

COMPLETE PANDEMONIUM



FADING SUNS™

Complete Pandemonium Contents

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How To Use This Book

Complete Pandemonium provides more detail on the planet setting given in the **Fading Suns** Second Edition rulebook. It fleshes out the people and places of the Hub, and provides a broad outline of the entire planet. In addition, two dramas are provided for the gamemaster, each appropriate for beginning characters.

Pandemonium is introduced here as a good place to begin a **Fading Suns** epic. It is ideal for starting characters, since there are some restrictions (at least initially) on where they can go and who they can meet. Most encounters should take place in the Hub, where members of every major faction in the Empire can be found. From there, plots and conspiracies can engulf the hardy band of adventurers and lead them across the Badlands and even to other worlds — perhaps even Byzantium Secundus, throneworld of the Empire.

We recommend the beginning gamemaster first run his players through "Diplomatic Immunity," the drama provided in the **Fading Suns** Second Edition rulebook, and then go to "Everlight" (in this book). The allies and enemies gained in "Diplomatic Immunity" can raise the heat in this second drama, as all hell breaks loose on Pandemonium. From there, the characters may be looking to get out of the city for a while; "A Healing Draught," the other drama in this book, provides the perfect excuse not only for adventure but redemption for any misdeeds the characters may have committed earlier.

From there, gamemasters are encouraged to create their own epic plot, either confined to Pandemonium or stretching across the stars. Holistic Design provides a host of supplements detailing other worlds and some of the adventures to be had on them. A good place to start is the **Byzantium Secundus** sourcebook, which details the people, places and plots on that august world. Also recommended is **Weird Places**, a collection of adventurous sites across the Known Worlds.

Have fun, and remember the Prophet's first injunction: Quest!

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Pandemonium Primer

By Bill Bridges and James Moore

History

The relevant history of Pandemonium (formerly Grange) has been described in the Appendix of the **Fading Suns** Second Edition rulebook. What remains to tell is the inspiring story of a peaceful, agrarian utopia which lasted for generations with only minor conflicts to remind the people of the horrors of war. The period when Pandemonium was cut off from the rest of interstellar society is usually referred to as the Non-Interstellar Era, or sometimes the Peaceful Interregnum. The current era is known as the New Interstellar Age.

During the Peaceful Interregnum, most of the world was ruled by various small kingdoms that occasionally vied with one another but more often allied and traded across fiefdoms. Some regions banded together under the governance of the Oldeppa League, the surviving remnant of the Second Republic legislature. While the kingdoms were ruled by famous families of noble houses who were around before the world's removal from interstellar contact, the Oldeppa League was led by elected senators, although ones who served long terms and usually came from the most privileged non-noble families.

As the years passed, scions of noble houses slipped into senatorial seats and slowly eroded the democratic League from within. By the time House Juandaastas came through the jumpgate to claim the world, the al-Malik ruled Oldeppa League territory.

The ensuing conflict over the planet's ownership — between the Juandaastas and the local House Gilgar, distantly related to the al-Malik through the ancient Caspari family line, and now aided by their long-sundered relations — drew the other kingdoms into the fray on one side or the other. The Gilgar and pro-al-Malik factions eventually won out, and seized the lands of any who stood against them. Own-

ership of the world was finally consolidated into al-Malik hands — but the ruler was appointed from afar by the head of the house. Afil al-Malik, the new governor, arrived eager to plunder the world of its secrets, all the while alienating his local Gilgar relatives.

His financial failure eventually led to the current Decados rule over the world, helped in no small part (some say) by the remnants of the anti-al-Malik noble houses native to the world. While the details of the world's power transfer are not privy to any but the highest level members of the two major houses, rumors abound — too many to simply list here. Nobles native to Pandemonium now possess little power, being considered barely more than wealthy merchants by most Known World nobles. Even the Gilgar, partly subsumed by their al-Malik relations, are barely considered family by their interstellar brethren. Nonetheless, some local nobles have attained status and power as quislings to the Decados Sharn family, advising them on all things Pandemonium.

Pandemonium's people were a rather simple and uneducated lot, content with their limited democratic participation in Oldeppa League matters. The transfer of their destinies into noble hands was barely noticed, for their lives changed little — at first. The cataclysms struck well before the Decados's tyranny could wreak its own havoc. The mass of peasants now huddled in and around the Hub look to the Decados as potential saviors, knowing little of their bad reputation with serfs on other worlds. While some blame the Decados for their troubles, most look to them for a solution.

Solar System

Pandemonium's sun (called Hearthfire) shows little effect from the fading suns phenomenon, but peasants from the more traditional communities claim it was once brighter, and that crop yields grew less bountiful over the years even



before the cataclysms — an event they sometimes blame on the dying sun.

Lack of Second Republic records, and Pandemonium's dwindling tech during non-interstellar times, means that most of the system's planets are little known or explored.

Barloom: A tiny, parched ball of rock. As far as anyone knows, nothing of note has ever happened here, whether mining or even orbital exploration.

Sheen: This planet's gaseous atmosphere, full of metallic particulates, makes Sheen appear bright in the night sky. Rumors of an old Diaspora-era mineral extraction operation persist, although no one who has explored the planet reported seeing it.

Luck: This world's thin atmosphere allows people to breath without suits or apparatus, but prevents strenuous exertion without such aid. Its name supposedly comes from the first explorers' discovery of gold and precious gems, now long-since stripped. The ravines and valleys created by Diaspora extraction enterprises still scar the planet. Recent Charioteer explorers claim there are lifeforms hiding in caves, but when pressed for details, they admit they only saw moving shadows rather than actual creatures. Still, many wonder...

Farcry: A gas giant similar to Jupiter, Farcry has nearly two dozen moons; none has any features of particular note. The planet's name comes from a small spacestation once placed in orbit amidst the moons, serving as a penal colony for Second Republic criminals. While it still moves in orbit — powered by some Second Republic wonder-engine — its force fields cannot be breached. No one knows if anyone still lives, in the vast cages designed to maintain life's needs indefinitely.

Shiver: An icy rock, Shiver is now home to a small scientific Engineers guild team that studies the system's second jumpgate. Between jaunts to that artifact, they spend downtime in a high-tech, pre-fab building erected in a cored-out pit. Tunnels under the surface nearby have been discovered, but don't seem to lead anywhere interesting. However, one guildsman exploring the tunnels never returned.

Jumpgate: The system's working gate is guarded by a small fleet of Church frigates, whose crews sometimes spend short leaves on Shiver's base, causing uncomfortable mixing between the zealots and Engineers. Their main job is to prevent residents of Iver from entering the Known Worlds.

Jumpgate #2: This dysfunctional gate is a mystery to all who have studied it. It seems to be incomplete, as if its construction was never finished, although it appears normal from the outside. While jumpcodes have been retrieved from it, no gate has opened. Some Pandemonium natives mutter that it was the Decados fooling with this gate that caused the terraforming cataclysms to commence.

Geography

Pandemonium is 70% land, once-temperate but now mostly arid, with many inland seas (originally four, but now — due to lowering water levels and rising land-masses — seven). Large areas of grassland have become desert, and woodlands recede from the equator, now huddling along the northern and southern polar regions. Some mountain ranges have become volcanic, occasionally spewing the planet's molten core and covering regions in ash.

By Land Gashan

Gashan is the planet's central landmass, bordered on the west by the Oldeppa Sea and on the east by the Toshani Sea. It is home to the Hub, the only remaining civilized center, and its nearby features, such as the Orthodox Cathedral, the Groaning Desert, the Makso Mountains and the River Sali.

Gashan was the center of the planet's economy before the world's rediscovery by the Known Worlds. Trade from across the Oldeppa and Toshani Seas traveled up the (now-dried) River Drim and River Sali to Gilgar (now the Hub). Tradesmen and craftsmen from all over gathered in Gilgar to sell their wares to merchants from across the world. After interstellar contact was again initiated, Gilgar, the most populous and technologically-savvy city, became the capital and seat of governance. Once the terraforming cataclysms began, it was only natural for the planet's population to stream into the city seeking protection and welfare.

Groaning Desert

Once home to the Sanchen Forest, cataclysms have desertified the region, creating a malformed wasteland of parched clay, jutting rocks and gnarled, dead-and-dried roots — the remains of the once-mighty trees. As the wind blows fiercely at ground-level, it whistles through the old wood, causing creaking and moaning sounds as if the land itself cries out in pain. Natives avoid the region with extreme superstition, believing that the ghosts of the planet's former lifeforms haunt the place, hungry for revenge against their human malefactors.

The Cathedral

The Orthodox Cathedral is built amidst these frightening wastes, a beacon of sanity and safety. While largely complete, it still undergoes construction in some areas, and has yet to be fully dedicated and named. For now, parishioners (who usually arrive on the Church-owned flitter ferries once per week) have divided into camps over three potential names: Ostani (a local saint figure, although one not yet officially canonized by Holy Terra), Hombor (the saint of beggars) and Delucep (named after the bishop who began

the construction before dying three years ago).

Makso Mountains

Still mineral rich, these mountains had only begun to yield their precious resources to miners when the cataclysms brought a halt to most such operations worldwide. Rumors persist of uncovered veins of gold, silver and even Pygmalium, and some whisper that caves hold holy relics from before the Second Republic. However, sudden quakes and cave-ins pose risks to any explorers.

River Sali

Flowing in two directions (east and south) from its source in the Makso mountains, the River Sali is as large as Urth's Amazon river. In the east, it once spilled into the Toshani Sea at a mighty confluence, but the desertified coastal land has split the river into smaller streams emptying into the sea with less force. In the south, the river trickles into the remains of the Soldab Wood, disappearing into underground streams and lakes.

While the river was once full of boats and rafts of all kinds, only a few hardy natives still ply its rivers, living off its dwindling supply of fish.

Memsah

A mountainous region once home to bands of tribal pagans. Its eastern chain has become volcanic, and occasional eruptions have covered the northern and southern

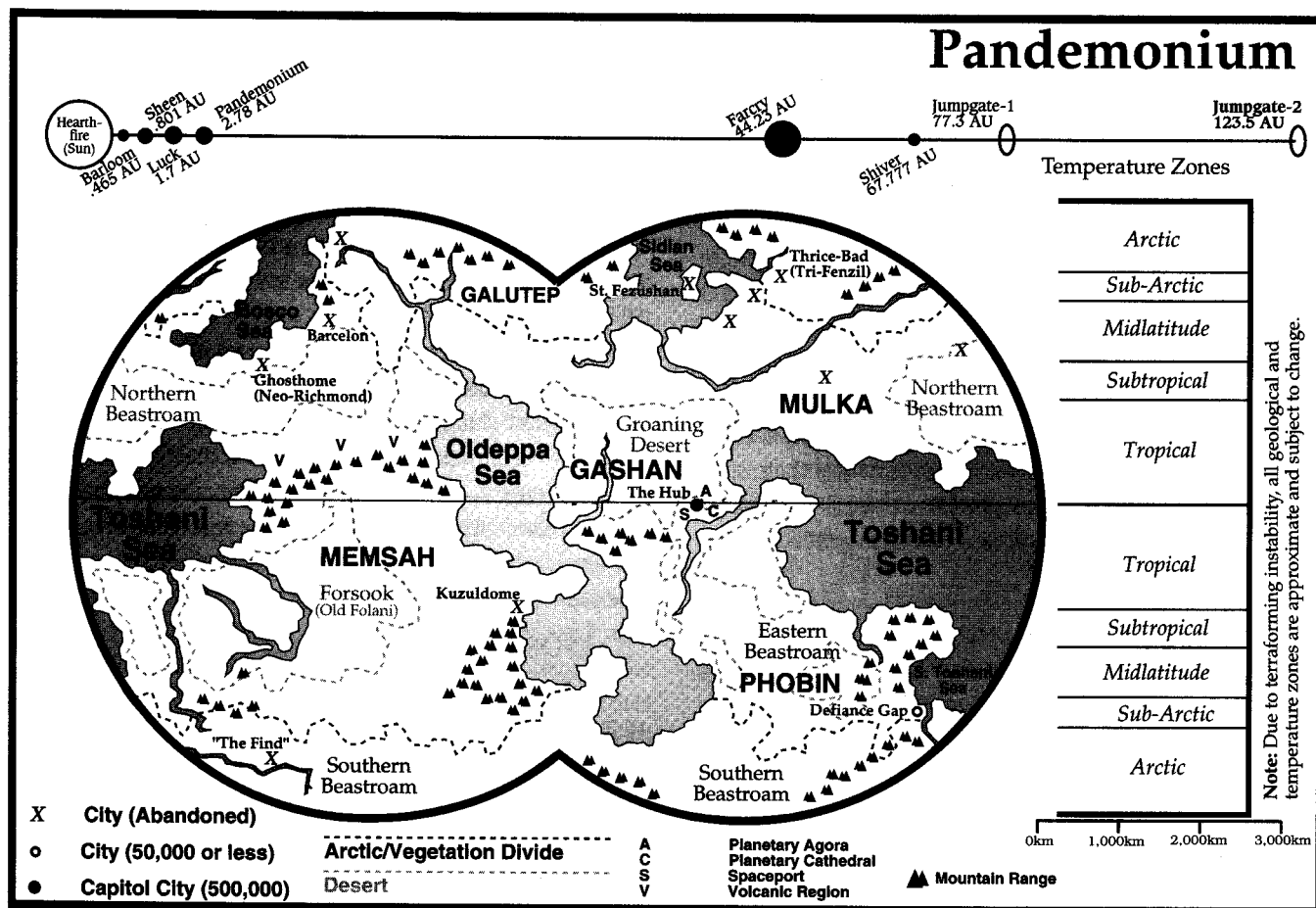
regions with ash and dirtied the Oldeppa Sea. No one knows if any of the tribal natives still live here, although most doubt anyone could survive for long amidst quakes, volcanos and poison-gas spewing geysers.

Kuzuldome

On the lower banks of what used to be the Oldeppa Sea, but which is now an enclosed and unnamed sea, are the remains of a once-renowned city called Kuzuldome. Founded in non-interstellar times (c. 4560) by a famous philosopher banished from a now-forgotten royal court, it was known as a haven for thinkers and scholars. It also became a major port for merchants bound for the River Drim and Gilgar across the Oldeppa Sea. It was already in decline, however, by the new interstellar times, and had lost much of its once-learned population to Gilgar. When the cataclysms came, it was abandoned except for a few sailors. By the present year, even they have given up the empty city. Although its tech items have been looted, its libraries remain untouched — or so the Hub rumors state.

Forsook (Old Folani)

Vast woodlands and grasslands made Folani a pastoral paradise. The cataclysms closed that chapter of the planet's history, turning its breadbaskets into deserts and mud flats, and raising mountains in the midst of cities. Folani was the first place to be struck by the terraforming quakes, and



caused a panicked mass exodus to the Hub which quickly spread across the world, even into unaffected regions. Since the majority of the population fled over a period of a few months, the region was soon called Forsook, although natives still call it by its original title of Folani.

Southern Beastroam

Various regions of Pandemonium have been given over to wild beasts once confined or believed extinct. The areas where they are most prevalent are called "beastroams" by natives. The Southern Beastroam represents an area the original colonists allowed to remain wild, where flora and fauna developed without human intervention. The cataclysms felled mountains and rivers which once provided natural barriers for the beasts, and the creatures now roam in increasingly wider territories. Vicious predators and Changed monstrosities supposedly lurk in the beastroams — or so the peasants say.

"The Find"

Along the banks of the Chevit River, close to the southern pole, is the site of a persistent rumor: "the Find" was an archeological dig centered around Anunnaki ruins. Abandoned during the cataclysms, no one is now sure exactly where the site is — or if it even still exists. Expeditions to find this fabled vale of treasures are occasionally formed in the Hub, but very few return, and these report only months spent in unsuccessful wandering.

Galutep

A region of immense, stark beauty, Galutep has suffered perhaps the least amount of geographical change of any place on the continent, but its population, dependant on high technology to resist the harsh winter weather, has long since fled to the Hub.

Barcelon

Formerly called Gushuphan, Barcelon was the seat of power of a non-interstellar era kingdom. Its carved stone palace became the center of Count Efil Juan Domingo de Justus's fief. One of the wealthiest nobles to come to Pandemonium in the New Interstellar Age, Efil bought Galutep from the locals for an exorbitant amount (by their standards). The castle, like the surrounding town, is now abandoned, but has been looted of any valuable goods.

Mulka

Sparsely inhabited even before the cataclysms, Mulka is now completely ignored by the powers-that-be, and has been given over to beasts and bandits.

Thrice-Bad (Tri-Fenzil)

Three mining towns grew up in the new interstellar boom. Originally owned by separate guilds, the Charioteers bought the lot of them and erected a monorail system between the towns, creating Tri-Fenzil. People once native to

the region claim that each town has been taken over by a separate coven of Antinomists or psychics, who now war against each other for control of the mining warrens in the nearby mountains. No one has yet bothered to investigate such extravagant stories, although natives now call the towns Thrice-Bad.

Phobin

Beautiful valleys between soaring mountains made Phobin a popular vacation and relaxation spot before the cataclysms. Its hot springs now exude poisonous gasses, and the valleys are haunted by creatures once confined to a single valley.

By Sea Oldeppa

The Oldeppa once stretched nearly the length of the planet between the poles, but cataclysms have seperated its waters by land, turning it into three smaller seas. The southern two seas are so recent they aren't named, as the locals left for the Hub before their creation. The Oldeppa proper is still the calmest and most temperate of Pandemonium's waters.

Toshani and South Toshani

Larger even than the Oldeppa in terms of volume, the Toshani has also suffered from rising land bridges, creating a smaller sea now called the South Toshani by the residents of Defiance Gap. Ships still ply its waters, although in greatly diminished numbers. Most of them are explorers seeking to chart Pandemonium's ever-changing landscape (and hoping for valuable finds).

Defiance Gap

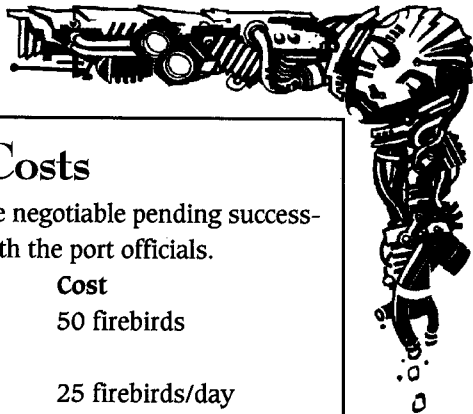
A small city that was once a noble resort called Calm Fendi, Defiance Gap's residents are all refugees from the Hub — not because they were denied entrance or kicked out, but because they refuse to live in such squalor. Nobles, priests, guildsmembers, freemen and even peasants have come to stake claims to new homes, defying the ever-present threat of earthquakes or floods. So far, their luck has held out, and only minor problems (intense cold or heat) have plagued them. The repopulated city is less than a year old, however, and Hub skeptics eagerly bet on the date of its demise.

Bosco

A fresh water sea, its tranquil waters were once home to a vast variety of fish.

Ghosthome (Neo-Richmond)

Neo-Richmond was built on the Bosco's shores (along the James River) by Gilgar's early colonists. It is rumored that the populace was killed in one night during the first



cataclysms by a poison gas cloud or band of marauding beasts. No one knows for sure. Their bodies have long rotted, but few natives dare enter the city they believe is now haunted with angry ghosts. Some even claim that Gilgar's spectre appears here at night, lamenting the loss of his great work of art — the world itself.

Sidlan

Cold waters which are still home to Pandemonium's Turupaz Whale and a number of sea serpent legends.

Saint Fezushan

On a large island in the middle of the Sidlan, a monastery was erected by Saint Fezushan, an early martyr of the Church who died exhorting Second Republic citizens to give up their cities and flee to the wildernesses. Riot police, attempting to disperse the crowds, lobbed canisters of knock-out gas at the leader of the convocation. When the smoke cleared, the saint was gone; he was never heard from again. Later Dark Ages priests bestowed his sainthood, and he is now the patron saint of Wild Men of the Woods.

The monastery was hit hard by the cataclysms when its sanctuary disappeared into a hole in the earth, which promptly filled with sea water from some deep source. The monks wandered off, some of them to the Hub, others to secret hideaways across the world. Some still speak of the wondrous relic which once sat in the sanctuary, a bear-skin coat that is said to protect its wearer from any wild beast.

The Hub

(A map of the Hub is located on the inside back cover.)

Only one place on the planet still hosts the teeming masses of Pandemonium's population — the Hub. Here, nobles rub shoulders with filthy peasants — not by choice, but because the streets are overcrowded and often uncontrollable. Native refugees squeeze into the city's walls, and off-worlders come from all worlds of the Empire seeking wealth and opportunity, usually from the relics and tech to be scavenged or the natives to be taken advantage of.

Spaceport Afil

At the center of the Hub is an ugly but fully-functional spaceport. Its hangers, control center and private offices form a circle around the huge tarmac where lander-grade spaceships regularly land, unload and pickup cargo (anything from food to people), and take off again for some distant world. Some ships stay, taxiing across the tarmac to any of the large hangers available for rent at high prices (see Costs sidebar.)

The following factions maintain suites of hangers for their own uses: the Decados, Charioteers, Engineers, and Reeves (who mainly rent to other factions). Everyone else must rent from these owners or the Charioteers who run the

Spaceport Costs

Note that all costs are negotiable pending successful bargaining/bribery with the port officials.

Item/Service	Cost
Landing Fee*	50 firebirds
Hanger Fee	
Size ratings 1-3	25 firebirds/day
Size ratings 4-5	50 firebirds/day
Size ratings 6-7	75 firebirds/day
Stevedores	
Unload/Load (required)	1 firebird per 100 kg
Guard ship	3 firebirds per day per person

* Includes return launch

port. It is not uncommon for all hangers to be full, forcing pilots to land in the Badlands just outside the city walls (although some — with Church or Decados permission — temporarily land in a fallow field in the Farmlands).

"The Refuge" is the spaceport pub, constantly full of workers and desperate freelancers. Cots in the overcrowded top-story rooms (with little sound protection from the screaming starship engines landing nearby) can be rented at the outrageous fee of one firebird per night, depending on availability. Better lodging can be found outside of the port.

The port is run by Dean Bezil Aldemann of the Charioteers guild. He is a terrible alcoholic, banished to this post because no one else wanted it and because no one wants to risk flying under him. It's too bad, because he's still quite a crack pilot despite his relationship with distilled spirits.

However, Bezil rarely involves himself in the actual logistics of coming and going ships; that task is left to Port Manager Asco Drimm, a Charioteer Captain. Asco is the man who really runs the port, and he's the one everyone has to bribe to get anything done. He isn't in complete control, however, for the Scravers and Muster both have strong footholds in the doings of the port, whether it be as stevedores or mechanics. He must constantly "share the wealth" with their rotating roster of leaders or risk work stoppages and even outright violence.

The Bazaar

The heart of the Hub is indisputably the Bazaar, run under the aegis of the Scravers guild. Here, the varied wealth and knick-knacks of the world are placed for sale in the numerous shops and stalls. Artifact hunters and tech-looters from the Badlands sell their finds to merchants, who in turn jack up the prices and sell them to off-world speculators who arrive hoping to find just such unregulated tech or lore. Pandemonium is one of the more prominent "sin" mar-





kets in the Known Worlds, and there are too few priests here to put a stop to it. Most priests are far more concerned about the immediate suffering of Pandemonium's displaced citizenry — even the Avestites cannot help but turn their activities more toward these needs than heretic-hunting (although there is certainly time for both...).

Basically, almost anything a person might want may be found here. It may not be immediately available, but asking around will eventually produce it or at least someone who can commission its manufacture. However, it is a seller's market, for the demand is high; characters who outbid other buyers may find themselves stalked by enemies and thieves — or even assassins.

Notable Shops

Gentleman Jeluzhan's (Quality High Tech)

For those seeking high-quality, high-technology items, there are few better shops than Gentleman Jeluzhan's. It's eponymous owner is a crafter in the Engineer's guild and a member of Pandemonium's native Gilgar family. He holds the title of knight, but is far more merchant than noble. His prices are high but his goods guaranteed — any reasonable problems that develop within a week of purchase will be fixed for free. His customers are mainly high class — Reeves seeking think machine repairs, nobles desiring personal

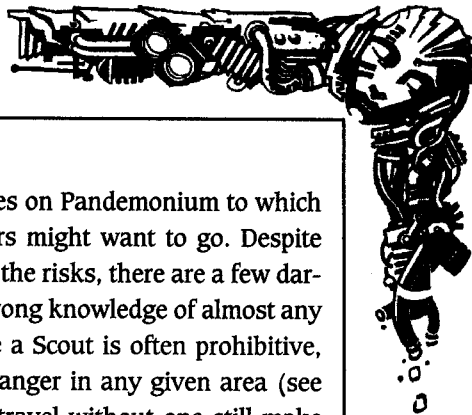
magic lantern projectors or priests wanting think machine censorship chips (allowing them to override a user's access and control which files he can read).

The shop is located among the fine jewelers and clothiers along the northwest quadrant, close to the noble estates.

The Wonderful Crimson Gadget Depot and Treat Shop

This gaudy shop is actually painted red inside and out. Located along the southwestern quarter, near to the Southern Lane, this odd place caters to a wide array of customers. While its chief commodity is cheap tech (of all tech levels), it also sells candy — a fact which the Church greatly frowns upon, fearful that the children who line up outside its glass windows to peer within will associate the tech with the sweets.

The store's owner, Sal Reddy, is a Reeve of some ill-repute in his guild. Some whisper that he was once a dean, but the pressures of his work became too much for him, and he fled to Pandemonium to open this schizophrenic shop. Others say he is a high-ranking spy of some kind, involved more in information coding and decoding than mercantilism. Still others say that he simply a man with a sense of practical necessity and humor — a rare combination for his guild.



Low-tech but useful expedition equipment can be found at reasonable prices here, and high tech items occasionally appear on the shelves. In addition, besides candy, he also sells travel rations, making the shop popular among the city's artifact hunting contingent.

The Public House

The remains of the former community center, located in the southeastern quarter of the Bazaar, have been renovated into the most popular magic lantern theater in the Hub. While more exclusive theaters can be found in the noble estates or the guild sector, this one shows the most entertaining "moving shadows." Although it is sometimes shut down by Bisop Lyander, it invariably opens as soon as he returns to his cathedral in the Badlands.

Lately, shows about Questing Knights and their overblown deeds are the most popular and tend to show at all hours.

The Hall of Records

This old city building, located where the Bazaar meets the Great Way, is the sole remaining public library in the Hub. Calling it public is something of a misnomer, for it is only open to those of good reputation or of good patronage — in other words, the upper classes or those working directly for them.

Records of Pandemonium's former cities, towns and villages can be found here on think machines, along with their tax and census records, although the last entries date just before the Emperor Wars.

Notable Inns

There are a number of inns and hostels available to newcomers or oldtimers. Most of those catering to visitors are accessed on or near the Bazaar, while the older establishments tend to be found deeper into the city's four quarters.

The Aragon Destrier

The most upscale of inns catering to visitors, the Destrier is also the most expensive and exclusive — only those with connections to a noble house, major guild or sect are allowed rooms. The smoking room is famous for the powerful figures who come to gossip about Pandemonium's troubles. It is located along the Bazaar's northwest quarter.

Mama Jazi's

This sparse but comfortable inn is not far from the Eskatonic Chapel in the Freeman District. It is popular among oldtimers who come and go from the Hub for various reasons (missionaries, artifact seekers, etc.). However, Mama is an imposing, ex-professional boxer — she allows no open shenanigans in her establishment.

Scouts Guild

There are many places on Pandemonium to which adventurers and explorers might want to go. Despite the recent upheavals and the risks, there are a few daring locals for hire with strong knowledge of almost any territory. The cost to hire a Scout is often prohibitive, rising with the level of danger in any given area (see below), but the risks of travel without one still make the expense worthwhile.

Most such Scouts are locals who were trained in woodcraft and other survival skills before the Cataclysm, or are the sons and daughters of such rangers. They can be counted on to know not only general facts about Badlands geography (although the cataclysms can change features, a fact they warn their employers of) but also the local dialects and culture of any bands living in the Badlands.

While non-guild members constantly hire themselves out as scouts, only the Scouts Guild guarantees its expertise. (Scouts are skilled in Survival, Tracking and Hub and Badlands Lore).

Job	Pay
City guide	1 firebird per day, or 5 per week
Badlands guide	10 firebirds per day, or 50 per week (+10 per 100 miles away from the Hub)
Beastroam guide	+ 25 firebirds per day

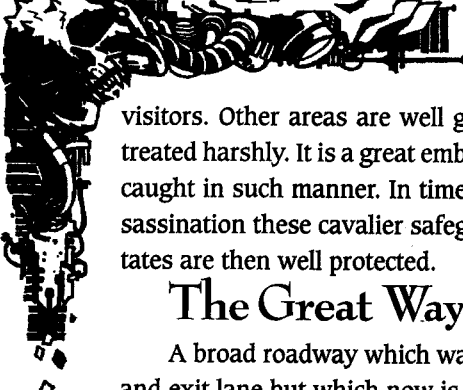
Noble Estates

In the northwest quarter of the city can be found the estates of the noble houses of Pandemonium. All the major houses have a representative (although the Hawkwood Estate is removed across the Great Way on the edge of the Industrial Sector; see below). Even native minor houses have at least an apartment or two here. All the estates converge on Manse Sharn, the center of Decados control and home to Count Enis Sharn.

The estates boast the most beautiful lands left on Pandemonium — large, well-tended lawns, romantic groves and wells, and fascinating hedge labyrinths. While each house's estate is separated by a wall, the height varies along its length, invariably providing numerous places that may be scaled easily by late-night paramours or conspirators. Indeed, an atmosphere of playful spying and sneaking is not only tolerated, but encouraged — anything to break up the tedium. Midnight guards often retire to their small guard houses, knowingly ignoring cloaked figures slipping through shadows.

However, these games have rules, too — only certain ledges and windows within noble estates are open to night





visitors. Other areas are well guarded and trespassers are treated harshly. It is a great embarrassment for a noble to be caught in such manner. In times of trouble or threat of assassination these cavalier safeguards are put aside and estates are then well protected.

The Great Way

A broad roadway which was once the city's main entry and exit lane but which now is often deserted to all but occasional foot traffic. It is largely reserved for festivals and ceremonial marches, and the residential homeowners to either side of the lane don't like strangers wandering their district looking for shops. The local guard is well-paid by residents to run off any ne'er-do-wells.

Industrial Sector (Guildville)

Numerous guildhouses make up the portion of this sector that faces the Bazaar and lanes, but deep within are factories and foundries where Pandemonium's mineral wealth is refined for transport off-world. While House Decados owns most such operations, they are handled by many different guilds, from the Smelters to the Haulers. Over all this activity, Engineers monitor the quality of the processing while Reeves manage its efficiency.

East Lane

The main road leading to the east gate, this is the most disreputable region of the city, for all manner of sin is practiced professionally here — courtesans, cyber chop-shops, poisoners and black-market dealers abound.

Slums

Squatting south of the east lane are the slums, the close-packed and multi-leveled buildings crammed with poor refugees from all over the world. A sanitation nightmare, the slums are the only places in the city where outsiders are allowed to squat — living anywhere else requires rent money, something most refugees don't have. Still, it's better than the lot of those wretches *outside* the walls.

Brother Battle Hiring Hall

On the corner of the Bazaar and the East Lane is the Brother Battle hall. From here they occasionally seek mercenaries and other laborers to aid their activities on world or on other planets. Mostly, however, it is a bunk house for itinerant Brother Battle monks and a training center — the central floor of the building is a roofed courtyard where the local monks regularly practice their Mantok arts.

Amalthean Mission

No matter the person or his background, if one is in need, succor can be had at the Amalthean Mission. The healing priests who run this sorely overcrowded medical clinic

and mess hall have extensive experience in dealing with starving peasants and wounded thieves alike. They are quite canny about sizing up a person without asking any questions about his background, and the penance they demand in return for aid usually forces the charge to reconsider his role in life. Community service is the most common penance, but quests into the Badlands for healing herbs may also be asked.

Alien Slums

The worst part of the slums is surely the alien portion, where most poor non-humans are forced to live, denied room and board elsewhere. Here, destitute Gannoks rub shoulder-to-flank with Darkwalker Shantor, and lonely Hironem make unlikely friendships with soot-stained Etyri. Ukari are the most numerous race here (brought in by the al-Malik originally), with Etyri and Vorox the most rare.

South Lane

Leading to the south gate of the city, this road is the most crowded with foot traffic, as freemen from the west rub shoulders with peasants from the slums. Just outside the south gate is the small bazaar area of the Outer Slums, a popular place for con men and slavers.

Temple Avesti Chapel

Near to the south gate — where they can keep an eye on the scum coming and going from the Hub — is a small Temple Avesti Chapel. While it consists only of two rooms (one on the upper story, the other below), it is one of the cleanest in the area. The Avestites sleep on straw mats during the night and roam the streets and Outer Slums during the day.

Chainer "Hiring" Hall

With its main door opening into the Outer Slums, this controversial building is the main receiving and cataloging center for the Muster guild's disreputable slave trade. Pandemonium has proved a lucrative place for the Chainers, with its uncounted and impoverished refugees. Hunting the Outer Slums is easy pickings for the slavers, with only Church priests regularly standing in their way. They will not nab anyone in site of a priest, but will mark noted targets for later collection (midnight assaults and kidnappings). However, such brutal and underhanded tactics are not always necessary — many refugees are willing to sell themselves into slavery in return for passage off-world for their families.

Freeman District

The population of freemen on Pandemonium is not nearly so high as its peasants, but a number of refugees came to the Hub with some of their valuables and powerful connections intact, allowing them to buy a somewhat decent living in the Freeman District. By no means a middle



class haven, this district does provide a degree of security (through neighborhood watches) and comfort unknown in the Slums.

The Church fears that this district hides enclaves of Republicans, plotting to shut the jumpgate down once more and rid the world of its interstellar tyrants. One such group, the Sons of Oldeppa, occasionally leaves propaganda broadsheets or graffiti on walls.

Eskatonic Chapel

The Eskatonic Chapel is not overly austere, nor is it in the best part of the Hub, but it is well known and generally feared. The maxicrete structure is wide, almost pyramid shaped, and surrounded by statuary which mimics the Gargoyles of the Jumpgates (the building was once a Second Republic archaeology museum). It is said that there are dreadful powers held at bay within the building, powerful artifacts and books of demon lore capable of great destruction. It is also said that the Eskatonic Order has used all of its faith and power to keep these atrocities from overthrowing the whole of the planet.

What is known for certain about the chapel is that there are more members of the Eskatonic Sanhedrin (see **Priests of the Celestial Sun**) in and around the chapel at any given time than there are regular priests of the order. The sight of the hooded, silent figures standing around the building — two at each of the two entrances — is enough to send most people scurrying past a little faster than they might otherwise.

No one outside the order has ever been permitted beyond the large room that serves as a foyer, and even those within the order must spend a long time gaining the trust of the local chartophylax before being allowed deep within. Once inside, however, they find that the whole dreadful atmosphere guarding the chapel is somewhat of a sham — a useful method for keeping the idle curious away so the priests can continue their true work uninterrupted. This true work consists of various endeavors unique to each priest. For some, it is conducting geomantic investigations of the cataclysms or astrological studies of the system's second jumpgate. For others, it is simple meditation or alchemical experiments (some of which occasionally pollute the chapel with noxious fumes or minor explosions).

Gilgar Park

The remains of the once huge and beautiful city park dedicated to Gilgar's terraforming vision. It is now well-kept but dwindling in size, as new buildings and huts encroach onto its lawns. Scaliwags and squatters are run out by a local militia of concerned freemen, but they often slip back in to sleep under its tree boughs by night.

The maxicrete statue of Gilgar still stands, but it is stained with graphitti and obscene icons.

Farmlands

This region is owned mainly by the Church and House Decados, and it is kept free of squatters' huts and such refuse. Its fields provide the only assured food source for the Hub, except for occasional yields brought in from the Badlands and imported food from other worlds. As such, it is considered a planetary treasure, and is well-maintained and guarded on its perimeters. Its farmers are the best-treated serfs on the planet, and they are careful to keep their crop lore to themselves and their families, assuring that future generations maintain their privileged position.

Orthodox theurges who come from other worlds to see the Badlands Cathedral often bless the crops here before leaving the planet.

Urth Orthodox Chapel

A small chapel within the city, providing for the needs of the upper classes. Its priests often take to the streets to provide services for the freemen and the poor. They also arrange for the weekly cart and flutter trips out to the Badlands Cathedral.

West Lane

West Lane still retains some of its original parkland, running down the center of this wide cobbled lane. Trees still flourish here, and small wildlife (birds, squirrels, or their native equivalents) skitter about. A stream run through the center, forded by many bridges along its length; its water is clean and sweet. There is little fear of violence here, for noble guards patrol the lane at all hours of the day and night.

The homes that line the lane are all extravagant and costly, owned mainly by nobles who can't afford prime estate land, or priests and guildsmen rich enough to perch near the high-born. Properties occasionally come up for sale or rent here, as their lords leave for extended off-world jaunts.

What few shops and taverns exist here specialize in items most people could never hope to afford, such as the most-desired clothes or restaurants; they are closed to most of the public anyway. The shopkeepers are specialists, and their stores are their homes. The only time the doors are opened for business is when a noble or particularly wealthy member of society calls in advance and requests an audience.

Every Church-day, wealthy society takes to the lane to strut its stuff. Reeves saunter in their most expensive suits, trying to impress the local nobles, who likewise dress in their most formal clothes, trying to remind the freemen of their proper places. Even priests fall into this trap, and Orthodox deacons and canons are sometimes seen in their ceremonial robes, relaxing and "taking the air" after a sermon.

Only horses and elegant carriages are allowed to travel



the West Lane, although exceptions are made for quiet skimmers and flitters. Noisy vehicles, or those which spout smelly fumes, are prohibited.

Outside the Walls

Surrounding the great wall of the Hub is a vast collection of huts, tents, shacks and poverty-stricken humans and aliens. This gauntlet of beggars and ne'er-dowells is called the Shantytowns. The areas just outside the main gates are cleared regularly by Decados guards so that traffic can come and go, but the regions between gates are unpoliced and terrorized by gangs and thugs.

Coming into the Hub requires an entry pass signed by a Reeve, who manage the traffic under contract from Count Sharn. Passes can be bought and approved at the gates or from the Reeve guildhall in the city. It costs one firebird for such a pass, but usually takes at least a week for requests to be processed from the gate (one day if done at the guildhall). The usual bribe for expedited processing is five firebirds.

Secrets

Secrets are everywhere, as are the people who claim to have the answers to those secrets. Rumors abound as to just why Pandemonium is going through such violent changes, and why creatures long thought vanished are returning to the world.

For the right price — with a little careful planning and a solid grasp of who can be trusted — the characters can learn the latest rumors about almost anything. Sometimes, they can even learn the truth.

Below are some examples of the “truths” waiting to be discovered. The gamemaster can decide which of these is really true (if any).

The Badlands Cathedral

- The Church is building the great Cathedral as a defense against demons waiting in the earth of Pandemonium.
- House Decados is actually behind the construction of the Cathedral, and is hiding a crime they committed under

the rising building. Some even claim the Decados are now in control of the Church itself on the planet. The proof is just waiting to be discovered.

- A great cache of Second Republic weapons is being excavated from the ground where the Cathedral is being built. The weapons are to be used by the Church to destroy the Empire and bring about a new theocracy. This tech is smuggled off-world in Church ships.

- The Annunaki have been in consultation with the Urth Orthodox Church, and the land where the Cathedral is being built is actually being prepared for their return.

House Decados Secrets

- The Decados have started dealing in body parts, and the disasters that have befallen Pandemonium are all part of a ploy to make it easier to grab unwitting “donors.”

- The Decados have made pacts with demons, which is why they insisted that the Cathedral be built so far away from the Hub.

- The Decados are puppets, in debt to the Chainers, who really have control of the entire planet.

- The Decados are broke, and their leaders are doing what they can to hide the truth.

- Emperor Alexius has taken everything the Decados own, leaving them only Pandemonium as a place of power. They will soon be replaced by House Hawkwood, even here.

Beastroam Secrets

- The beastroams have been invaded by Symbiots, who have awakened the ancient terrors of the past.

- The Pancreator is merely restoring what once was, a sure sign of His anger over the technology that was used to change this world.

- House Decados deliberately dismantled the terraforming engines, planning to use them on another world beyond the second jumpgate.

- Scientists, vile researchers who seek to bring about the destruction of the Empire, have been using the beastroams to hide secret laboratories.

Characters

Sir Martell Gilgar

Most noble houses trace their ancestry to a great figure of history. So too the minor house of Gilgar, supposed descendants of the great terraformer of Pandemonium, said to have been granted peerage for his scientific feats.

Sir Martell was born and raised on Pandemonium and, like many of his brethren, remembers the time before he was born, when his family held sway over virtually all of the planet. He remembers these events through the bitter

stories told by his family, and remembers as well the ways in which they were ignored and stripped of power during the dawn of the New Interstellar Age.

There is a very strong sense of bitterness around the Gilgars — an aura so pervasive that many say the name of the planet fits their hearts. Though the family still rules vast fiefs in Old Folani (now Forsook), those lands are now uninhabited. Most Gilgars live in the Hub, in small apartments along or near West Lane (although the family head has a small mansion abutting the Decados estate). While they have



practically no serfs left, they still own portions of the Hub (some of the guild quarters and Farmland), and subsist on taxes from those properties.

They also have a penchant for reminding any and all who are tempted to forget that they were once the most noted family on Pandemonium — although noted mainly for their vanity and arrogance. Sir Martell excels at the games of pride and cruelty that mar the long history of his family on the planet. He is renowned for challenging people with sharp wits to duels with swords or even blasters. It's commonly believed that he prefers swords, as they provide a more intimate death.

Martell is not overly muscular, nor is he taller than average, but almost everyone who meets him remembers him that way. The simple fact of the matter is that Martell Gilgar is a terror in combat, and a sadist to boot. Martell has his family's influence to keep him out of trouble, and never hesitates to make challenges. The only answers he responds to when making such challenges are either a yes, or a very long and groveling apology for whatever offense may or may not have occurred. Those who refuse his throwing of the gauntlet, or who dare turn their backs to him, quickly learn that Martell considers either response an invitation to attack. On his best day — which wasn't that long ago — he maimed or killed seven different people who offended him. He himself was not injured in any of the frays.

Martell spends his time moving about polite society, often dressing and acting as scandalously as he feels he can safely get away with. His clothes are among the finest, and his long-curved tresses are always perfect. But there is definitely something about his sense of fashion that is always deliberately off-kilter, and he's been known to wear badges and marks on his outfits that are designed to outrage — perfect examples being the cod piece he sometimes sports that bears the symbol of the Muster and the kerchiefs he

blows his nose into that bear the Brother Battle emblem.

While some of the nobles look upon his actions with shock, most tend to think of Martell as the life of any party. When he is not moving among his own kind, Martell likes to take a troupe of his personal bodyguards and frequent the seedier dives in the Bazaar. It isn't so much a matter of whether or not someone will offend the young noble as it is a matter of when he will decide to be offended by virtually any slight, no matter how small. He considers a good duel or a vicious fight as the only sport worth knowing, and also tends to think it's the best way to ensure that people show his family the respect it deserves.

Race: Human

Rank/Class: Gilgar (minor house) Knight

Quote: "Out-of-fashion? Is that what you think this cape is?! Why you insufferable off-worlder! I'll teach you how we Gilgar respond to such insults!" (draws sword...)

Body: Strength 7, Dexterity 9, Endurance 7

Mind: Wits 8, Perception 6, Tech 5

Spirit: Extrovert 6, Introvert 2, Passion 9, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 5

Natural skills: Charm 4, Dodge 9, Fight 9, Impress 8, Melee 10, Observe 5, Shoot 7, Sneak 3, Vigor 9

Learned skills: Bureaucracy 5, Etiquette 6, Lore (Pandemonium History) 5, Ride 5, Speak Pandemonium Dialect, Streetwise 4, Survival 7, Torture 5, Tracking 3

Blessings: Bold (+2 Passion acting when others hesitate)

Curses: Argumentative (-2 Extro in conversation), Surly (-2 Extro when upset)

Wyrd: 5

Weapons: Rapier (5d), Blaster Pistol (7d)

Fencing Actions: He knows almost all of them.

Armor: Synthsilk (4d), Assault Shield (5/15, 10 hits)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0

Karst Olafsan

Karst Olafsan is a big man who manages to live a double life with ease. By day he is a Scraver guildsman. By night he is a member of two separate factions frowned upon heavily by the powers that rule in the Hub. He is a Son of Oldeppa, notorious for his painted slogans and printed flyers that litter the streets. His goal as a member of this secretive cabal is simply to see an end to the interstellar interference that has ruined the planet and the Hub since the Off-Worlders came back.

His other job is as a member of the Sirocco Syndicate, a growing gang of enforcers who take full advantage of the chaos in the Hub and profit from the mayhem and carnage they inflict on peasants. Between the often-violent assaults on homeless families and the extortion they charge to those with any sign of money, the gangmembers are quickly earning a name as a force to be reckoned with. There have been several conflicts with guilds and nobles alike. The only people





so far left unmolested by the violent street gang are official members of the Church.

Karst Olafsan is one of the Sirocco ringleaders, and he is more than eager to cause as much chaos as he can in a effort to make off-worlders look as bad as possible. The theory behind his actions? Natives must look to their native, pre-New Interstellar Age leaders if they wish to be freed from terror. Karst is merely helping them reach the right decision... and profiting along the way.

Race: Human

Rank/Class: Scraver Boss/Sirocco Syndicate member

Body: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Endurance 6

Mind: Wits 4, Perception 5, Tech 5

Spirit: Extrovert 5, Introvert 1, Passion 3, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 3

Natural skills: Fight 5, Impress 4, Melee 6, Observe 5

Learned skills: Bureaucracy 2, Gambling 4, Knavery 3, Leadership 5, Read Urthish, Streetwise 7, Tech 5, Warfare (Terrorism) 7

Curse: Righteous (-2 Calm when judgment questioned)

Wyrd: 5

Weapons: Med Revolver (5d), Club (4d)

Armor: Studded leather (5d)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0

Sarma Trojas

Sarma was born into the Smelters guild and has lived her entire life working towards the goal of one day running the great furnaces. While she is a skilled Smelter and very well trained in management by her father, it is her ability to know more than she should about almost everything that has helped her reach her current position as Second to the Master Smelter.

Sarma is sharper than she looks; her fingers are in almost every pie in the Hub in one form or another. Three separate members of the Decados family answer to her, a

direct result of her accidentally witnessing far more than she should have about their activities. This is not information she shares, and their willingness to do her favors is not something she overly exploits. She saves the clout she has with them for special occasions, when the normal bureaucratic pathways are not efficient enough.

Sarma could, in all reality, be far more powerful than she is in the community. She has information that could embarrass almost everyone. She chooses not to use this information except to expedite things to the Smelters working efficiently. The only reason she has not yet gained the role of Master Smelter is her reluctance to depose her father.

Still, despite her cautions, she is making enemies faster than friends, and she knows it. As a deterrent against her potential demise, she has a very large number of files hidden away, their location to be given to various and sundry members of the guilds, Church and houses in the event of her untimely death. There is a very large bounty for information leading to the location of these files.

Race: Human

Rank/Class: Second Smelter

Quote: "Yeah, I know some things. Things that would chill your bones. But I ain't tellin' any of 'em. Not unless you got somethin' you wanta tell me..."

Body: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Endurance 5

Mind: Wits 8, Perception 9, Tech 6

Spirit: Extrovert 6, Introvert 4, Passion 3, Calm 5, Faith 3, Ego 2

Natural skills: Impress 4, Observe 9, Shoot 6, Vigor 6

Learned skills: Bureaucracy 8, Etiquette 3, Streetwise 9, Survival 3

Blessings: Shrewd (+2 Wits against fast-talk attempts)

Wyrd: 3

Weapons: Frap stick (6d shock/3d club)

Armor: Studded leather (5d)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0





Moshet Branko

Moshet Branko was never meant to reach Pandemonium. Taken as a young cub from his people, he was supposed to be sold into slavery by the Muster. Instead, he was stolen by pirates looting the ship transporting him. The pirate leader, the young and rather foolish Cecil Emilio Decados, took his booty to Pandemonium, where he made the mistake of intimately examining the young Vorox, misunderstanding just how lethal its poison claws were.

Moshet left the cooling body and wandered away, living as a feral for several years before slowly beginning to make use of the more advanced notions of human language and technology. After being almost mortally wounded by a band of explorers in the Badlands (who were supposed to be his dinner), the Vorox found his way to the shantytowns outside the Hub, befriendng a family of Gannocks. The Gannocks fed and cared for Moshet, giving him his name and teaching him to speak while he healed. He lived with them, as much a watchdog as a member of their family.

Then the Sirocco Syndicate came, insisting on protection money from the Gannocks. Moshet taught them the error of their ways, killing the first three human predators who tried to force their will on the family. That night, the crumbling dwelling where the Gannocks and Moshet lived was burned to the ground. Only Moshet survived.

He has now set himself up as a counterpoint to human extortionists, offering protection to other aliens for a fee. He works more as a deterrent than as an actual bodyguard, but has been known to track and kill any human who hurts someone under his protection. Very few on Pandemonium know the backways through the shantytowns and Alien Slums within the walls as well as Moshet Branko. He is part legend and part nightmare to many of the humans who go there.

Moshet Branko is still very feral, and retains all of his poisoned claws. He has a strong hatred of humans, but not so great that he is willing to risk his existence merely for the pleasure of killing them. Any human who hurts one of his charges is in for a nasty surprise, as Branko is not above sneaking out of the slums and finding that person wherever he sleeps. Branko does not carry any weapons, but has been known to improvise very well.

Race: Vorox (feral)

Rank/Class: none

Quote: "The Ukar you kick? He under my guard. I eat you now..."

Body: Strength 9, Dexterity 10, Endurance 9

Mind: Wits 7, Perception 6, Tech 2

Spirit: Extrovert 3, Introvert 1, Passion 7, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 3

Natural skills: Dodge 8, Fight 10, Impress 7, Melee 5, Observe 9, Sneak 10, Vigor 8



Learned skills: Knavery 5, Speak Urthish, Speak Voroxish, Streetwise 8, Survival 9, Tracking 9

Blessings: Predatory (+2 Per/-2 Calm when hungry), Giant (base run: 14 meters), Sensitive Smell (+1 Per smell),

Curses: Uncouth (-2 Extro in society)

Benefice: Extra Limbs (six total, usable as arms or legs)

Wyrd: 3

Weapons: Poison Claws (5d, targets who suffer damage receive -1 cumulative penalty per turn), Bite (-1 Init, 5d)

Armor: Stolen Energy Shield (5/10, only 5 hits left in cel)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

Weird Creatures

The Baralough

The Baralough was once considered a legend, a creature that might or might not exist in the deep recesses of the Northern Beastroams. According to the stories, the Baralough is an ape-like creature, covered with thick scales and sporting tusks from its wide, powerful maw. It's said to have the strength of several men and a hide tough enough to deflect the finest sword with little effort. While never considered smart, it has a reputation as a fierce hunter, capable of following prey for league and never losing track of a potential meal once it has chosen it.

Parents used the hideous monster as a deterrent, telling their children that the Baralough would surely get them if they stayed out too late or disobeyed their guardians. Now it seems the legends just might have a foundation in truth. Though still fairly rare — a blessing in the eyes of any who've even seen one — the Baralough, or something looking much like the legendary creature, has been spotted several times. Each time it has shown itself, people have died.

The truth of the legend is almost as ugly as the tales themselves. The Baralough does exist, and until recently was apparently content to live in the beastroams, but the





Cataclysm has changed that. In order to eat, the creatures have begun travelling farther and farther, moving away from their once-paradise to find new sources of food.

Though little remains of the planet's oldest documents, a few academicians have reported on ancient parchments calling this creature a "natural executioner of the guilty." The Baralough is believed to have a minor psychic talent that allows it to sense a guilty conscience, which is apparently quite appetizing to the beast.

Body: Strength 13, Dexterity 8, Endurance 12

Mind: Wits 4, Perception 7, Tech 0

Natural skills: Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Fight 7

Powers: Sense Guilt (roll Perception + Empathy, range 25 meters)

Weapons: Claws (4d), Tusks (4d)

Armor: Tough hide (7d)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

Psi-Leeches

There is a creature found in the beastrooms that seems almost too good to be true in the eyes of some of the more fanatical members of the Church. The creature is called a Psi-Leech, and its name is very appropriate. Unlike Urth leeches, the Psi-Leech can actually fly; using a set of rudimentary wings and an expanding gas bladder, the creature can propel itself from the sands where it hides and fly for short periods of time — normally just long enough to attach itself to the skull of the only prey these creatures feed on: psychics.

The rumor is that Psi-Leeches are a byproduct of the Second Republic, but some claim they are more recent, that mad technosophists hidden in the Badlands created such things. There is little doubt among xenobiologists that Psi-Leeches are not natural in their origin. They are too different from all known lifeforms to be anything but genetically-engineered. Their exclusive diet, however, is the most tell-

ing factor. When in the presence of a psychic — even those with the most basic abilities — they become active and hungry. Otherwise, the creatures remain buried in their sandy terrain in a state of hibernation. Such hunger for psychics causes many people to fear a Symbiot-taint in them.

The whole body of a Psi-Leech is designed for the simple purpose of eating the brains of psychics. These strange creatures — also called "flying flowers" by the more poetic at heart — are roughly 18" in length, with rough brown skin and a mouth filled with very sharp, very hard teeth. The only sensory organ is a cluster just above the mouth which is apparently capable of noticing psychic brain wave patterns within 50 meters. They are generally unresponsive to visual, auditory or scent cues. They do, however, react very negatively to vivisection.

Once these nightmares have a target sighted, they immediately swell in size, filling their bladders with as much air as they can for their short take off. They then launch and land on the skull of their targets. Their mouths open much like a flower blooms, spreading in five separate directions, the better to clamp down on the target's cranium. The teeth peel away the flesh covering a victim's skull, and a razored proboscis then drives through the bone before emitting a liquefying agent that immobilizes and then kills the target. Within a minute of injecting the venom, the Psi-Leech can then suck out the brain of the victim.

Body: Strength 2, Dexterity 1, Endurance 3

Mind: Wits 1, Perception 7, Tech 0

Natural skills: Dodge 0, Fly 5, Fight 5, Vigor 4

Weapons: Teeth (3d), Proboscis (injects toxic agent that turns brain to mush: 10d per turn; target's victory points on a Psi + Stoic Body roll act as armor)

Brain-Chewing: The Psi-Leech must first roll Fly+Fight to successfully land on a target within 10 meters per launch (who can attempt to dodge). Then, its teeth must penetrate



armor (inflict at least one point of damage on the target — ignore energy shields due to proximity). On the following turn, the proboscis will inject its brain-killing poison. The Psi-Leech can be yanked off a target with a resisted roll of Str+Fight versus the leech's Str+Vigor. If it is killed, it falls off.

Armor: none

Vitality: -6/-3/0/0/0

Ravagers

Something new has come from the Badlands, but it is hardly new to Pandemonium. The Ravagers are recorded in the history books, strange insects that feed, mate, sleep and awaken as one unit. The records are vague about anything that can destroy them other than fire, but are very clear on one aspect of the bug hoard: they eat anything and everything that gets in their way. If it can be consumed, the Ravagers look upon it as a meal.

The good news about the insects is that they have short cycles of feeding. The bad news is, the cycle repeats itself roughly once every three months. So far, humans have only encountered them twice. In both cases all that remained of the small settlements were the empty shells of the buildings where people once dwelled and a few of the dead Ravagers husks. They do not, apparently, eat their own dead.

To date, they've been reported moving in Memsah, but should they find the pickings slim, they could well change their direction and seek greener pastures where the population of the planet is heaviest. Since they were first spotted, the Ravagers have only covered some 20 kilometers of territory. But the most disconcerting news is that when they hide away to rest, no sign of them can be found.

Body: Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Endurance 1

Mind: Wits 0, Perception 1, Tech 0

Natural skills: none



Weapons: Teeth (1d — ignore energy shields and armor, unless environmentally-sealed)

Swarm: The danger from the Ravagers comes not in their individual strength and power, but from the fact that they swarm as one gigantic unit (10 can swarm one human-sized target per turn), slipping past most defenses with ease, and taking tiny bites of whatever they find. Lots of tiny bites. A human caught in a swarm of Ravagers is likely to die a very quick death without high tech defenses or an environmental suit. They do not eat non-organics, but anything living is fair game. While they are not overly strong, they are persistent, and have been known to devour bone.

The gamemaster does not need to make goal rolls for Ravagers — simply roll 1d damage for each bug in the swarm per turn.

Armor: none

Vitality: 0/0



Everlight

By Bill Maxwell

In a world where disaster is commonplace, the worst news is often believed without question. In "Everlight," the characters are initially contracted to retrieve an Engineer. This draws them into a net of intrigue that explodes into a citywide riot when people begin to fear that one of Pandemonium's moons will crash into the planet.

The Beginning of Order

Two months ago, Count Enis Sharn, ruler of Pandemonium, requested that the Decados send a Mantis Knight to aid him in keeping order. The Decados readily agreed and sent in Baron Kohl Von Heller to create the Mantis Guard. The Guard is composed of squads containing one of Kohl's retinue as well as fresh recruits from local knights and freemen. They patrol the Hub at regular intervals, occasionally venturing outside the walls.

This temporary "peace" allowed Count Sharn to start cleaning up the political scene, throwing undesirable nobles off planet while forging stronger ties with the guild and Church. Specifically, Count Sharn targeted the technology-loving al-Malik, since they are his greatest noble rivals for artifacts uncovered by Pandemonium's constant earthquakes. For the characters, this means that noble characters, especially al-Malik, had best watch their step in the Hub.

(For Mantis Guard traits, see Characters, below)

Everlight

Pandemonium has three moons: Floxam, Flaxom, and (the largest moon) Everlight. Until recently, Everlight possessed the most stable orbit. That is about to change...

So it Begins...

One day, around mid-afternoon, the characters notice that the street crowds are getting restless. If anyone attempts to learn what's going on, they'll hear that a "Race" may be happening today. A few minutes later, a roar of sound and strange hooting comes from a few blocks over. People wise in the ways of the Race clear the streets quickly.

The Race

The Race is a highly dangerous illegal sport. It consists of a race between alcohol-powered motor vehicles (which are normally used to haul heavy equipment) and a herd of animals called Meerka. The Meerka are huge, two-legged furred lizards used by the colonists primarily for food. Meerka run up to 60 MPH and are strong enough to carry riders, but are unsuitable as riding animals because of their skittish temperament.

To begin a Race, the racers (freemen, nobles or guildsmen looking for fun) release a group of Meerka from an unguarded corral and jump on their backs. At the same time, a second group steals some motor cars and comes zooming in after the Meerka, chasing them around town. The first one, animal or machine, to reach a pre-determined point wins.

Moments after the characters hear the sounds, a dozen terrified Meerka charge down the street, ridden by several nobles. Behind them screams a hastily-constructed mess of steel bars and wheels. Any stalls or pedestrians left in the street are knocked aside as they race by. This unsightly gaggle roars off down the street and vanishes, only to return a few moments later going the other way. At this point, some of the Meerka are without riders. A character crazy enough to want to could probably jump onto one and ride it (Dex+Vigor roll at a -4 penalty; one v.p. means the character barely hangs-on as the beast bucks to and fro).

Then, the Mantis Guard appears. The racers immediately struggle to guide their Meerka away from the Guards and into nearby alleys. That's when disaster strikes. A panicked Meerka stampedes right in front of a steel-framed car. The car smashes into it, and both beast, car and riders end up in a bloody heap in front of the characters. One of the racers is unconscious. The other, with a shattered leg, begs for help from the characters. In the meantime, the Guard forces its way through the crowd, trying to get to the racers.

What happens next will determine the player's future with the Guard. If they help the racers, the Guard will be extremely unfriendly. The characters may even be jailed (for a day) for aiding criminals. If they help the Guards, the Guards will hail them as "model citizens" and buy them a



drink at the nearest pub. If they do nothing, the Guards will seemingly ignore them, treating them as just more faces in the crowd. In truth, one of their number notes the characters and reports their descriptions to Baron Heller.

Small Talk

If the characters do not end up jailed, they notice tension building in the Hub. Half-overheard conversations hint at problems outside the walls. There are rumors of massive prayer meetings, suicides and widespread looting — mores so than usual. Should anyone investigate these rumors, he finds there is a grain of truth to them. Fear of some upcoming disaster has spooked people in the shantytowns. Though the characters may feel sympathy for the plight of those outside, there is, unfortunately, little they can do.

Messenger

At sunset (or on the characters' way out from jail), a small child approaches the characters. Emaciated and miserable, she has a message for them. If they accept it, she tells them that their presence is requested at Serena Decados's summer residence that evening. If they do not take the message, the girl will follow them around for a while and then abruptly vanish (Chainers are efficient in this part of town).

The Decados Estates

Serena's palace is small and garishly decorated. Because of the extensive debts that Serena owes to the Scravers, she allows them to use her palace as a club for the upper classes. Here, nobles, priests and guildsmen engage in pleasures and politics of all kinds.

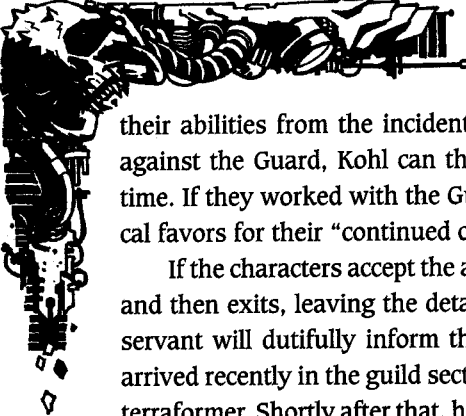
The characters are met by Serena herself, who receives them quite graciously. A servant will then take the characters to a luxurious interior garden. There, seated in a gemstone-encrusted gazebo is the man who sent for them — Baron Kohl Von Heller.

Pleased to see them, Kohl motions for them to sit. With a clap of his hands, servants appear, offering a variety of refreshments. It is obvious that each character has been assigned two members of the opposite sex to tend him or her. It is equally obvious, due to brands on the servants' necks, that these attendants are slaves.

Kohl immediately gets down to business. He wants the characters to track down an elusive Engineer — Endomar Sordiek. He would prefer to keep this a straight business deal: firebirds (200 per person) or tech (starship parts) for no questions asked. If necessary, he uses a variety of tricks to get the characters to accept the assignment. Kohl prefers to work with the "carrot and the stick" approach, showing both the benefits of working for him and the things he could do to them if they don't.

Kohl chose the characters for a specific reason — they are outside of the normal power structure of Pandemonium. In addition to this, Kohl feels he has a decent assessment of





their abilities from the incident at the Race. If they stood against the Guard, Kohl can threaten them with more jail time. If they worked with the Guard, he can promise political favors for their "continued civic support."

If the characters accept the assignment, he thanks them and then exits, leaving the details to a Reeve retainer. The servant will dutifully inform the characters that Endomar arrived recently in the guild sector with the retinue of a new terraformer. Shortly after that, he was sighted being brought to the al-Malik Estates. He fled the estates a day later and disappeared into the Slums. Finally, the Reeve gives the characters a sketch of Endomar's likeness and 30 firebirds to help finance the hunt.

What the Reeve is *not* telling the characters is that Kohl had no interest in Endomar until he learned that Endomar visited the al-Malik. Also, after the investigation began, Kohl was visited by the Inquisition, who were looking for Endomar as well. This made Kohl suspect that the al-Malik were up to something unusual. These pieces of information can be bribed out of the staff of Serena's palace, or gathered by anyone with strong Church or noble connections.

(For Serena and Heller's traits, see Characters, below)

Timing

The characters now have several ways they could go. For simplicity's sake, the information is presented in the order of the panic that spreads through the city over the course of the next three nights. This does not mean that the characters have to proceed in that order or that the gamemaster has to keep to it. They can (and should) adjust the story as they see fit.

What does the gamemaster do if the characters abandon the search? Just remember that quite a few forces (like the Muster and the Avestites) have an eye on the situation. They will try to recruit the characters, assuming the characters have information these forces are not already privy to.

First Night: Moonrise

Everlight crests the horizon — larger than people have ever seen it — just in time to seemingly cause a small earthquake. Outside the Hub, several people, fearing the end of the world, drop dead. Others flee towards the city gates. Those inside the Hub remain blissfully ignorant, though they may notice that the Mantis Guard is out in force. Should anyone venture outside the Hub, he will find a complete panic — the people are convinced that Everlight is going to crash into Pandemonium.

Guild Sector

News quickly spreads that an Engineer predicted that Everlight is going to crash into the planet.

Noble Estates

People often remark on how large the moon looks.

Slums

Riots begin shortly after midnight and continue late into the next day. The Church will recruit any characters it can to try and quell people's fears, perhaps by getting them to escort an Engineer from the Guild Sector to answer people's questions.

Barter Town

There is a place among the crowded hovels where you can hear banging pots and the raucous cry of the meat men selling spiced stews made of unidentifiable bits. Here, life is cheap and firebirds aren't worth spit. This is Barter Town, friend, where you swap favors for the goods you need to last just one more day.

The Slums of the Hub are miserable, yet many consider them paradise compared to the wretched shacks outside the Hub. The key to gaining information here is the ability to barter. You're better off having a dozen good knives to trade with than a hundred firebirds. Much of this comes from the lack of space in the Slums. People don't move far from their homes (even to a place as close as the Bazaar) because they are rightfully afraid that others will seize their homes before they return.

The strongest force for order in the Slums is Sanctuary Aeon, whose priests works tirelessly among the masses to give them at least a modicum of hope. Led by Sister Elishea, priests wander the streets helping the sick and leading impromptu prayer sessions. Often, these actions are not enough. In the face of unending misery, they are a dying light in the darkness.

If the characters treat the Amaltheans or their parish well, they will be able to find Endomar's workplace. Hidden under his cot, they find notes describing a tech cache that Endomar appraised (and also that this stash is hidden somewhere in the Guild Sector). They may also uncover a set of dead bodies hidden near Endomar's hovel that have been partially eaten. The devoured corpses are the victims of Endomar's strange appetites. He must eat human flesh at least twice a week or he will begin to rot. Endomar is no longer sure that he can keep his appetites confined to the dead — some of his living patients are beginning to look appetizing. It's not that he doesn't want to be cured of his ghoulish condition, he just doesn't want to be cured at the end of an Avestite flame-thrower.

(For Sister Elishea's and Endomar Sordiek's traits, see Characters, below.)

The Avestites

Sooner or later, the characters will run into Brother Pietro and a band of Avestites hunting Endomar. They have discovered some of Endomar's freshly-eaten meals and are going to destroy him. Right now, they are trying to find a small child (the same small child from the *Message* section,



above) whom they believe Endomar kidnapped. The truth is that the child was kidnapped by freemen working for the Chainers.

(For Pietro and his Brethren's traits, see Characters, below.)

Second Night: Moonrise

The night begins with another set of earthquakes. The Slums are now in a complete panic and despair spreads through the streets like wildfire. Everlight is obviously abnormally large. The League has blockaded the starport and the Bazaar is all but empty. Non-Slum dwellers met on the street won't say much. When they do, they are always looking up at the moon.

Slums

The men of the Mantis Guard (especially Kohl's direct retinue) are dying in significantly large numbers. Characters who witness one of these "accidental" deaths may notice that the killers are quite skilled — they are actually al-Malik retainers in disguise.

Noble Estates

The nobles have decreed that no one leaves the planet until they order it. To maintain this edict, a phalanx of the Mantis Guard is inside the starport, holding an uneasy distance from the guild blockade keeping out the panicked masses.

Guild Sector

To everyone's shock, the Engineer terraformers abandon the planet (see *The Truth About Everlight* for an explanation), taking off in their ship for parts unknown. Everyone interprets this as a clear sign that they can't fix the problem and the planet is doomed! The guilds are desperately seeking a way out of the imminent destruction. The Muster propose seizing the starport (and keeping the nobles out). A few caution that this panic may be for nothing. If the characters have found Endomar's notes, they can hunt down the stash of Second Republic tech. Unfortunately, it is well guarded by a group of Muster mercs and al-Malik retainers.

As they enter the sector, the sharp blue glow of acetylene torches and the dull illumination of fluorescent worklights fill the air as Scravers pick through the garbage, like flies feasting off a carcass. The Guild Sector is the dumping ground for every spare scrap of technology that people find. You never know when that strangely-shaped metal piece might be the very thing you need to save your life.

The Scravers are the first thing the characters meet in the Guild Sector, and the scavengers gladly guide them to any Guild Hall for a fee (two talons). The Charioteers remember taking on-board the new terraformer and his crew. The Reeves collected money to get the crew housed on Pan-

demonium. The Muster wonder why the characters are doing a "collection job" instead of them.

The Engineer's portion of the Hub exists in a place nicknamed Black-Lung Alley. There, the factory smoke hangs thick in the air, congealing into almost solid clumps before drifting off into Beggar's Alley and other squalid places within the Hub. Most of the Engineers there wear filter masks to keep out the worst of the smog (these are available for rent by visitors for 1 firebird per week each).

Jeziah Sheridan, head of the Engineers Guild, allows the characters exactly 15 minutes of her time — if they have filled out the proper paperwork (which requires good guild connections or a two-hour long wait in line). Jeziah knows that Endomar was a last-minute addition to the terraforming team. His supposed specialty was astrophysics and his purpose was to determine the effects of Pandemonium's moons on the terraformers' work. Once he arrived, however, it became obvious that Endomar was not what he was supposed to be. The Engineers sloughed him off on some al-Malik noble who became interested in him and haven't heard from him since.

The Scravers and the Engineers on the terraforming team have some additional information. They know that Endomar was actually fleeing the Inquisition on Leagueheim. The Engineers know that Endomar was "sold" to Saladin al-Malik via Argos. The Scravers think Endomar is probably a tech-smuggler, since they know that someone is attempting to ship a large amount of Second Republic contraband off-planet.

(For Jeziah's traits, see Characters, below.)


Chainers

Argos Halfman, a leader in the Muster guild and co-conspirator with Saladin al-Malik of the whole Everlight panic (see *The Truth About Everlight*, below), knows that the characters have been approached by Kohl and is interested in knowing what Kohl knows. However, he is loathe to waste any good resources and, if given the opportunity, will attempt to lure the characters to Saladin's side. In no way will he attempt to jeopardize Saladin's plan or his position in the Muster.

If necessary, he will dispatch a squad of Muster thugs to teach the characters how to keep their mouths shut or to keep them from nosing around the warehouse holding Saladin's Second Republic tech stash. This warehouse is undescript, and seems just like any other processed-ore holding barn on the block — except for the Muster thugs and handful of al-Malik knights guarding it. Anyone caught nosing around will be beaten within an inch of their lives and deposited in the Slums.

Characters who do successfully sneak in (requiring sustained rolls of Wits + Sneak and 9 victory points) can glimpse the Second Republic-era think machine parts hidden in ore-





containers. They are too big to remove without notice, but anyone with good knowledge of such things (Wits + Lore (Market Goods) or High-Tech Redemption) realizes together they are worth at least 10,000 firebirds. The scientific terraforming data encrypted within the computer cores is worth nearly as much: 5,000 firebirds and some hefty favors from high-level Engineers.

(For Muster Squad and al-Malik Knight traits, see Characters, below.)

Final Night

As the panic reaches the Noble Estates, all nobles are called to the court of Count Sharn.

Slums

Endomar flees the Slums for the spaceport, hunted by the Avestites and anyone who recognizes him as the source of the rumors. He will not survive unless the characters assist him. Even then, they may need to fight to get him out of there.

Guild Sector

The guilds are actively fleeing. The Mantis Guard in the spaceport has been overwhelmed and the guilds now control everything. You can see a string of spacecraft lifting off one-by-one. The Guild Sector is relatively empty. The al-Malik and Argos's Muster squad take this time to move their stash to an al-Malik freighter ("The Prophet's Torch"). The ship will leave soon after the tech is safely stowed away.

Noble Estates

If Saladin is not stopped, over three-quarters of the Mantis Guard's innermost circle will be killed. Kohl takes this as a personal failure and retreats into despair long enough for Saladin to convince enough nobles to prevent Kohl from forming another Mantis Guard.

Al-Malik Estates

Beyond ornately carved gates of bronze and gold lie small estates luxuriously decorated in desert hues. Conversation is hushed and cultivated, for here, on a planet far away from home, is a piece of the motherworld, Istakhr. And here, above all, the ideals of the nobility always endure.

Unless the characters have a connection with an al-Malik (either an al-Malik character or a guildsman) OR they know the name Saladin, it will be difficult to gain an audience with anyone. Though the al-Malik are generally gracious, they have been extremely dissatisfied with the Guard as of late. In specific, the Mantis Guard has been seizing any object that smacks of heresy and having the Avestites destroy it in very public burnings.

The characters could easily interact with the servants. The staff knows that Endomar was taken into the estates

under armed guard. They also know that Saladin has seen both Muster and al-Malik retainers lately.

Should the characters gain access to the al-Malik, they will soon meet Saladin. He will be quite pleasant, offering them refreshments and the use of his servants for any minor errands they need to run. He will offer to clear up any misunderstandings and, if prompted, will claim that he hired Endomar to take a look at some malfunctioning holograms.

If, at any time, Saladin is presented with hard evidence of his activities, he will turn cold. He will then launch into a tirade about how the Decados are destroying this system and how the whole planet could be better managed under another's control. He then demands that the characters leave. Soon after that, he will send some Muster agents to try and kill them.

(For Saladin's traits, see Characters, below.)

The Duel

At some point, the characters will witness and/or participate in a duel between al-Malik forces and the Mantis Guard. It begins when the Mantis Guard accosts an al-Malik in a random sweep of the streets, treating her with (obviously) customary roughness. If the characters are on good terms with the Guards, they will be invited to "watch as justice is served." If they are hated by the Guard, they will be told to get lost. At that moment, several al-Malik knights come into view. They instantly launch scathing insults at the Guard, which ultimately results in drawn weapons. How the characters interact with the two factions will determine if a fight begins.

(Traits for the Mantis Guard and al-Malik Knights are given in Characters, below.)

The Truth About Everlight

Several factors cause Everlight's ever-closer orbit. First, a malfunction in the terraforming machines draws Everlight into an erratic orbit. The terraformers (who allegedly left the system on the second day), actually landed on Everlight to install a terraforming node that re-adjusts its orbit. Intent on their work, they were oblivious to the message their little trip sent to the masses, and will be quite surprised at the whole fuss when they return.

The other reason that Everlight appears closer to the planet is a simple one. Have you ever noticed that the moon looks bigger near the horizon than in the center of the sky? The size of the moon hasn't changed — only the people's perception of it has. It is perceived as larger on the horizon because the horizon gives something with which to compare the moon's size. Everlight is currently framed by its two sister moons. These provide an artificial horizon, making the moon appear in comparison much larger than natu-



ral. Combine this with Everlight's erratic orbit and Saladin's well-planted rumors, and you have mass hysteria.

Endomar predicted this, including the fact that Everlight may very well collapse into the planet somewhere from 50 to 300 hundred years from now. Saladin simply rewrote Endomar's predictions so that Everlight's demise sounded more immediate.

After the third day of Everlight's approach, the moon will slowly return back to its orbit as the other moons move to different places in the sky. All will be as it was.

The Court of Count Sharn

There will be a reckoning as everyone is called in to give an account of the situation. Saladin comments on the ineffectiveness of the Mantis Guard. Kohl counters that the guilds are the root of the problem.

Because of their involvement, the characters will be dragged right into the middle of this. Before having to publicly present their evidence, both Kohl and Saladin each take them aside and try to gain their loyalty. Depending on whose side they take, they may gain potent allies or equally dangerous enemies.

Where's Graaf

It seems inconceivable that a conspiracy of this proportion could go off without Graaf becoming involved somehow. Yet, the mysterious "King of Thieves" is nowhere to be found in the Hub during these days. The gamemaster can decide just where Graaf's plans have taken him, whether it is on an expedition into the Badlands or on an incognito mission to Iver (where he has secret contacts and — if some rumours be true — family connections).

Characters

Baron Kohl Von Heller

Kohl is an interesting contradiction. On one hand, he is a typical Mantis Knight — rarely effective. But Kohl also harbors a deep secret — he truly wants to be an honorable knight of old, spreading the might of House Decados through example rather than showmanship. He is using his time on Pandemonium to collect knights into the Order who may have similar feelings to his (which is one of the reasons he is rarely on the frontlines).

Kohl hates the al-Malik. During the Emperor Wars, they destroyed his family lands and now, on Pandemonium, he considers them worthless parasites. If Kohl had his way, the al-Malik would be driven off-planet without delay.

Rank/Class: Decados Baron, Mantis Knight

Quote: "I am certain, my friend, that you will find much in common with the Order of the Mantis."

Description: A tall, dangerous looking man with raven-black hair and dark, piercing eyes. Though usually gregarious, he falls into an occasional storm of moodiness.

Body: Strength 8, Dexterity 8, Endurance 7

Mind: Wits 6, Perception 5, Tech 3

Spirit: Extrovert 5, Introvert 4, Passion 3, Calm 6, Faith 1, Ego 4

Natural skills: Dodge 6, Fight 5, Impress 8, Melee 9, Shoot 5, Vigor 4

Learned skills: Etiquette 5, Remedy 4, Ride 5

Blessing: Eloquent (+2 Extro when swaying others with speech)

Curse: Vain (-1 Per when flattered)

Wyrd: 4

Weapon: Rapier (6d), Knife (4d), Med Autofeed (5d)

Armor: Synthsilk (4d), energy shield (5/10, 10 hits)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0

The Mantis Guard

Lead by a contingent of Mantis Knights (the Decados' answer to Alexius' Questing Knights), this rabble is a mere publicity stunt for the Decados, accomplishing little more than rousing speeches or the disruption of citizen's lives.

Rank/Class: varies

Quote: "If you are innocent, you have nothing to fear from the Mantis Guard!"

Description: Young freemen and knights wearing green tabards each with a gold Mantis emblem.

Body: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Endurance 5

Mind: Wits 5, Perception 6, Tech 3



Spirit: Extrovert 5, Introvert 2, Passion 4, Calm 1, Faith 2, Ego 4

Natural skills: Fight 4, Melee 4, Observe 6, Shoot 5, Sneak 4

Learned skills: Inquiry 4, Knavery 6, Search 4, Tracking 2
Wyrd: 2

Weapon: Shotgun (8d), Rapier (5d), Knife (3d)

Fencing: Parry, Thrust, Slash

Armor: Leather Jerkin (4d), Energy Shield (5/10, 10 hits)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

Baroness Serena Vincenza

Serena ranks up there as one of the least-favored nobles on the planet. More often than not, she is out with her retinue in the shantytowns, watching barbaric (and thoroughly bloody) gladiatorial combats. She has a taste for death, and it shows.

Rank/Class: Decados Baroness

Quote: "I see you wear a sword. So pretty... so sharp. Do you use it often?"

Description: Though she is a handsome woman, Serena suffers from an old scar that renders her face into a perpetual sneer. Her eyes are a sharp, crystalline blue, and she rarely blinks.

Body: Strength 5, Dexterity 8, Endurance 5

Mind: Wits 5, Perception 7, Tech 3

Spirit: Extrovert 7, Introvert 3, Passion 7, Calm 2, Faith 1, Ego 5

Natural skills: Dodge 6, Impress 6, Melee 7

Learned skills: Etiquette 4, Knavery 5, Ride 6, Stoic Body 2, Streetwise 1

Blessing: Suspicious (+2 Per when rivals about)

Curse: Cad (-2 Charm)

Wyrd: 5

Weapon: Rapier (5d), Palm Laser (3d, concealed)

Armor: Dueling shield (5/10, 15 hits, concealed)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

Sister Elishea DeSalvo

Sister Elishea is a well-known sight in the Slums and devoutly fights for the rights of her followers. Even the Muster likes her, and, more often than not, Sister Elishea has been able to rescue someone from their chains through a simple word.

Rank/Class: Amalthean Priest

Quote: "Forgive me, brother, but I noticed that wound needs tending. Sit here a moment while I brew you some tea."

Description: A plain woman, with unruly hair and rough, swarthy skin. Her hands are long and delicate.

Body: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Endurance 4

Mind: Wits 6, Perception 7, Tech 4

Spirit: Extrovert 5, Introvert 3, Passion 3, Calm 5, Faith 6, Ego 1

Natural skills: Charm 5, Observe 4

Learned skills: Artisan (Cooking) 2, Empathy 7, Focus 4, Inquiry 3, Physick 6, Read Urthish, Remedy 8, Speak Pandemonium Dialect, Streetwise 3

Blessing: Just (+2 Passion when righting wrongs)

Curse: Poor Liar (-2 Wits when lying)

Wyrd: 5

Weapon: none

Armor: none

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

Endomar Sordiek

Endomar's real name is Farimid Demaarcen, and he used to be a genetics Engineer specializing in Second Republic tech. While working with nanotech, he was accidentally infected by the virus-sized machines. Now, cursed with strange appetites, he has fled to Pandemonium. Unfortunately, he was recognized by the al-Malik and taken to Marquis Amil Saladin. Saladin used Endomar to learn of the upcoming conjunction of the moons (see *The Truth About Everlight*) and to appraise a huge stockpile of Second Republic tech. Endomar escaped by killing a guard. Now, Endomar hides in the Slums with the Amaltheans, using his knowledge of anatomy to aid them with healing.

Rank/Class: Engineer Crafter

Quote: "Hold! Please! It was merely an accident! I did not mean to eat his eyes!"

Description: A tall razor-thin man with sharp cheekbones and dark, sunken eyes. He wears simple clothing and talks rapidly, usually with a thin-lipped smile.

Body: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Endurance 5

Mind: Wits 7, Perception 4, Tech 7

Spirit: Extrovert 1, Introvert 5, Passion 1, Calm 3, Faith 1, Ego 3

Natural skills: Observe 5

Learned skills: Academia 5, Drive Landcraft 2, Lore (Sec-



ond Republic Tech) 4, Read Urthtech, Science (Genetics) 6, Mech Redemption 5, High Tech Redemption 6, Volt Redemption 4, Think Machine 5

Wyrd: 3

Weapon: Knife (3d)

Armor: none

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

Brother Pietro, Servant of the Flame

Brother Pietro runs the Avesti convent in the slums. To him, sin is everywhere and the wages of sin are the purging power of the Holy Flame. He despises the nobility and guilds equally, blaming them for the miserable conditions his parishioners live in.

Rank/Class: Avesti Deacon & Inquisitor

Quote: "You would speak to me of discomfort? Look to your own black heart! The demons there will drag you screaming to Gehennungap when you die!"

Description: Brother Pietro's skin is cracked with exposure to heat and his voice rasps with weary righteousness. He is blind in one eye, a bitter reminder of the one time he was merciful (he let an innocent woman he interrogated live, only to be blinded by her when she tried to protect her Antinomist husband).

Body: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Endurance 7

Mind: Wits 4, Perception 5, Tech 3

Spirit: Extrovert 3, Introvert 5, Passion 5, Calm 2, Faith 5, Ego 1

Natural skills: Impress 7, Observe 4, Shoot 7, Sneak 4, Vigor 6

Learned skills: Focus 4, Remedy 3, Search 5, Speak Pandemonium Dialect, Stoic Body 3, Stoic Mind 5, Streetwise 3, Torture 2

Blessing: Pious (+2 Extro among sinful)

Curse: Prideful (-2 Calm when insulted)

Wyrd: 5

Weapon: Flamegun (5d/3d each turn until no dmg is rolled)

Armor: Studded Leather and flame-retardant robes (7d, +3d vs fire)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0

Avesti Brethren

Rank/Class: Avesti Novitiates

Quote: "Stop!" (Whoosh! — then the sounds of someone burning)

Description: The Brethren keep themselves covered in full length, crusted brown robes. They smell strongly of burned flesh and ka-oil.

Body: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Endurance 4

Mind: Wits 4, Perception 6, Tech 3

Spirit: Extrovert 1, Introvert 3, Passion 5, Calm 1, Faith 5, Ego 1

Natural skills: Charm 4, Fight 6, Impress 6, Melee 6, Observe 5, Shoot 6

Learned skills: Inquiry 6, Lore (Avesti Doctrine) 3, Search 6, Torture 2, Physick 3

Wyrd: 5

Weapon: Flamegun (5d/3d each turn until no dmg is rolled), club (4d)

Armor: Studded leather and flame-retardant robes (7d, +3d vs fire)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

Argos Halfman

Argos is a fixture around the Guild Sector, having returned here after the Emperor Wars. He knows every inch of the place, and is willing to show it for the right price. When he was younger, Argos worked for the al-Malik on Criticorum. When a Decados grenade blew off his left leg and arm, it was Saladin al-Malik who dragged him to safety. Argos has always looked after Saladin since, alerting him to any opportunity he sees. It was Argos who alerted Saladin to Endomar and it is Argos's men who are helping Saladin carry out his plans.

Rank/Class: Muster Sergeant

Quote: "If yer wanting to go that way, that'd be fine, but for a half-guilder, I can show yer a way past the Chainer Gang yer about to run into."

Description: Old, incredibly wrinkled, with beady black eyes and a smile that cracks open his face. Argos' left arm and leg are cybernetic.

Body: Strength 5, Dexterity 6, Endurance 7

Mind: Wits 5, Perception 4, Tech 5

Spirit: Extrovert 3, Introvert 1, Passion 3, Calm 4, Faith 3, Ego 1

Natural skills: Fight 6, Impress 5, Melee 4, Observe 5, Shoot 8, Vigor 5

Learned skills: Gambling 5, Inquiry 4, Knavery 5, Remedy 4, Stoic Body 2, Mech Redemption 3, Warfare (Demolitions) 2

Blessing: Curious (+2 Extro when seeing something new)

Curse: Limp (base run = 8 meters)

Wyrd: 3

Weapon: Shotgun (8d), Knife (3d)

Armor: Stiffsynth (7d)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0

Jeziah Sheridan

Jeziah Sheridan runs the Engineer's Guild on Pandemonium. She prizes efficiency above all else, even her own health. She has been in charge long enough to know who knows what and how everything works.

Rank/Class: Engineer

Quote: (at a rapid clip) "There. 32.6 seconds more of my time wasted. Hurry up or leave."

Description: A short, squat woman, she has a piercing gaze that has the uncanny ability to silence anyone. She also has a sharp, clockwork mind and an incredible sense of timing.



Body: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Endurance 3
Mind: Wits 7, Perception 4, Tech 7
Spirit: Extrovert 1, Introvert 3, Passion 4, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 4
Natural skills: Impress 6, Observe 5, Shoot 7
Learned skills: Read Urthtech, Science (Engineering) 7, Search 4, Mech Redemption 8, Volt Redemption 6, High-Tech Redemption 4, Think Machine 5
Blessing: Shrewd (+2 Wits against fast-talk attempts)
Curse: Disrespectful (-2 Extro around authority figures)
Wyrd: 3
Weapon: Med Autofeed (5d)
Armor: Energy shield (5/10, 10 hits)
Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0

Muster Squad

Rank/Class: Muster Privates

Quote: "Remember us?" (The sound of a club being slapped against a hand.)

Description: The Muster tend to dress in brownish-black leather, with belts filled with clips they can attach equipment to.

Body: Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Endurance 8
Mind: Wits 4, Perception 5, Tech 5
Spirit: Extrovert 5, Introvert 2, Passion 4, Calm 2, Faith 1, Ego 4
Natural skills: Dodge 5, Fight 6, Impress 6, Melee 6, Observe 5, Shoot 6
Learned skills: Drive 4, Lore (Guild Sector) 4, Search 6, Streetwise 4, Tracking 5
Wyrd: 4
Weapon: Frap Stick (6d electrical, 3d normal), Knife (4d), handcuffs
Armor: Studded leather (5d)
Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

Al-Malik Knights

Rank/Class: al-Malik Knights

Quote: "Ah, a challenge!"

Description: Well-groomed, bearded knights, wearing elegant clothing & reddish-brown capes.

Body: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Endurance 5
Mind: Wits 5, Perception 6, Tech 3
Spirit: Extrovert 2, Introvert 6, Passion 6, Calm 2, Faith 3, Ego 1
Natural skills: Fight 4, Impress 4, Melee 4, Observe 6
Learned skills: Etiquette 4, Inquiry 4, Social (Debate) 6
Wyrd: 2
Weapon: Rapier (5d), Knife (3d), Med Revolver (5d)
Fencing: Parry, Thrust, Fancy Footwork
Armor: Energy Shield (5/10, 10 hits)
Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

Amil Saladin al-Malik

Saladin is a complex man with a complex agenda. He truly believes that the Decados are destroying this world and wishes to see them stopped. He even has evidence that they tampered with the incomplete jumpgate in the system, perhaps causing the malfunctions in the terraforming grid that led to Everlight's ever-closer orbit to the planet.

Argos gave Endomar to Saladin, who then blackmailed the Engineer into working for him. From Endomar, Saladin found out about the upcoming conjunction of the three moons (see *The Truth About Everlight*) and realized the potential to which this information could be used. He also used Endomar to sort through a huge collection of recently uncovered Second Republic tech.

Saladin came up with a simple plan. First, his spies spread the lie that Everlight would crash into the planet. Then, he backed this up with a few well-paid rumors from Argos's Muster squad to keep the panic flowing. This chaos would give him the opportunity to move the tech off-planet without Avesti or Decados interference. Secondly, the riots would serve as a perfect cover for the assassination of the Mantis Guard. So far, both of these goals seem to be working just fine.

Saladin is an extremely cautious man, but causing a riot on this scale could get him killed. He will always cover his tracks, sacrificing friends like Argos, if necessary, to stay alive.

Rank/Class: al-Malik Marquis

Quote: "Ah. I can see how you may perceive such a thing. But trust me in this — perceptions often lie."

Description: A pleasant-looking man with a full face, an aging warrior's body, and highly intelligent eyes. He wears well-tailored, plain clothing and smokes exotic cigars.

Body: Strength 4, Dexterity 7, Endurance 5
Mind: Wits 7, Perception 7, Tech 4
Spirit: Extrovert 5, Introvert 5, Passion 4, Calm 5, Faith 2, Ego 4
Natural skills: Charm 7, Dodge 6, Fight 4, Impress 8, Melee 8, Shoot 7
Learned skills: Empathy 4, Etiquette 7, Knavery 5, Remedy 3, Ride 5, Social (Oratory) 5, Speak Gracious Tongue, Stoic Mind 3, Think Machine 3
Blessing: Gracious (+2 Extro to guests)
Curse: Vengeful (-3 Calm when slighted)
Wyrd: 5
Weapon: Rapier (5d), Laser Pistol (5d)
Armor: Synthsilk (4d), Dueling Shield (5/10, 15 hits)
Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

A Healing Draught

By Brian Campbell

The wealthier citizens of the Hub, Pandemonium's capital city, have isolated themselves from the poor, the desperate and the destitute. The city has been flooded with lost souls trying to find a way off-world — so many that Count Enis Sharn has financed the construction of a massive stone barrier around the city. Within these walls, there is at least a pretense of civility; outside them, there is no hope. Crossing this boundary is like traveling to another world. Crude shantytowns look out upon miles and miles of desolate Badlands.

Priests and nobles wade into the masses of human souls with the best of intentions, but the population's poverty far exceeds their charity. The sight of so much suffering tests the faith of even the most devout. Yet despite the rampant poverty, injustice and hopelessness, the faithful survive. Throughout this drama, the characters have a choice: they can choose to be heroic, high-minded and ethical, or they may become devious and diabolical, seizing whatever they can to survive. How this drama resolves depends on which path they follow....

Getting the Characters Involved

As with many stories, this tale begins with a rumor whispered throughout the city. Allegedly, a wandering priest has found a rare artifact in the Badlands. This is hardly surprising, since the local "landstorms" — massive upheavals in Pandemonium's terrain — often churn up tech abandoned by the planet's previous inhabitants. Whether the characters hear this news in a shadowy corner of the Aragon Destrier, Mama Jazi's, a guildhouse barracks, or an antechamber of Manse Sharn is irrelevant. The informant is cynical, stating that a lone priest doesn't stand an ice cube's chance on Pyre of surviving for long outside the walls.

That same day, another character hears of some other reason to travel outside the city. Fabricate an excuse tailored to a specific character. A merchant may find out about illegal trade in an item the entourage desperately wants, or a noble may find out about a householder who has been reduced to abject poverty in a Badlands shantytown. No matter what motivation you invent, make sure it is an ut-

terly plausible and diabolical lie. They won't find out about this subterfuge until after they've left the city.

Outside the city, the rumors of widespread suffering have basis in fact. The shantytown has deteriorated to appalling conditions of squalor. Dispossessed serfs are suffering from dehydration, starvation and disease — there has been a drought here for the last three weeks. Masses of humanity lay about in crude tents, or find shade wherever they can. Nearby, a series of long trenches serve as a crude sewage system, but there is no water to wash the effluvia away. The starving steal from the sick; the desperate rob the dead. It is impossible to sink any lower than living beyond the Hub's stone walls.

There is one more complication: When nobles or high-ranking guildmembers first arrive in the Hub, they have the option of obtaining identification papers from the local Reeves. These are essential for entering and leaving the city. If characters try to return inside the city before this drama is over, they'll find that their passes are no longer recognized. This might be the result of the character's actions in a previous drama, an insidious scheme devised by the Decados, a perceived slight avenged by the Reeve's Guild, or simply a case of mistaken identity. Regardless, it will be several days before their entourage can enter the city again. Let the slumming begin.

Mercy: A Priest in Danger

Streetwise characters may have heard (Wits + Streetwise) that three minor syndicates struggle for control of this territory. True to form, each one is known within the city for upholding a legitimate business; outside the walls, they are better known for their extralegal specialties. For instance, the Sirocco Syndicate maintains a thin veneer of legitimacy by hiring out cheap muscle as "bodyguards." At a moment's notice, their members may be called up to work as "leg-breakers," collection agents or enforcers.

After witnessing scenes of human suffering, the entourage encounters a more violent horror. A hesychast priest is surrounded by a pack of men in filthy jumpsuits. One kicks dirt in the priest's face; a second kicks him as he tries to get up. The thugs of this gang are well-fed, in decent shape,



and utterly intimidating to someone who's starving to death. As one of them raises his hand to smash the mendicant monk across his face, an observant character (Perception + Streetwise) may notice a small whirlwind tattoo on the back of the thug's hand; this confirms the involvement of the Sirocco Syndicate. A Wits + Hub Lore roll informs the character that this syndicate is tied to the Scravers.

If the characters are heroic, they will no doubt be appalled at the gang's callous disregard for human life. Any nobles present are probably ready to enforce low justice. Even if the characters are scum, they may at least expect that the gang wouldn't be putting the screws to a lone hesychast unless he had something they wanted. Regardless of their motivation, the entourage may feel compelled to save a holy man from an ignominious beating.

The gang members are little more than hired meat and are far from masters of unarmed combat. Cinematic gamemasters may embellish this scene with down-and-dirty tactics: the thugs try to blind opponents with thrown handfuls of dirt, toss someone into patch of cactus, or even hurl someone into a sewage ditch. Humiliation is more important than actual damage. These mooks won't fight to the death, but are paid to run for their lives after someone gets in a few good blows. Normally, this is because they're supposed to report anyone stronger than they are to the *real* enforcers.

The Hesychast

The lone priest is eternally grateful for the entourage's aid. Regardless of the characters' motivations, he is deeply impressed. "*The Prophet would be proud of men like you,*" he professes, "*heroes who embody the virtue of mercy!*" The mendicant monk's name is Von Effman, and he is convinced that the characters' appearance is a miracle, the result of divine intervention. He immediately confides in them and begs for aid:

"You have been sent, no doubt, to aid me in my travels. I have come into town to beg a few meager provisions for my quest. I see the Pancreator has provided me with great riches! Perhaps you have also had the vision, yes? A cup overflowing, a nobleman in shining armor? A healing draught? I implore that you aid me. As you can see, I no longer have the strength to make such a journey on my own. Scravers and nomads prowl the Badlands. The Pancreator will bless you with providence if you protect me in my travels."

If the players are the sort who will follow any lead to heroic adventure, the adventure is underway. If they are skeptical or their characters are mercenary, however, the monk will at least settle for some protection while he finds food and water.

Long Shadows

Throughout the rest of the drama, the hesychast continually worries at a rosary made of small pieces of bone. He also seems obsessed with his companions' actions, describing them in terms of the seven virtues detailed by the Prophet Zebulon in the Omega Gospels. He has already spoken highly of their *mercy*; he is also eager to commend any other virtues they display. His own actions are monitored with even greater fanaticism; he is eager to admit any minor sin he perceives in himself.

If a priest present performs the theurgic rite: Rending the Veil of Unreason, he sees that the monk's soul shines like a mirror that is polished regularly. There are only the faintest traces of spiritual imperfection. Despite this, a slight tarnish lies beneath the surface, like a sin that will never go away. Further scrutiny fails to identify what could have changed such a holy man forever.

There is a reason for this. The priest will reveal several days later that he was banished from his Orthodox monastery, though he is loathe to explain why. His dark secret is that he does not always have "visions" of his ancestor — sometimes, he purposefully *summons* him. While acting as a missionary among the Ur-Ukar, he discovered a hidden talent for the forbidden practices of Manja, an ancient art of ancestor worship. The hesychast has a knack for finding religious relics because his ancestors give him hints of where they might be. He hides this secret until the very end of the drama. If a psychic tries to search through his mind for the truth, the hesychast resists with a Faith + Stoic Mind roll. His goal number is 18; his will has been strengthened by countless years of hardship.

The Living Land

The hesychast can guide the entourage to the relic he seeks, following the revelations he saw in his vision. Wandering in the Badlands near the Groaning Desert does more than test a traveler's strength and endurance: it also tests his very soul. It is not uncommon for holy men to wander through this remote realm as a test of their own faith. Privation and suffering reveals their own flaws and failings.

Traveling to the site should take about four days. Each day, the entourage experiences an event that tests their character. Von Effman sees each occurrence as a test of faith and is all too willing to speak of the seven virtues of the Orthodox Church. You may also want to compose brief stories about Zebulon and the seven saints as examples of virtuous behavior.

Humility: Begging for Food

Even if the characters aren't sure they want to follow the hesychast into the Badlands, they should at least honor his request for provisions. If they attempt this within an hour of their first encounter with the Sirocco thugs, they're



Saintliness and Sin

Here are the virtues and vices the hesychast watches for. This set of beliefs is a very simplified guide to the Urth Orthodox faith.

Virtues	Vices
Questing	Pride
Loyalty	Greed
Compassion	Lust
Protection	Envy
Justice	Sloth
Wisdom	Wrath
Humility	Oathbreaking
Discipline	

able to find a few crude supplies for him. Cloth-wrapped bundles of bland, yet nourishing, food and rickety brute carts are available. Finding water, however, is impossible. The few gourds of brackish liquid these serfs own are treasured like family heirlooms. The Badlands are often plagued by lengthy droughts. Everyone is terrified at the thought of dying of thirst, and water is as hard to find here as hope.

Any rolls to appeal to the locals' sense of charity (Extrovert + Charm is an excellent choice) should be made at anywhere from a -1 to a -5, depending on skillful roleplaying. Heroic entourages may use Oratory or Performance to encourage generosity, Inquiry to find a family that's willing to part with their possessions for a few firebirds, or even Streetwise to find peasants who hate the Sirocco Syndicate enough to provision their enemies. Regardless of the traits used, the amount of food a character gains depends on the number of victory points he scores on this roll. If a character attempts several different rolls, use the highest result. Regardless, no one scores more than six days worth of food.

After the monk has been provisioned, he is obsequiously grateful. If the characters were respectful of the starving serfs, he praises them for their *humility*. If they immediately set off into the Badlands with him with no food at all, he also commends them for their *discipline*. If they are intent on ripping off a bunch of serfs, the hesychast gives a brief admonition about *greed*. At first, he will be subtle in these sorts of remarks, but toward the end of the drama, he becomes more fanatic, and will use all the restraint of an Avestite teaching Sunday school.

Revelations: A Prophetic Vision

Some players may feel their entourage needs a stronger motivation for following this monk through hell and high water. If the heroes show signs that they are hesitant to follow this madman, or if their morale wavers during the



first few days of the journey, have the hesychast stop and hold up his hand to signal for silence. The most observant character (Perception + Observe) then sees in the distance a man in a full suit of Gothic plate mail in the midst of the sweltering heat.

Once the rest of the characters notice, he lifts a shining chalice, as if offering a cool draught of water. The vision fades soon thereafter, but not before the sound of thunder echoes through the heavens. At that point, a sudden downpour prophetically ends the drought. The water is muddy, and barely palatable, but it's enough to put an end to weeks of drought. The monk dramatically turns towards our heroes and speaks. "*You have seen the vision. The Pancreator has revealed his intentions.*" Nothing further need be said; he resumes his trek across the desert. Anyone seeking the miraculous follows.

Complications: Sirocco Enforcers

The characters may decide to track down the Sirocco gang's boss (Karst Olafson; see *Characters* in the Pandemonium Primer chapter) and steal *his* food. He isn't alone, however; he also commands a tough pack of enforcers. If the characters don't come looking for them, they'll come looking for the characters. In fact, they may even decide to follow them into the desert, perhaps even following their tracks all the way to the relic. If the gamemaster chooses this combat, he'll need to boost the traits for the Sirocco gang (see *Characters*, below) before the rematch. Raise the combat skills of their reinforcements, set an ambush, and let revenge take its course.

Discipline: Surviving the Badlands

Once the characters stumble out of the shantytown, surviving in the Badlands is difficult, but not impossible. The farther one travels from the city, the more difficult life becomes. Each day the entourage progresses, have one character make a Perception + Survival roll; for each day's travel beyond the wall, add a -2 difficulty to the roll. Each victory point scored represents one day's worth of food for three people. If a character cannot eat or drink that day, mark off one Vitality level. (Scout guildsmembers can make complementary Badlands Lore rolls to aid them.)

The terrain is an odd mix of various types of desert. Any food found is nasty, to say the least: roots and scrub, bits of bark, and the odd lizard. If the characters endure these challenges stoically, the hesychast commends them for their *discipline*. If, on the other hand, any villain demands that others sacrifice food or work to keep him comfortable, the priest mutters about that individual's *sloth*.

By the end of the first day, if someone succeeds on a Perception + Tracking roll, he finds the stumbling tracks of

a starving brute. By nightfall, the characters can actually track down this beast of burden: a six-legged brute slowly plods through the desert with a cart lashed to its back. Inside, there are several empty water gourds and three decomposing bodies. Even a vulture wouldn't eat them.

Complications: Shaky Ground

If anyone scores less than five successes on the Survival roll for any given day, one of Pandemonium's infamous landstorms endangers everyone. Start with a Perception + Observe roll as the ground begins to shake. With one victory point, the characters have one turn to react to the sudden phenomenon; ask for immediate responses. A few possible catastrophes are listed below.

— An earthquake throws everyone to the ground. Anyone perceptive enough to brace for the impact can make a Strength + Vigor roll to avoid 3d damage; anyone caught off guard makes the roll at a -4.

— A chasm filled with roiling poisonous gas opens up. Anyone failing a Dodge roll to get out of the way takes 4d of damage. Anyone who scores less than one victory point falls *into* the chasm and takes damage every turn from suffocation until he is rescued.

— Jagged rocks shoot up from the ground, forming a 20-foot lava formation. The character with the fewest successes on his Perception + Observe roll must Dodge or suffer 5d damage.

Compassion: A Refugee Family

A few desperate souls prefer stalking the Badlands to enduring syndicate exploitation. One day during the journey, the entourage sees a family of six starving peasants stumbling over rocky terrain on the horizon. Their clothes have been torn to shreds by the thorny bushes surrounding them. Despite their privation, they are obviously walking *away* from the city, not toward it.

The strangers are paranoid at first, fully expecting the travelers to rob them (or worse). They may even choose to flee. If the characters actually hunt them down, these frightened wanderers beg for mercy and tell the entourage about "desert nomads" who wiped out their home, a village deep in the wasteland. Their eldest daughter was captured and will no doubt be sold into slavery.

A heroic entourage may decide to offer food or money to this family. If they do, the hesychast makes a remark about their sense of *compassion*; otherwise, he berates them for being so *greedy* as to place their needs above the starving. If the characters offer them the brute and its cart, the priest is even more pleased. Shortly thereafter, the family falls upon the beast with drawn knives, butchering it and drinking its blood before the very eyes of our heroes.

A nomad gang also prowls through this domain. In the stretch of desert, a small family has established a sort of “Brewer’s Guild.” Joseph Brewer, an elderly scoundrel, has installed a still on the back of a rickety old alcohol-powered vehicle, allowing him to set up shop wherever he pleases. His family has redeemed several transports; he uses some of his hooch to fuel their operation.

Each leviathan vehicle carries four or five guild members in desert robes up front and a massive vat of crude alcohol in back. Liquid that isn't used as fuel is later sold as a mind-numbing intoxicant. "Brewer's Unleaded" is the swill of choice: a nasty, yellowish liquid with the kick of a rampaging Vorox. Villages in the Badlands are eager to trade for it. Thriving settlements buy more alcohol to celebrate their successes; struggling ones are later victimized, providing a few more slaves to sell to the Chainers.

Anyone keeping an eye out for trouble (a successful Perception + Observe roll) notices one of Brewer's vehicles rolling across the desert. If anyone achieves five or more successes, he notices that two of the passengers are in chains. If they have met the starving family, one of the women chained to the transport bears an amazing resemblance. There are two obvious options:

— If your players are combat junkies, and they've still got their brute cart, they'll no doubt look forward to a raucous "Mad Max" chase scene across the desert. The hesychast commends their sense of *justice*, and the drama proceeds to....

A Thundering Chase Scene: If your players are spoiling for a fight, havoc reigns. A few embellishments can make this combat even more dramatic.

— The driver of the brute cart may make contested Drive rolls against one of the Brewers if he chooses to flee or pursue. Since the cart is slower, the driver gets a -4 to his roll.

— The brute-cart driver may be able to goad the beast into moving faster (Wits + Beastlore or Dexterity + Drive Beastcraft). Unfortunately, the beast will die about an hour after such heavy exertion.

— Using ranged weapons from a moving vehicle is difficult. Weapons fired from a jostling brute cart are at a -4. One of Brewer's guards has a bow and three arrows; he fires at -4. The characters may prefer to close with their enemies and fight with swords and blows.

— Once the brute cart closes with one of Brewer's vehicles, the two drivers have to jockey for position. Each one

Speed	Armor	Fuel	RNG	Cargo	People
6 km/hr	2d	Feed	50 km	1 ton	1/12

Vitality (cart): Ruin/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0

Vitality (brute): -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

Speed	Armor	Fuel	RNG	Cargo	People
60 km/hr	4d	Alcohol	100 km	100 kg	1/6

Vitality (cart): Ruin/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

Tech Level: 4

rolls Dexterity + Drive. Take the higher roll, convert it to victory points, and give everyone in that vehicle a bonus to hit with their melee weapons.

— Feel free to throw out obstacles for both drivers to avoid: patches of cacti, a herd of stampeding beasts, or even a gaping chasm. Roll Dex + Drive, with a penalty between -1 and -5.

— On a critical Drive roll, one vehicle causes 5d damage to the other. Anyone with a ranged weapon can take a pot-shot with no penalty; anyone with a melee weapon can take a swipe at the vehicle with a +5 to hit.

— Fire makes tanks of alcohol explode. Brute carts next to flaming vehicles may also burst into flames. Stray gunfire may hit the alcohol vats, spewing flammable chemicals just about anywhere. One of the passengers has a lighter, and is stupid enough to use it.

If the characters slay the Brewers, or at least leave them stranded in the desert, they gain command of a wicked transport and a massive vat of alcohol. The two female slaves chained to the vat are obsequiously grateful.

On the last day of the drama, Von Effman confides in the character who has demonstrated the greatest virtue (or least amount of vice) so far. *"I do not undertake these journeys for wealth, my friend. I have taken a vow of poverty. I had no choice after I left the Orthodox Church."* He is reticent about confessing *why* he left the Urth Orthodox sect; he only declares that he was sinful. The hesychast then asks his friend to promise to deliver the relic safely to the shrine. If the character accepts, he offers a gift. In gratitude, he shows his friend a small electronic compass. This device is a think machine that points to the coordinates of his ultimate destination: a hesychast monastery called the Temple of the Burning Bush. He also commends his ally for trusting him with such *loyalty*. If the promise is not made, the priest falls into silent, fatalistic introspection for the rest of the day.

The Final Rite

On the final day of the journey, Von Effman staggers to his feet and motions for the entourage to stop. He takes a few more steps, falls to his knees, and prays. He turns to the character who took the oath earlier. This is a final test of character; *oathbreaking* is considered a sin by the Orthodox Church. *"Despite what you see, you must safely deliver the relic to the Church. Tell them of my deeds. This is the site I saw in my vision."*

He then asks the Pancreator for forgiveness for what he is about to do. He produces the rosary and mumbles in vulgar Latin. As he continues, he grows fanatic, and eventually begins shouting in Ukari. He drops the rosary beads and takes two long rib bones from a pouch at his side, rubbing them together. (A Wits + Occult, Theology or Academia roll identifies the prayer as a Manja chant; otherwise, the priest just looks like a madman.) The grounds shakes; a chasm opens wide. The gamemaster should ask the players for their characters' immediate responses as the very earth opens up.

As with the earlier landstorms, anyone who hesitates falls into a 10-foot pit opening in the earth. As long as a character dives for cover beforehand, he should be safe. Anyone who falls inside will see the holy relic resting in the middle of the cave. There is a suit of armor beside it... one that slowly rises from the ground. Within moments, the armor fills with rotting flesh; this then transforms into a living husk of a man. Von Effman once again mutters three words over and over: *"...a healing draught... a healing draught..."*

If the Characters Are Virtuous: If the entourage waits for the hesychast to enter the cave first, he will kneel before the reanimated knight. For a moment, the Husk's broadsword is raised above the priest's head; if no one intervenes, he thrusts it into the ground before the priest and then offers him the chalice. The mendicant monk intones: *"Pancreator, forgive my sins and offer unto me this healing draught."* Reverently, the priest swallows the draught from the chalice... and then falls to the ground, dead. (Casting Rending the Veil of Unreason just before he dies reveals that the stain on the priest's soul is gone.) The knight places the cup beside the holy man's body, makes the sign of the jumpgate, and collapses. As long as no one intervenes, he does not attack.

If the Characters are Treacherous: If the entourage consists of villains and scoundrels, they'll just kill this mad cultist and attempt to steal the chalice. If this happens, the reanimated knight peers through his visor gains a glimpse into the characters' souls. It "breathes" deeply, gaining strength from every act of sin the characters have committed since they left the Hub. The Husk starts with 10 Vitality levels; increase this by three levels for each act of *vice* the

Virtue and Vice

The Husk's Vitality levels depend on the number of times the characters displayed *vice*; each vice adds three to its base 10 rating. In addition, virtues provide positive modifiers for using the chalice, while vices provide negative modifiers. Here are the most significant ones from the drama.

<i>Pride</i> (-1)	Demanding aid from the starving impoverished peasants
<i>Greed</i> (-1)	Stealing from the needy
<i>Sloth</i> (-1)	Letting the slavers escape; allowing others to tend to one's needs
<i>Lust</i> (-1)	Taking "liberties" with the slaves
<i>Wrath</i> (-1)	Inflicting unusually cruel punishment on the Brewers
<i>Mercy</i> (+1)	Saving the hesychast from the Scravers
<i>Humility</i> (+1)	Humbly asking for aid in the shantytown
<i>Discipline</i> (+1)	Enduring the trials of the desert without complaint
<i>Compassion</i> (+1)	Aiding the refugee family
<i>Justice</i> (+1)	Setting out after the nomad gang to avenge the villages
<i>Loyalty</i> (+1)	Helping a fellow hero endure great hardship during the drama
<i>Questing</i> (+1)	Successfully arriving at the Burning Bush Temple

entourage displayed on its quest. (See the Virtue and Vice sidebar for more details.) The summoned knight fights with the fury of vengeance; its sword goal roll is 16. Curiously, guns and energy weapons don't harm it; only fists, kicks or low tech (TL 4 or less) melee weapons inflict damage. The last solid blow scatters the fragments of armor as the cup clatters to the ground. If any of the players are delusional enough to believe they've just found the Holy Grail, let them persist, at least until a priest shatters their illusions.

Questing: Delivering the Tabernacle Chalice

Anyone examining the cup will notice that the words the priest spoke (or was about to speak) are engraved around the rim of the cup. Anyone who kneels, says the inscribed words, and attempts to drink from the chalice can make a Faith + Empathy or Focus roll. For each instance that the character displayed virtue during the quest, add one to the goal number; for each instance of vice, subtract one.

Each character has *one* attempt. If his roll succeeds, he regains all of his Wyrd and his Wyrd rating *permanently* increases by one. If a psychic or theurgist drinks from the

chalice, it can also remove spiritual imperfections, lowering Urge or Hubris by one level. At the gamemaster's option, if a character achieved a critical success on his Faith roll while drinking from the chalice, his Faith *permanently* increases by one.

Alternatively, the chalice can also be used to "heal" soil in the Badlands. Once per week, if a virtuous man or woman fills the chalice with water and pours it on the ground, the area will be safe from landstorms for seven days. Anything planted on that spot prospers — quite a blessing for the suffering villages of the Badlands.

Resolution: The Burning Bush

As long as the character who promised to deliver the chalice continues to travel to the Temple of the Burning Bush, the relic works. If the oathbound character decides to turn back towards the town, the golden chalice turns black. *Oathbreaking* is a serious vice, and the holy relic will not work for the unholy. Once the characters reach the shantytown, the metal turns to tin, and the cup appears battered and worthless. The guards at the city gates may accept the stolen think machine compass as a bribe to let them back in.

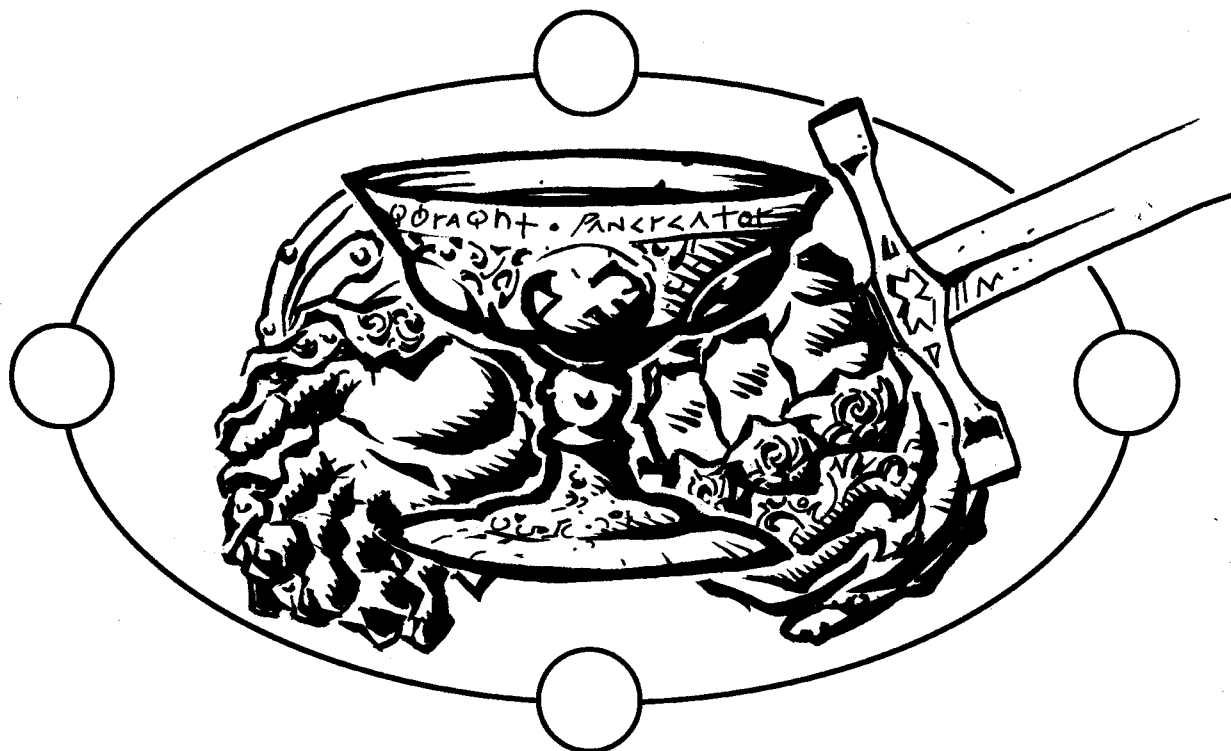
If the characters want to press on, you may choose to fast forward to their arrival at the Temple of the Burning Bush, an obscure hesychast monastery populated by a small group of monks seeking enlightenment through an ascetic desert existence. The austere stone shrine is an amazing contrast to the desolate landscape that surrounds it. The

interior is a cave surrounded by walls of bas reliefs; the exterior is a massive rock formation embellished with rock carvings in the style of one of Urth's Gothic cathedrals. Atop the church's spire, an eternal flame burns in the center of a stone representation of a jumpgate.

Once the characters stumble inside the church, the holy men (and women) provide them with water and offer to tend to their wounds. The priest of the church is saddened to hear of the death of Von Effman; he describes him as a holy man who fell from grace. At the sight of the golden cup, his disposition changes. He immediately identifies the Tabernacle Chalice (silencing any tales of the Holy Grail). This was a relic guarded by one of the Knights of Lextius, created to give divine assistance to those who spread the virtues of the Prophet throughout the stars.

Reverently, the priest receives the cup and places it on the altar of the church. From this time onward, it can bestow its healing draft once each month upon the most virtuous traveler who petitions for aid. The priest states his belief that the Healing Draught may very well have washed away the hesychast's sins. Anyone who humbly fulfills this quest receives the blessings of the deacon. He bestows a gift upon them: an aged sheet of vellum, detailing his gratitude. If the travelers present this at the Orthodox Church in the Hub, they acquire a very thankful contact. By showing the scroll to the Decados guards at the city walls, they can also claim to be on Church business and return to the city.

As the entourage treks back towards the Hub, we conclude our passion play.



Characters



Von Effman

Race: Human

Rank/Class: Hesychast Priest

Body: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Endurance 6

Mind: Wits 7, Perception 5, Tech 3

Spirit: Extrovert 4, Introvert 6, Passion 3, Calm 6, Faith 9, Ego 1

Natural skills: Charm 5, Observe 5

Learned skills: Academia 1, Alchemy 2, Empathy 4, Focus 8, Lore (Church legendry) 4, Remedy 6, Physick 2, Read Latin, Search 2, Speak Pandemonium Dialect, Stoic Body 3, Stoic Mind 9, Survival 3

Occult: Theurgy 3

Rites: Prophet's Blessing, Laying On of Hands, Advisor (Manja rite)

Wyrd: 7

Weapon: Knife (3d)

Armor: none

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

Sirocco Thugs

Race: Human

Quote: "Where is it, scum? Speak up! Dammit, you're bleeding all over me!"

Body: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Endurance 4

Mind: Wits 6, Perception 7, Tech 4

Spirit: Extrovert 4, Introvert 3, Passion 3, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 3

Natural skills: Dodge 4, Fight 4, Impress 3, Melee 4, Observe 7, Shoot 3, Sneak 7, Vigor 7

Learned skills: Inquiry 3, Search 7, Tracking 6

Wyrd: 3

Weapons: Punch (2d), Kick (3d)

(Two of the thugs know the maneuver: Martial Throw)

Armor: None

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0

Brewer's Slavers

Race: Human

Quote: "Faster, damn you!"

Body: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Endurance 4

Mind: Wits 5, Perception 5, Tech 6

Spirit: Extrovert 5, Introvert 2, Passion 2, Calm 2, Faith 3, Ego 2

Natural skills: Dodge 4, Fight 4, Impress 3, Melee 6, Observe 5, Shoot 6

Learned skills: Drive 7, Search 3, Tracking 3

Weapons:

— The driver has a whip (5d).

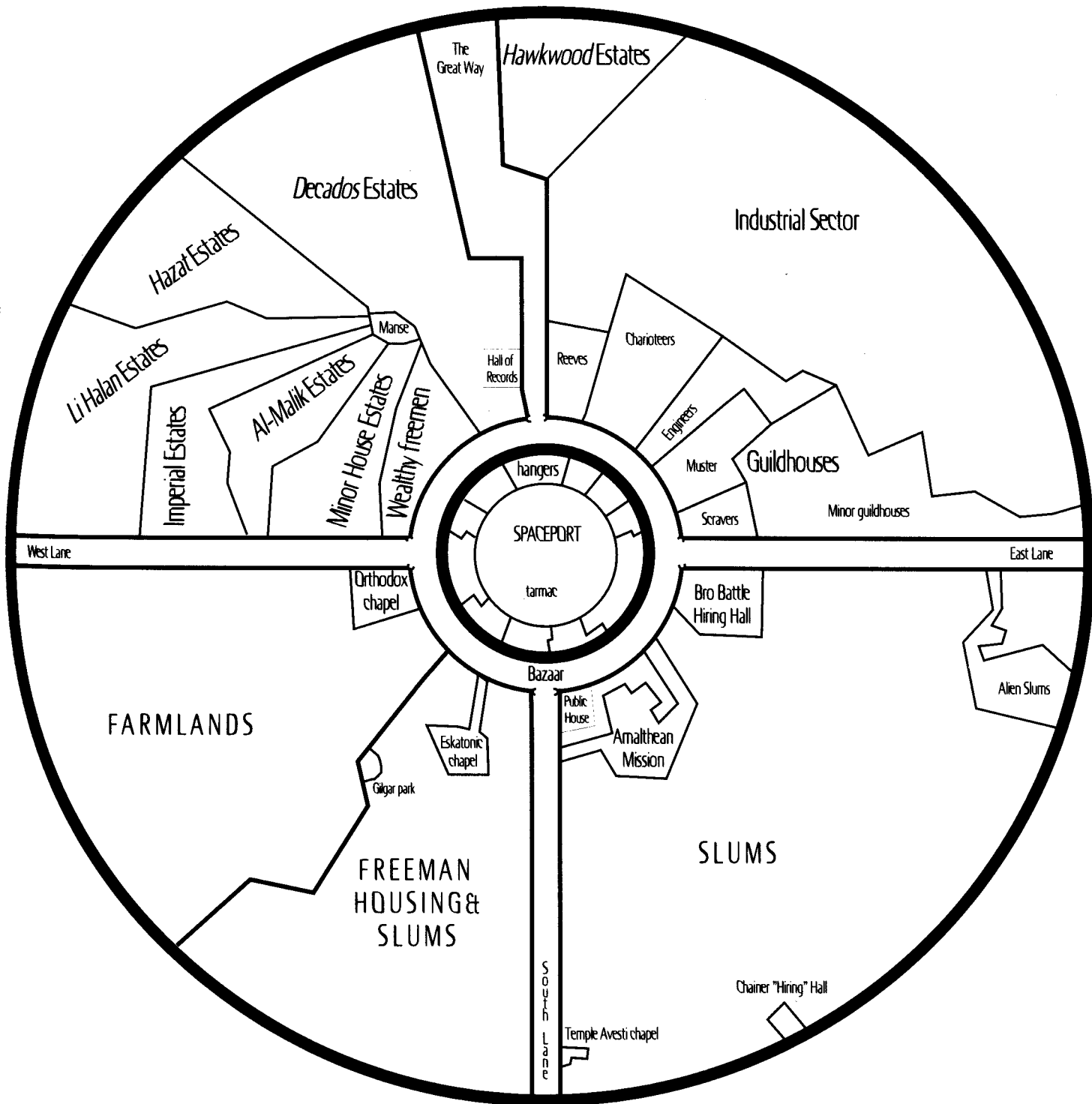
— Half of the passengers have broadswords (6d); the others have hunting bows (4d).

— The last passenger recklessly attacks with a dirk (4d) and defends with a main gauche. He performs three actions every turn.

Armor: none

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0





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