superiors' favour but, unfortunately, all the elder doppelgangers were reluctant to give him any position of power: it would mean one of them stepping down for him. Sodo soon realized that if he didn't take his

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fate into his own hands, he'd be a peon of the elder doppelgangers for the rest of his life.

Sodo secretly obtained a hat of disguise that allowed him to take forms he could not take normally. Using this he took the form of the elders in order to sow chaos within the clans. While the clans accused each other of causing mayhem, Sodo planted the seeds of a city-wide riot. This revolution, along with the confusion of the other clans, delivered Sodo just the diversion he needed. Through a chain of accidents, Sodo eliminated his fellow doppelgangers. Slowly but surely Sodo used the system of hierarchy to his advantage, obtaining the positions of those who disappeared.

As he rose, Sodo cared less about his position in human society than doppelganger society. Eventually the only position that he could ascend to was chieftain of the clans. Knowing that he would not receive the chieftain's position, even after death, Sodo disposed of the current chieftain and used the hat of disguise to masquerade as the former chieftain.

Sodo set about further uniting the other clans under his leadership, working from the shadows to undermine the clan leaders and force them to obey him. Once all doppelgangers in the city answered to him, Sodo named himself the "Grandmaster" and changed the once static doppelganger society into one that promoted inter-clan competition.

As Sodo felt secure after duping his fellow doppelgangers, a bank of Mists collected around Zherisia, and the land was brought into the Dread Realms.

In this new, isolated world Sodo quickly discovered that his form was no longer as stable as it once was. While he could take any form he wished, he found it harder and harder to keep that shape for any length of time.

Fearing that he had caught some form of degenerative disease, he became increasingly brutal with the members of his clan, making it clear to them that they would prosper only if they worked with him, and suffer horribly if they ever betrayed him. As Sodo's brutality towards his own kind

thickened, his inability to hold his shape grew stronger.

Sodo was on edge; he knew that what he had done to achieve his position could also happen to him and his inability to maintain a single form stole the one protection doppelgangers could be sure of. As a result of this paranoia, Sodo sought to ensure his own personal safety, at many times to the doom of his followers. Some early acquisitions from this fear were the scarabs of timed death, used to ensure the loyalty of servants. Thirty-five years after becoming the darklord of Paridon, Sodo's servants brought him the Fang of the Nosferatu, an artifact that could give him immortality.

Sodo found that his shape-shifting prevented him from using the knife properly, so he was forced to rely on others to perform the ritual. In order to ensure their loyalty, he used tactics of intimidation and rewards, in addition to the scarabs. In 586 BC, Bloody Jack appeared in Paridon for the first time. This ritual, involving the slaughter of six people, would be continued once every thirteen years, and soon became embedded in Zherisian society. Once again, to save his own skin, Sodo hid the knife from the other Doppelgangers when the ritual was not taking place.

As the years passed, Sodo's exposure to the Fang began to change him. The Fang allowed him to feel the pain of others, magnifying his sadistic urges until they were an addiction. His curse altered, granting him the ability to taste the suffering of others on his own, while cursing him a healing touch. Yet despite his new power, Sodo was still afraid and paranoid.

The most recent two Blood Rituals have proven to him that the Fang is not as secure as he once thought. During the 13th Bloody Jack killings, Roja (Sir Edmund Bloodsworth), betrayed him and tried to take the Fang for himself. Seeing this as a sign that the Doppelgangers could not be trusted with the Fang, he commissioned Dr. Emil Bollenbach to create a golem to commit the Blood Rite. In 756, the 14th Bloody Jack killings were interrupted by a party of outsiders, a sect of the Divinity of Mankind,

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and a new force: the Hive Queen. After the latest interruption Sodo's paranoia sparked out of control. Not only did he fear reprisal from his fellow doppelgangers, but the addition of Timor and its Hive Queen posed a new, uncontrollable threat to his reign in Paridon.

Current Sketch

Sodo is a paranoid sadist. He has controlled Paridon for over two centuries, but still feels uncomfortable about his abilities to lead it. This insecurity is taken out on the fellow doppelgangers around him. From all outward appearances, he seems to be a master of subtlety, handing out orders through intermediaries and waiting patiently for his plans to come to fruition. In reality, he has become a crude thug in order to deal with his own insecurities. Few doppelgangers have ever seen Grandmaster Sodo, but they know of him as his powers over death and his ability to inflict pain are legendary. He is cruel and vindictive, reveling in the suffering of others and seeking ways to increase his own personal power.

Throughout his life Sodo desired power and control over others. Now that he has it he fears others will try and take it away from him. Often Sodo will needlessly send one doppelganger to assassinate another considered a rival, only to then send a second assassin after the first to cover his involvement. This paranoia consumes his every thought, leaving him nervous and agitated, increasing the speed at which he changes his form. He is unable to enjoy his power, since most of his time is spent keeping the doppelgangers under his leadership and the city calm. Sodo's greatest fear is that the doppelgangers will revolt against him, and will do anything to stop it.

Sodo is seeking to manipulate the Newbill (and thus public opinion) by suggestions that the doppelgangers are actually golems, skin thieves or other lesser threats. In the mean time, he has caused a widespread movement against constructs, pointing to them as the cause of the Blood Jack Murders. Sodo has also spread suspicions in the city of

outlanders, as it was a party of them that interfered with the most recent rituals.

Recently, several key members of the Divinity of Mankind have recently met "accidents" and Sodo is now keeping a tight watch on the Celebrants. His primary fears are other doppelgangers and the Hive Queen. He feels that if he can keep the doppelgangers constantly competing with each other, then they will be too divided to unite against him. The Hive Queen frightens Sodo more than anything else. Her society reminds him of the communal world he was born into, but is impossible to infiltrate or corrupt. However, word has come to Sodo of an "Enclave" and he has plans to infiltrate it.

If the last two Bloody Jack killings proved anything to Sodo, it was that the Fang had not only become a crutch, but an unreliable one at that. His minions have been sent out to find a more permanent solution to his mortality and the conditions of his curse. They are currently seeking an alchemical answer, which, despite a flawless production, has had no effects on him. Sodo now suspects that there might be more to his 'disease' that he first hypothesized. As one of the Dread Realm's oldest darklords, Sodo is starting to question the very nature of his existence, as well for the reasons behind Paridon's isolation.

Sodo's Curse

There are three prongs to Sodo's curse. One is that he can not hold any form more than a minute. This effectively leaves him exposed, which he fears makes him an impotent leader.

The second curse is his healing touch. Due to his reliance upon the Fang of the Nosferatu, Sodo is an insatiable sadist, and enjoys the act of strangling people. But because his touch instantly heals, it is impossible for him to inflict long-term pain. Most strangled by "Flickerflame" wake up the next morning and view the whole ordeal as a bad dream.

The last is his paranoia. Even when everything is in order, he will still think that something is after him. Doppelgangers that

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are otherwise completely loyal to him are often killed for trivial actions counted as dissent. To add insult to injury, he feels abandoned and isolated from fellow doppelgangers; it is impossible for him to trust anyone.

Combat

Sodo is terrified of direct combat, and will run from a fight. He knows how vulnerable he is. Instead, Sodo deals with his enemies through "accidents", never letting them anywhere near him. It is often not a question of overcoming Sodo physically, but of catching him in the first place. He is an astounding escape artist, and is perfectly fine with letting others do the fighting for him. Sodo knows every street, twist, turn and alley way to his urban playground. If players are not careful he will lead them on a frustrating, even lethal goose chase.

Special Attacks

Flickerflame's Touch (Su): By laying his hands upon a target, Sodo can directly experience the target's pain without the help of his detect thoughts. This method of feeling another's pain is intoxicating to him. However, by laying his hands upon a target, he also involuntarily casts the spell regenerate that lasts until all damage is healed. If the target is dead then the touch instead acts as a resurrection spell. Both effects act as if cast by a 14th level Cleric.

Special Qualities

Change Shape (Su): As with a dread doppelganger, only fewer limitations. Sodo can shapechange in sizes varying from tiny to large creatures, non-humanoid beings and even into objects. If running from a fight, Sodo is fond of turning into a cast-iron lamp or trashcan as his pursuers run by. These changes require great effort to hold. Sodo must make a Concentration Check after three rounds. The DC for this check begins at 5, and then increases by 5 for every round afterward (therefore the DC becomes 40 after one minute). The DC increases by 10 if

Sodo is particularly agitated, as his changes happen more rapidly.

Glamer (Su): As with a dread doppelganger, only this requires concentration to hold.

Horrifying Appearance (Su): Anyone within 30' of Sodo when he is agitated must make a Horror save (DC 13).

Improved Doppelganger Traits: Sodo is immune not only to all sleep and charm effects, but all mind-influencing effects. The only exceptions to these are those effects imposed by the Fang of Nosferatu.

Detect Thoughts (Su): As with a dread doppelganger's detect thoughts. Sodo can also project false information of his own design for any divination spell targeted at him. Spells such as detect thoughts and legend lore will give mundane, admissible lies of Sodo's making.

Salient Powers

A Thousand Voices, Sense the Secret Doors, Sense a Desired Object, Mislead the Curious, and Master of Unlocking.

Uncontrollable Sadism: If Sodo does not feel the pain of another being with his detect thoughts or his touch within five days, on the sixth day he is wracked with his own uncontrollable pain. During this day, Sodo can only take partial actions. When Sodo can feel the pain of another he gains a +2 competence bonus to all attacks, damage, skills, saves, and AC. If Sodo himself loses more than 50% of his hit points, the same is applied but as a penalty.

Lair

Since being forced out of the sewers when the city joined with Timor, Sodo has lacked a stable base. He moves randomly between abandoned buildings, accompanied by a select group of servants.

He has several torture chambers secreted throughout the city, which he visits when he feels the need to punish an underling or just hurt someone. These torture chambers are rank 1 sinkholes of evil that sometimes rise to rank 2 after prolonged periods of use.

Closing the Border

When Sodo wants to close the border, the Mists around Paridon thicken. Those who enter it find that they become lost, and wander around the fog-enclosed streets until they emerge in another portion of the city. Strangely enough, Sodo is unable to close the border between Paridon and Timor. He has ordered the doppelganger clans to keep an eye on the sewers and ensure that nothing slips through.

The Hive Queen

Darklord of Timor

Female Marikith Queen

Huge aberration; 13 HD; 127hp;

SA: See combat; SQ: See combat;

Str26, Dex12, Con20, Int20, Wis11, Cha17;

AL CE; CR 14

Outcast rating of 14 when her full body is showing, and 4 when only her upper half is visible.

The clacking of claws on hard stone grows louder as the creature rounds the bend. Obscured by an outcropping of rock you are startled when a beautiful woman slips into view.

At first startled by her nudity, this is quickly replaced by horror as you gape at her extra pair of arms. She smiles at you and a shudder dances down your spine from the rows of knife-like teeth contained in her mouth.

She bobs slightly, moving in a curious manner, before moving out from behind the rock revealing herself. Your heart skips at the horror.

The Hive Queen is a horrid being divided into two halves. Her upper half is that of a vaguely attractive female figure in her early twenties with night black hair marred by her sharp teeth and extra set of arms which betray her as something inhuman. Her lower

Dread Possibility The Fate of Bloody Jack

After striking fear into the heart of Paridon for over 169 years Bloody Jack's rampage has been interrupted for a second time.

If Sodo managed to retrieve the Fang after the events of Shadow of the Knife he would likely abandon the persona in favour of the secret sacrifice of kidnapped victims. These murders are far less satisfying than those the cycle usually provided, but Sodo is no longer willing to risk the loss of the Knife by letting it out of his sight.

Without completing the Blood Rite Sodo will lose its gifts and become more vulnerable than he has been in over 150 years. However, Sodo was a darklord for 35 years before he acquired the Fang and will continue to be so with or without its power.

Without the Fang there is little reason to continue the 13-year cycle of the Blood Ritual. However, if someone else should discover the Fang they may find themselves adopting the persona of Bloody Jack.

Additionally, stories and belief have power and it is possible that Bloody Jack might rise as a bogeyman with all the power that the people of Paridon have attributed to him.



half has a long insect-like abdomen with several legs and a foot-long stinger at the end. She has a thick and sharp carapace that blends in with shadows perfectly. When the Hive Queen is angry, her insect half flails about, wriggling and writhing in a manner sickening to those around her, and a black drool hovers from her mouth. When she tries to be pleasant, she attempts to hide her more unsightly half and sometimes even tries to be seductive.

Background

The story of the Hive Queen begins before her birth. Her mother, Queen Orenia, the vain and despotic ruler of an outlander world, sought to create the most beautiful city in all of history. The Queen made a pact with a wizard who created illusions of creatures that frightened the populace. The queen then stated that if her people did not swear over everything they had, she would not be able to protect them from this new menace. By 620 BC, a bank of Mists collected around the Queen's kingdom.

Unfortunately for the Queen, she developed an irrational fear of her own illusions, which her daughter soon realized. The princess seduced the Wizard and convinced him to cast a spell that would make her appear as one of these 'shadow killers'. When the Wizard caught her with her lover, the Captain of the Royal Marikith Hunters, he changed the spell so that it would turn her into a monster. Orenia died instantly of fright, and her daughter became the new darklord of Timor. In a rage, she slaughtered the wizard, eliminating the one way she could ever return to normal.

During the chaos of the Grand Conjunction there was a massive earthquake and the domain of Timor was united with the city of Paridon. After learning about this new city and its leader Sodo, the Hive Queen devised a plan to take over Paridon. Secretly, the Fang of Nosferatu whispered to the Queen of its location, promising her a new kingdom. The Queen's plan failed and the Fang of the Nosferatu fell out of her possession.

Current Sketch

The Hive Queen is enraged by her failure to conquer Paridon. She is disgusted with her marikith hunters, whom she finds unintelligent and alien. But she knows that the marikith hunters are completely loyal to her and that they are all that she has.

Possession of Paridon is an objective for her, but she knows that she is far from having a force capable of dispensing Sodo's doppelgangers or the others that would defend the city. Her plan is to find magical items that could turn the tide of war to her favour and place spies across the surface.

Recently she has let those corrupted by Timor leave but has used her connection to plant suggestions to learn what they can on doppelgangers and Sodo then return to Timor for further instructions. Her web of spies in Paridon grows each month.

She also is looking to eliminate any resistance there might be within her underground world. From a corrupted Remnant that became a marikith, she learned

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of the Enclave but has been unable to find it. Its existence gnaws at her.

The Hive Queen's Curse

The Hive Queen longs for intelligent companionship. She feels isolated among the marikith hunters and, at times, is even frightened by them. They offer her no conversation or company being little but slaves. She longs to be beautiful again and is ashamed of her appearance.

The Hive Queen's greatest fear is that she will be replaced as she replaced her mother and as the marikith replaced humanity. Timor continually reminds her that things have changed. She has begun to dream of another marikith queen, her child that was allowed to hatch. The Hive Queen fears these are more than just dreams and she can no longer trust her hunters. She is torn between the desire to have another queen, one that might offer her company, and her fear that the new queen will betray her.

Lair

The Hive Queen resides in an underground palace beneath the Bowels borough. Her palace looks as if at one time it might have been a majestic piece of architecture, but now countless holes have been drilled into it for the use of her marikith. Inside, there is a wide collection of riches and treasures that she has been collecting since the fall of the city. Her palace is normally a rank 2 sinkhole of evil, but rises to rank 3 when she is converting someone into a hunter.

Combat

The Hive Queen will always send her hunters to face an enemy first. If her life is threatened, she will summon all of them in order to shield herself or give her time to flee. Should she ever be forced into melee combat, she prefers to use her stinger and natural attacks.

Special Attacks & Qualities: Described in Denizens of Dread or Shadow of the Knife.

Closing Borders

When the Hive Queen wishes to close her borders all passages seem to loop back in on themselves, the tunnels of Timor become a maze without exit. Mists sometimes rise up from the pipes to further disorientate and confuse travelers. Lost explorers caught by the closed borders either wander in circles or find ever passage leads into the heart of the Hive. The Queen can literally force people to come to her.

Roja, 'The Invisible Man', Sir Edmund Bloodsworth

Male Dread Doppelganger, Rog 10

Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 14; 102hp; SA: See combat; SQ: See Combat;

Str16, Dex20, Con15, Int16, Wis15, Cha14;

AL NE; CR 15

At first meeting, Roja is commonly mistaken for a ghost. Without any clothes on he is completely transparent, as if an invisibility spell were cast upon him. Any clothes he puts on are visible, wrapping around as if there was a body there. Roja's favourite outfit is a long trench coat, a brimmed hat, and a pair of glasses with a broken lens. He is also very fond of cigars, and always smokes when he isn't trying to hide.

Roja does his best to be pleasant towards humans. He is cheery and ironic, often trying to bring humour even into the grimmest of topics. His accent is that of an educated man, yet he uses slang that would only be heard in Blackchapel. When asked, he will introduce himself as "Eddy".

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Background

Roja was born to a human father and a doppelganger mother. For the first sixteen years of his life he had no clue that he was a doppelganger, and still thought of himself as a human by the name of Edmund Bloodsworth. After his seventeenth birthday, Roja was trained by his mother in the art of shapechanging. He considered his identity as Roja secondary to that of Edmund Bloodsworth.

He gained Sodo's favour when it came time to consider a candidate for the next Blood Rite. When Roja learned about the Fang of the Nosferatu, he saw no reason not to take it. He attempted to complete the Blood Rite for himself, but was interrupted by a party of outsiders. Feigning his death, Roja barely escaped with his life. Sodo, however, found him soon enough.

Sodo retrieved the Fang and locked Roja up in one of his torture chambers. To add insult to injury, Sodo quickly disposed of everything even remotely related to Sir Edmund Bloodsworth: his family, his business, and his title. It was as if Sir Edmund Bloodsworth had never existed. For

the next 13 years Roja would endure Sodo's sadistic torture.

Sodo used Roja as his personal guinea pig, subjecting the doppelganger to all manner of humiliating experiments and alchemical procedures. One caused him to instinctively mimic his surroundings essentially making him invisible. However, a side effect of the potion has negated his ability to alter his appearance.

Ever since, Roja has been permanently invisible. He quickly used his abilities to flee from Sodo and escape into the crowds of Paridon. Several days later, the Newsbill printed stories of an "Invisible Man" haunting the city. Roja gladly adopted the title.

Current Sketch

Roja seeks to regain the Fang and to replace Bloody Jack in the annals of history with the Invisible Man. He obsesses over this persona, and has begun a crime wave to bring himself notoriety. Caring little for the spoils of crime, he is merely interested in the attention it brings him. He is now making plans for what he has named 'The Ultimate Heist', involving a group of master thieves, each a specialist in their own field of crime.

As he is invisible Roja fear he is losing himself and his identity and is working hard to carve himself a legend and reputation. He also hopes that by supplanting Bloody Jack in the psyche of the nation he will deprive Sodo of his reputation and status among the doppelganger clans.

Sodo took all that Roja held dear, and Roja wishes to exact the same revenge. He knows that the best way to do this is to expose Sodo and his precious doppelganger clans for what they are. Humanity right now looks like the best ally for him.

Roja has become a megalomaniac in his years of imprisonment. He is charming and respectful towards humans, but only because they are a means for him to destroy the Grandmaster.



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Combat

Roja's 13 years of torture at the hands of Sodo has given him some discomfort with brutality. He prefers 'cleaner' tactics, with quick deaths. When stalking someone, he will be patient and precise with his throwing daggers, studying his enemy for three rounds in order to make a Coup de Grace. Roja always uses his invisibility to its full advantage.

Special Attacks

Invisibility (Su): Roja always counts as having the effect of the spell Greater Invisibility on him, as if cast by an 8th level Sorcerer. This effect is permanent, and cannot be countered by a Dispel Magic spell.

Special Qualities

Detect thoughts (Su): As per the spell.

Nondetection (Su): Roja has the permanent effect of the spell nondetection on him, as if cast by an 8th level Sorcerer. Additionally, the spells see invisibility and true seeing instantaneously fail when cast upon him. The only beings able to "see" Roja are cats.

Salient Powers

Sense a Desired Object, and Master of Unlocking.

Lair

Roja and his team of expert thieves reside within the basement of a clockwork shop in Riverside Square. Roja also has access to a small series of safe houses in some of the other boroughs, should his home in Riverside be found.

Alfred Lerner

Head of the Paridon cell of the Fraternity of Shadows

CR11

Male human Mnk2/III3/FoS6

NE Medium humanoid (human); HD Init +6;
Senses Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages Zherisian*, Timorian, Mordentish, Draconic, Lamordian.

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12;

hp 46 (11 HD)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +15

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee Unarmed attack +6 (1d6+), **Ranged**
Pistol +7 (1d10)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +6

Atk Options Flurry of blows, ring of shooting stars, stunning fist

Wizard Spells (CL 11th);

Illusion specialist, prohibited schools
Conjuration and Necromancy

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 10

SQ evasion, slippery mind

Feats Combat Reflexes, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Open Mind, Reincarnation, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (Illusion), Spell Mastery (greater invisibility, major image, lightning bolt, colour spray), Stunning Fist

Skills Climb +6, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (Ravenloft) +18, Knowledge (religion) +9, Jump +9, Listen +7, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +16, Spot +7, Tumble +9

Possessions crystal ball, pistol, ring of shooting stars, spellbook.

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Spellbook 0th: *all non-conjuration, non-necromancy*

1st: *protection from chaos/evil/good/law, shield, comprehend languages, identify, charm person, sleep, magic missile, shocking grasp, colour spray, disguise self, Nystul's magic aura, silent image, ventriloquism, feather fall, jump*

2nd: *arcane lock, detect thoughts, see invisibility, daze monster, continual flame, darkness, scorching ray, blur, invisibility, magic mouth, minor image, mirror image, misdirection, alter self, cat's grace, darkvision, knock, pyrotechnics, rope trick, spider climb*

3rd: *dispel magic, nondetection, clairaudience/clairvoyance, hold person, lightning bolt, displacement, illusory script, major image, blink, gaseous form, secret page, water breathing*

4th: *lesser globe of invulnerability, scrying, charm monster, hallucinatory terrain, greater invisibility, phantasmal killer, shadow conjuration*

5th: *break enchantment, mind fog, sending, dream, mirage arcana, persistent image, seeming, fabricate*

Signature possessions: crystal ball, pistol, ring of shooting stars.

Alfred Lerner was born in Paridon in 718 BC to a lower middle-class family, the ninth of eleven children. His family hovered perpetually on the edge of poverty and their house was never quiet. Perhaps this is at the root of the dislike which Alfred still has for noise and clutter; his disdain for those low in social station; and his ambition to become a gentleman -or, at least, someone so powerful that he cannot be ignored.

Alfred was interested in the philosophical teachings and physical training of the Divinity of Mankind from an early age - partly for their own sakes, and partly as an excuse to leave his family behind and find a more tranquil atmosphere- and one more conducive to advancement. His diligence in pursuing his studies, combined with the backing of his superiors within the order of the Divinity of Mankind, led to his obtaining a scholarship to study philosophy in the Core. Financial considerations led him to reject Il Aluk and Port-a-Lucine; instead, he found himself studying at the University of Richemulot, where he soon came to the attention of Viktor Hazan and Erik van Rijn.

Seeing in him a potential Brother, they used his philosophical background to draw him into the viewpoints of the Fraternity. After all, the real difference between mankind and the animals was his power of intellect; why, then, should there not be a further division within mankind, with those of greater intellect and mental power ruling over their lesser fellows? After a brief period of skepticism Alfred became entirely convinced by this argument and began to apply it in ways even his mentors found rather startlingly liberal. If intellect were truly the measuring rod of worth, then why should a non-human of great intelligence not be accepted as an equal? Why, equally, should an intelligent woman not be considered equal to an intelligent man? Despite these rather unorthodox



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formulations, Alfred was soon found worthy of admission into the Fraternity, with his first papers being on the relationship between physical health and mental responses, including an exploration of why people suffering from disease tend to be more susceptible to illusions and enchantments.

After completing his degree at the University, Alfred returned to Paridon in 742 and immediately set about attempting to recruit for the Fraternity there. At first he returned to work in the Chapter House of the Order of the Divinity of Mankind but his philosophical outlook had changed so much that he found himself continually at odds with the main body of the order. Tired of the continual conflict and knowing that he was unlikely to persuade the Order to adopt his views, he left and began teaching as a private tutor to noble families.

His backing of unusual candidates for membership in the Fraternity (including humanoids, bards, and women, in increasing order of scandal) is counted against him in the more doctrinaire corners of the Fraternity, but his continued scholarship and efforts to expand the Fraternity in Paridon have led to his maintaining a slow but steady advancement through the ranks of the Fraternity. Alfred has shepherded his flock of Brothers with great care and determination, as he is determined to see the Fraternity succeed in Paridon; despite his relatively obscure position, the position of Exalted Brother and even Father of the Fraternity may not be beyond his grasp -or so he hopes.

Alfred has had some success in recruiting others to the Fraternity's cause, especially from those on the outskirts of the orthodox alchemical traditions and philosophies of the Divinity of Mankind. Because of their backgrounds, those he has recruited tend strongly toward being alchemical philosophers and transmuters. Knowing that this makes the Paridon cell vulnerable to van Rijn's enticements, and hoping to avoid insinuations of complicity with the arch-traitor, Alfred has resolved to take the bull by the horns and launch an extensive man-hunt for van Rijn in Paridon. He and his fellow Fraternity members are compiling the

information they have on Paridon in the hope of finding any clues that may hint at van Rijn's presence in their city, and are even planning a full-scale exploratory expedition into the sewers to ensure that he is not hiding from the Fraternity there.

Current sketch:

Alfred Larner appears to be a rather ordinary Paridoner not-quite-gentleman in his early 40s. He is balding somewhat and wears his ginger hair short, with full sideburns and a handlebar mustache; he's otherwise clean-shaven. He is physically slight, but quite a bit stronger than he looks; he wears spectacles for purely cosmetic reasons, as he feels it gives him a certain amount of gravitas. The spectacles are plain glass, and he sees perfectly well without them. He goes to some pains to cultivate a meek public persona, but beneath it--and not very far beneath it, at times--lies the ambitious and aggressive mind of a senior member of the Fraternity of Shadows.

Nevin, Court Illusionist

CR14

Male Human 3rd Rank Ancient Dead Wizard
11

LE Medium Undead (Augmented
Humanoid)

Init +6; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +14,
Spot +14

Aura Fear (sight, paralysation)

Languages Timorian*, Draconic

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 24

hp 80 (11 HD), DR 10/magic, Resistant to
Blows

Immune Cold, Undead Traits

Resist Fire 20, Turn Resist +4; SR 20

Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

Weakness Acid

Who's Doomed

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee Slam +10 (1d6+5 plus disease)

Base Atk +5; Grp +10

Combat Gear Arcane Scroll of Doom
Scarabs, Wand of Ray of Exhaustion (27 charges)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 11th);
prohibited schools Conjurati^on,
Enchantment:

6th - Greater Sign of Sealing, Mislead

5th - Baleful Polymorph, Friend to Foe,
Quickened Shield

4th - Bleakness, Doom Scarabs,
Phantasmal Killer, Polymorph

3rd - Dispel Magic, Heightened Ray of
Enfeeblement, Legion of Sentinels, Major
Image, Ray of Exhaustion, Slow

2nd - Alter Self, Blindness/Deafness,
Kelgore's Grave Mist, Mirror Image,
Phantasmal Assailants, Wall of Gloom

1st - Chill Touch, Comprehend Languages,
Magic Missile, Ray of Enfeeblement, Shield,
Silent Image

0th - Ghost Sound, Open/Close, Ray of
Frost, Read Magic, Touch of Fatigue

Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con --, Int 17, Wis
18, Cha 12

SQ Passage, Rejuvenation

Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat
Casting, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative,
Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe
Scroll, Toughness

Skills Appraise (Alchemy) +5, Concentration
+14, Climb +13, Craft (Alchemy) +17,
Decipher Script +17, Knowledge (Arcana)
+17, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +17, Hide
+10, Move Silently +10, Spellcraft +19 (+21
vs. Illusion), Survival (Underground) +6,
Use Magic Device (Scrolls) +5

Possessions combat gear plus Arcane Scroll of
Teleport, Potion of Detect Thoughts, Cloak
of Resistance +1, Ring of Protection +1,
Bracers of Armor +2, Amulet of Natural
Armor +1, Spellbook

Disease (Su): Filth Fever; DC 15;
Incubation 1d3 days; 1d3 Dex, 1d3 Con

Fear (Su): Anyone viewing Nevin must
make a Will save (DC 16) or be paralyzed
with fear for 3d4 rounds. Regardless of
success or failure, the target is immune to the
fear for the rest of the day.

Passage (Su): Can cast Phase Door 11/
hour, as a Sorcerer 11.

Rejuvenation (Su): Unless Nevin is
brought to -10 or less hp, then after 1 day of
lying inert he will begin to Rejuvenate,
healing at the rate of 12 hp/hour. After he is
fully healed he must continue to lie dormant
for another hour before he can become
active.

Resistant to Blows (Ex): Nevin takes only
1/2 damage from physical attacks, applied
before Damage Reduction.

*The withered being standing before you
has stick-thin limbs and papery skin but its
face twists with a fierce hatred at being
disturbed. A few simple adornments lie upon
its frame, somehow surviving the ages more
or less intact.*

Nevin was once the court magician in the
royal palace of Timor. Most nobles and
royals had at least one spellcaster on retainer
and the position paid well. Nevin focused on
the school of illusion, and was utterly
devoted to the royal family he served in
Timor. He slavishly cast his spells for them,
believing that they kept him safe from the
masses outside. So it was that he began using
his illusions for the Queen of Timor to use
the fear of her subjects to increase their
productiveness.

The Queen's beautiful daughter came to
see the power that Nevin held. Though he
was not a master wizard, he had useful skills.
The daughter seduced Nevin and conspired
with him to take away the Queen's rule.
However, as history tells, Nevin discovered
the Princess' infidelity and strove to punish
the girl. Instead of casting an illusion to
make her appear as a marikith he changed
her into a Queen. When the Princess went on
a rampage Nevin was the first one killed.

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The Hive Queen went to the sewers after her rampage and the council was left to clean up the slaughter. Not trusting the wizard's remains after his 'cursing' of the princess but not wishing to anger his spirit, they buried him in an elaborate tomb they had pre-constructed for the royal family and left him there. The conditions of the wizard's death combined with the preservative effects of the tomb transformed him into one of the Ancient Dead. However, Nevin only rises when the sanctity of his crypt is violated.

After the Grand Conjunction, when Timor's sewers were placed under Paridon, Nevin's crypt was moved there too. He slumbered within his tomb until a marikith scout force invaded it, waking him. With little effort he dispatched the creatures, and went back to sleep. More marikith came, and with each effort, he destroyed more of them. The Hive Queen soon learned that a powerful being resided within the sepulchre but had no idea about its nature. Also, she found that it only reacted when its lair was invaded and seemed to have no desires on expanding. As the marikith themselves sensed no fear from this creature that destroyed them, they soon left it alone to its slumber.

Now, the tomb of Nevin is a desolate area, shunned by marikith and Remnants alike. Nevin himself is content to slumber in his tomb unless it is violated. He is one of the few beings who knows the history of Timor and could provide adventurers with much knowledge of the past. He would also like to revenge himself on the Hive Queen but in his current state cannot be bothered to leave his crypt.

Note: Some spells listed above have been taken from the books Complete Arcane and Player's Handbook II. If these books are not available, substitute them with appropriate spells from your own resources.

Clubs and Societies

The Thorne Society

Made up of very select members of the nobility that are recruited using a complex series of tests (which the applicant is unaware of), The Thorne Society is preoccupied mainly with the study of agricultural alchemy and the development of new food processing techniques (or revival of old ones) that will increase the aristocratic stranglehold over the meek food supplies of Paridon. They are not beyond using underhanded methods to accomplish their goals, making it relatively hazardous to innovate or be in the possession of innovative alchemical or technological information.

Daughters of the Mystic Light

This is rumoured to be the brainchild of a group of witches of Hala that were pursued into the Mists by the Tepestandi Inquisition. The Daughters are concerned with compassion for the sick and hungry, the creation of basic rights and equalities for women (Suffragettes), and raising funds for the establishment of hospices and secret shelters for abused women and children.

The Daughters are the only known secret society in Paridon exclusive to women. The current Head Matron, Agnes Hark, is an accomplished mistress of the arcane arts and has been instrumental in maintaining the founding principles of the Daughters.

House of Sagee

The story of this society is a bloody one. The three ruling members of the current incarnation of the Sagee or "The Brotherhood of Polyhedron" are the children of an unnamed clan of high-ranking doppelgangers that were decimated by Sodo following a failed coup. Having grown up in hiding to prevent Sodo's forces from eradicating their line, the three survivors resurfaced a decade later under the moniker

Who's Doomed

of the House of Sagee; a society dedicated to harboring and plotting the final destruction of Sodo and his allies from power.

The Sagee are not to be mistaken for benefactors as they have no particular love or empathy towards humans, or the intention to rule with compassion once they have seized control of the government.

The Legion of Trust

The Legionaries are an assortment of middle-class factory owners, engineers and businessmen that believe Paridon's salvation lies squarely on the shoulders of industry and economic reform. Their views however tend to be callous towards the poor and unskilled members of society. Their philosophies are unapologetically elitist in a social Darwinian manner, yet ironically enough they encourage and applaud those that raise themselves from poverty and demonstrate economic or technical ingenuity.

The Zherisian Brothers of the Land

The Zherisian Brothers of the Land are an activist group of men and women of Paridon's working class. Notorious for their guerilla tactics against the Riverside factories, the Brotherhood destroys the machines that they feel are trapping mankind into servitude. "Man was born free", they say, "but he now lives in chains".

At night they will often sneak into warehouses and ruin as many machines as they can before fleeing from the authorities. If they attack during the day it is in great numbers, with many different forces striking from different locations in order to confuse the factory guards. Most members, often called Saboteurs, are ex-workers that were replaced by a machine, but some are radicals who want to see humanity freed of technology forever. Occasionally, factor guards have been physically overwhelmed, even killed, by these raids. Most of the time they use hit and run tactics.

Factory workers are often warned that there will be an attack so as to avoid casualties. Surprisingly, the labourers don't

warn their employers despite the bonuses offered to anyone that turns informant on the Zherisian Brothers of the Land. This is partly due to the cruel conditions that they are forced to work in. Peer pressure and retaliation also contributes to this silence. Past informants had their possessions robbed and their fingers broken, courtesy of the "King of the Slums".

Many believe the King of the Slums is simply an urban myth created to frighten the lower classes into obedience. In truth, he does exist, and trains many of the Brotherhood's members. Many members of the Zherisian Brothers of the Land have levels in the Saboteur prestige class.

Club Requirements

Clubs located in King's Quarters use the following modifications to the affiliation rules described in Player's Handbook 2:

Variable	Bonus
Upper class background	+ 0
Middle class background	- 2
Lower class background	- 4
Outsider (not from Paridon)	- 2
Female	- 4
Character level	+ 1/2
Charisma bonus	1/2
Diplomacy and/or Knowledge (nobility & royalty) 5 ranks or more	+ 1
Diplomacy and/or Knowledge (nobility & royalty) 10 ranks or more	+ 2
Education/University Educated feat	+ 1
Wealthy feat	+ 2
Noble title	+ 1
Total wealth of more than 20,000gp	+ 1
Total wealth of more than 40,000gp	+ 2
Total wealth of more than 60,000gp	+ 3
Upper class background	+ 0
Middle class background	- 2
Lower class background	- 4
Outsider (not from Paridon)	- 2
Female	- 4

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Potential members must be sponsored by a patron and pay an initial membership fee of (1000gp) and monthly fee of 50 gp and have an affiliation score of 4 or more.

Club Benefits

Once accepted into an organization, a character may partake of several benefits. The clubs and lodges of Paridon provide many of the following benefits.

- Access to excellent, high quality accommodation for inexpensive prices
- A club bar with fine wines and spirits costing a third of the normal price for members
- An excellent dining room costing half the normal PHB prices
- Access to the club's well-stocked library (+1 on research rolls)
- Discrete and helpful staff.
- Free safety deposit boxes and banking services for members.
- Exclusivity (guards and doormen prevent the riffraff from entering and the best security available)

Additional Benefits

As a character increases his or her prominence within an organization, he or she gains a number of benefits and responsibilities.

Affiliation score 11+

+2 to Diplomacy and Gather Information rolls with members

Personal servant/valet (CR1 or lower) provided when staying at the club

Duties: Members of this level are expected to host an extravagant dinner for members of the club once a year (dinner value 500gp)

Affiliation score 21+

Call in Favour (gives a permanent -5 decrease to affiliation score after the favour has been called in)

Audience with the upper echelons (can claim an audience with one of the most senior and influential members of Paridon

society once a month (takes 1-6 days to arrange meeting)

Loan (one item or cash of a value of up to 1000 gp for 2d4 days) once a month. If the loan is not paid off on time, affiliation score decreases by 1 per day overdue. If the affiliation score reduces below 4, the person is expelled from the club.

Duties: Members of this level are expected to host an extravagant dinner for members of the club once a year (dinner value 1000gp)

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New Skills

Art Forgery:

A New Application of the Craft Skill

The PHB Forgery skill is concerned exclusively with written documents: from duplicate signatures to the scribing of fake text into full-length books. To create forged versions of items that are normally fabricated via the Craft skill (including artificially-aged books or pages, to which text can be added with the Forgery skill), the forgery-maker must have at least 5 ranks in the appropriate type of Craft.

To Craft a forgery, determine the finished item's genuine sale price and the DC necessary to create it. Pay one-third of the item's actual price for raw materials. Note that you can deliberately Craft a worthless item, then increase its apparent value until it looks salable; raw materials for such items cost a nominal 1 cp per pound of the finished item's weight (minimum 1 cp).

To increase the apparent value of the item beyond its actual worth, you then add a "forgery bonus" to the DC of your Craft check, which can be anything from +1 to the number of ranks you have in the Craft skill. For example, if you have 10 ranks in Craft (jewelry), you may add a +1 to +10 "forgery bonus" to your check's DC, to make a piece of jewelry that looks more expensive than it really is. Roll your Craft check against this DC, after applying other modifiers relevant to Craft checks.

If your check succeeds, multiply your result by the DC minus its forgery bonus. This represents real value added to the item under construction, and counts toward the item's completion. Next, multiply your successful check result by the forgery bonus. This is the number of coins' apparent value which has been added to the item, making it seem more expensive. The type of coin is the forger's choice:

- A simple forgery increases the item's apparent value in silver pieces (or

copper, if progress at crafting the item is being tracked by the day).

- A risky forgery increases the item's apparent value in gold pieces (or silver by the day).
- A daring forgery increases the item's apparent value in platinum pieces (gold by the day).

If a forger desires, an entire work-period may be devoted solely to making an item appear more valuable. To do this, use the same DC for the Craft check, but success increases only the item's apparent value (result X forgery bonus), not its actual value. Such work doesn't count toward an item's completion.

To determine if the finished forgery passes inspection at its time of sale, the potential buyer makes an Appraise check opposed by the forger's Craft check. Like the Forgery check for a false document, this Craft check is rolled secretly by the DM. The following modifiers apply to the buyer's Appraise check:

Condition	Modifier
Simple forgery	+ 0
Alleged style or maker unknown to appraiser	- 2
Risky forgery	+ 5
Alleged style or maker somewhat known to appraiser	+ 0
Daring forgery	+ 10
Alleged style or maker well-known to appraiser	+ 2
Item accompanied by convincingly-forged documentation	- 2
Forged documentation suspected by buyer	+ 4
Forged documentation conclusively identified as false	+ 8
Seller believes item is genuine or succeeds on a Bluff check	- 2
Seller's Bluff check against buyer fails	+ 6

If the Appraise check beats the forger's Craft check and the usual DC to Appraise an item of its sort (e.g. DC 12 for common items), the buyer is not deceived and realizes the item's actual worth. If the Craft check beats the Appraise check, the buyer instead

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believes its value to be its apparent worth, as the forger intended. If the Appraise check beats the Craft check, but not the standard DC to appraise such an item, the buyer either estimates its value (common items) or cannot make a guess (see PHB description of the Appraise skill).

Convincing a potential buyer that an item has value for purely historical and/or cultural reasons ("This chaise-lounge once sat in the study of Count Strahd I, himself!") is adjudicated via Bluff and Sense Motive checks.

Craft (photography)

(Int; trained only)

This new version of the Craft skill encompasses both the manufacture and care of photographic equipment -plate sensitisation, camera construction and maintenance, framing and preservation of finished daguerreotypes- and the actual picture-taking process. It is such a recently developed skill that it cannot be employed untrained; as yet, photography lessons may only be obtained in the city of Paridon.

Use of this skill for building cameras and other equipment -most of which, daguerreotypists are required to make for themselves- is adjudicated as per other applications of Craft. To actually take a picture is a three-Craft-check process: sensitising the photographic plate is one check, exposing the plate to light is the second, and developing the resulting image is the third.

The Craft check DCs for each step, and time required to complete the steps are as follows:

Task	Time required	DC
Sensitise a plate to light	5 minutes	10*
Exposure (direct sunlight or equivalent)	3 rounds	12
Exposure (brightly lit indoor conditions)	6 rounds	10
Exposure (shadowy illumination)	12 rounds	25
Develop an image	10 minutes	12

* One of the gases used to sensitise daguerreotype-plates to light is volatile and mildly toxic. On a natural roll of 1 for such a check, the skill-user must roll a second skill check against DC 5 to keep the gas from escaping its container; if the check fails, the photographer is exposed to the fumes (Inhaled poison DC 11, initial damage 1 Int, secondary 1d3 Int; this gas requires an open flame to produce, so is normally unsuitable for use as a weapon). A photographer cannot Take 10 on the second check to keep fumes contained.

Craft Check	Modifier
Indoor light sources not evenly distributed around subject	-2
Extra indoor light sources pre-positioned to improve photo quality	+2 per source (+6 maximum)
No stable surface or tripod available to hold camera steady	-4 per 3 rounds of exposure-time
Subject is a landscape with moving features (surf, waterfall, etc)	-4
Subject is a "still life" or landscape without moving features	+4
Subject is a living, stationary adult and holding very still	-1 per 3 rounds of exposure-time
Subject is a living, stationary adult, but is not holding still	-2 per 3 rounds of exposure-time
Subject is a living, stationary, cooperative animal or small child	-4 per 3 rounds of exposure-time
Subject is a living, non-stationary creature or refuses to hold still	-8 per 3 rounds of exposure-time
Subject is a living, sleeping creature	+2
Subject is a dead or magically paralysed creature	+4
Subject is a non-instantaneous, visible magical effect	-6
Subject has concealment due to fog, haze, etc.	-5 per 10% miss chance
Hidden subject	-(Hide bonus of subject)
Distant subject (not applicable for landscape-images)	-2 range penalty per 20'

A successful Craft (photography) check to expose a plate produces a high-quality image. While a check that fails by less than 5 points produces a low-quality image, a check that fails by more than 5 points produces no

Appendix II

distinguishable image; plates so ruined may be cleaned and re-used.

Due to motion's effect it is common for a daguerreotype-tableau to depict some of its subjects quite clearly, while others are hazier or even too blurred to distinguish. Technology to copy daguerreotypes does not exist, although existing pictures can be photographed in turn.

Sensitising plates and developing the finished picture must be performed in total darkness.

New Equipment

Photographic Materials

Daguerreotype, high-quality: Primitive photographic images on silvered plates of copper, these items are extremely delicate, requiring protective cases to shield them from abrasion, tarnish, or even dust. A high-quality daguerreotype is sufficiently accurate that merely seeing the subject in such a picture counts as "seen once", for purposes of divinations or teleportation. If a character using Spot to detect an imposter (opposed check vs. Disguise) has a high-quality daguerreotype of the genuine individual for comparison, that character receives a +3 circumstance bonus on his or her Spot check.

Curiously, a high-quality daguerreotype of a subject counts as a "garment or possession", not a "likeness or picture", for purposes of scrying attempts directed at that specific subject.

Daguerreotype, low-quality: A frequent consequence of poor lighting or subjects

who can't sit still for long enough, low-quality daguerreotypes nevertheless have some value as curios, and not all plates that come out poorly are cleaned for re-use. A low-quality daguerreotype provides no special advantage for spotting impersonators or for divinations and other magic, yet retains enough detail so that the persons or sites depicted may be recognisable to viewers who have previously seen the photo (and vice versa).

Daguerreotype frame: The image on a daguerreotype is as fragile as the scales of a butterfly's wings, so these pictures are sealed in glass-fronted cases for their protection. If not properly encased in an intact frame, a daguerreotype is 10% likely to be damaged every time it is handled, and tarnish or dust will reduce its quality every three months that it is left exposed (from high-quality to low, then low-quality to indistinguishable and worthless).

Silvered plate, blank: This silver-coated copper rectangle is the "film" used in daguerreotype-era cameras. Most daguerreotypists build their own cameras and commission their own plates to order, so the exact size and thickness of plates are not standardised and a particular blank plate may not slot properly into a camera constructed by a different 'typist.

Camera: Frequently called "picture boxes" by non-daguerreotypists, these devices are little more than a wooden box with a lens at one end, a slot for inserting plates at the other, and a tinted glass peephole on one side through which the 'typist may check a forming image's progress. A hatch at the bottom allows the 'typist to introduce mercury-vapour to the

Item	Cost	Craft (DC) to produce	Weight
Daguerreotype, high-quality	3 gp	photography (see description)	2 lb
Daguerreotype, low-quality	6 sp	photography (see description)	2 lb
Daguerreotype frame	5 sp	glassmaking or jewelry-making (15)	½ lb
Silvered plate, blank	2 sp	silversmithing (15)	2 lb
Camera	250 gp	photography (17) or carpentry (20)	4 lb
Adjustable tripod	40 gp	blacksmithing (15)	8 lb
Photography kit	40 gp	alchemy (10) or photography (12)	5 lb
Photography workroom	400 gp	alchemy (12) or photography (15)	250 lb

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box, to "fix" the resulting picture's appearance at the end of its exposure-time. No craftsmen in Paridon specialise in the sale of cameras, so most daguerreotypists build their own and order plates to fit their creations; plates that fit one picture-box's slot may not fit another.

Masterwork cameras haven't yet been constructed in Ravenloft, but are theoretically possible. When such devices do emerge from some innovative daguerreotypist's workshop, they will likely produce ambrotypes (pictures on glass) rather than images on metal. Only the Craft (photography) skill is suitable for the production of a more advanced camera design; carpenters who try it automatically fail.

Adjustable tripod: Normally used by astronomers and surveyors, a few clever daguerreotypists who specialise in landscapes have found these invaluable for securely propping their cameras in place.

Photography kit: This leather satchel contains all the necessary field-equipment for the exposure and initial "fixing" of daguerreotypes, save a camera or tripod. A complete kit includes ten pre-sensitised plates in black cardboard slipcovers, mercury fixatives, a tiny "camp stove"-style burner for heating them, a black draping-cloth to shield plates that are being slotted in or out of the camera, chalk for labeling finished plates' covers, and a crude chart used to estimate exposure-times based on ambient light. A kit's contents require restocking after ten uses, and grant a +2 circumstance bonus to Craft (photography) checks for the exposure process. It is not useable for sensitising or developing plates.

Photography workroom: A 'typist's counterpart to an alchemist's lab, this set of gear includes a vapour-chamber and reagents for sensitising plates, basins of developing-solutions and preservatives, stands for air-drying finished daguerreotypes, and sufficient draperies and other light-excluders to convert a small room or large closet into a darkroom. Checks made to develop a daguerreotype suffer a -10 circumstance penalty if such a room is not used.

Equipment for the construction, repair, and maintenance of cameras, and for polishing plates prior to sensitisation, are likewise included in the cost of a photography workroom, but these are usually set up in a different room, since such tasks do not require darkness. A workroom does not include the lamps, backdrops, arm -and head- props, or other gear utilized in portrait-studios.

New Feats

The following feats are particularly appropriate for the Ravenloft setting. Players should consult with their DM to see if he allows these feats before taking them, however.

Just Another Face

Prerequisite: 5 ranks in Hide, must have lived in an urban area (at least a Small City) for 1 entire year.

Benefit: You may use the Hide skill if you are surrounded by a crowd of at least thirty people of indifferent attitude to you. The crowd must be predominantly the same size as you or one size larger. You suffer a penalty for two points of Outcast Rating you have higher than a crowd.

Normal: You cannot use Hide if you are being even casually observed.

Special: for every 10 NPC's around you above 30, you receive a cumulative +2 bonus to Hide.

Urban Chameleon

Prerequisite: must have lived in an urban area (at least a Small City) for 5 cumulative years.

Benefit: you receive a +2 bonus to Hide and a +2 bonus to Bluff whilst within urban environments.

New Spells

Reveal True Form

Abjuration

Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature with the alternate form ability

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The spell neutralises the effects of a creature's alternate form ability. The caster raises the focus (see below) up to his or her eye and merely looks at the creature it is targeting. The creature is then transformed back into its true form and is trapped in that form for the duration of the spell.

If the targeted creature does not possess the alternate form ability, the spell simply does not work. The same is true if the creature makes its Will save or the spell is negated by spell resistance. This still counts as casting the spell. The caster does not know whether the spell worked or not and thus does not know if the creature made its will save or did not possess the ability.

The creature that fails its save is transformed into its true form and is trapped in that form for the duration of the spell. This spell works by disrupting the creature's concentration so it cannot use the ability.

Focus: A gold-rimmed monocle worth 2000gp.

Mimic Marikith

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You (humanoids only)

Duration: 10 minutes/level (D)

This is a highly specialised spell developed by a Zherisian scholar who claimed that there were beings living underneath Paridon. No one would believe him and so he went on to create this spell. The only surviving records of this spell were found amongst his personal effects when he disappeared soon after claiming that he would prove the veracity of his claims.

This spell transforms the caster into a marikith for the duration of the spell. This spell transforms the caster's body into that of a marikith but keeps the mind of the caster intact. He does not become part of the marikith hive mind and retains his individuality.

DM's Note: (PCs who discover this spell are unaware of this effect as no one who has used this spell has returned): As soon as the caster enters Timor, the DM secretly rolls a Will save for the caster against the Hive Queen's mental control (DC 20). If the caster succeeds, s/he does not have to make another Will save for 30 minutes. If the Hive Queen succeeds the caster is under her control and is subject to her commands. If the character subsequently inspires fear they are permanently and completely transformed into a marikith and the caster's former mind is lost.

Prestige Classes

Royal Marikith Hunter

Founded by Queen Orenia in 604BC, the Royal Marikith Hunters were trained for the eradication of local predators and protection of the citizens of Timor. They are experts in subterranean survival and hunting as well as evading the hazards of the sewers.

Modern Marikith Hunters either discover the tradition from the ruins of Timor or are taught by someone who knows the methods. There are several Remnants who still follow the path of the Royal Hunter and could be

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convinced to train outsiders. There are even rumours of some spirits, Hunters slain in the Night of Running Screams, who are unable to rest until their land has been freed. They might also be persuaded to teach someone their ways.

NPC Royal Marikith Hunters are typically Timorian Remnants who use their skills primarily for survival. They evade the marikith and scavenge for food to return to the Enclave. A few might survive in other lands, either descendants of Timorians that left in the Dark Decades after the Hive Queen took power or those in other lands they educated. Royal Hunters could easily find a place in Richemulot, or Port-a-Lucine.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify to become a Royal Marikith Hunter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Hide 3 ranks, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) 8 ranks, Listen 5 ranks, Search 3, Spot 3 ranks, Survival 12 ranks.

Feats: Endurance and either Self-Sufficient or Skill Focus (Survival).

Special: The training of a Royal Marikith Hunter is special and the result of decades of expertise. To become a Hunter, one must be trained by an experienced Hunter or find a book describing the procedure.

Class Skills

The Royal Marikith Hunter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge

(dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spellcraft, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the Royal Marikith Hunter prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A Royal Marikith Hunter is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with light armour and shields (except tower shields).

Marikith Foe (Ex): A Royal Marikith Hunter is trained in the eradication of the marikith and other inhuman creatures. Because of this training they receive the benefits of the Ranger's Favoured Enemy ability towards aberrations.

The Hunter gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against creatures of this type. Likewise, she gets a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against such creatures.

This ability stacks with any previous bonuses from a favoured enemy if the Hunter has ranger levels and previously selected aberrations.

Subterranean Survival (Ex): Royal Marikith Hunters spent much of their time in underground tunnels. They receive a +2 bonus on any Survival checks made in underground situations. They also receive a +1 to any Listen, Search and Spot checks.

Table 1: Royal Marikith Hunter

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Marikith Foe, Subterranean Survival
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Sneak Attack +1d6
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Darkvision, Hazard Sense
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Abnormal Anatomy
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Sneak Attack +2d6

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Given the intimate nature the Hunters have with the Timorian tunnels in particular, this ability also negates any survival penalties in that particular land.

Sneak Attack: Through stealth and years of hunting, Royal Marikith Hunters are skilled at felling prey quickly through the element of surprise. They can use the rogue's sneak attack ability as described in the PHB.

The damage done by this ability is increased by 1d6 at 5th level.

Darkvision (Su): The Hunters, despite their human origins, spend so much time in the darkness that they became prenatally adapted to it. They gain darkvision of 30 feet.

Those Hunters who already possess darkvision from other sources (such as racial traits) do not gain this ability but instead have their natural darkvision extended by 15 feet. For example, a caliban normally has darkvision of 60 feet. After becoming a third level Hunter they now have darkvision of 75 feet.

Hazard Sense (Ex): Through years of living in tunnels Hunters gain a sixth sense regarding unsafe terrain. This includes but is not limited to pitfalls, loose ceilings and weakened walls or floors. They can search for natural and stonework dangers or traps as per a rogue's trapfinding ability.

If the Hunter already possesses the trapfinding ability though another racial class feature (such as the dwarven stonecutting ability) they receive a +4 bonus to searching for stonework or natural subterranean traps and hazards.

Abnormal Anatomy (Ex): The Hunter's experience with inhuman creatures has gifted her with almost unnatural knowledge of their physiology. They have an improved chance to score a critical hit against aberrations.

While fighting aberrations, they are treated as if they have the Improved Critical Feat with any weapon with which they are proficient. They must still confirm the critical as normal. Additionally, the Hunter must have fought at least one similar aberration in the past to know enough anatomy to make use of this ability.

Captain of the Mists

To be born half-Vistani is to be without a true home; Vistani blood calls those who have it to wander the Mists, but giorgio blood places one forever outside the circle of vardos.

But mixed heritage offers something that the giorgio world needs and which the Vistani cannot be bothered to supply: an intuitive sense of the Mists. He who develops these sensitivities can control the path he takes through the Mists -not perfectly, but well enough to make himself invaluable to others.

There is a great demand throughout the Land of the Mists for goods to be taken from one place to another, be it grain from the Core to Paridon, silks from Rokushima Taiyoo to Dementlieu, or the coffee bean of the Amber Wastes to the coffeehouses of Richemulot. This trade is conducted largely by groups led by half-Vistani merchant captains, known as Captains of the Mists, who use their ability to navigate safely through the Mists to mass fortunes in trade. Captains of the Mists are universally well-traveled traders, seasoned caravan leaders or sea-captains able to handle the competition in trading houses or the attack of brigands with equal aplomb.

The captains of the Mists form a loose association -nothing so organised as a society, simply the fraternity of a group of men and women with a common background, vocation, and set of abilities. To undercut a fellow Mist-Captain by stealing a march and reaching market first is admirable, as is outwitting a fellow Captain in negotiations. However, cheating a fellow Mist-Captain outright is frowned upon; to inform upon a fellow captain is disgraceful; and to abandon or betray a fellow is a black mark which cannot be erased. The code of the Captains of the Mists is unwritten and turns on subtleties but to most Mist-Captains that code is their moral compass, and to live by it is their badge of honour.

Player Options

Class Skills

The Captain of the Mists' class skills are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Int), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Cha), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis)

Skill points at each level: 6 + Int

Class Features

All of the following are features of the Captain of the Mists prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiencies: A Captain of the Mists gains proficiency with all martial weapons and light armour, if applicable. He does not gain proficiency with medium armour, heavy armour, or shields.

Well-traveled: The Captain of the Mists adds his class level to all Diplomacy and Gather Information checks as a competence bonus.

Dark Scrutiny: The price of an increased intimacy with the Mists is increased attention from the Dark Powers. A character with one or more levels in Captain of the Mists increases any Dark Powers Checks he must make by one-half (rounded down).

Dedicated Linguist: A Captain of the Mists must spend at least one skill point on Speak Language at each level.

Mistled: The Captain of the Mists has a 5% lower chance per class level of reaching an unanticipated location when traveling a Mistway, to a minimum of 5%. (For example, a 2nd level Captain of the Mists



Requirements

To qualify to become a Captain of the Mists (CoM) a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Race: Half-Vistani.

Hit Dice: d8

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Appraise 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks, Knowledge (geography) 6 ranks, Speak Language (at least one Core language and one non-Core language)

Special: Must have successfully led a group of people via Mistway to their desired destination at least once.

Table 2: Captain of the Mists

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Well-traveled, Dark Scrutiny, Dedicated Linguist, Mistled 5%, Caravan leader
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Mistled 10%, Canny Dealer
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Mistled 15%, Mist Eyes
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Mistled 20%, Mist Truce
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Mist's Captain

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has a 40% chance of being led astray on a Mistway of Poor reliability, a 20% chance of being led astray on a Mistway of Moderate reliability, and a 5% chance of being led astray on a Mistway of Excellent reliability).

Caravan Leader: At 1st level a Captain of the Mists gets a +2 competence bonus to Listen, Spot, and Survival checks made to notice trail conditions, the presence of bandits or monsters in an area, changes in the weather and other conditions that would affect the trade group he leads.

Canny Dealer: At 2nd level the Captain of the Mists gets a +2 competence bonus to Appraise, Bluff, and Sense Motive checks.

Mist Eyes: At 3rd level a Captain of the Mists can see clearly in fog or mist up to a distance of 60'. Fog does not grant concealment against the Captain of the Mists. This includes magically generated fog or mists. Note that this ability does NOT grant low-light vision or darkvision.

Mist Truce: At 4th level creatures with the Mists descriptor becoming unwilling to attack the Captain of the Mists unless provoked.

Mist's Captain: At 5th level the Captain of the Mists can enter the Mists anywhere and treat it as a Mistway of Poor reliability (50% chance of arriving at the desired location, 50% chance of being led astray). His Mistled bonus does NOT apply to this check. This ability can be used at a point in the Mists which is normally a Mistway (that is, a Captain of the Mists can enter the western Sea of Sorrows, which is the entrance to the Excellent reliability Mistway to Saragoss known as "Leviathan's Clutches", and have a 50% chance of arriving instead in the Nocturnal Sea near Vechor, which is his desired destination.)

If the Captain of the Mists fails this check when attempting to use an established Mistway to travel to some unusual point, the Mistway functions normally (the Captain of the Mists cannot apply his Mistled bonus to this check, either). If the Captain of the Mists is entering the Mists at a random point and fails this check, his destination may be determined randomly.

Saboteur

The Saboteur prestige class is available to anyone who joins Zherisian Brothers of the Land and their underground resistance against technology. While anyone who joins the King of the Slums in his raids is considered to be a Saboteur by the public, within the society the term is used only for an elite few who are personally trained by the King of the Slums. He only selects those in his society that demonstrate a genuine rage against modern machines, as well as the technical skill to properly dismantle them.

Most Saboteurs are rogues, however a few are fighters. The King of the Slums himself is said to be a ranger specialised against constructs.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Saboteur (Sab) a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Hit die: d6

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Alignment: Non-Lawful

Skills: Disable Device 4 ranks, Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering) 4 ranks

Feats: Jaded, Power Attack, Improved Sunder

Special: Character must be accepted into the Zherisian Brothers of the Land. Character must make an oath to shun all forms of advanced technology (CL9+), gunpowder weapons included.

Class Skills

The Saboteur's class skills are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at each level: 6+ Int

Player Options



Class Features

All of the following are features of the Saboteur prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiencies: The saboteur gains no new armour or weapon proficiencies. However, see Worker's Weapons.

War against the Machine: At first level the saboteur receives a +1 bonus to all attacks, damage, and skill checks towards constructs and objects. This bonus increases every other level.

Worker's Weapons: At first level, the saboteur is able to use any object normally found in factories as a weapon as if he had the proficiency for it. This includes to sledgehammers, crowbars, shovels, picks, pipes, chains, and the like. Details for these improvised weapons can be found in the Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide.

Snatch: The saboteur can pick up an item as a swift action instead of a move action. The saboteur can combine this action with a move action, picking up the item before, during, or after the move.

Deconstruct: Any bludgeoning weapon that the saboteur wields counts as a magical weapon against constructs for purposes of

bypassing damage reduction (but not attack or damage rolls).

Dismantle: The saboteur can take a 10 on all Disable Device checks, even if the saboteur is under conditions that would normally prohibit him from doing so. This skill can also be used for high tech machinery, such as fire arms, but not for constructs.

Wrath of the Brotherhood: If the saboteur is holding a bludgeoning weapon, he is now able to score critical hits when sundering a weapon, destroying machinery, or attacking constructs (despite their immunities).

At third level, all critical hits are x2 damage. At 6th, the saboteur's threat range becomes 19-20. At 10th level, the multiplier becomes x3. These numbers are independent of the bludgeoning weapon the saboteur is wielding, and do not apply when the saboteur is attacking a target that is not a construct, machinery or weapon.

Urban Camouflage: At fourth level, the saboteur is able to use his Hide skill in any sort of urban terrain, even if the terrain doesn't grant cover or concealment.

Sabotage: At 8th level if the saboteur is able to study a construct or high tech object for at least three rounds from no more than ten feet away, he can attempt to sabotage it. The saboteur makes an attack and, if he hits, he makes a Disable Device check against the Craft check made during the target's creation. If a Craft check was never made use the minimal required Craft DC. If he succeeds, the construct or object is disabled after 1d4 rounds of malfunctioning.

During this time of malfunctioning, the target can only make move actions (and in the case of a high tech object, it cannot be used). A Craft check of DC equal to the saboteur's Disable Device check is needed to repair the target. This Craft check receives a +4 circumstance bonus if the target is only malfunctioning and not fully disabled.

Improved Deconstruct: Any bludgeoning weapon wielded by the saboteur is considered to be made of a special material for purposes of bypassing damage reduction.

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This includes (but is not limited to): silver, cold iron, and adamantite.

The weapon can only replicate the properties of a single material at a time and only one material can be used in each battle. The saboteur need not declare this at the beginning of combat and can decide the material later in the fight. This ability stacks with deconstruction; for example, a weapon can be magic and silver.

Table 3: Saboteur

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	War against the Machine +1, Worker's weapons, Snatch
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Deconstruct
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Dismantle, War against the Machine +2, Wrath of the Brotherhood (crit x2)
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Urban Camouflage
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	War against the Machine +3
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Wrath of the Brotherhood (crit 19-20)
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	War against the Machine +4
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	Sabotage
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	War against the Machine +5, Improved Deconstruct
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Wrath of the Brotherhood (crit x3)

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New Diseases

The Hatter's Curse

So called because it is most contracted by hat makers who seem to be exposed to the polluting chemicals that cause this affliction. The disease isn't exclusive to hatters as the responsible pollutant is ubiquitous in the food and air of Paridon and the sewers below.

Infection: inhaled (DC 16).

Incubation: 1-4 days. Damage: 1-3 points of Wisdom and 1 point of Intelligence per day. Moreover, each day the afflicted must make a Madness check (DC 8+ total number of ability points of damage taken from the disease to date).

The Nymph's Kiss

The slums of Paridon are filled with citizens showing the telltale pox scars of this infamous malady.

The patient starts to display distinctive pustules on the face and private parts. These pustules are accompanied by an intense itching in the affected area, which has led to the disease also being referred to as "the itch" or "the scratch".

Infection: contact (intimate) (DC 14).

Incubation: 1-2 days. Damage: 1-3 points of Charisma. After a total of 6 points of Charisma damage has been accumulated, the afflicted also takes one point of Intelligence and Constitution damage per day.

Doppelganger Salient Powers

The doppelganger's key ability is to change its form into other humanoid creatures. As he ages and progresses further in his use of detect thoughts and practice of infiltration, he develops an array of salient powers. These powers individually take the form of a spell as cast by a 10th level Sorcerer. It is



believed that these powers only work while the doppelganger is in Paridon.

A Thousand Voices (Sp):

CR Adjustment: +1/2

The doppelganger has mastered altering his thought-speak to sound as if someone were speaking from many different places at once. He can cast the spell ventriloquism at will.

Sense the Secret Doors (Sp):

CR Adjustment: +1/2

The doppelganger can use his detect thoughts to find hidden compartments and doors. He can cast the spell detect secret doors at will.

Sense a Desired Object (Sp):

CR Adjustment: +1

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The doppelganger can use his detect thoughts to find a specific object. He can cast the spell locate object at will.

Mislead the Curious (Sp):

CR Adjustment: +1

The doppelganger can use his detect thoughts to block out divination spells. He can cast the spell misdirection at will.

Master of Unlocking (Sp):

CR Adjustment: +1

The doppelganger can sense a way to bypass both mundane and arcane locks. He can cast the spell knock at will.

New Monsters

Caliban Vampire

Dong...Dong...Dong...Dong.

Marie woke to the Clock Tower tolling the midnight hour, and the thick oily rain soaking her clothes. As her eyes focused Marie let out a scream of terror barely muffled by the dirty rag stuffed in her mouth. From her perch on the tower's highest steeple she could see the well-dressed partygoers scrambling for shelter, returning from a party she had planned to attend just hours before.

"A great irony it is," a voice said from above, "That society spends so much time preparing themselves to be so beautiful- and all it takes is a single drop of rain to show them for the ugly little mice they are."

With a grunt the speaker swung himself off the stone ledge, hanging on by a thick gnarled forearm in front of his bound victim. The blood in Marie's veins froze as she gazed on the horrid visage of her abductor, a twisted mass of flesh and bone and fangs dominated by a huge pale white eye.

"Do you see them, my pretty little mouse? The painted faces, the colourful wrappings. They think they will be beautiful forever but we know...yes my pretty we know the paint

shall crack and they will wither and rot in their wrappings. But not I, my little lovely; I shall remain as beautiful as the day I died...And feel free to scream, they all scream eventually...it sweetens the blood...."

Already outcasts on the fringes of society some calibans openly embrace undeath as a way to gain revenge on their tormentors. For them, death is a means to compensate for their misshapen birth. Caliban vampires appear as exaggerated mockeries of their normal form with even minor deformities enlarged and made prominent. Oddly, all caliban vampires grow an umbilical cord upon their descent into vampirism.

Hit Dice: Increased to d12

Speed: Increase from base creature as determined by age category (see Caliban Vampire Age Modifiers table)

AC: The base creature's armour class improves as determined by age category (see Caliban Vampire Age Modifiers table)

Attacks: Same as base creature.

Damage: Same as base creature

Special Attacks: The caliban vampire retains all abilities of the base creature as well as the following:

Paralysing gaze (Su): Anyone who meets the gaze of the caliban vampire must make a fort save at DC 15+1/2 the vampire's level or be Paralysed by fear for 2d6 rounds. This is a magical fear effect.

Mutative touch (Su): On a successful touch attack a caliban vampire can cause the grasped limb to mutate and grow large fibrous growths rendering it immobile. This attack causes 1d4 points of charisma damage.

In addition, if the vampire successfully makes a critical hit, they have struck the victim's face.

This damage does not heal normally but a cure disease cast within one minute will restore the area to normal. After that the growths must be cut away for 2d6 points of damage before the ability damage will heal.

Blood Drain (Ex): Same as base vampire.

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Children of the night (Su): Once per day the caliban vampire can call upon 1d6 giant rats, 2d6 large spiders or 2d4 giant frogs to aid it in battle. The creatures show up in 2d6 rounds and fight for one hour.

Create spawn (Su): If a human is subject to the caliban vampires mutative touch and subsequently drained to 0 hp he/she will rise in 1d4 days as a caliban vampire and his/her base creature type will be changed to caliban. The new spawn remains under the mental control of the master vampire until death.

Special Qualities: The caliban vampire retains all qualities of the base creature and gains the following:

Damage Reduction (Su): A caliban vampire's damage resistance is determined by its age category (see Caliban Age Modifiers Table)

Turn Resistance (Ex): A caliban vampire's turn resistance is determined by its age category (see Caliban Age Modifiers Table)

Resistance (Ex): Same as base vampire

Spell resistance (Ex): A caliban vampire's spell resistance is determined by its age category (see Caliban Age Modifiers Table)

Refuse Walk (Su): A caliban vampire may walk into any man-size or larger pile of refuse and reappear in any other pile up to 100 yards away.

Abilities (Su): A caliban vampire's ability increase is determined by its age category (see Caliban Age Modifiers Table)

Organisation: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature plus modifier determined by age category (See Caliban Vampire Age Modifier Table)

Repelling a Caliban Vampire

Caliban vampires recoil from mirrors, strongly presented holy symbols, and anything related to birth or infants (such as a baby's blanket). They are unable to enter a home where a normal birth has happened between the last full moon and the next. These do not harm the vampire; they merely keep it at bay.

Slaying a Caliban Vampire

Simply reducing a caliban vampire to 0hp incapacitates it but does not destroy the vampire. However certain weapons can slay caliban vampires. Exposing a caliban vampire to sunlight for a full round causes growths on its skin to multiply and fester until the vampire is only a mass of mutated flesh before dissolving into ash. Amniotic fluid from a normal birth burns the vampire like acid for 2d8 points of damage each round until washed off. Impaling a caliban vampire with an ivory stake instantly slays the creature. However the creature will return to life with full hit points if the stake is removed. If the creature's re-grown umbilical cord is removed and the body burned the creature is destroyed forever.

Table 1: Caliban Vampire

Age Category	Str	Dex	Int	Wis	Cha	Speed	Damage Reduction	Turn Resist	AC	SR	CR
Fledgling	+8	+1	+3	+1	-2	+0	15/+1	+5	+8	8	+3
Mature	+10	+1	+6	+1	-4	+0	20/+1	+5	+8	10	+3
Old	+10	+2	+6	+2	-4	+15	20/+2	+6	+9	12	+4
Ancient	+12	+2	+9	+2	-6	+15	20/+3	+7	+9	14	+4
Eminent	+12	+3	+9	+3	-6	+20	25/+3	+8	+10	16	+5
Patriarch	+14	+3	+12	+3	-8	+20	25/+4	+9	+10	18	+6

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Marikith Breeds

Marikith transformation: Not all marikith are identical, although only three kinds are born directly from the egg (hunters, queens, and drones-this last is presumptive, having never been seen "in the wild"). More exotic types are derived from one of two sources.

The first comes from hormonal changes caused in hunters when one devours the appropriate body parts of at least one of its fellows. After such a meal, the marikith hides itself beneath a layer of spongy white spittle and enters a chrysalis-like state. It remains in this state for a length of time varying according to the type of marikith it will become (days to weeks); when its transformation is complete the new marikith moults its former hunter carapace and emerges to the sewers in its new form.

The second source of marikith abominations comes when a hunter is made from a non-humanoid creature or already mutated human. Whilst demihumans such as elves and calibans all become hunters, the other rarer races sometimes produce anomalies. However, as these races themselves are rare, the resulting abominations are even rarer.

Marikith, Hunter

This material first appeared in Secret of the Knife; it has been updated to a v3.5 format.

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice	3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative	+8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed	40 ft. (eight squares), climb 20 ft.
AC	17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
Base attack/Grapple	+2/+5
Attack	claw +5 melee (1d4+3)
Full Attack	2 claws +5 melee (1d4+3), bite +0 melee (2d4+1)
Face/Reach	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks	Voice mimicry
Special Qualities	Compression, darkvision 120 ft., DR 5/piercing or slashing, immunities, light sensitivity
Saves	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5
Abilities	Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 5
Skills	Escape Artist +12, Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Spot +5
Feats	Improved Initiative, Alertness
Climate/Terrain	Underground (Timor)
Organisation	Pair, pack (2-8) or swarm (2-20)

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Challenge Rating	2
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always lawful evil
Advancement	4-5 HD (Medium-size)

The twisting tunnels of Timor are inhabited by a seemingly endless hive of marikith hunters, all serving a single marikith queen. Marikith are hulking, hive-minded humanoids, their bodies covered in a rubbery, glistening black hide. Marikith bodies have no rigid structures beyond their chitinous fangs and talons; they maintain their shape by tightly inflating interlocking bladders with fluids. By compressing these bladders, a hunter can squeeze its body through tiny gaps such as barred windows or drainpipes. Marikith eyes glow a dull red, but they can veil their eyes with a special membrane, revealing the glow only moments before striking.

Combat

Marikith feed on their victims' fear as well as their flesh. Thus, marikith torment their prey before moving in for the kill. Outside their lightless hives, marikith operate in small packs. Within their realm, hunters attack in waves, starting with packs of two or three and increasing the number of marikith with every assault until foes are outnumbered by ten-to-one or more.

Voice Mimicry (Ex): Although marikith have no true language, hunters can mimic sounds to mislead or terrify others. They often imitate the cries of recent victims and can echo the comments of current prey. To fool a subject, a marikith hunter must make an opposed Bluff check (with an effective +8 racial bonus) against the subject's Listen check.

Compression (Ex): A marikith hunter can squeeze through any gap of at least 1 foot diameter as a free action whilst moving. It can squeeze through a 7- 11 inch diameter gap as a move-equivalent action. It can pass through a 3-6 inch diameter gap as a full-round action. Marikith hunters cannot

squeeze through gaps smaller than 3 inches across.

Immunities (Ex): Marikith hunters take half-damage from bludgeoning weapons and are immune to all fear, horror and madness effects. All hunters are considered to be under the influence of their queen (see Chapter Three of the Ravenloft Campaign Setting).

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Marikith suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls in candlelight or starlight, a -2 penalty in torchlight, and a -4 penalty in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Skills: Marikith hunters receive a +8 racial bonus to Escape Artist checks and a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.

Marikith, Spiderkin

By eating the brains and limbs of two of its fellows then entering the chrysalis-state for a period of five days, a marikith can cause its body to grow an extra four limbs.

The resulting spiderkin marikith is slightly tougher than the marikith hunter and gains extra claw attacks and a +8 racial grapple bonus; it gains a racial +8 to Climb checks and may climb at 40 feet base movement, but its bonus to Escape Artist checks drops to +4 and it may no longer compress itself to pass through any gap smaller than 7 inches in diameter.

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice	4d8+4 (22 hp)
Initiative	+8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed	40 ft. (eight squares), climb 40 ft.
AC	17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
Base attack/Grapple	+3/+5
Attack	claw +6 melee (1d4+3)
Full Attack	6 claws +6 melee (1d4+3), bite +1 melee (2d4+1)

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Face/Reach	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks	Voice mimicry
Special Qualities	Compression, darkvision 120 ft., DR 5/piercing or slashing, immunities, light sensitivity
Saves	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6
Abilities	Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 5
Skills	Climb +12, Escape Artist +8, Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Spot +5
Feats	Improved Initiative, Alertness
Climate/Terrain	Underground (Timor)
Organisation	Pair, pack (2-8) or swarm (2-20)
Challenge Rating	2
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always lawful evil
Advancement	5-6 HD (Medium), 7-8 HD (Large)

Marikith, Chitterling

By gorging itself on at least ten of its companions and taking a special meal of jelly from the Hive Queen, a marikith can enter a chrysalis state lasting about a month which ends when the skin of the marikith hunter splits to reveal dozens or even hundreds of chitterling marikith.

Roughly the size of a rat, chitterlings can be considered to be the equivalent of either a swarm of rats or as individual rats for statistical purposes, although with the Aberration type rather than the Animal. All chitterlings formed from a given marikith hunter share a hive mind with each other, in addition to their link to the Hive Queen.

The Hive Queen often uses chitterlings as an alarm system to warn her of approaching food opportunities or would-be heroes, sending them throughout the sewers of Timor with instructions to signal if they find any humanoid life. Each individual chitterling has Int 1 -it can distinguish a

human from an ooze and both from a marikith, but lacks any greater distinction. However, when within 20 feet of each other, a band of chitterlings with a common "parent" may exhibit disturbing cunning, dividing their numbers and using decoys to lure opponents into a disadvantage before swarming in for the kill.

Marikith, Man O'War

A marikith that eats the chitinous shell of at least eight other marikith hunters and enters a chrysalis state of two weeks will emerge as a man o'war marikith.

These hulking, plated abominations sacrifice much of the flexibility of the marikith hunter for increased strength and toughness. It loses the marikith hunter's racial bonuses to Escape Artist, Hide, and Move Silently as well as the Compression ability, but its greatly thickened shell serves against the attacks of slashing weapons as well as deflecting bludgeoning damage. Slightly more intelligent than its hunter companions, they still prefer direct tactics: closing with opponents and ripping them apart.

Large Aberration

Hit Dice	8d8+32 (68 hp)
Initiative	+8
Speed	40 ft. (eight squares), climb 10 feet.
AC	20 (-1 size, +11 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 20
Base attack/Grapple	+6/+16
Attack	claw +12 melee (1d8+6)
Full Attack	2 claws +12 melee (1d8+6), bite +10 melee (2d6+3)
Face/Reach	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks	Voice mimicry, rend 2d8+9
Special Qualities	Darkvision 120 ft., DR 10/piercing, immunities, light sensitivity

Appendix III

Saves	Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +8
Abilities	Str 22, Dex 11, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 5
Skills	Hide +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +3, Spot +5
Feats	Alertness, Multi-attack, Power Attack
Climate/Terrain	Underground (Timor)
Organisation	Pair, pack (2-8) or swarm (2- 20)
Challenge Rating	5
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always lawful evil
Advancement	9-12 HD (Large size)

Rend (Ex): If a man o'war Marikith hits with both claw attacks latches onto its opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d8+9 points of damage.

Marikith, Seeker

Seeker marikith are produced when a hunter marikith devours the eyes and brains of two of its fellows and enters a chrysalis state for at least two weeks.

On emerging, the marikith is smaller, quicker, more delicate, and considerably more intelligent. They are more perceptive and even more difficult to keep track of; their racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks rises to +8 each. The Hive Queen employs these in conjunction with the chitterlings as an early-warning system to detect intruders and inform her of their location, numbers, and equipment.

Large Aberration	
Hit Dice	3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative	+9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed	50 ft. (eight squares), climb 30 ft.
AC	17 (+5 Dex, +2 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 12
Base attack/Grapple	+2/+2
Attack	claw +2 melee (1d4)
Full Attack	2 claws +2 melee (1d4), bite -3 melee (2d4)
Face/Reach	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks	Voice mimicry
Special Qualities	Compression, darkvision 240 ft., DR 5/piercing or slashing, immunities, lamp eyes, light sensitivity

Saves	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5
Abilities	Str 10, Dex 21, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 5
Skills	Escape Artist +15, Hide +15, Listen +10, Move Silently +15, Spot +10
Feats	Improved Initiative, Alertness
Climate/Terrain	Underground (Timor)
Organisation	Pair, pack (2-8) or swarm (2-20)
Challenge Rating	2
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always lawful evil
Advancement	4-5 HD (Medium-size)

Lamp Eyes: Seeker marikith have darkvision 240', but they cannot mask the red glow of their eyes. This glow is only visible if the seeker marikith is within 60 feet of the viewer, and by that time it is usually far too late to prevent the seeker from warning the Hive of the viewed party's whereabouts.

Monsters

Winged Marikith

Perhaps one in fifty hunter marikith is born with beetle-like wings, which fold at its back. Although not terribly useful in the sewers (the marikith can run faster than it can fly) it does have tactical value above the surface, to say nothing of the shock value of opening the wings suddenly in combat and rising into the air! Like the spiderkin marikith, the winged marikith has a limited version of the full compression ability; it can only fit through spaces at least a foot in diameter, because its wings are relatively rigid.

Challenge Rating	2
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always lawful evil
Advancement	4-5 HD (Medium-size)

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice	3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative	+8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed	40 ft. (eight squares), fly 20 ft (poor).
AC	17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
Base attack/Grapple	+2/+5
Attack	claw +5 melee (1d4+3)
Full Attack	2 claws +5 melee (1d4+3), bite +0 melee (2d4+1)
Face/Reach	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks	Voice mimicry
Special Qualities	compression, darkvision 120 ft., DR 5/piercing or slashing, immunities, light sensitivity
Saves	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5
Abilities	Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 5
Skills	Escape Artist +12, Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Spot +5
Feats	Improved Initiative, Alertness
Climate/Terrain	Underground (Timor)
Organisation	Pair, pack (2-8) or swarm (2-20)

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2nd ed. Hour of the Knife, Domains of Dread, Islands of terror (Timor).

Fan made. Brotherhood of Mortis (Book of Sorrows 1998); Invisible Man (QtR 2), Shining Bay Cluster (QtR 2), Crown of Queen Anne (QtR 2).

Suggested inspiration

Books

- From Hell (Graphic novel by Alan Moore)
- The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (Graphic novel by Alan Moore)
- The works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- The works of Charles Dickens
- The works of Edgar Allen Poe
- The works of H.P. Lovecraft
- Who Goes There? by John W. Campbell, Jr

Films

- Aliens (1979) and Aliens (1986)
- CHUD (1984)
- Dark City (1998)
- From Hell (2001)
- It (1990)
- Mimic (1997)
- Taking Lives (2004)
- The Thing (1982)

The Daily Herald

House of Horror!

Early Tuesday, investigators discovered the remains of no less than thirty human beings in a house on Turtle Bay. The royal constabulary confirmed the rumors in a public statement made to the press.

Constables were drawn to the house by complaints from neighbors regarding a foul smell emanating from the old two-story house. The owner, Ted Burgandy, a former constable, persuaded officials that the misnomer was caused by fertilizer in his backyard garden.

When Burgandy disappeared a week ago, police refused to allow neighbors to search the house, and even posted guards to protect the privacy of the former officer.

It was not until a neighboring dog broke into the garden that the hideous truth was revealed. The starving animal dug up and partially devoured the remains of Burgandy's wife, long believed to have run away.

Police have since excavated the grounds and discovered numerous graves throughout the garden.

Worse still were the discoveries inside the house. Decomposing bodies were found crammed beneath floor, behind false walls, in closets, and even inside hollowed out furniture. Burgandy's study was a charnel house of hideous trophies displayed on his wall and shelves. The kitchen and pantry was a particularly gruesome scene, where parts of human flesh and organs

I am not MAD!

Daily Sentinel

Not many people know this, but I shot JR. And I'd do it again!

The Evening Inquisitor

City Cripples Strikers!

This evening, under the heroic leadership of Sir Robert E. Stingley, a contingent of the Royal Horse Fusiliers descended on the unruly mob of socialists and waged a quick and decisive battle in the streets.

The conflict was short and bloody as the soldiers bravely fought the mostly unarmed, unwashed unionists. With sabers drawn, the cavalry charged into the human mass, laying waste to the treasonous insurrection that plagued Paridon for these last four days.

Cannons and musketeers were also drawn up, and but for a wiff of grapeshot, no shots were heard. Realizing that the mob was broken, the musketeers and artillery men conserved ammunition and used

clubs and bayonettes to further defeat the broken strikers.

Sir Stingley has been hailed as a hero by nobles and wealthy alike. A few critics suggested that Sir Stingley might have spoken with the strikers first, rather than using violence as his first response. Stingley dismisses these critiques with his proud motto: "We don't negotiate with unarmed civilians!"

Union activists have been rounded up and imprisoned within the city dungeons. Magistrate Phillips assures that after a fair trial the suspects will

It Came from the Privy!

A Stanford man is in prison tonight, charged with the gruesome murder of his entire family, including his wife, four seniors, and three children. Police were summoned to the one room apartment in the East end by the sounds of screaming and howling all through the night.

Chances know the secret closet strewed on the party

Du heran been furth rui shap dicit a pl p We of assi one cluc vic go

Mad Imposter strikes again!

Once more our city reels in terror as another in a string of impersonation murders has been revealed. Police society is in a panic as evidence emerges revealing a plot of deception and murder.

Two months ago, detectives began an investigation into the dealings of Horace Windweather, a wealthy industrialist. A recluse for years, Windweather ascended into the public eye last fall, when he began a series of high profile business dealings. Though he quickly became a darling of high society, questions were raised regarding massive loans and suspect business practices.

When Windweather vanished in October, constables began searching his estate and offices looking for clues to the location of Windweather and his embezzled millions. Searchers recently uncovered a secret passageway beneath the estate, wherein they found the decomposing remains of Horace Windweather. The municipal coroner has declared the time of death to be at least half of a year previous.

Police have already found similarities to this gruesome case to a string of murder/impersonation cases leading back for decades. The search goes on for the mysterious imposter as well as his accomplices.


Criminologists fear that this impersonation murder represents the beginnings of a new wave of "identity thefts". The first such theft is believed to have occurred nearly one hundred years ago, when Lord Fizzlebottom was murdered by a local lookalike, who replaced the Lord and spent the next fifty years funding his own debauchery with Fizzlebottom's estate.

Experts from around the entire city converged on the lonely home of Lord Windweather to examine the mouldy remains. Many forensic physicians took turns juggling the skull, to determine the amount of brain matter still contained within.


Worms and maggots were recovered from the scene and processed to determine the amount of nutrients still available inside the body. Sadly, the pests had made short work of the carrase, leaving little of the tasty flesh.

be on hang inter deter in or Th Wed recis cant and exc she skinn punishments deliv crowd to begin a mass chanting.

TRUST NO ONE!




Welcome to Paridon,
an outpost of civilisation amidst
the medieval lands of the mists. Here in
the greatest city of Ravenloft, you will find the
greatest wonders of enlightened science, and the
deadliest nightmares ever dreamt by man. By night, the
foggy streets are prowled by deranged predators, seeking
prey, while foul beasts haunt the dank depths of the sewers.



All manner of fiends skulk in the shadows, yet the deadliest enemy
of all hides in plain sight. Paridon is the spawning ground of the dread
doppelgangers; a disgusting race of shapeshifters that prey on men. More
lethal than any jungle or desert, the city is the most perilous terrain of all.

For here, in the flickering shadows of the gas-light,
you won't know friend from foe.



For use with these Dungeons and Dragons® core books :
Players Handbook™, Dungeon Master's Guide™,
and Monster Manual™ as well as the Ravenloft
core books: Ravenloft Campaign Setting
3rd edition™, Ravenloft Player's
Handbook™ and Ravenloft
Dungeon Master's
Guide™

