



AMERICA

Land of Monsters

AMERICA

Land of Monsters

Enter Post-Surge America, where racial tensions are at an all time high, immigration is a matter of immediate life and death for all involved, and you'd kill for a job at the burger joint around the corner.

We are the Newcomers! We've fled from the destruction of our worlds and stumbled onto Earth, circa 2018. Our new lives are complicated by our demi-human traits and our cultural differences, but we must preserve.

America is Hard! Nobody is waiting to tell us how this new world works. Legal issues stand in the way of our citizenship at every turn. Corporations are leery of investing in us. Jobs are hard to get when your hands are claws.

Big Business is Scary! While we've escaped the obvious evil of The Great Dark One, we're unprepared for the insidious control the corporate world exerts on us all. Are we consumers, products, or both?

Corruption is Rampant! Behind a veneer of politeness, everyone's trying to get something. Who can you trust when so much of our livelihoods depends on social currency we weren't given in the first place, or money we're not allowed or able to earn?

Our Stories are Wild! Life ranges from amusingly disastrous to sickeningly grotesque. Which will our story be? Will we struggle to keep a stable job or struggle to keep our sanity?

America: Land of Monsters is an expansion for Heroines of the First Age, with a fully-fleshed setting, 7 Modern Archetypes, 24 new adversaries, and extensive rules for dealing with the hardest parts of life in the States.

Trigger Warning: Racism, Domestic Violence, Discrimination, Sex, Profanity

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AMERICA: LAND OF MONSTERS
A Campaign Setting for Heroines of the First Age by Voidspiral
Entertainment
And Powered by the Apocalypse

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I was just an alchemist's apprentice before the darkness came. My father was a court mage and my mother was an enchantress, but they weren't really important to the defense of the realm in the grand scheme of things. Not when the demons came.

They first we heard of them, they'd destroyed a border town by the sea. The next we heard of them, they were raining down brimstone and ash on the capital. I was lucky that the alchemist thought to take refuge in the Gate, if he hadn't, I wouldn't have made it out of Yazador.

When I awoke, I couldn't tell if I had been killed or taken to Hell by the demons. Giant metal beasts careened past me every which way, speeding faster than a bolt of lightning and moving in perfect synchronicity and formation. That was when I almost died.

—Simbarii Tracular

A modern campaign setting for Heroines of the First Age.

In America Land of Monsters, players are demi-humans who have recently fled oppression and genocide in their fantastical ancestral homelands in favor of a chance at peace here on Earth. Demi-humans aren't used to the modern world, and it's culture clash after culture clash as these people try to find or make homes for themselves. Their sudden appearance is condemned by some humans but accepted by others, leading to all kinds of civil strife and chaos. Two years after their first arrival, the governments of Earth have finally realized that this is an issue that is here to stay,

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and that the demi-humans aren't going anywhere. We're all just going to learn to get along, whether or not it kills us.

This is a pre-generated campaign setting for Heroines of the First Age. It exists to give you the tools to quickly put together a game within a specific setting and with particular themes. Always remember that you can modify the setting as needed for your own game. The core HFARPG book covers many ways to expand the setting.

You'll need a copy of the core Heroines of the First Age book to play.

TRIGGER WARNING

This book contains topics that may not be suitable for, may cause undue stress to, or may be considered distasteful by some audiences. It is possible to run the game without encountering these topics, but they *are* presented in the book. Reader discretion is advised.

Here's a list of potentially sensitive topics covered in the book.

- Racism
- Domestic Violence
- Discrimination
- Romance, Sex, Fetishes
- Profanity, Swearing, Insults

Additionally, it's probably a good idea for the players to pass the GM a private note with topics they're not comfortable with, so that the GM can take that into account when running the game.

DISCLAIMER

This book is not about glorifying racism, it's about dealing with a world in which it exists. It should be fairly clear that those who hate demi-humans (or any other group) just because of where they come from or what they look like is just plain wrong. Things in this game will get complicated, dirty, and confusing. It's time to put on your adult pants, because this setting can very easily get out of hand. You may experience terrible situations, hatred, and bigotry in this setting, but don't mistake our presentation of these things as condoning them. The point is to see these evils as what they are and give us a platform for talking about and exploring them like adults. If you don't think you can do that, bail.

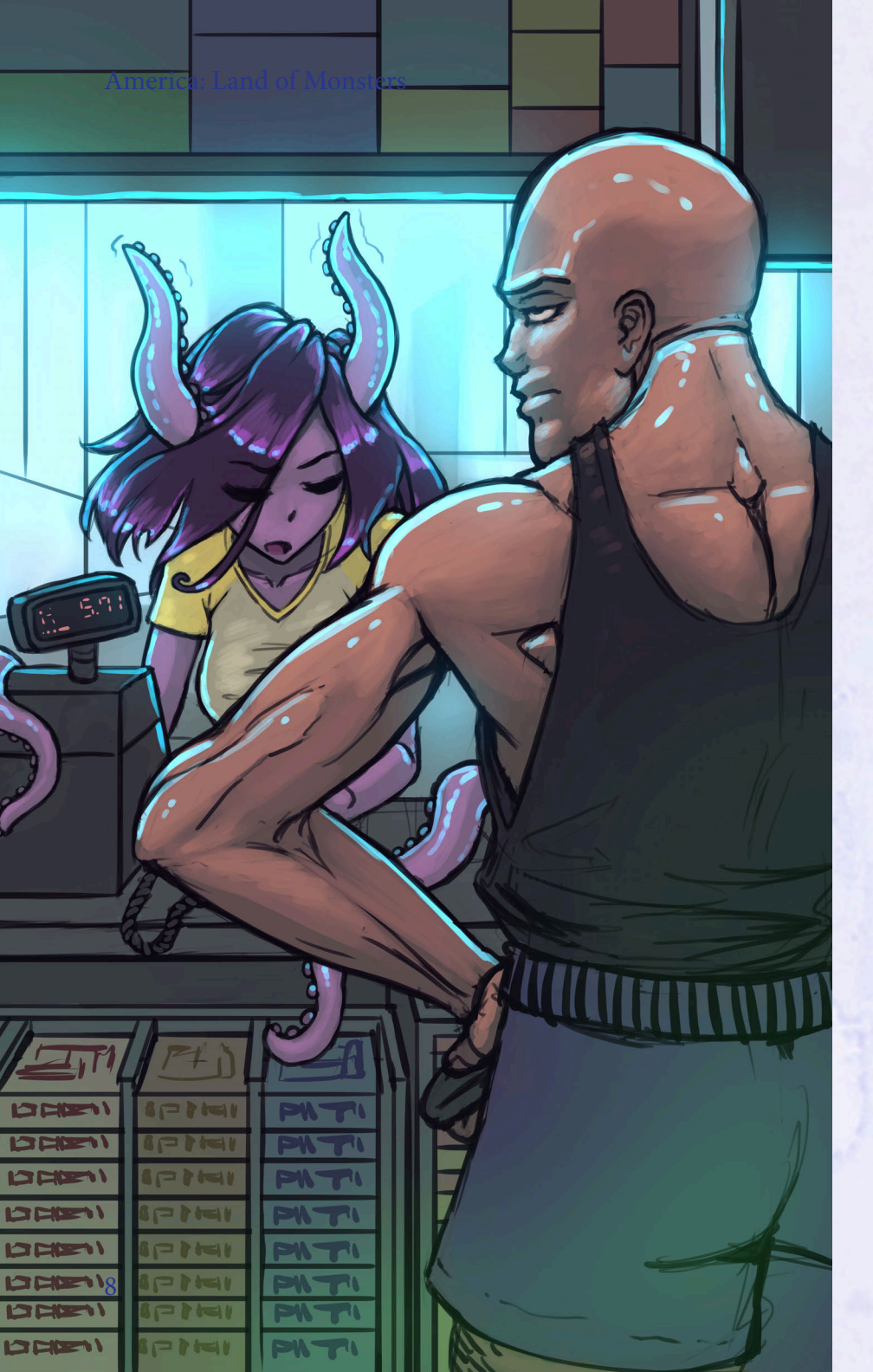
CHANGES FROM HFARPG

Imagine the world of HFA is just on the other side of the veil from Earth. When the forces of darkness triumph over Otherworld, there's nothing left to do but escape into the Gates.

ALM is more about people dealing with life in the US as a demi-human than it is about heroines vanquishing evil. Most of the heroines are still fighting in Otherworld; the demi-humans who made it stateside are more likely to be civilians and refugees than warriors and mages.

CUSTOMIZATION

This setting provides a specific world and setting for you to play in, but remember that the game is yours to do with as you please. If your group wants to focus on specific parts, throw out sections of lore, or rebuild the setting from scratch, keeping only the themes, selections, or rules, by all means go for it.



THE LAND OF MONSTERS

The first human I met ran away screaming. It broke my heart—I saw on his face the exact same expression I wore when the demons invaded Vorden.

—Kerda, a slime newcomer from Yordenheim

America, the land of freedom. Home of the brave. A lot has changed in the past few years.

THE SLIDING SCALE OF TERROR VS HILARITY

When you're a demi-human living in the United States, your life often swings between two polar opposites. We can analyze these extremes on a sliding scale from one end to the other. We start with the lighter end and work our way down the scale in terms of gravity and seriousness.

☀ **Hilarity Ensues:** Situational comedy revolving around the trials and tribulations of newcomers adapting to life in the US, many of which are spectacularly poorly adapted for modern life.

You walk down an alley and find a catgirl who insists she's not a kitten even though she's sitting in a box that says "please adopt me."

☂ **Crapsaccharine:** A silly sweet outer shell of humor hiding a darker, harsher world of cynical reality. Jokes cut a little deeper, and humor may arise from schadenfreude.

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You walk down an alley and find a kitten in a box that says “please adopt me,” but there’s a little girl next to it crying. She runs away when you approach.

✂ **Black Humor:** It’s terrible, but it’s just so terrible that you have to laugh. Laughter eases the pain.

You walk down an alley to find a bruised young catgirl smoking a cigarette and wearing a ripped band t-shirt. She’s handing out flyers to anyone who passes from a big stack in a Kinkos bag. The flyers are adoption papers.

☠ **Absolute Terror:** Horror. Power corrupts. People are the real monsters. Bad things happen to good people. Watch your back. Expect racism, discrimination, and violence.

You walk down an alley and find a box that says “please adopt me.” The box is closed. Blood is pooling from the bottom of it.

Before you move on, discuss this scale with the group and find out where on the scale people are most comfortable, and how far away from this baseline you’re willing to go. Decide what you’re willing to explore and what you want to stay away from in advance. Make lists if you want.

To get an idea of what can happen in each of the categories along the scale, check the Global Immediate Threats section later in this chapter.

Content in the rest of the book is organized into the same scale for ease of reference, and the symbols (☀ ☂ ✂ ☠) are used to denote a particular section’s content. Since it’s expected that things will tend to deteriorate, you can always read further in each section if you’re looking for darker material. On the other hand, to keep things lighter and fluffier, you stick to the earlier parts of each chapter.

THREATS

Many sections in this and other chapters contain “Threats.” These short descriptions can be used as Immediate Threats or Background Issues as per Heroines of the First Age. See page 19 of Heroines of the First Age for more information.

THE SURGE

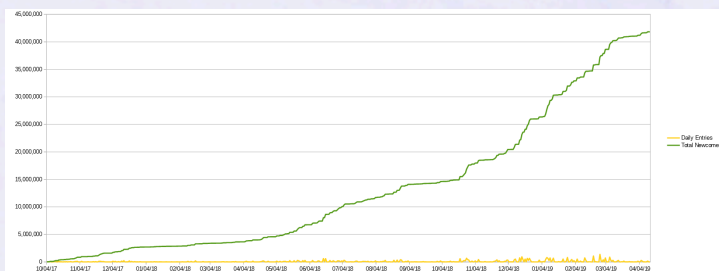
Chaos in Aurora!

Wednesday, 10/4/2017

It seems today's unusual earthquake was not only a national crisis, but the beginning of an even bigger problem. Local police are now saying that several unusual creatures are now loose and rampaging through downtown. So far, no one has been injured, but dozens of eye-witnesses have reported what appear to be large horses with bizarre mutations running wild past Starbucks and McDonalds and taking refuge in the mall...

One day in October, the floodgates opened up and unleashed an unprecedented phenomena into the world. Some climbed into their bunkers, others took to the streets with signs—others with firearms. Some joined the armed forces. Chaos reigned in the early days, and for a few months few earth-humans were aware that the beings rushing through the Gates were sentient. The Surge was a classic watershed moment—and probably the most important one in history.

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WORLDWIDE

The first few encounters between “monsters” and humans did not go well, which is to say that no one had any idea what was coming. No one was prepared for the sheer panic and fear that could be roused from the human mind when confronted with beings as strange as lamia, arachne, cephs, and harpies. So long-forgotten were they myths old that no one who witnessed the first wave of the Surge correlated it to ancient legend. By and large, across the entire world, first contact was chaotic and full of fear. It wasn’t for weeks that people started realizing that the phenomenon was more than just a bunch of localized hysteria.

Nevertheless, even after the dots were connected on the internet, it still took time for nations to admit that the Surge was a global crisis and that cooperation would be necessary. Many countries were content to handle the situation as they wished, without the interference of outsiders.

STATESIDE

While it may *seem* like the vast majority of demi-humans are appearing in the United States, this is a kind of survivorship bias: we know of more demi-humans in the US because more demi-humans make it into the media here. There are plenty of newcomers arriving in Europe, South America, Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, and even Antarctica, but none of these regions are

sensationalizing the phenomenon quite as much as we are here. And while America is no longer the super power it once was, it still has considerable weight to throw behind issues that mean a lot to its people. This has translated to a hugely diverse set of reactions to the Surge from corporations, governmental bodies, politicians, celebrities, and common people. Unregulated news outlets have fueled the fires of fear and hatred while local city councils have simultaneously taken steps to secure their metropolitan areas and accommodate the unique biology of the newcomers. The times they are a changin.

GOVERNMENT

Due to the chaos caused by the past few years of political turmoil (not all of which was caused by the Surge) the official position of the United States Federal Government is complicated and everchanging. Bills are being negotiated, passed, blocked, and overturned on the topic of integration, with a whole new political cross section appearing across party lines to further complicate matters. Moves have been made to begin organizing a new third party for proponents of integration, but it's being mired in pushes to make the party more focused on the complete and abject failures of the Democratic and Republican parties.

No constitutional amendments or federal bills have been passed on the topic of the actual basic rights of demi-humans. Demi-human rights are currently subject to the whim of the local jurisdiction, making America a very complicated place for newcomers. The case of a beating of a demi-human by a human that one judge would convict over might be completely thrown out by his colleague. Traveling from one part of the country makes little difference either, the divisions between detractors and proponents are so new that they haven't coagulated into regional allegiances yet. And since there's no federal oversight, everyone's essentially free to make their own rules.

CORPORATE INTERESTS

Certain outlets of popular media would have you believe that all the demi-humans who come through the Gates are poor and bereft of belongings and wealth. The truth is substantially more complicated than that. While many Newcomers arrive with little more than what they could carry, there are lots of companies that are willing and able to make money with, for, or on these demi-humans. Pawn shops are making an absolute killing by ripping off newcomers for their gold, jewelry, and other foreign artifacts, which they often turn around and sell to super-rich investors and collectors. Jobs are hard for many newcomers because they're not used to the strict adherence to the many laws and social customs of the USA, but since many demi-humans have fantastical physical abilities, they can often find work in unusual niches in the labor market. Medical companies are interested both in how to make medicines to sell to demi-humans, and what new discoveries can be made *from* demi-humans. And unfortunately, there are a number of unscrupulous cartels that are more than willing to help a poor unfortunate newcomer find a job. That many of these people end up in slavery is of no concern to them—there's no law against it, after all.

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

The appearance of the Gates, the rediscovery of magic, and the existence of supernatural beings and powers has somehow managed to cement both belief in, and denial against God. Some schools of thought believe that the very existence of “magic,” that is, things which cannot be explained by science, is more than enough evidence for the existence of God. What it does not seem to prove is *which* god. All popular religions have laid claim to this proof, though to date no specific religious miracles have occurred to validate one religion over another. The same evidence has also led to resurgence in ancient faiths, obscure cults, and new-age religions. Additionally, small churches to the gods of Otherworld have begun cropping up where demi-humans gather, but these are invariably short-lived affairs plagued by vandalism and violence.

OTHERWORLD

Because the many demi-human races of who have come to the US have languages just as diverse as those of Earth, it has been hard to come up with a useful label for the world they come from except “Otherworld.” Exacerbating this is the fact that most demi-human cultures in Otherworld translate the word for their homeworld as “Earth.” Otherworld has mostly stuck among the US population, though in many cases of law the term used is “The Alternate Planet Earth.” The acronym TAPE has become emblematic of bureaucracy standing in the way of demi-human integration.

Otherworld itself is widely touted as a terrible place, a world nearly every civilized creature would want to take refuge from. There are no complete accounts of Otherworld; for all intents and purposes it seems to be more of a chaotic mix of closely linked sub-worlds, each of which is ruled by its own nefarious leader. Some cultures are described as seeming pleasant or even utopian on the surface, but the consensus is that every one of them is rife with conflict and violence, either beneath the surface, or in plain daylight. Refugees and immigrants from Otherworld report innumerable evils, including tyranny, slavery, dark sorcery, concentration camps, genocide, and even darker, unmentionable things.

THE GATES

Everybody knows that if there had been one single Gate from Otherworld, the US would have bombed it into oblivion. Such as it was, that wasn’t possible. The Gates are many, shifting, and hard to even recognize with modern technology, let alone close. Earth is pretty much stuck dealing with demi-humans, but whether they’re treated as invaders, interlopers, or refugees is up to those they come in contact with.

In the years since the first Gates started appearing, several agencies have put together task forces that specialize in dealing with intrusions, including the Gate Entry Task Force, Guàiwù zhífǎ

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bùmén, and others. For some communities, even that isn't enough. They have put together their own neighborhood watch programs and private militia.

A less-reported issue involving the Gates is the increase in their frequency. Statistical evidence suggests that Gate events are accelerating, rather than declining. Considering that there are already millions of demi-humans in the United States alone, this increase could soon represent a major issue for the stability of the country and its ability to provide for those living in it.



THE NEW DIVIDE

In only a few short years, it has become difficult to remember the times before the only thing on the news was the “integration argument.” It fills the airwaves and screens every hour of the day here in the US, to the point that other priorities are suffering from being put aside.

The New Divide (coined by the influential book of the same name by Kerra Dylan) is a complex thing. While it is definitely one of the most momentous events in recorded history, sweeping away what we thought we knew about almost every subject in science, religion, and philosophy, it is also true that the sensationalism has been taken to the extreme. Rather than sitting down to work out the issues, most politicians have taken to using the New Divide as a way to antagonize “the other side.” Meanwhile, normal people are trying to figure out how to deal with day to day lives where it’s almost impossible to sort out meaningful problems from invented or conflated issues or outright lies.

Note: When discussing the New Divide, it’s important to remember not to make gross generalizations of either side. Many people base their beliefs on what little information they have, and there are millions of voices screaming for their attention every minute of the day. A lot of folks may fit into one camp or the other without directly talking about or acting on their beliefs, and many are able to be civil even to those who don’t believe as they do.

DETRACTORS

Slang: Defenders, Humanists, Resistance, Bigots, Racists

Detractors disagree with integration. Some are actively working to protect human culture and development while others are more aggressive about ridding the nation of those they call “invaders.” A large portion of detractors simply don’t feel comfortable around demi-humans, often citing things like the uncanny valley and

natural responses to other species. A lot of these people are offended by claims that they are racist, especially those who are simply waiting for evidence either way on demi-human behavior.

On the other hand, there are also detractors who are vitriolic, hateful, and violent. They may make trouble for demi-humans in their daily lives, post inflammatory remarks online, or even assault or abuse demi-humans they come across. Because demi-humans lack the same rights as humans in the eyes of the law in a lot of places across the US, these assaults are not usually handled with the seriousness and speed that cases of human-on-human violence are handled with. Though this is often because the legal situation has to be sorted out first by the lawyers, a lot of integration proponents blame all these cases on racist police forces and corruption. Corrupt police forces that *do* actually ignore demi-human cases support their brethren in solidarity, often cementing the “us-versus-them” attitude that is driving a wedge between the people of earth.

There are a number of approaches that detractors put forth.

- **Border Enforcement:** The USA should withdraw troops from abroad to defend our home soil. Military budgets should be spent on developing ways to predict, catch, and detain any creature that attempts to Gate into the United States. Newcomers must be vetted.
- **Non-Human Exile:** No non-humans should be permitted within the United States. All those who are here are here illegally, and should be deported or exiled. We owe invaders nothing.
- **Zero Rights:** Non-human invaders are just that, not human. They have no rights at all, and therefore land owners are fully within their own rights to trap them, capture them, or shoot them on sight. Furthermore, every one of them that arrives takes precious resources away from our own people.

PROPOSERS

Slang: Bleeding Hearts, Hearts, Bleeders, Beastlovers, Satanists

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Proponents agree with integration. They believe that (at some point, at least) humans and demi-humans can get along, and that America is strong enough to support both populations. They point to the fact that America is and has always been a melting-pot of cultures, and that studies have shown that immigrants have often brought with them a wave of innovation and industry. While not all proponents are comfortable around all demi-humans, they're usually willing to give someone the benefit of the doubt. Detractors have a lot of insults for proponents of course, but even those who aren't insulting claim that proponents are being incredibly naive if they think that demi-humans can integrate into American society at the drop of a hat.

Not all proponents have the best interests of the people in mind, however. There are a lot of hypocrites, swindlers, and fraudsters in the ranks of the proponents. They know that there's a lot of money to be made in dealing with this situation, either through providing expensive stopgap solutions to urgent problems, by taking money for the protection of demi-human refugees, or through back-room deals with corporations that have a stake in the demi-human integration game. A number of these people have secret ties to companies and politicians that are unabashed detractors.

There are a number of approaches that proponents discuss.

- **Staged Immigration:** To prevent damage to property, misunderstandings, and dangerous standoffs, newcomers should be gathered into immigration zones where they can be taught what to expect in on Earth and in the United States. There they would also be able to formally apply for immigration or refugee status.
- **Cultural Amnesty:** We should take a stance of forgiveness and accept these refugees. We should do our best to comfort them, educate them, and learn from them. We should create sanctuaries and neighborhoods where they can participate in their own cultural expressions, rather than paint them over with our own opinions.
- **Welfare & Welcome Programs:** We are legally obligated by UN treaties to offer certain protection to refugees, but this is only the

barest minimum we can do. These people deserve sympathy and respect, and it's morally wrong to treat them like second-class citizens. We should create federal programs to help them integrate and settle in the USA, because that's what a decent person would do.

THE THIRD SIDE

Opinions differ on whether the Third Side actually exists. Forum threads and pundits alike have raged over the semantics of whether one can truly be neutral in the battle between detractors and proponents of demi-human integration. Some argue that everyone is fundamentally either for or against integration, and that every opinion can be boiled down to a basic “in or out,” meaning that there can be no Third Side. On the other hand, some say that it's quite possible to feel the jury is still out, that we don't have enough information. Others point out that this complex and volatile problem isn't so easily understood or discussed, and that our early opinions will simply be extensions of our inherent biases and preconceptions, having nothing to do with the eventual “right answer.” Some even feel that integration is such a complex and difficult problem that only those with specialized or expert technical knowledge on the subject should be trusted with the decision, not unlike medical or scientific professionals.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

There are a number of groups of humans who feel that the hue and cry raised over integration is an insult to the decades of work they put in for their own causes. Some are frustrated that demi-human rights movements are getting as much backing and being taken as seriously as they are so quickly when their own rights are *still* not supported. Some people with disabilities feel snubbed that changes are being made for demi-humans so easily and readily, while others throw their anger at the politicians who use these programs as a way to win more voters. Another important subset of Americans frustrated by the situation are the demi-humans who were already

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living in the States in secret, who subsequently had their lives turned upside down by the Surge and are now forced to either remain hidden or answer some very uncomfortable questions.

TECHNOLOGY & MAGIC

Despite what some internet commentators have said, there is no effect that causes technology to fail in the presence of magic; the two are not incompatible in any way. In fact, certain cultures from Otherworld had access to various technologies far more advanced than our own. Nevertheless, modern “Earth” technology consistently seems to surprise and confound newcomers, just as newcomer magic confounds the minds of earthfolk.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media, ironically, is one of the technologies that newcomers find the most comprehensible. Because most of them come from cultures and lands where one’s reputation was one’s livelihood, social media seems merely like an extended, expanded version of the same kind of social environment they’re used to navigating. Of course, the specifics of platforms, networks, devices, and media present a different challenge, but the core concepts and impetus remains familiar enough.

What usually trips up newcomers is the availability of that data. Few realize how readily accessible their data is to those they don’t know, nor do they recognize the risks of talking about unpopular opinions or the dangers of discussing criminal acts online, and are quite surprised to find the police pursuing such investigations. Many liken this to a form of thought-police.

MAGIC SYSTEMS

While most scientists observing the magic produced by the newcomers agree that these phenomena can’t be explained by

current scientific theories, none would concede that these phenomenon *can't* be explained by any system. After all, most magic users claim that there is some kind of methodology to producing magic. What confounds scientists more is the apparent dissimilarity between the systems of magic so far observed. Contrary to their expectations, few utilize similar underlying principles, so knowledge of one system of magic doesn't in any way translate to knowledge in another area. The same, obviously, is true of science.

The observation and cataloguing of magic systems has already proven useful in practical application though. Because magic systems seem to be cultural in nature, their effects (as far as they can be correlated to the system that produced them) can be used to narrow down the list of suspects in a crime. While the police don't *understand* much about the magic they're enforcing, they've certainly collected a lot of data about the outcomes, and they're starting to get a handle on the differences between one system and another.

NATURAL MAGIC

Not all magic comes from practiced instruction or can be easily explained in terms of how it works. Such magic is sometimes called “natural” magic because it's used more like a personal skill than a series of complex calculations or predefined incantations. Such magic is the most annoying for both scientists and for law enforcement, because it can be completely unique to the being that wields it. Once the source can be determined, it becomes much simpler to ascribe magical activity to the caster, but determining the source is usually impossible without firsthand evidence or observation.

Scientifically, natural magic is the most offensive to rational minds because it usually only follows its own rules. This fact keeps physicists up at night.

FIREARMS & WAR MACHINES

Many an internet flame war has raged over how the US armed forces would fare if they were to counter-invade Otherworld, but the simple fact of the matter is that demi-humans are usually tougher than humans. Several newsworthy demonstrations have shown that tougher specimens are more on par with armored vehicles than soldiers when it comes to durability and strength. While demi-humans aren't at all "immune to bullets" the way some claim, they are often much harder to bring down than would be expected. When asked about it, most demis give the same kind of "we're used to it" response that those with a knowledge of weapons or firearms regards as "not remotely how that works."

DEMI-HUMAN NEEDS

Demi-humans generally eat more than humans do, perhaps because of an increased metabolic rate. Some demi-humans can consume truly prodigious meals. Some don't have specific dietary restrictions or needs, but it seems like a majority do, with that percentage growing over time as more and more unusual vitamin deficiencies are diagnosed among the demi-human population. Often, these dietary needs relate to the environment the demi-human evolved in, ranging from substances in fruit and meat not available on Earth to plants that has ever heard of. More extreme needs have also been observed, like utter dependency on crystalline mineral deposits, sunlight for photosynthesis, and even human blood.

Other demi-humans have requirements that aren't nutritional: harpies don't do well unless they have room to flap around and access to the outside where they can fly, for example. Other species need certain temperatures or humidity levels, or have an unfortunate tendency to ruin carpets and hardwood, like the slimy cephs.

Some demi-humans come directly to their local government, medical facility, or even grocery or hardware store in search of what they need, but others try less socially acceptable methods to get, particularly if social stigmas, financial issues, or logistical problems stand in the way of getting what they need through legitimate means. Obviously, not all needs are met by the offerings on today's market, leading more to crime for the sake of survival.

MONEY & JOBS

Because social security numbers and other documents are often needed for various financial activities, many demi-humans find themselves limited in the kinds of purchases they can make and the ways they can earn money. Few businesses pay their employees in cash these days, so it can be hard to get started in America. Because people tend to judge demi-humans based on their appearance, those who are more similar to humans or are more attractive are more likely to stumble into someone who is willing to help them. Intimidating creatures have a much harder time not just with getting a job, but with banking, shopping, and socializing, opening up a whole new rift of underground activity. At least in the States there are no laws *preventing* demi-humans from holding a job. Overseas, one can find many restrictions on the activities of demi-humans.

GLOBAL IMMEDIATE THREATS

These are the initial issues that the PCs have to deal with. Remember that they are problems to be tackled, not just background events.

It's important to note that any of these themes can easily be "dropped" to a darker part of the scale. It's not as easy to elevate the darker elements to lighter levels, but it can also be done.

HILARITY ENSUES

- **Cooking for Everyone is Hard:** A lot of terrible things can happen in the kitchen. Maybe someone has no manners, or doesn't know how to not start a fire, or you have trouble keeping the fridge stocked, every meal is a battle to be won, or the one who likes to cook is an utterly lethal chef. Did we mention that onions are toxic to all canids?
- **Straining the Budget:** If it's expensive to be poor, it's doubly so to be a poor demi-human, especially with a household of people who only have a loose grasp of American finances. Hide the credit cards and don't tell *anyone* about Amazon.
- **Romance Ensues:** Isn't it cute when an eleven-hundred pound half-spider almost crushes the object of her affections? Or when an overconfident outlander strips naked in the middle of the mall food court while wooing a sweetheart? Of course it is.
- **Staying Employed Isn't Easy Either:** Gas stations aren't exactly made for centaurs. Orcs sometimes give into cravings in the checkout at the grocery store. It's super hard for catfolk models to stay awake under those nice warm lights. And that's not even mentioning your coworkers.
- **Drinking with Demi-Humans is Dangerous:** While oni can hold their liquor better than anyone, a drunk oni is a walking disaster area. Nevermind taking the vampire or the succubus to the bar, we're not having a repeat of the police station party again.

CRAPSACCHARINE

- **Subtle Discrimination:** Maybe it's funny the first time that someone thinks that every angel is nice or that every gigasborn is tough as nails or that every ox is lactating all the time. But it's not that funny the seventeenth time just that afternoon. Not to mention the other things people think about demi-humans.
- **US Constitutional Amendments:** It's surprising to newcomers how good Americans are at making laws that so completely miss the point. It's not surprising to Americans, newcomers just aren't as used to navigating the bullshit.

- **Mandatory Reeducation:** Sure, it's helpful to participate in society and to work towards fitting in. No one's begrudging you that, you hope. But it's a whole other matter when it turns out that there's no regulation of what kind of education facilities are required to provide. You don't need damnation, you need a job.
- **Law Enforcement:** For some critters, like arachnes, mimics, and cephs, it's hard to just *look normal*. You're either skulking about suspiciously (while trying to stay out of the way of people on the sidewalk) or you're needlessly disturbing the peace (while trying to get through the gawkers and picture-takers to check out at Target).
- **Poverty:** Americans don't know how good they've got it. We don't even get access to the social welfare programs offered to immigrants and refugees. If you can manage to convince someone to give you a job, maybe you can avoid hanging out in the hobo camps.
- **Climate Change:** Sure, ultimately, there hasn't been a huge loss of life because of the Surge. Mostly, life continues on in roughly the same way it always has, cities and workers and the wealthy and the whole bit. But this world has its own impending problems of a more insidious nature than newcomers are used to dealing with.

✧ BLACK HUMOR

- **Otherworld:** The Alternate Planet Earth was a hellhole so unreal that stories of it sound like the plot of a heavy metal concept album. A few newcomers with a talent for writing have become quite famous telling stories of their homelands, but nobody remembers it fondly to say the least.
- **Corruption:** While it's not as hammy or as physically violent as in Otherworld, there's plenty of evil here in the US. To a lot of newcomers, the whole world seems like an parade of duplicitous liars and backstabbers. The worst part is that you never get used to it; every time someone betrays your trust, you say to yourself "I should have known better this time."
- **Desperation:** When you'll do anything to get what you need, you have this weird tendency to end up in embarrassing situations.

The Land of Monsters

Sometimes it's not so bad, but sometimes it doesn't matter how desperate you are, you're going to have to make do without.

- **Crime:** There are a lot of demi-humans who end up in lives of crime for various reasons. Some aren't that good at it and end up in ridiculous capers. Others only do what they must and even occasionally turn themselves in afterwards. As with humans, only a few are really bad, but those are the ones you have to watch out for.
- **Customs Enforcement:** Being chased across the country simply for existing is pretty terrifying by itself, but the horror of the situation is somewhat muted by the absurdity of how often these agencies don't know what to do with demi-humans they capture.
- **Magic in the US:** Demi-humans aren't the only ones causing problems. Since people started hearing about magic a few years ago people all over the world have been trying to harness it to make money or do bad things or both. Since they don't have the experience to back it up, things often go horribly wrong with these schemes.

☠ ABSOLUTE TERROR

- **Adult Fear:** Even real live monsters have nothing on life itself. Life is the cruelest teacher, the most inevitable killer. Terrible things happen in life, from betrayal to systemic oppression, hate crimes, brainwashing and insanity, the loss of children, powerlessness, and any of these things happening to those you love.
- **Abuse:** When you live in a world where minorities have no representation, you inevitably and routinely see those minorities taken advantage of. While it may be as limited as simple bullying, it can also be as ubiquitous as racial segregation or institutionalized discrimination. Often though, abuse is taken to mean a very personal type of situation.
- **Racism:** Demi-humans face all kinds of racism. While racism isn't new to them, the social acceptance and integration of it into society is. At least in the Otherworld, you were allowed to fight back. Here, you're condemned for using violence even to defend yourself.

- **Demi-human Trafficking:** Humans are known for their interest in the novel, and what could be more novel than strange humanoids ripped from the pages of myth and legend? Like exotic pets, demi-humans are valued by some based on their appearance and pedigree.
- **Slavery:** There are those who take the lack of demi-human rights to its extreme conclusion. Because they are not legally human, they have no legal protections from those who would capture them and keep them against their will. Strong ones may be kept for work or sport, while attractive ones are kept for other purposes.
- **Monster Villains & Terrorists:** Obviously, there are demi-humans who do not agree with their treatment here on Earth. Some of them strike out at the societies they find themselves in, while others operate within those societies and subvert them from inside.
- **Demi-human Experimentation:** Medicine is big business, and pharma companies are highly interested in the secrets they could extract from demi-humans, especially those with unusual traits or interesting powers. The military industrial complexes of the world are likewise interested, leading to a whole new kind of arms race and a New Cold War.
- **World War M:** Diplomatic relationships have been strained to the breaking point. Any minute now the New Cold War will boil over and catch fire. Then, nations across the globe, many of which were allies until recently, will take aim at each other once again.
- **Eldritch Abominations:** While it's widely touted that there is no greater evil than that which lurks in the hearts of people, this is not the case. Earth, for all its hazards, misfortunes, and calamities, is a paradise compared to the ruined cinders of Otherworld. Dark things hold dominion there, things that can render—and *already have rendered*—even the greatest heroines insensate with madness.

TERMINOLOGY

In this politically charged atmosphere, some words and phrases are considered offensive by some groups, while other terms are relatively safe.

- **Non-human:** Offensive, usually intentionally so.
- **Demi-human:** Preferred. Sometimes shortened to demi or D.
- **Dehu:** Hashtag equivalent to demi-human, used among younger social groups.
- **Monster:** Offensive, but demi-humans are taking ownership of the word as a term between themselves.
- **Newfolk/Newcomer:** Polite, verging on overly-polite. Used to describe all demi-humans who arrived in the Surge.
- **Shitblood:** Extremely offensive. Used only by the most egregious bigots. Also used for proponents, implying sex acts with demi-humans.



2019

A new study by the Speculative Biology Research Institute shows that almost 75% of all demi-humans are involved in violent crime in their first year on Earth. We talked to Doctor Karl Brandt of the SBRI, who suggests that physical disabilities may be causing violence among these refugees. Are we headed for a new refugee crises? Get the whole story tonight. Watch the interview at 7 PM eastern time, here on WGLA 5.

Three impeachments in two years, a record number of mega-storms, government shutdowns, renewed rioting, scandal after scandal, it sounds run of the mill until you add the sudden influx of millions of demi-humans into the mix. 2019 is shaping up to be a fairly big disaster already.



HILARITY ENSUES

Do you ever feel like your life has a laugh track that you can't hear? Because I sure do.

-James St. Martin, a host for several newcomers

DEMI-FRIENDLY JOBS

For most of the Surge, the only jobs that newcomers could get were either very dangerous, migrant labor style work, or mom-and-pop-shop type places owned by demi-friendly humans. What these types of jobs have in common is a lack of corporate oversight and standardization, allowing the business owners to take advantage of the influx of newcomer workers. While this is convenient for both parties, it also means that the business can often avoid paying more

than minimum wage. Some can't really afford it, while others just choose to maximize profits since they can.

Especially early on, jobs newcomers were able to get were in no way optimized for their physical traits. These early jobs were more of arrangements of desperation than opportunities to find someone who's the perfect fit for a position, and so a number of demi-humans ended up in weird positions, gargoyles working as clerks, centipedes running deliveries, slimes serving food at hole-in-the-wall restaurants, that sort of thing. As time goes on, however, options are slowly opening up to both the business owners (who now have access to more demi-humans who might have advantages for the job) and to the newcomers (who are more socially prepared to find jobs and negotiate).

As of now, larger corporations are finally getting wise to the idea that they can hire demi-humans. Fast food chains, big box stores, and grocery stores are all getting in on the action, hoping to turn a profit before the laws change about how things have to be done. While this has curtailed the number of destitute and feral demi-humans, it's also led to a lot of civil unrest, among those on both sides of the New Divide. Detractors often want newcomers out of their stores, while proponents are concerned about the mistreatment and abuse of the demi-human workers.

Threats

- Getting the job was like a hero story all by itself, fraught with dangers, risks, and gambits and punctuated with mentors and tribulations. Now that you've got the job, it turns out that getting the job was the *easy part*.
- All this manual labor is bulking you out in ways you never expected, let alone wanted. Now you've got to figure out how to balance maintaining your figure as well as your social standing among peers who sit in comfy chairs all day and type on the computer.
- Your boss is suddenly and swiftly escorted off the property by the FBI, his last words being "Ah crap." Somehow, by virtue of age, you, the demi-human, are now the most senior member of

the staff, at least for the moment. Your human coworkers are already overreacting.

THE DATING SCENE

Humans talk about dating like it's one of the hardest things an adult can do, but many of them haven't even spared a thought for how different things are for lonely demi-humans. Not only are they thrown into a new culture with new social norms and mores, but the vast majority of people they interact with aren't even mentally prepared to *meet* them let alone date. That leaves precious few potential lovers who are stable, sane, and well-adjusted. Many of the humans who go out looking for romantic relationships with demi-humans are either looking for someone exotic purely for aesthetic reasons or fetishize demi-humans to an unhealthy extent.

Unfortunately, there just aren't that many places where humans and demi-humans can intermingle in a social setting. Many of the clubs and bars that permit newcomers quickly become hangouts for them and end up deserted by their human clientele, contributing to more aversive racism. Social pressures often prevent humans with open minds from visiting these establishments, under pain of social ostracism or stigma.

But finding someone to go out with isn't the end of the problems. The social ramifications of interspecies romance can be quite extreme, on both sides. Even socially progressive friends or family may find themselves suffering unconscious distaste for the relationship, and demi-human friends may consider such relationships betrayals of their people. Dates in public are invariably the subject of unwanted attention, and sometimes others interfere (even violently) in order to "save" one party from the other. It can even get so out of hand that the police are called, which doesn't usually go well for the demi-human in question regardless of what happened or if there was any ill-will at all.

On top of all that, romance with a demi-human can also be *physically* complicated, not just because of body shapes and sizes,

but also because many newcomers have vastly different biologies from their human lovers. Claws, scales, fur, and horns can all interfere in romantic activities among those inexperienced with their challenges, and what might seem pleasurable or painful to one species might be the opposite for another. Even cuddling can be dangerous, lamia hugs must be executed carefully, and it takes a special kind of person to be able to endure a ceph's snuggling.

Threats

- You just met this person, and they're wonderful, but unfortunately there's a reason they were crying when you met. It turns out they're trying to get out of a bad relationship that's only getting worse. Who knows what would happen if you intervened, but every time you see them together it gets more tempting.
- What you thought was going to be a nice time with a flirt from the bar turns into a nightmare when they can't stop telling all their friends about you. They won't call, but instead spend all their time talking about you on social media. You're starting to get the idea that they're not saying good things.
- Feelings get hurt on both sides when the relationship is strained by physical complications. Now you've both got to figure out how to forgive each other and yourselves.

CULTURE CLASH

When someone from overseas visits America, they at least have an idea of what to expect, often drawing from popular music, movies, books, and internet phenomena. Newcomers have no such preconceptions. They know nothing about the US, about our culture, about our memes, mores, values, society or anything else. They come in as blank slates. What's more, they don't usually arrive expecting to have to change their perceptions so completely to integrate into our society. Most come through anticipating that things will be more or less like *Otherworld*, with perhaps less fire and brimstone. What they find when they arrive is as different from their expectations as they are from ours.

This can cause problems on all kinds of levels. In some Otherworld cultures, mates are determined by ritual combat or physical contest, which is called “assault” in the USA. In other cultures, it’s expected that the king of a region pays for the upkeep of roads and sanitation. In the USA, we have taxes for that. While many were simple farmers and merchants by trade, there are a few that act like Thor or Conan or Xena, and the others aren’t even phased by their behavior. Americans, on the other hand, look poorly on bad manners, public violence, might-makes-right attitudes, and the kind of physical coercion that so many of them seem to think demi-humans represent.

A lot of the culture clash comes down to value dissonance between the societies. As far as anyone can tell, no newcomers hail from lands anywhere near as corporate, as capitalist, or as bureaucratic as America. They come from cultures that value glory and bravery and honor, and *none* of these words mean the same thing to American ears. Misunderstandings, miscommunications, and assumptions are to blame for many embarrassing Youtube moments.

Threats

- You’re not sure how it happened, but everyone’s taking the other person’s side now. What should have been a simple little brawl over a lover has turned into a newsworthy event, and your pride is standing in the way of you making amends.
- One of the most sacred practices from your homeland is apparently anathema to American society. Whether it’s the raw meat, nudity on the Sabbath, or the way you style your hair, people around you have taken offense, and they won’t listen to your side of the argument.
- The only acceptable outlet for your competitive and combative side seems to be sports. Unfortunately the only league in your area is horrified that you’d have the gall to ask to play with them, especially after how hard you schooled them at their “private” practice.

CELL PHONES AND CARS

The two most ubiquitous devices in America are among the most world-shattering to newcomers. For the price of a few meals, one can effectively become a wizard, with access to all the knowledge in the world. For a monthly payment easily supported by a stable job, one can purchase a vehicle that travels faster than a dragon can fly. What's more, nobody is there to *explain* these devices to newcomers; natives don't even realize they're holding magic in the palm of their hand when they talk to a mesmerized catfolk or suspicious wolfkin. Unfortunately, the same story is repeated over and over again with every newcomer. At least now it's become a meme that nice folks try to explain things to newcomers they meet, but this has the unintended consequence of being quite patronizing to demi-humans who've lived on Earth for more than a few months—or indeed their entire lives.

While these two pieces of technology are disruptive, they're not impossible for newcomers to understand individually. What's more of a problem is comprehending how different a world with cars and cell phones is from a world without one. It's almost impossible to hide public events, it's difficult to keep people in one place if they want to leave, and many Americans have been further on vacation than newcomers have ever traveled in their lives. Consequently, subtle misunderstandings are quite pervasive, and many humans—even those who consider themselves proponents of integration—sometimes feel like they're talking to aliens.

Threats

- You just spent a fortune on this new eyefone at the behest of one your human acquaintances, and only now, after you've gotten your shiny new prize home and signed a blood contract with a dark lord in a white button-up, have you discovered that your fingers are simply too big to touch the right buttons.
- One day, quite without warning, you get to the bus to discover that they've removed *all* the demi-human accessibility options. When you confront the bus driver, he simply tells you that they

did it to all the busses. When you ask who, he simply shrugs and says “the government?”

- Hitchhiking isn't well looked upon, even if you're only doing it to see all the different kinds of cars, trucks, and other vehicles on American roads. The police try to explain this to you, but they're very bad at it, especially when they're screaming at the top of their lungs.

EDUCATION

The education level and preparation of newcomers varies enormously depending on what culture and social class they came from in the Otherworld. For that reason, many need varying levels of education to participate in modern Earth society.

BASIC SCHOOLING REQUIREMENT

BSR is usually aimed at younger demi-humans or young refugees who don't yet match an elementary or middle-school level education. Some times (to their embarrassment) older demi-humans are told to take BSR classes in order to qualify for later RCE classes.

BSR classes cover all of the following.

- Reading & Writing
- Basic Mathematics
- Basic Acculturation

BSR classes usually take between 6 months and 2 years. They cost between \$1000 and \$10,000.

REMEDIAL CULTURAL EDUCATION

RCE classes are specifically designed to help demi-humans integrate into society more easily.

RCE courses cover the following topics, usually all at once. The most important material of each topic is front-loaded to the beginning of the class.

- World Geography
- Home Economics
- Advanced Acculturation
- Computer Usage

RCE classes are usually structured so that they are useful even if the student can't afford to pay for the entire course, which often runs 1 or 2 years. Classes cost between \$500 and \$15,000 per year depending on the quality of the staff and facility, but some schools offer deferred payments or financial assistance so that newcomers can use the courses to prepare themselves for jobs that allow them to pay for their education.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

Higher learning facilities have diverse outlooks on inviting in demi-human students. Public and state-run schools are often more open to newcomers than private ones, though private universities also have more advanced and specialized programs for demi-humans.

A 2 year college usually covers only 1-2 of the following courses, while a 4 year may cover up to 3-4+ depending on the quality of the establishment. Part of attending college is the exposure to a wide number of different courses, so you may also pick a couple fields you've got tangential knowledge of. Notably, demi-humans that attend college are vastly more prepared for life on Earth than those that do not, as it trains the mind in the culture of the area as well as the skills of the courseware.

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Communication
- Computer Science
- Education

- Engineering
- Architecture
- Healthcare
- Medicine
- Math
- Science
- Psychology
- Social and Protective Service
- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts

Going to university usually costs between \$10,000 and \$60,000 per year depending on the in-state/out-of-state/foreign-student policies of the location and the quality of the program. Financial assistance is offered to help students pay for their educations. To calculate your monthly student loan payment, divide the amount of your loan by 100. This is your monthly loan payment for 10 years.

Threats

- For some reason, every time you try to talk to a human, they burst out laughing at you. When you ask them why, most refuse to answer or are glib about it. You're beginning to suspect that learning English from cartoons wasn't the best idea.
- It was easy to figure out what major to take at university in order to learn the skills you wanted. What wasn't easy to understand is that your major has almost no bearing on the kinds of jobs you'll get later on in the real world. When you complain about this to humans you know, they commiserate with you. It's good you have something in common, but you'd rather they'd have just told you from the beginning.
- There's someone in your class who isn't all there. It could be a human or a demi-human, but either way they're "that weird one" in the class. Now the weird one is targeting you. They follow you around a lot and are sometimes caught mumbling about you. In their locker are pictures of you photoshopped into superhero clothes.

CRAPSACCHARINE

Humans act like our powers and abilities instantly and completely nullify any hardships we endure.

I hit my head on a low-hanging door hard enough to crack the frame. People are like, “Oh, you’re a monster. You’ll be fine. You all are tough like that.”

And no, thanks, I needed stitches and they kept me under observation for a concussion. So yeah. Being a huge tough demon is great, thanks. I’d never be so rude as to wish that things were a little easier on us, heavens no.

—Anonymous Oni from the first wave, from an interview in a hospital

THE WORLD IS MADE OF CARDBOARD

There is one trait that really divides humans and demi-humans. While the term “demi” seems to imply “half” or “sub” human, in truth it should be interpreted as “part.” Demi-humans are part human, part something else. Something more. Demi-humans, on the whole, are faster, stronger, and tougher than humans are. Even among the weakest individuals, their physical abilities are surprisingly notable. Demi-human children have accidentally hurt their friends with their uncontrolled strength, and adult demi-humans must be very careful indeed to keep from destroying property or severely injuring those around them. Even those demi-humans who are nearly on par with humans for physical strength have other attributes that far outstrip humans. While a young catfolk might not be as strong as a bodybuilder, she might be able to run faster than olympic sprinter if she were so inclined.

And besides strength and endurance, many demi-humans have characteristics that just make them more dangerous to be around

than baseline humans: take for example the claws of a dragonewt, the paralytic gaze of a medusa, or the venom of a centipede.

These are all things that a demi-human has to be constantly careful with that humans never even have to think about. And for that matter, many newcomers are likewise not used to thinking about themselves as potentially dangerous, as many are from societies where the heroes and heroines are far stronger and more powerful than themselves. All told, there's a reason humans are cautioned against hugging newcomer demi-humans.

Threats

- Most of the time, it's fairly easy to fix or replace things you break around the house: door knobs, pens, plates, etc. This isn't one of those times. Now you've broken the refrigerator somehow. You have no cooler or anything to keep your food cold, and even if you did, the repair men said you're going to have to order a new one anyway, and that'll take *days*.
- While turning around, you accidentally walked through a wall. Now the building superintendent is trying to have you thrown in jail and to top it off your insurance doesn't cover "acts of God."
- Some small-time crooks are trying to get you to join them for a "smash and grab" run. While you're not familiar with the term, it sounds like something Americans would consider illegal. Nevertheless, the crooks won't leave you alone.

SHILLS

The smart and cunning among the first groups of newcomers realized right away that this world was not prepared for them, nor they for it. Some of these first newcomers made names for themselves by allying with corporations or political bodies in exchange for money and protection. These demi-humans are treated with suspicion by most other newcomers, but make an excellent living acting as emissaries of Otherworld to the United States and beyond. Naive demi-humans aspire to the wealth and

prestige they see in the shills, while suspicious demi-humans are more likely to feel betrayed by the shills' lack of solidarity with their own people. Resentment is growing for these "plastic-demis."

Life isn't a bed of roses for the shills either, however. Since they entered contracts before anyone knew anything about demi-human legal protections, they're almost entirely owned by the corporations they signed with. Only a very small number are clever enough to play the corporations off each other in order to retain some freedom.

The other kind of shill is the one who whole-heartedly joins human society. Like others, they're just trying to make the best of the cards life has dealt them, but other demi-humans begrudge them their easy transitions. Not everyone falls into the right situation to become a police officer or lawyer right out of the Gate.

Threats

- You meet your idol for the first time and the first thing you notice is that she's completely different in person. Instead of the bright, sparkly, chipper demi-girl the media knows and loves, she's tired, distracted, and disappointed. She does her best though, even if she has to sneak away to relieve her stress with illicit activities sometimes.
- Ferica the quetzalcoatl had a nice life with a very accepting human boyfriend and a close circle of human friends. That all changed when someone used magic to brainwash her for a night. Now she can't face any of them and she's too depressed to be able to figure out who did it and why.
- Dendrobia, a famous Orchid demi-human, has slowly shifted stances to the detractor camp. Now she has written a book that detractors around the world are holding up as a defense against racism. Nobody knows why Dendrobia would have written such a vile book, nor what happened to her to make her change sides.

ADRI

The American Demi-Human Rights Initiative (usually pronounced like “Audrey”) is a political organization working to get demi-humans included in the definitions of human rights. While it seems like an obvious and straightforward task, the complexity of politics has essentially quashed their efforts. ADRI has now taken several different directions all at once in an attempt to outmaneuver the problem. They’ve started pushing for ever more extreme legislation, not because they hope to actually pass it, but because setting an expectation high makes it easier to people fall back to a more moderate—but still favorable—stance. They’ve funded numerous clinics, law offices, and other small social service programs across the states. They’ve started aid programs for foreign countries that don’t have the resources to deal with the sudden influx of newcomers.

All told, ADRI sounds like one of the most forthright groups in the political arena around the New Divide, but it’s not all sunshine and rainbows. ADRI supporters are growing frustrated with the utter opposition to basic human decency they’re experiencing. Already violence is erupting in the more contentious parts of the country, which isn’t going to help legitimize their cause.

Meanwhile, in the background, the bureaucrats who work for the Initiative are being run absolutely ragged trying to gain funding and support, but it’s slowly taking hold. Some of the most clever people in the business (and no small number of Shills) are working on cementing ADRI as a powerful new federal task force, their goal being to eventually enforce much more strict anti-discrimination laws.

Threats

- ADRI clinics are popping up more and more frequently, but they’re not doing well. As an almost universal target for hate speech, the more of them that go up the more people blame the

violence around them not on the racist perpetrators but on the existence of demi-humans themselves.

- Social welfare programs just put into place are falling apart as support for them in the government erodes. Many politicians are finding that being a good person just isn't good business, and that they're losing money and votes from the detractors in their constituency, who are often louder and more impassioned than their proponent rivals.
- A small-time robbery that happened at an ADRI safehouse and ended in a shootout has brought public support for ADRI to an all time low, mostly thanks to a complete news blitz by the conservative media to paint this happening as a vicious battle between savage monsters. The reality, that this was simply a drug deal gone bad having nothing to do with demi-humans, is completely ignored by much of the press.

TRASHLAND

Funded by ADRI and a number of other proponent organizations, the Las Sirenas Artificial Islands are a small atoll of specks off the coast of California universally known as Trashland. They are composed mostly of inert material contributed from California's various recycling and landfill programs, as well as a number of dredging operations, and are topped with a chaotic mess of Gate-imported plants and animals intended to mimic some of the lands of Otherworld. Ever-growing, Trashland was intended as a kind of new Ellis Island for demi-human refugees, who could take time to reeducate themselves in American culture, or simply stay there permanently.

As with most programs designed to make the newcomers feel at home, Trashland has abjectly failed at its intended goal. No technologies were ever found to be able to redirect the Gates to Las Sirenas, so immigration has remained uncontrolled. On the other hand, Trashland is still an appealing place for demi-humans, but not as a transitional home. Instead, it's seen as a kind of oasis or promised land, where they don't need to act like Americans or participate in other cultures if they don't want to.

Trashland is now more like Burning Man than Ellis Island. A thousand Otherworld cultures mingle with appropriated and abused artifacts of Earth cultures, spanning miles of ramshackle, sunny architectural creativity. The whole affair is run by a Community Committee drawn from the hundreds of independent cliques, families, clans, compounds, and tribes. Mostly, the CC sees to continued air and sea travel to mainland Cali, in order to transport more food, goods, and newcomers to the “monster heaven” of the Las Sirenas Artificial Islands.

Threats

- Yachts and liners are circling, offering wealthy tourists helicopter rides over the islands for an exorbitant fee. Mirroring old British safaris, they even offer guides who can point out the various types and attributes of the demi-humans as they fly over. The Committee is preparing their first Air Force, composed of harpies, angels, hawks, and succubi.
- A very fancy and expensive cruise ship has run aground on the atoll, leaving all 5000 passengers and crew stranded on an island full of nearly feral demi-humans. While the staff act as negotiators, many passengers are nervously awaiting rescue, being too scared to leave the partially sunken vessel. Meanwhile, factions among the demi-humans are arguing over whether they should loot all the food from the ship.
- A young werewolf appears on the atoll and is adopted immediately as a kind of mascot, since she’s apparently the first demi-human to be Gated directly into Trashland. The many cultures are quietly warring over who claims her and meanwhile the girl herself is going about her mission: assess the political situation of the Las Sirenas Artificial Islands, report to her corporate superiors, and prepare for destabilization of the Community Committee.

BLACK HUMOR

The driver waved the golem back into the car before flooring it. "The hell you doin', man? Shooting at the cops? We gotta get outta here!"

"I did not shoot at the cops, they shot at me. It's not my fault that their bullets ricochet."

"This was a terrible fucking idea."

"I'm fine by the way."

GATE ENTRY TASK FORCE

While the federal government hasn't handled the Surge well by any measure, that doesn't mean there haven't been a number of steps and actions taken. One of the very first was the founding of the GETF, a new agency under the Department of Homeland Security. Analogous to ICE, the GETF exists to neutralize threats presented by the appearance of Gates on US soil. This task is *tremendously* complicated, not only because of the jurisdiction and legal hoops to jump through, but also because of how poorly understood the Gates are and how random their locations are.

As time goes on, the powers granted to the GETF expand, at times with alarming speed. Already it has jurisdiction over a surprising number of cases and has powers that seem only tangentially related to its mission. On top of this, their confidence in dealing with demi-humans has increased as well, meaning that they often enter situations with a level of cockiness and disrespect that quickly leads to violence.

Threats

- Given their reputation and what the others tell you about the GETF, the man who came across you doesn't seem to fit the bill.

He was nice, courteous, and helpful, having directed you to a number of useful resources when you first met. He checks in from time to time to see if you need anything, but everyone else around you is telling you to get away from him.

- Somehow you've made a new friend at the GETF. You have no idea how he knows you or what he's tracking you for, but he's doggedly determined, and he keeps leaving messages that he'll be seeing you soon. Asking him what this is all about isn't really in the cards at this point, since he put your face out on an APB.
- Getting captured by the GETF is one thing, but it's a completely different thing when you get captured *from* the GETF by the local police. What started as an accident has now snowballed into a federal standoff with the GETF besieging the police station as the brave cops inside try to keep you from getting sniped. All over an *accident*.

CITIZEN PATROL

Of course, it started innocently enough, with various Neighborhood Watch members collaborating over the internet to help deal with Gates that appeared in urban areas. Fueled by paranoia and fear, and given voice by a number of conservative forums, Citizen Patrol quickly became much more than that. Now it is likened to the KKK, except even more hilariously incompetent and confused. For reasons no one knows, they were among the first organizations in the modern news era to receive coverage that was almost universally flippant and dismissive.

While the Citizen Patrol is widely known for their suspicion and fear of demi-humans, their members are usually non-violent. Rather than seeking out "monsters" to harass, they tend to focus on (ill-conceived) methods for keeping away from them. Their forums are full of hate speech but rarely suggest employing force. Security firms and preppey construction companies are making a killing on this newly-expanded market.

Threats

- The Citizen Patrol is on to you. They know where you live, and they're "not afraid to take steps." What's annoying is that you've lived here longer than they have. You remember the neighbors who moved out before they moved in, and they were nice folks. Now these Patrol assholes can't stop leaving you letters, warnings, and notes in your mail, even though you've never seen one of them in person.
- This is getting out of hand. Now they've posted pictures of you on the internet, inviting others to come and harass you. They've also erected a barbed-wire fence around their yard, and the dogs keep getting stuck on it. You can't go over to free them because the Patrol members would probably shoot you on sight. Your neighbors are getting worried too; property values are sinking.
- You receive an ultimatum: leave the neighborhood or there will be consequences. It's been issued on what looks like real police letterhead, but you're fairly sure that Sgt. Meyer wouldn't have permitted such a crass threat. Maybe they've got someone on the inside, but it's hard to tell what's going on since nobody ever sees these alleged neighbors.

KEMONO CLUBS

Skirting the grim edge between social generosity and moral bankruptcy, kemono clubs are (mostly overseas) establishments that employ demi-humans purely for the spectacle. These establishments run the gamut from quiet, restrained cafes to freak-show style carnivals to gentlemen's clubs that focus exclusively on sex appeal. Kemono clubs, by definition, are places where staff are hired and work of their own free will. While some put pressure on their staff for various reasons, anything beyond what would be legal for a *human* is defined as a "kennel club" instead.

What kemono clubs have in common is the strategic use of demi-human appearance and traits for the amusement and entertainment of human clientele. The form of entertainment and the social acceptability of the activities offered are up to the management of a given establishment. While the proprietors of kemono clubs claim that they're doing both demi-humans and humans a service by

employing the former and introducing them to the latter, a lot of integration proponents (especially in the USA and Europe) aren't so comfortable with the idea of putting people on display solely because they're different. Nevertheless, it's impossible to generalize to all of these clubs because they vary so widely in how they treat their staff.

Threats

- When a kemono club pops up nearby in town, most people's first question is "Is that legal?" Regardless of the answer, the place seems to be doing brisk business, and has a huge sign out front advertising that they're hiring demi-humans. A job is a job, right?
- It seems you just can't please some people. Even if the club is clean and friendly, it's looked down on as a filthy perversion. Even if the job is good and pays well, people tell you to get out and seek help. Even if the club is doing well and keeping dehus employed and comfortable, the city government is always trying to get the place shut down.
- The problem with small businesses is that they can change so quickly. When a new owner takes over the club, things change for the worse. First comes the pandering and sex appeal. Next come changes to the contracts. After that, the clientele goes from curious to hungry, and it's all down hill from there.

MONSTER COMBAT FEDERATION

This underground "boxing" circuit was founded as a web-series on Youtube about "who would win" style bouts between various demi-human varieties. Things became complicated when the fights started actually taking place, with the showrunners of the MCF offering various demi-humans prize money cut from their massive ad revenue. After some legal wrangling, copyright battles, and reorganization, MCF moved to its own video service, which now hosts a vast number of short demi-human related videos in addition to video series following the various fighters, trainers, and tournaments.

While the fights and training are usually held in locations where they're technically not illegal, it's fairly apparent that the organization itself is not wholly above board. There are many hints and suggestions that not all the competitors are fighting of their own will, and as with any sport involving fighting or betting, corruption is absolutely rampant.

Part of the draw is the chaos of the matches; the showrunners (either intentionally or otherwise) are usually unprepared for the ferocity and capabilities displayed by the fighters, who routinely level the ring and cause massive collateral damage. Many matches have their winners declared later by judges as filming cuts out when the demolition occurs.

While there are many series and tournaments, viewers a show a surprising amount of loyalty to particular combatants, not unlike professional sports teams, which the MCF is actively encouraging. Product deals are being made, merchandise sold, and marketing being done to milk the fighters and their bouts for all they're worth.

Threats

- A battle between two of the most popular fighters of all time has the fans of both sides ready to tear up the town. Bar atmospheres are tense and arguments are rife as the lead up showcases the best knock outs from both fighters' careers. Friendships are being made and broken over the lead up, and even the mainstream media is talking about it, bringing on MCF and ESPN commentators to discuss the upcoming bout.
- A popular youtube channel host goes undercover with his demi-human friend to discover the truth behind the MCF and their fighters. In a series of terrifying clips, they manage to get involved in a rookie matchup and simultaneously uncover evidence that the rookie they're up against was kidnapped. The channel goes off the air for a while, uploading only chaotic, unedited video clips for several days before going dark. The internet is torn between thinking it's an elaborate promotional campaign and calling for an investigation.

- Underground “tryouts” begin to flourish, claiming that they will accept the best fighters and produce them as new combatants in the MCF. These fight clubs aren’t even sanctioned by the MCF, let alone the police or local government, and tend to be broken up quickly. Nevertheless, they’re leading to a rise in underground activity and are correlated with higher crime rates. The police and GETF are cracking down on demi-humans spotted out at night or in out-of-the-way places.

IT’S ALL GOING TO HELL

With the immense number of newcomers, each with their own new breed of chaos to sew into the world, there’s the very distinct possibility of it all going straight into the crapper. After all, if otherworld is any indication, when worlds collide, neither is the same afterwards.

If society starts to crumble, you can expect the following things to start happening.

Threats

- Goods start dwindling fast as people as people preemptively stock up
- Gas gets ridiculously expensive
- Suspicions start to rise of people acting outside of the norms
- Generators, solar panels, wood stoves, and ethanol vehicles become high-demand items
- Breakdown of law and order at the local level as police forces can’t maintain budget
- Home invasion on the rise
- Preppers start carving up municipalities
- International action/interference, probably then opposed by the country in question
- Rioting on the rise
- Martial law declared

☠ ABSOLUTE TERROR

I fled from a country burned to the ground. I watched the flames of my family. I have fled from demons and been hunted by nightmares.

Do you know what really scares me?

Looking into the eyes of a true detractor.

—Anonymous New York demi-human

THE PALADINS

Embedded in the worst parts of the GETF is a sinister gang called the Paladins who join up and serve in the hopes of getting the opportunity to kill monsters. Despite their evil intent, they're not stupid, and they don't let *any* non-members in on their secrets or operations. The Paladins have deep ties to various corporate interests, and are supported by the Coalition's most fervent believers. With access to these resources, it's easy for the Paladins to cover up murder, but a lot of their kills have to be set up to become a public spectacle that the Coalition can use to fuel fear and hatred of demi-humans in the American population.

The Paladins are also known for their mastery of criminal law, prosecution, and internal affairs investigations. They don't take applications, instead they look for law enforcement officers who have shot or killed demi-humans and use their legal power to have the case against them thrown out. After the officer has gone back to work for a while, an invitation to the GETF arrives, with a shield-and-cross pin that the Paladins use to signify their membership to each other.

Other members of the GETF are at least aware of the rumors. Some know what goes on and stay out of it, while others walk a very dangerous line by trying to prevent their colleagues from getting

away with murdering demi-humans. Unfortunately a lot of these good cops get “transferred” when they become too much of a problem.

Threats

- A plan was leaked. This wouldn't be a major deal to other criminal enterprises, but to the Paladins, this is a hell-worthy trespass. Now they're dispatching units to harass and shake down anyone who might have even tangential information about the events. Today, they're paying *you* a visit.
- A harried, terrified GETF agent comes to you and begs you to skip town. He says that the Paladins are on their way, and they have no intention of stopping to ask questions. They're out for blood tonight, and for some reason you're on the list.
- Someone you know has gone missing. Coincidentally, the news has reported another violent shootout with the GETF near where they were last seen. If you go looking for your friend, you're going to end up getting on the Paladin's bad side, but there's nothing else you can do.

THE PURITY SECT

Fight fire with fire is their motto. The Purity Sect believes that monsters must be destroyed and returned to Hell at all costs, and that doing so requires the use of a vast array of occult and religious paraphernalia and rituals. Exorcisms, voodoo, blood sacrifices, Buddhist chants, these are all tools that the Purity Sect is willing to employ to destroy demons. While they generally have little idea of how to actually accomplish their goals directly, they have no qualms against massively overdoing it with the ceremonies and artifacts they employ. If one thing doesn't kill a target enough, they simply keep trying with something else, reveling in every step of the process along the way.

The Purity Sect is secretive and suspicious, and their members are among the most hateful of human integration proponents. Their priests claim that such people are actually *worse* than demons,

because a demon is simply a mindless agent of greater evil forces, while integration proponents are the most vile kind of treacherous sinners, betrayers of the blood of God.

It's not known how many religions the Sect has penetrated, nor how deeply, but as time goes on their membership and activities seem to only be growing.

Threats

- Another terror attack, this time using poison gas, is linked to The Purity Sect. What's more disturbing is that the gas can be traced back to a dictator in the Middle East, who has not been seen to have any contact with the group so far. The authorities are not yet sure whether the gas was sold or stolen, but it is known that more of it is unaccounted for.
- The Purity Sect has a new weapon at its disposal. A theologist and former priest going by the name Lazzari has joined their ranks, bringing with him a wealth of knowledge of ancient witch-hunting techniques and a library of occult tomes. He is eager to test as many of these techniques as possible on the Sect's captives.
- What everyone assumed was a simple string of more missing persons cases involving demi-humans turns out to be the prelude to a horrific terrorist action. The Purity Sect has gathered together hundreds of demi-humans at a well-defended ranch outside of town, where they've been recording and distributing the torture and execution of them online. Public outcry has forced the police and GETF to get involved, but neither group has made any headway with entering the compound.

KENNEL CLUBS

Kennel clubs take the ideas of a kemono club and brutally toss out the concept that demi-humans are sentient or have any ethical value at all. Kennel clubs are usually run by perverse collectors who kidnap and enslave demi-humans they find interesting, unique, or

valuable. Many of these people are quite comfortable with the current lack of coherent legal protection of demi-humans, and are actively working to destabilize any attempt at unifying or expanding their rights. Nevertheless, they futureproof themselves by keeping their businesses out of the public eye.

Kennel clubs are expensive affairs where huge amounts of money change hands. Some buy and sell demi-human slaves for profit to other rich collectors, while others do brisk business loaning out their captives to those who can't afford to purchase one themselves. Needless to say, kennel clubs aren't in the business of treating their captives well. Abuse of every kind imaginable is rampant here, and many also cater to fetishes not available elsewhere.

Ironically, kennel clubs are one of the strongest opponents of the Paladins and Purity Sect, who view demi-humans very differently.

Threats

- The news cycle is suddenly consumed with the story of Arvaraca, a clever and determined spider demi-human, who managed to save up the gifts and favors given to her by the clients of her "owners" in order to purchase her way to freedom. Her "owners," acting via shell companies and intermediary law firms, have filed a countersuit that she stole the money and cannot legally make such purchases as a non-human entity.
- An escaped demi-human has broken into your home and is desperate for a place to hide. Club minders are searching the street for the escapee, who is in a state of growing panic. Before an explanation can be made, you hear the thwup of suppressed gunfire outside.
- Open war erupts between Paladin-led GETF agents and the private armies of the benefactors of several of the most lucrative kennel clubs. Caught in the middle, the captive demi-humans can do little but lay low and hope for a chance to escape in the fire and chaos.

SURGE CAMPS

While no state in the Union has been tyrannical enough to round up all demi-humans on sight, the same is not true of other nations. Such camps are usually terminal, because the governments that start them are not the sort of governments that would bother to pass legislation granting demi-humans protection after the fact. Surge camps are kept hidden from other nations who might choose to interfere or report them to the UN, though some have already grown so large that they're visible in satellite imagery.

The camps are the worst possible situation for a newcomer. They do not educate their captives, they are fed next to nothing, their needs are not met, they are regularly beaten, abused, and experimented on, and they offer little chance of escape. Even if a demi-human *does* escape, they usually find themselves in a desolate wilderness far from any kind of town or shelter, in a foreign land where the natives are terrified of them and possibly armed.

Threats

- A new surge camp has been started right here in the States, right outside your town. Fueled by religious hysteria, fearmongering, and xenophobia, a measure for its construction was slipped in as a rider on a city planning bill. Now, by some cosmic irony, you're literally paying taxes to fund the creation of a detention camp for yourself.
- The men who let you go from the camp in the Nevada desert told you that if you ever speak of where you came from, they would come and kill you. To your dismay, the police are now investigating a group in the desert, and they've come to ask you about your time out west.
- In a terrible freak accident, you are swapped with a newcomer via a fresh Gate connected to a surge camp. You don't speak the language and have no idea where you are. Despite your confusion, the guards blame you for the disturbance and punish you severely. Do you escape, or do you try to free the others?

THE COALITION

In direct opposition to ADRI is the Coalition, which formed almost as an afterthought. Made up of a cabal of insecure but powerful politicians, the Coalition is shaping up to be the national standard for defending the country from outsiders. Fundamentally an organization of detractors, its members range from staunchly defensive to spectacularly offensive. The worst members have taken opposition to the Surge and to integration to the next level, and are claiming minority races in the United States are “nothing less than the monsters invading our country.” Somehow though, the insanity of these bigots is tempered by the moderate members, who brush off their inflammatory remarks with dismissal that leaves the door open to condoning their statements without verbally agreeing with them. Phrases like “I think what my esteemed colleague is trying to say is...” and “I don’t know anything about that, but believe me...” are stock and trade among the Coalition speakers.

But the real problem isn’t just the front face of the Coalition. Behind closed doors, members are solidifying connections and forging new allegiances in political bodies, corporations, and foreign nations all the time. They have the money, resources, and acumen to get away with just about anything, and the only saving grace is that they’re still putting together their plan to expunge the newcomers from US soil.

Threats

- ADRI is forced to close its doors. At all levels, the Coalition has applied pressure to make sure that it receives no support. First they neutered it, then they handicapped it, then they destroyed it. The politicians look so happy on television you could puke. You can tell who the detractors are that week, because they’re the ones who look like a major victory was won. The rest of us look like death warmed over.
- The Freedom of Private Enterprise Act has passed, despite the impassioned and enraged filibusters of proponents and moderates alike. Now, corporations are given the unabashed

right to discriminate in any way they see fit, so long as their qualifications “are made clear.” It’s not only a blow to demi-humans, but millions of minority-group American humans as well.

- The Defensive Supernatural Measures Act is passed, again sliding past all opposition. The new act allows police and the GETF (as well as the National Guard and all other military branches) to treat anyone or anything that seems “supernaturally suspicious” as a person or item of interest, thereby bypassing all laws and rights for the protection of citizens. All the integration proponent politicians can do is suggest that demi-humans stay inside and out of sight for as long as it takes to resolve the matter. Nobody’s holding their breath for that to happen.

2019



WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?

- *How tall are you?*
- *How do you go to the bathroom?*
- *Do you always eat your boyfriends?*
- *Was it hard learning to speak?*

–Some of the many questions asked of newcomers

The creatures that have come through the Gates display a dizzying variety of shapes, sizes, forms, colors, and attributes. There are so many subtypes, lineages, bloodlines, and unique beings that entirely new branches of science have been founded to try to make sense of the utterly world-shattering revelation that was the Surge.

NEW BASIC MOVES

- **Balance Sheet**
 - At the end of each month, sum up your Monthly Debts and Monthly Income. Subtract your debts from your income and apply that to your Balance. If your Balance is negative, fate intervenes.
- **Get Some Respect**
 - When you fight people's preconceptions or strive to build trust, roll Charm, Spirit, or Cunning. You take a penalty to this roll based on your appearance. Human: 0. Nearly Human: -1. Non-biped/bestial: -2. Monstrous: -3. You also take a -1 penalty if your clothes and grooming are not up to the standards of the person you are talking to. **S:** You get what you want, but just barely. **T:** Either you manage not to offend anyone, or you get what you want, choose 1. **F:** You don't get what you want and fate intervenes.

What the Hell Are You?

- **Pub Crawler**
 - When you go out drinking, roll Charm or Power. **S:** choose 3 **T:** choose 2 **F:** choose 1, and fate intervenes on your bender.
 - Your hangover only *kind of* sucks.
 - You've made new friends, heaven help you.
 - The collateral damage is limited in scope.
 - Several people have new Relationships with you.
 - No videos of your escapades go viral.

MODERN ARCHETYPES

All HFA Archetypes are viable in ALM, but many are perceived by US citizens as at best backward and at worst criminally dangerous. There are also new archetypes to choose from.

OFFICE WORKER

- **It's Technical**
 - When you meet someone in the same field as you, you get +1 to Get Some Respect with them.
- **Computer Systems Expert**
 - You get +1 to all Moves related to working with computers.
- **Phone Operator**
 - When you're on the phone, you get +1 to Basic and Social Moves with the person on the other end of the line.
- **Air of Legitimacy**
 - You get +1 ongoing to Get Some Respect while wearing your work outfit.
- **Filed In Triplicate**
 - When paperwork stands in your way, roll Cunning or Alertness. **S:** You've already got something (a license, passport, or previous account, etc) that allows you to skip it entirely. **T:** You get the paperwork done faster than anticipated, but it still takes some time. **F:** Fate intervenes, but at least you know what you need to complete the forms.
- **Financial Planning**

- Each month, when you do your Balance Sheet, pick one Debt you or another player has. The owner doesn't have to pay it this month.

ODD JOB

- **Self-Employed**
 - Each month, roll Charm to see if you get more work. **S:** choose 3. **T:** choose 2. **F:** choose 1 and fate intervenes.
 - Grow the business
 - Expand your market
 - Get paid: calculate pay based on the lowest rate in your field
 - Make a business connection
 - Your work goes viral
- **Temp Agency**
 - You have an agency that places you in temporary jobs, usually part-time. Your pay for these jobs is always the minimum rate, but you don't have to pay anything to get started, the agency handles that. If you have problems with one job, the agency can get you moved to another job the next day.
- **Shady Work**
 - When you're really hurting for some money, you can put your feelers out to some contacts on the street. Roll Cunning. **S:** They can get you something safe, lucrative, and possibly illegal. **T:** They can get you something safe or lucrative, but both are illegal. **F:** They told you it'd be safe and lucrative, but it wasn't either. Fate intervenes.
- **My Own Schedule**
 - There's no particular time you need to be at work. You're always up for an adventure, because you make your own schedule. You won't be fired for taking time off or disappearing for a while. In addition, you can usually find an advantageous time to get something important done, often when no one else is trying to do the same.
- **Handy**
 - When you have the tools and time to perform minor repairs, roll Cunning or Alertness. **S:** choose 3. **T:** choose 2. **F:** choose 1 and fate intervenes.

What the Hell Are You?

- You get it done quickly.
- You *don't* have to wait for replacement parts.
- You *don't* need any tools that aren't in your kit.
- You impress your client, they'll probably hire you again.
- You prevent the problem from coming up again for long time.
- **Polymath**
 - When you make a Move that hinges on knowledge of science, technology, engineering, or math, you take +1 on the roll.

ROMANTIC

- **Lover's Comfort**
 - When you spend some romantic time with someone, choose 1.
 - They heal up to 2 health stars
 - They take +1 ongoing for the next few hours
 - They take a Relationship with you
 - They mark 1 experience
- **Practiced Naiveté**
 - When you interact with someone you can hide your intelligence and intent. Roll Charm. **S:** choose 3. **T:** choose 2. **F:** choose 1, but fate intervenes.
 - They accidentally reveal a piece of information they wouldn't have given someone suspicious.
 - They gain a positive Relationship with you.
 - They willingly invite you through whatever protections were designed to keep others out.
 - Hold 1. Spend 1 hold to reveal a new gap in someone's plan that involved you.
- **Celebutante**
 - You know all the right people. When you encounter someone famous or important, roll Charm. **S:** You actually *are* acquainted with them, though they may not want to advertise how. **T:** Either you've confused them into misremembering you, or you've outwitted them and they're forced to play along. **F:** What were you famous for again? Fate intervenes.
- **I Speak Fluent Body Language**

- You can use Social Moves even when you can't speak or your target can't hear you. This includes situations where you might be bound, tied, or otherwise indisposed. When your target *can* hear you, you take +1 to Beguile and Get Intimate with them.
- **Putty in My Hands**
 - Each session, hold 3. You can spend 1 hold to take +1 forward on a Move to deceive, beguile, threaten, play with or manipulate someone.
- **Too Kinky to Torture**
 - When you have 1 or more marked health star, you take +1 ongoing to Social Moves and Moves to resist revealing information.

LABORER

- **Indomitable**
 - People trying to intimidate, threaten, beguile, or seduce you take -1 ongoing to do so.
- **I Can Go All Day**
 - When something would be arduous or difficult to keep doing, roll Power. **S:** It's no big deal for you. Take +1 on it ongoing. **T:** Whatever it is, you get it done anyway. **F:** You get it done, but fate intervenes, probably involving some sort of strain injury.
- **Tough As Nails**
 - When you have 1 or more health stars marked, you get +1 ongoing to armor.
- **Wrecking Ball**
 - When you inflict harm at close/melee range, you inflict +2 harm.
- **Operate Machinery**
 - When you operate a loader, backhoe, crane, tractor, or other piece of heavy machinery in a dangerous situation, roll Alertness. **S:** choose 3. **T:** choose 2. **F:** choose 1 but fate intervenes.
 - You drive carefully, avoiding collateral damage.
 - You're faster than they thought.

What the Hell Are You?

- You pull off an impressive maneuver, such as picking up or rolling another vehicle.
- **Hard Shelled/Thick Skin**
 - You get +1 armor ongoing against punches, kicks, and other unarmed attacks from non-demi-humans.

HOST

- **Iron Butt Monkey**
 - You get +2 armor, but in exchange, the GM can redirect interventions of fate from your allies and friends directly to you, even though you don't deserve it.
- **Papa/Mama Wolf**
 - When someone threatens or hurts a member of your close circle of family or friends, you get +1 ongoing against that person.
- **Work Your Butt Off**
 - When confronted with an overwhelming amount of work, you can mark 1 willpower star to get it done in a flash, leaving you almost completely exhausted.
- **Discount Genius**
 - When you want to purchase something, roll Alertness or Cunning. **S:** You manage to finagle it down to 50% the original cost. **T:** You only drag the price down by 20%. **F:** You found a cheaper alternative, but it sucks.
- **All There in the Manual**
 - You're considered to have perfect knowledge of any paperwork, laws, guidelines, and contracts you or your friends are involved in. You use the Seize by Force Move to wrangle contracts or find loopholes.
- **Weirdness Magnet**
 - When you encounter something unusual or supernatural, roll Spirit. **S:** hold 2. **T:** hold 1. **F:** it gets weird in a whole new and unexpected way. Spend 1 hold for one of the following:
 - You're completely unfazed by something that should have surprised or terrified you.
 - Something equally weird appears and temporarily neutralizes the original problem.

- Cosmic forces take an interest in you, with unforeseeable results.
- It turns out you've got some useful but incomplete knowledge of whatever it is.

BOSS

- **Delegate Responsibility**
 - Each session, hold 3. You can spend 1 hold to get one of your employees to come and try to handle a situation for you. When you do so, roll Charm. **S:** Your employee is excited and enthusiastic about the task. **T:** "Well, it's a job." **F:** Fate intervenes on your employee, possibly causing you more problems.
- **High Powered Executive**
 - Each session, hold 3. You can spend 1 hold for one of the following:
 - A luxury car is pulled around for you to drive or be driven in.
 - You wave your black credit card and ignore the purchase price.
 - Bribe someone into doing something you want.
 - Automatically succeed to Get Some Respect.
 - You've already got a meeting or reservation.
 - Bypass lines, queues, and security.
 - Receive an invitation to a party, gala, ball, or formal event.
- **Management Experience**
 - When you Read a Person, add the following questions. In addition, you can ask 1 more question than your roll indicates.
 - What would motivate this person?
 - What is this person good at?
 - What *would* this person be good at?
 - Who would be a good or bad match for them?
- **Those Wonderful Toys**
 - When you need something your company might make, design, or sell, roll Cunning or Power. **S:** You get ahold of an advanced prototype of the thing, and no one will be too put out if you manage to return it in one piece. **T:** You get one,

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but people are looking for it now, so be careful. **F:** You've gotten something like it, but fate intervenes, somehow that thing is doomed.

- **Situation Resolution**
 - When you interfere in a personal conflict, you can offer both sides an out. If they *both* take it, they both mark experience. If only one intends to take it, you can mark 1 health star in order to convince the other party.
- **Pep Talk**
 - When you talk to a group before they do some activity you have knowledge of, roll Spirit or Charm. **S:** Your team takes +1 ongoing while doing the thing. **T:** Your team takes +1 forward to do the thing. **F:** Your team takes +1 forward to do the thing, but fate intervenes, either because someone didn't like your speech, or because someone else is interfering.

ENFORCEMENT AGENT

- **Deescalate**
 - While in a conflict where no one has suffered harm yet, you have a chance to deescalate the situation. Roll Charm or Power. **S:** The situation goes from an actively hostile one to a tense standoff, or from a tense standoff to a sullen silence. **T:** The situation is still hostile, but the combatants hesitate, possibly buying someone else an opportunity. **F:** Fate intervenes, you're the target now.
- **Pain Compliance**
 - When you start a conflict within reach of an adversary, you take +1 forward to grapple with them. Furthermore, you get +1 ongoing with the Seize By Force Move for grappling situations.
- **Investigative Awareness**
 - When you Read a Person or Situation, you add the following questions to the list. Additionally, you can ask 1 more question than usual.
 - Did this person have something to do with ____?
 - Who else might be connected to ____?
 - What has already been overlooked?

- What piece of evidence is conspicuously *absent*?
- **Centralized Dispatch**
 - You are part of a web of other agents, allowing you to share your information and resources. Each session, hold 3. Spend 1 hold for one of the following:
 - Call in some backup to help you deal with a situation.
 - Call in tracking or surveillance on a particular target you have information about.
 - Ask the network if anyone has reported something or someone matching a description.
 - Report an accident or incident for further cleanup or emergency management.
 - Ask for activities that need doing.
- **Brotherhood/Sisterhood**
 - When you yourself are in trouble with the law, you've got people to turn to. Roll Charm or Power. **S:** Your compatriots absolve you of the crime. You suffer no punishment, and your reputation is unharmed. **T:** You're not going to jail, but your reputation isn't what it used to be. You effectively take a -1 to your criminal record. **F:** They'll bail you out as in a Tie, but you're now obligated to help them with an illegal "chore" that needs doing.
- **Special Agent**
 - Select a specialty, such as Air Marshal, Interstate Patrol, or Drug Enforcement. When on the job in your specialization, you get +1 ongoing to Read a Person or Situation.

SPECIAL POWERS

As with HFA archetypes, HFA Special Power Moves are also available, but are often looked down as barbaric, dangerous, or criminal. There are also some new Special Powers.

- **Gaterider**
 - When you encounter a Gate, you can actually leap *into* it, which then deposits you at the output of some other random Gate, often very far away. When you leap into a Gate, roll

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Spirit. **S:** You can pick any active Gate to come out of. **T:** You can choose a region to end up in, but not which Gate. **T:** You can pick a region, but fate intervenes.

- **Natural Resources**

- Your body naturally makes things that others might find valuable, like feathers, scales, horns, or venom. When you harvest your resources, suffer 1 harm past armor and roll Charm or Alertness. **S:** choose 3. Base value is \$1000. **T:** choose 2. Base value is \$100. **F:** choose 1, but fate intervenes. Base value is \$10.
- Good Harvest: Multiply your harvest by 1d6.
- Perfect Resources: Double the value of your harvest.
- Solid Deal: Nothing goes wrong with the trade.
- Active Buyer: You've already got a buyer, no need to track one down.
- Easy Harvest: You don't suffer harm from your harvest.

- **Utility Magic**

- You can use any of your Moves at a very low level of power. When you do so, you can do simple tasks with it, like boiling water with fire breath, or spicing the chili with your venom. Doing so doesn't require you to roll the move. With people you don't know, you may have to Get Some Respect to prevent them from being weirded out.

- **Hot Blooded Declaration**

- When you make a declaration of your passion for a lover or your wrath upon an enemy, roll Power. **S:** You take +1 ongoing with those who viewed the declaration. **T:** You take +1 forward with them. **F:** Fate intervenes, someone probably thought your declaration was embarrassing, cringeworthy, or poorly timed.

MONEY IN THE LAND OF CREDIT

ALM introduces two new concepts you'll need to keep track of: Monthly Debts and Monthly Income. List each item for both of

these with a name and an amount (like Bus Pass: \$20/mo) so that you can remove them from your balance sheet if needed. See the new Basic Move Balance Sheet for more on how this works.

When traveling from Otherworld to Earth, it may be helpful to know that 1 gold coin is worth about \$1000. Treasure sells for less, usually about \$700 per 1 treasure. Equipment itself sells for much less, usually about \$500 per 1 gold's worth, unless it's inherently magical.

EQUIPMENT

All equipment from HFA is *technically* available in ALM, but most of it is extremely rare or hard to come by. In addition, all HFA equipment has the "Otherworld" tag, marking it as foreign to Earth. Natural Weapons and Armor can't be taken away from you, and don't require licenses, but mark you as a demi-human.

Whereas HFA uses Gold and Treasure to track money, the modern world of ALM uses the almighty dollar.

RESPECT AND PURCHASING

A lot of items require a certain amount of respect to acquire, either because you'll get thrown out of the store otherwise, because you need to apply for a loan or license, or because those selling the goods are leery of dealing with people they deem "untrustworthy." If a price in dollars also has a DN listed, that's the DN to Get Some Respect in order to buy the item in question.

WEAPONS

One of the first (and only) things the federal government could agree on was licensing for Otherworld Weaponry. Objects from the HFA weapons list are still available, but they are limited in quantity and require expensive licenses to own. Obviously, it's illegal to

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actually use them on someone, as that would be assault. It's also difficult for demi-humans to get licenses—even for the objects they've brought with them through the Gates—because of how slow the bureaucracy moves when you're on that side of the fence. Humans have a much easier time getting Otherworld Weapon Licenses, of course, leading many newcomers to sell their arms for a better leg up in US society.

There are, of course, new weapons, available to demi-humans and humans alike.

Name	Harm	Tags	Cost
Pistol	4	Ranged, Concealed, License	\$500
Rifle	5	Ranged, License	\$500
Assault Rifle	5	Ranged, Automatic, License	\$1000
Kitchen Knife	2	Melee, Ranged, Concealed, Limited Use	\$20
Baseball Bat	3	Melee	\$50
IED	1d6	Area, Indirect, Trap, Illegal	\$50
Tranq Gun	4	Ranged, Stun	\$400
Taser	3	Melee, Stun, Concealed	\$200
Gas Grenade	3	Ranged, Stun, Area, Limited Use	\$40

ARMOR

Name	Armor	Tags	Cost
Leather Jacket	+1	Suit	\$150
Kevlar Vest	+3	Suit	\$400
BDU	+1	Impressive	\$150
Ballistic Ceramic Vest	+4	Suit, Heavy	\$600
Combat Helmet	+1		\$100
Riot Gear	+5	Impressive, Suit, Heavy	\$1000
Tactical Operations Gear	+3	Suit, Stealthy	\$800

Note: Modern armor isn't designed to take repeated abuse. After you suffer harm in combat, you should get your armor replaced, lest a hit go right through the same spot.

TOOLS

- **Cellphone**
 - GlobalMart Brick: \$20
 - Smartphone: \$500
 - PhiOne: \$1000
 - Monthly Service: \$60
- **Laptop**
 - GlobalMart OEM: \$300
 - Convertible: \$700
 - Gaming: \$2000
- **Desktop**
 - GlobalMart OEM: \$300
 - Gaming: \$1500
 - Advanced Workstation: \$3000
- **Firearms License**
 - Fees: \$50
 - Classes: \$150

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- DN: 3
- **Standard Drivers License**
 - Fees: \$40
 - DN: 1
- **Occupational Drivers License**
 - Fees: \$60
 - DN: 2
- **Passport**
 - Fees: \$100
 - DN: 3
- **Forged Papers**
 - Simple Document: \$100
 - Verified Paperwork: \$1000
 - Fake Identity: \$5000
 - DN: 1
- **Nice Clothes**
 - Cost: \$300
 - +1 to Get Some Respect
- **Sexy/Embarrassing Outfit**
 - Cost: \$30
 - -1 to Get Some Respect, +1 to Moves to seduce
- **The New Green Book**
 - Cost: \$10
 - Details local customs, feelings, jobs, and services available to demi-humans across the United States and parts of Canada.

RESOURCES

- **Fresh Food**
 - Planned Meals: \$100/week
 - Unplanned Stockup: \$200/week
- **Fast Food**
 - Cost: \$120–\$200/week
- **Fresh Water**
 - Bottled, 2 gallons: \$2/week
 - Piped, 3000 gallons: \$10/week
 - Public, filled bottle: \$0/week
- **Rations**

- Cost: \$100/week
- **Gas**
 - Hybrid: \$10/week
 - Midsize: \$25/week
 - Truck: \$50/week
- **Barbed/Razor Wire**
 - Cost: \$150
 - 200 ft
- **Water/Sewer Plumbing**
 - Cost: \$50/mo
- **Garbage & Recycling Pickup**
 - Cost: \$15/mo
- **Data Connection**
 - Internet: \$65/mo
 - Internet & TV: \$90/mo
- **Office Supplies**
 - Cost: \$50–\$150/mo
- **Bus Pass**
 - Monthly Pass: \$70/mo
 - Daily Ticket: \$5/day

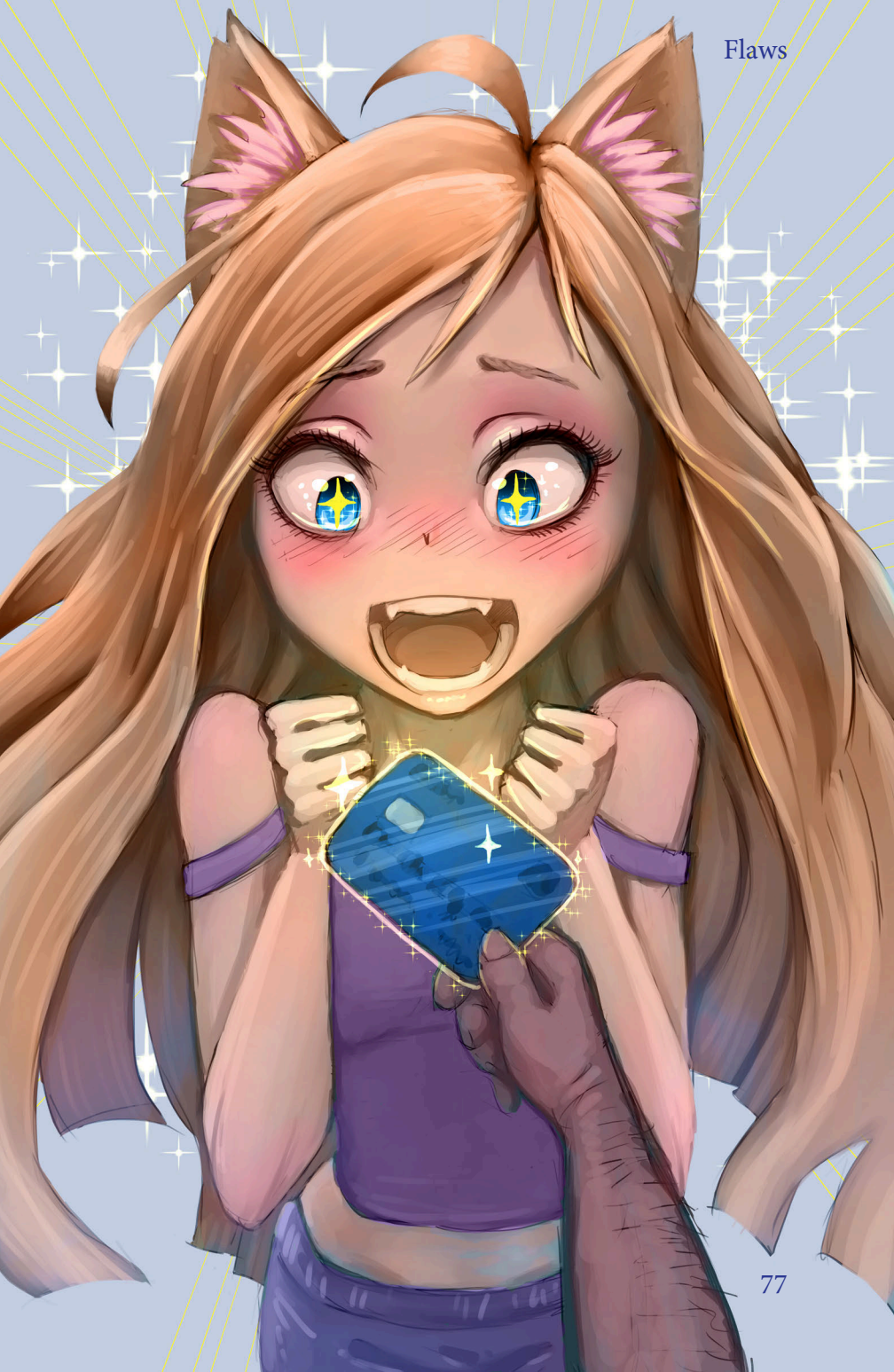
FLAWS

All the flaws from HFA are available, but there are also modern ones to pick from.

- **Poorly Adapted:** Turns out that you can't use a simple human-oriented facility or appliance. You can't fit in that space very easily. You make a mess of everything in the area.
- **Stuck in the Past:** Annoy others by talking about or reliving the glory days. Ignore modern social conventions to the detriment of your respect. Get in a huge argument about your ideals.
- **Terrifying Countenance:** Scare the crap out of someone completely by accident. Someone would rather run away than listen to you for even a moment. Nobody can take you seriously.

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- **Values Dissonance:** Glory is punishable by the police. Honor is tacky and politically incorrect. The moral compass has been replaced with bureaucratic law.
- **Busy With Work:** Someone gets mad because you're never there. You're too tired to help out. You get in a terrible argument about money.
- **Horny:** Someone attractive catches your eye and keeps it. You're caught not paying attention to the right thing. You manage to offend someone just by looking at them.
- **Nutritional Requirements:** You're too hungry to give it your all. Food is more expensive or hard to come by than it should be. You get sick because you haven't had the right nutrition.
- **Harassment Target:** People take a liking to you in a bad way. Someone thinks you owe them something. You can't avoid their unwanted attention.
- **Massacre Survivor:** There are always nightmares. Suffer flashbacks that make you lash out in terror. Old wounds make it hard to do something physical.
- **Dark One's Scion:** Religious people think you're the devil again. Zealots try to lynch you again. Your power goes badly out of control.
- **Long Record:** Nobody trusts you at all. You've got a court date you can't miss. People on the street want a piece of you.
- **Escaped Test Subject:** Avoid cameras and scrutiny. Lab security agents arrive to apprehend you. You don't feel so good, who knows what they did to you.
- **On Call Job:** Drop what you're doing and run off. Take an important phone call at a bad time. End up on the wrong schedule as everyone else.
- **Depression:** It's not worth it. Pretend everything's okay even though they can tell it's not. Ignore your own value completely.



THE RULES OF THE NEW WORLD

What you don't know can kill you dead.

–Newcomer saying

HOUSING

- **Squatting**
 - Unpaid stay on someone else's property.
 - Expect them to come back any day now.
 - They may serve you an eviction, but the police may refuse to remove you, depending on how long you've been there.
- **Camp Site**
 - Fees: \$400–\$800/mo
 - Sometimes you can find campgrounds that offer discounts for those with disabilities (and allow demi-humans to qualify) or are planning to stay long term.
 - Hygiene is hard.
 - Lots of open space for demis.
- **Hideout**
 - An abandoned warehouse or commercial building.
 - Liable to be checked by police occasionally.
 - Often home to bums, hobos, homeless, or drug operations.
- **Apartment**
 - Rent: \$500–1500/mo
 - Either a fancy apartment in a cheap town or a cheap apartment in an expensive town.
 - You can hear your neighbors doing whatever it is that they're doing.
 - They can hear you too.
- **Small House**

- Down Payment: \$5000–\$40,000
- Mortgage & Utilities: \$1200–\$1800/mo x 30yrs
- This is a real house with real rooms and appliances.
- Don't expect anything to fit demi-humans.
- Likely includes only 1 piece of random, unhelpful furniture when you move in, like an end table that only fits in one closet.
- **Large House**
 - Down Payment: \$20,000–\$100,000
 - Mortgage: \$1800–\$3000/mo x 30yrs
 - Big huge fancy place.
 - Actually big enough for decent-sized demi-humans.
 - Probably too fancy to be utilitarian for demis.
 - Likely to have haughty, suspicious, hostile neighbors.
- **Mansion**
 - Down Payment: \$400,000
 - Mortgage: \$9000/mo x 30yrs
 - Private pool, home cinema, conservatory, home automation, library, study, gaming facilities, etc.
 - Plenty of space for demi-humans.
 - Numerous outbuildings, large gated property, private drive.
 - Likely to be a public spectacle.
- **Farm**
 - Subsistence Farm
 - Purchase: \$500,000
 - Yearly Income: \$75,000
 - Grain Farm
 - Purchase: \$5,000,000
 - Yearly Income: \$600,000
 - Corporate Farm
 - Purchase: \$25,000,000
 - Yearly Income: \$2,500,000
- **Social Welfare Housing**
 - Rent: \$150/mo
 - One room studio, shared bathroom, may actually be a garage.
 - Low-income part of town.
 - Frequent disturbances.
 - Far away from all the good stores.
- **Science Foundation Housing**

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- Pay no rent!
- Only occasionally subject to scientific experimentation!
- Receive compensation for your service to science!
- Omnipresent observation cameras.
- Frequent interviews.
- Occasional visiting scientists who treat you more like an expensive exotic pet.

VEHICLES

- **Bike**
 - Purchase: \$100–\$1500
- **Motorcycle**
 - Seats: 2
 - Loan: \$150/mo x 5 years
 - Purchase: \$7000
- **Sedan**
 - Seats: 4–5
 - Cargo: 150 lbs
 - Loan: \$200/mo x 10yrs
 - Purchase: \$35,000
- **Pickup**
 - Seats: 2–4
 - Cargo: 1 ton in bed, 5 tons towing
 - Loan: \$230/mo x 10 years
 - Purchase: \$40,000
- **Sports Car**
 - Seats: 2
 - Loan: \$1300/mo x 10 years
 - Purchase: \$200,000
- **Semi**
 - Towing Capacity: 44,000 lbs
 - Loan: \$400/mo x 10 years
 - Purchase: \$70,000
- **Offroad**
 - Seats: 5–6
 - Cargo: 400 lbs

- Loan: \$200/mo x 10yrs
 - Purchase: \$35,000
- **Armored Livery Car**
 - Seats: 5
 - Purchase: \$150,000
- **Industrial Equipment**
 - Seats: 1–2
 - Cargo: 2–15 tons
 - Requires occupational license
 - Lease: \$2500/mo x 10 years
 - Purchase: \$350,000
- **Yacht**
 - Financing: \$3300–\$20,000/mo x 10 years
 - Purchase: \$500,000–\$3m
- **Private Jet**
 - Financing: \$8300–\$83,000 x 10 years
 - Purchase: \$1m–\$10m
- **Helicopter**
 - Financing: \$2100–\$15,000
 - Purchase: \$250,000–\$1.8m
- **Cargo Ship**
 - Used: \$15m
 - Custom Built: \$30m
- **Passenger Jet**
 - Used: \$150m
 - New: \$350m
- **Bomber**
 - Purchase: \$400m
- **Fighter**
 - Standard: \$40m
 - Advanced: \$85m
- **Warship**
 - Frigate: \$500m
 - Sub: \$1.5b
 - Destroyer: \$1.5b

JOBS

To function in society, you'll eventually need an income. To get an income, most people work a job. For demi-humans unfamiliar with the concept, a job is a profession where you typically go to do work in exchange for a steady payment over time. Jobs often last multiple years. Much of American society revolves around what one's job is and how well one does it.

INTERVIEWS

Regardless of the actual structure of the interview itself, the process of getting a job is usually broken down into 4 parts.

- **Application:** The vast majority of jobs in the US now require a typed or digital resume. Generally, you'll have to submit a large number of applications to various companies to get a reply. There are lots of filters to weed out candidates, and oftentimes demi-humans accidentally filter themselves out simply by not falling into the right categories or answering the right unasked questions. Education and experience are the most common factors.
- **First Impression:** Once you have a reply, you'll go through several interviews, often in phone or in person. At this time you'll need to Get Some Respect with everyone you meet with, to make sure they aren't completely turned off by you. You may end up using Social Moves as well, depending on the situation.
- **Technical Knowhow:** In the process of the interview, you'll be tested to see if you have a working knowledge of the skills you'll need for the job. In the States, don't expect to find an apprentice-style position, you've got to know what you're doing *before* you start. You may be asked to demonstrate your skills.
- **Teamwork/Personality:** You'll also be tested (subtly) on how you interact with the rest of the team. If you don't get along well with them, or if someone gets offended, or if you make a fool out of yourself, the team will probably talk about it after your interview and may decide to go with another candidate.

PAY RATES

The following chart lists jobs by field rather than position; Retail for example might include sales associate, custodial, and management positions at various levels of pay and with various responsibilities. The chart is followed by sections for Part Time Jobs, Raises, Promotions.

The monthly pay range listed here is the low/entry end of the scale. Initial positions are likely to be the less important/specialized/valuable jobs in a given field.

Note that many jobs require several years of college training, costing tens of thousands of dollars, before you can even start. The costs of college/university are not included in the job cost.

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Field	Monthly Pay Range*	Tags	Cost†
Retail	\$1600–\$3200	Boring	\$60
Construction	\$1600–\$4000	Hard	\$500
Transportation	\$2300–\$4200		\$120
Agriculture	\$1900–\$5800	Outside	\$200–\$15,000
Clerical	\$1900–\$3300	Boring	\$150
Education	\$2800–\$4300		\$150
Small Business	\$2500–\$5700	Unstable	\$50–\$5000
Fire/Rescue	\$2500–\$5100	Dangerous	\$2500
Military	\$2900–\$6700	Dangerous	\$0
Police	\$2500–\$4800	Dangerous	\$5500
IT	\$4200–\$5800	Boring	\$200
Software	\$4400–\$6000		\$200
Industrial	\$2900–\$4200		\$250
Business-person	\$3700–\$6300		\$1000
Engineering/ Science	\$4200–\$6700		\$100
Management	\$3300–\$6700		\$500
Entertainment	\$1200–\$10400		\$2000
Medicine	\$1800–\$6300	Hard	\$300
Banking	\$2300–\$5300		\$1000
CEO	\$8300–\$12,500		\$12,000

*Monthly pay range assumes full-time employment.

†Why do I have to pay to get a job? The US is a harsh place, newcomer. You'll need transportation, training, clothing, and maybe even special equipment for a lot of jobs these days. A lot of demi-humans end up in poverty simply because they can't afford to get a stable job. Generally, you have to spend this money *before* the interview in order to prove your seriousness about the position.

PART TIME JOBS

The pay ranges on the Job Field chart shows monthly pay for full-time employment. Often, full-time employment isn't offered or available to every applicant, especially for entry level, and especially for applicants the company feels it's taking a risk on.

When you work a Part Time Job, you only receive half the monthly pay you'd expect for full-time employment.

RAISES

If you do well at your job, you've got a decent boss, and work for a company that doesn't completely stiff its employees, you might have a chance at a raise every few years. For simplicity's sake, multiply your monthly pay by 105%, and that becomes your new monthly pay.

PROMOTIONS

When you move from one type of position to another, use the following chart to find out how much your new salary is, based on the original pay you received.

- **Base position/entry level:** 100%
- **Experienced position:** 150%
- **Part time vs full time work:** 200%
- **Master position/management:** 300%

TAKING OUT A LOAN

If you need a bunch of money, you can always try to take out a loan. Pick an amount on the list below. The Payment is a Monthly Debt, and the Term is how long it will take in years to pay off the loan.

Amount	Payment/Mo	Term
\$500	\$50	1 year
\$1,000	\$100	1 year
\$5,000	\$500	1 year
\$10,000	\$200	5 years
\$100,000	\$1200	10 years
\$200,000	\$1900	15 years
\$500,000	\$3700	30 years
\$1,000,000	\$7300	30 years

CONVERTING SALARIES & DEBTS

Job pay, debts, and credits are listed in monthly amounts for simplicity of book-keeping during gameplay, but you may want to figure out what these figures amount to over other periods as well.

- **Monthly to Annual:** multiply by 12
- **Annual to Monthly:** divide by 12
- **Monthly to Hourly:** divide by 160
- **Hourly to Annual:** multiply by 2000
- **Annual to Hourly:** divide by 2000

DEBT

Because we live in a world of credit cards, loans, monthly payments, and electronic banking, you may find yourself with a negative bank balance through the course of play. When the Balance Sheet move is done, it may lead to fate intervening because your balance is low. When this happens, you may be penalized with a \$50-\$100 service fee, your account may be closed or canceled, or it may even be sent to collections.

Debt collectors are notoriously poorly behaved and often act more like vigilante bounty hunters than responsible financial agents. They're not likely to handle tense situations with demi-humans well, and many of them are armed for their own personal protection.

SAVINGS

There are several ways of saving or investing money, but the more profitable they are, the more respect and money you need to gain access to them.

INVESTING

Investing is when you give money to an institution or pay for some asset with the expectation that you will be paid back later, with a larger sum. Here are several simplified investments. You can own as many of these as you want at a time. You can withdraw money from the account, but doing so may affect the amount of money your account continues to make, depending on the type. You're going to want a calculator.

- **Deposit:** The amount of money you pay into the account to get the account started. This is usually considered the account

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minimum before you start getting \$50–\$100 service fees each month.

- **Account Balance:** The amount of money in the account, composed of the Deposit and the interest.
- **Monthly Value:** Each month, multiply the Account Balance by this number to find the new Account Balance.
- **Risk:** Formatted as X/Y. You roll Yd6, and if you roll X or lower, you *divide* rather than multiply the Account Balance Monthly Value. You want a low X and a high Y.
- **DN:** The DN to Get Some Respect in order to open the account.

Investment	Deposit	Monthly Value	Risk	DN	Notes
Savings	\$300	x1.005	-	1	Deposit as much as you like
Money Market	\$0	x1.015	-	1	Deposit as much as you like
CD	\$500	x1.025	-	1	No withdrawals for 1d6 years, rolled at deposit
Bond	\$10,000	x1.04	-	1	No withdrawals for 1d6 years, rolled at deposit
Long Term Investment	\$50,000	x1.04	6/ 4d6	3	No withdrawals for 1d6 years, rolled at deposit, sellable
Diversified Stock Portfolio	\$100,000	x1.07	4/ 3d6	3	
Day Trading	\$20,000	x1.10	1/ 1d6	2	
Small-Time Criminal Enterprise	\$150	x1.1	2/ 1d6	1	Fate intervenes each month
Established Criminal Enterprise	\$100,000	x1.2	2/ 2d6	1	Fate intervenes on Risk failure

CRIMINAL RECORD

If you are caught breaking the law, you may gain a Criminal Record. Your Criminal Record is a list of penalties that may apply

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to Get Some Respect and other Social Moves depending on whether the person you're talking to knows about it, does a background check, or has heard your reputation. You can get items on your Criminal Record removed by doing time or getting them overturned in court, though this is very expensive.

- Misdemeanors: -1
 - Theft
 - Prostitution
 - Public Intoxication
 - Assault
 - Disorderly Conduct
 - Trespassing
 - Vandalism
 - Reckless Driving
 - Discharging a Firearm Within City Limits
 - Possession of Drugs
- Felonies: -2
 - Assault/Battery
 - Animal Cruelty
 - Vehicular Homicide
 - Arson
 - Burglary
 - Tax Evasion
 - Fraud
 - Hacking
 - Manufacture/Distribution of Drugs
 - Grand Larceny
 - Rape/Sexual Assault
 - Obstruction of Justice
 - Perjury
 - Threatening an Official
 - Escaping Prison
- Excessive Felonies: -4
 - Treason
 - Murder
 - Manslaughter
 - Kidnapping

If you're apprehended for a felony, you're probably going to prison for a while, though few prisons on earth are able to hold a determined demi-human. Escaping prison isn't exactly a good thing to have on your record though, that's a felony too.

STUN DAMAGE

Stun damage is not tracked differently than normal damage. Instead, if you are subject to harm from a weapon tagged with Stun, write Stunned on your sheet. If you are knocked out in the fight, you do not permanently lose 1 health star, and half of your health stars are cleared at the end of the fight, along with the Stunned status.



SUPERVILLAIN CLUB

*You just wait. I've got ten thousand of the best genetic engineers on Earth in my employment. I have billions at my disposal. I have clients in every world power on the planet. And I have an apparently **unlimited** supply of test subjects.*

Give me a couple of years and I'll be the world's first superhero.

–Valentin Werner Ivanov

AGENDAS

The GM's agendas are basically the same as HFA and are on page 107.

- Complicate the characters' lives
- Make the Land of Monsters come alive
- Discover the tale together
- Be Honest

PRINCIPLES

The Principles of ALM are somewhat different than those of HFA.

- **Fail Forward:** Never, ever let failure or moderate success stop the flow of the game. Always make failure interesting and dramatic, and make it lead into another issue. Present failure as a challenge to be overcome by finishing your Hard GM Move with "What do you do?" Treat failure as another route to eventual success.

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- **Blow It Out of Proportion:** Melodrama is funny, intensity is dramatic, and obsession is terrifying. Keep the story moving by keeping the action going. Is feeding a household of demi-humans the challenge? Watch Food Wars and Monster Musume for ideas.
- **They're Just Trying To Get By:** Whether they were heroines or civilians, the newcomers are not prepared for this new world, and it's hard enough to get three square meals and a roof on a consistent basis. Most aren't in the business of saving the universe here.
- **Name Everyone, Humanize Even Their Enemies:** Making everyone they meet feel meaningful will make all of their tough choices that much more important. Give them the reasons their enemies have turned from the light. Reveal to them the tragic backstories of the villains. Make the town that is under threat a real place in their minds. You can't do these things if the players don't even know these people's names. Example names are given in the last chapter, Appendices. Pull from them all the time or make your own lists to use.
- **Talk to the Characters, not the Players:** Bring the players back to their characters with everything you say. Draw them into the story with questions about how their characters feel about things, and whether those feelings will boil over into action or keep piling up until they break.
- **Inject Some Drama or Tragedy:** Not everything goes right. Mistakes are made, by the PCs, NPCs, *and* villains. Show that actions have consequences in this world. Make the choices tough. Get them invested.
- **Show the Complexity of the World:** Earth isn't a simple place. Even on a city level, there are going to be tons of subcultures, religions, groups, and government organizations all vying for control of various parts of peoples' lives. Sometimes the problems the PCs encounter aren't directly caused by them being demi-humans, but are instead caused because *demi-humans exist*. The Surge has caused chaos on all levels throughout all walks of life.
- **Conservation of Detail:** You don't need or want to plan everything out in advance. Having some ideas for events and opponents is good, especially if you're not great at flying by the

seat of your pants, but make sure that you focus your energy on the space and characters directly around the PCs. Anything you say can be the impetus for another adventure, so make sure you point your details in the right direction. If you spend a lot of time describing a suspicious person in the market, it's almost guaranteed the PCs will be chasing after that person in a heartbeat. If that character wasn't important, then too bad, the PCs just *made* them important. Conversely, you can use this to great effect to direct the interest of the PCs, often quite subtly.

GM MOVES

The GM Moves in America Land of Monsters are the primary way you'll influence the tone and feel of the story. They work the same way they do in Heroines of the First Age, and of course come in Hard and Soft flavors, but here in ALM, they're separated into the four categories of the Sliding Scale of Terror vs Hilarity.

HILARITY ENSUES

- Humans Stop and Stare
- Someone Appears with the Most Awkward Timing
- Someone is Caught in an Accidental Innuendo
- Doing That is Way Harder for Demi-Humans
- Someone Misunderstands or Miscommunicates
- Complicate an Relationship
- A problem comes up requiring money to be spent

CRAPSACCHARINE

- Reveal Bureaucracy Setup Against Demi-Humans
- What Would Have Been Awesome Turns Out Not To Be
- They're Just Not Built For That Cool Thing
- People Politely Avoid Them
- Everything's More Expensive When You're Poor
- A Suitor Backs Out Because of Race

✦ BLACK HUMOR

- Heroes are Experts In Getting Dead
- Customs Enforcement Shows Up at an Awkward Time
- They Have to Make Do With Something Hilariously Bad
- Most Petty Corruption Ever
- Earth is Not Prepared for Magic
- They Cause Humans Panic and Hysteria
- Physically Can't Make the Relationship Work

💀 ABSOLUTE TERROR

- Abduction Happens or is Revealed
- Abuse Happens or is Revealed
- The Forces of Darkness Spill Through a Gate
- Terrorists Attack
- Anti-Terrorism Teams Attack
- Make Them Steal to Survive
- Make Them Choose Between their Loved Ones
- Someone Goes a Little Yandere

HANDLING SETTING TOPICS

There are a lot of things in ALM that can be hard to deal with as a GM. Here, we'll go over a few of them. While all your questions might not be answered here, forewarned is forearmed.

SETTING THE TONE

The very first thing you should do when setting up a new campaign of ALM is to introduce ALM to the players and the things that can happen in it. Use the Sliding Scale and figure out where the group sits on it *right away*. If people look like they're not totally on board with something, then talk it through with the group. No one wants to be stuck in a game they're not going to enjoy. Better to find out if

someone doesn't agree with the others now than in the middle of a heavy scene. Remind them that how the story works out isn't set in stone, but make sure people know that it's okay to back out if it looks like the story is headed in a direction they're not going to like.

TRIGGER WARNINGS & CONCERN NOTES

Warn your players in advance of what ALM could entail. Read them the trigger warning at the beginning of the book, and add to it anything you think might come up in the story. Tell all of them to write down anything they specifically *don't* want to deal with on a note and give it to you. Avoiding these subjects will go a long way to making sure everyone feels comfortable with the story that they're participating in.

LIGHTER AND SOFTER CHALLENGES

Just as it can be hard to deal with story elements that are too dark, it can likewise be difficult to deal with story elements that are too light. When you're playing close to the Hilarity Ensues end of the Sliding Scale, it can be a challenge to think of and utilize meaningful challenges. Here are some options.

- Figure out the goals of *both* the PCs and the players. Some players might be comfortable just goofing around and getting into random “weekly adventures” or playing slice of life stories. Others are looking for something a little deeper, even in the lighter end of the scale. Knowing what the PCs want out of life allows you to set up stories allowing them to work towards their goals.
- Once you know what the PCs are trying to accomplish, your job is to use your Moves and the Adversaries to stand in their way. In lighter stories, you can make gentle down dangerous opponents either by playing them as bumbling, incompetent, or misguided. You can make darker events or actions lighter by “playing them for laughs,” which is the difference between

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hitting someone because they insulted you and hitting someone because they made a bad joke.

- Expand your GM Moves. Take the Hilarity Ensues moves and think about them in a broader scope. You can make simple events into ongoing running gags this way, while also providing resistance to the PC's actions. You can also look deeper in the list and play those Moves for laughs as well, by phrasing them in a cartoonish, silly way.
- Reality Ensues. Sometimes it's funniest to imagine what would actually happen to a demi-human in a given situation. What are the tiny effects of their anatomy that can interfere in simple things? Fox ears interfere with hats and helmets. Horns get stuck in doorframes. Think of the other riders on a roller coaster when you have an eleven-foot wingspan.
- Blow things out of proportion. Misunderstanding is the root of all evil. Newscasts are always sensationalizing the most minor things, and politicians latch onto meaningless nonsense, but when that's what people hear about, they may end up taking the absurd seriously, especially since demi-humans aren't yet adapted to how cynical Americans are about the media they consume.

MOVING UP THE SCALE

You may find that you want a scene or even the whole story to head upwards on the Sliding Scale, for whatever reason. It might be nice to take a break after a major win, or maybe the players are getting too downtrodden by recent events. Here are some ways to lighten things up.

- Change up your Move selection
- Defeat Means Friendship
- Beach/Swimsuit Episode
- Hotsprings Episode
- It was all just a big misunderstanding
- Moving to a new town or location

MOVING DOWN THE SCALE

You may find that it's time to get serious. This often happens as time goes on, or when you're nearing the climax of some story arc.

Make sure you're not over-reaching the bounds set up at the beginning of the game with the players. You may be able to be somewhat more flexible with this if everyone's on board, but you have to make sure of that first. Don't break your social contract or you risk offending or traumatizing your players.

Here are some ways to get darker.

- Change up your Move selection.
- Introduce a new villain
- Subtly begin to change an NPC's personality in reaction to events
- Start to hem them in with problems on many fronts
- Start implying darker things going on in the background
- Start revealing the edges of a conspiracy

USING IMPLICATION

There is such a thing in film called a "discretion shot" that allows filmmakers to show the viewer something without really *showing* them. Similar tactics can be used in role-playing to talk about topics or actions without directly engaging them. Examples would include things like having two characters pull each other into a room and slamming the door behind them, a gunshot that echoes down an alley as the characters run towards or away from it, or the sound of screaming, thumping, and breaking glass from the room next door. By watching how your players react to these implications, you can gauge how on board they are with the situation before you reveal (or hide) more details.

DE-ESCALATING SITUATIONS

Regardless of how well you've prepared the game and planned for your players, you'll someday hit a situation that someone isn't comfortable with. This can be as simple as someone disliking how a situation is handled or it can be as complex as someone getting deeply invested in a character and suffering unnecessary trauma when that character is hurt.

It's important to remember the golden rule here, that we're all at the table for entertainment. If something is ruining the entertainment value for someone, it should be removed or avoided.

Complications arise when one player is not comfortable with something that the other players find entertaining. Imagine you have a player who was abducted as a child and has diagnosed mental trauma from the incident, but hasn't told anyone. While the other players might be enjoying the pathos of a situation in which one of their friends is abducted, and they're trying to get that person back, the other player may be deeply disturbed by the situation.

A major part of your toolbox for this challenge are the notes the players give you to notify you of topics they want to avoid, but this doesn't always work. Sometimes someone doesn't want to bring something up, or thought it wouldn't be a problem, or the story takes a turn that no one expected.

To deescalate situations like this, you first have to be watching your players closely, especially in charged situations, to make sure no one's having trouble dealing with it. If some one is, it may be time to try some of these options:

- Take a moment to tell the players that shit's about to get real. This works when you have an opportunity ahead of time, and works best when the players are going into something they know is going to be trying or emotionally risky. It also serves as a way

to make sure everyone's still on board with the direction things are going.

- Prepare some backup plans. Whenever you're going into a scene where some sort of emotionally disturbing content might arise, try to think of at least one simple way to interrupt that. Read over the GM Moves again. You can always extract someone from one kind of danger by shaking up the situation with another kind of danger.
- At the earliest convenience, set up a question to be answered but take a break. Setting up a cliff-hanger for a moment and adjourning gives you a moment to talk with people to see how they're doing, and it gives you a quick way to get back into the story afterwards.
- Debrief the players. If the situation was rocky but got handled, it's probably a good idea to stop the game a little early and discuss what happened and how people felt about it. You can use this to look for ideas for further plot points, but you can subtly check to see if people are on the same page as well, and you can use it as an opportunity to calm people down and remind them it's a game.

BALANCING THE BOOKS

Money and income are major parts of life in the US, and can be especially important for demi-humans who may find themselves living hand to mouth. While not every ALM story may be about money trouble, you may find that your story does have a lot to do with finances. If that's the case, you'll want to keep any eye on the player's balance sheets. It may be useful to keep notes or even a whiteboard with the players' information on it. This will make it easier to give them challenges that depend on them not having enough money: if you try to throw a monetary problem their way and they're all rich it's not going to sell. On the other hand, knowing *how* rich they are can also be fun for when they want to go around throwing money at problems, buying hotels, and purchasing whatever they want.

Ways to limit or reduce their money:

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- Make it hard to get a job
- Part time vs full time work
- Home/Vehicle repairs
- Bills & debts
- Loans
- Mortgage/rent
- Criminal fines
- Purchasing expensive stuff
- Spend money on food

Ways they may try to get more money:

- Raises
- Promotions
- Odd Jobs
- Reward money
- Selling things
- Participating in experiments
- Crime
- Investment

Keep in mind that money is another tool for creating drama. You may not want to keep them broke all the time, but you may not want them to stock up too much cash either.

PLAYING WITH ROMANCE

Many of the franchises ALM draws influences from are romantic comedies. The rules are wide enough open that you don't need to involve this trope if you don't want to or if the group isn't comfortable with it, but you can also build a harem comedy using the tools ALM provides for you. Obviously, make sure the group is on board with the direction first.

There are several types of situation that usually occur. It's better to let the situations arise naturally, but you can also ask the group what the setup is going to be and come to a consensus, which will be easier if you're still building characters and setting up the story.

Situations include:

- **Straight Up Harem:** One character is generally the target of everyone's affections. Expect some interparty conflict, at least at a low level. Make sure to keep things on track and avoid hard feelings. Harems are usually composed of friends rather than outright enemies, after all.
- **Couple Building:** The relationships are more equitable all around, and pairs may form and separate frequently. Part of the drama and comedy will be the guessing game who ends up with who. This especially works when the player characters have unique and well-articulated personalities.
- **External Romance:** The players' romantic interests are mostly NPCs. Often the conceit will be that the players live or work together, and their romantic interests are from outside that circle. Serial relationship may happen. There are more options open here, which may lead to either more complexity or more stability. This can also be used to explore the dating scene more thoroughly.
- **Limited Scope:** If only one or two players in the group focus on romance and the rest of the group is more concerned with other elements of the story. Maybe the character just wants to be the Casanova, is a complete hedonist, is an incubus or succubus or something, or has some other specific romantic or sexual trait. This is one of the more dangerous situations at the table, because it requires the least buy-in from everyone. If someone's headed this way, make sure the group is cool with the direction things are headed, and keep an eye on people's reactions to the character's antics.

Regardless of the situation, there are two ways to play with it:

- **For Drama:** The romance is driving a major part of the story, possibly introducing conflicts or contradictions for the players to grapple with in the course of other events. Handled well, it can even be used as the core driver of the story. If you're playing it for drama, you're going to want to rely a fair amount on unresolved sexual tension, as that's usually what prevents

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characters from consummating their love and thus removing a source of drama.

- **For Flavor:** The romance isn't really that important to the story, it's there to color the events in rather than shape the events themselves. You may slowly transition from flavor to drama, or you might also have some relationships that are played for drama, while others are played for flavor, though this can be a balancing act.

Other tropes and traits might include:

- Tsundere
- Yandere
- The Casanova
- Accidental Pervert
- It's Not What It Looks Like
- Really Gets Around
- Blind Date
- Only Sane Man



ENEMIES OF THE SNAKE

Neri clamped her hands over her mouth, daring not to breathe. The man was already in the house, and there was no way to get downstairs.

Ears twitching, she glanced at the window, wondering if she could make it before he heard her moving.

Instead, a shadow loomed over the wall next to it.

“Here, kitty kitty kitty. Show me that pretty tail of yours.”

This section presents creatures, beings, demons, and monsters the GM can field against the PCs. PCs are advised to avoid this section and leave it to the GM. This is not an exhaustive, detailed bestiary. Instead, it is a collection of interesting examples of what can exist in Heroines of the Last Age. GMs should feel free to use or modify these entries, or to create new adversaries based on these examples.

Each adversary is presented with a general description, a Motivation, one or more GM Moves, and several example stat blocks.

POWER RATINGS

The various opponents and challenges presented in this chapter follow a five star rating system, which roughly parallels the NPC Chart in HFA. Each rating is explained in this chart.

Power Rating	Rating Title	Approximate DN	Suggested Appearance
★	Weak	1	Early game
★★	Tough	1–2	Early game boss/heavy
★★★	Powerful	2–3	Midgame
★★★★	Great	3–4	Midgame boss/heavy
★★★★★	Godlike	4	Late game

Note: Suggested Appearance only indicates a rough outline of where each level of power sits on the continuum of ability described in HFA. It's a suggestion rather than a limit.

GENERIC NPCs

These are NPCs you can use to fill out the ranks of organizations or use as a basis for someone unexpected who has just popped up. You can also use this list as a basis for creating new NPCs you may need.

- **Human Child:** 0 armor, 1 health. Power: ★
- **Demi Child:** 1 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★
- **Office Worker:** 0 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★
- **Young Adult Demi:** 2 armor, 4 health, 2 harm. Power: ★
- **Laborer:** 1 armor, 3 health, 2 harm. Power: ★
- **Police Officer:** 3 armor, 6 health. 4 harm, Ranged. Power: ★
- **Soldier:** 4 armor, 7 health. 5 harm, Ranged. Power: ★★
- **Thug:** 1 armor, 6 health. 3 harm, Melee. Power: ★
- **Burglar:** 0 armor, 4 health. 2 harm, Power: ★
- **Bodyguard:** 2 armor, 7 health. 4 harm, Ranged. Power: ★

OUR CORPORATE OVERLORDS

These threats are large groups that can't be dealt with all at once. They've usually got branches across a lot of territory and are fairly well integrated into Earth society. Bringing down one of these factions is a tremendous challenge.

SAVEFAST

Why dig through the garbage when you could just go to SaveFast and pay for the same thing?

—A medusa, voice dripping sarcasm and venom

Motivation: Sell cheap food but skimp in every possible way

Moves: Something Has Gone Bad, Inflexible and Inconvenient Work Hours, Coworkers Make Your Life Hell

SaveFast is a major grocery store chain that actually *does* hire demi-humans. Like many of their competitors, they are renowned for their low prices, wide selection, and availability in neighborhoods other stores won't put locations in. They're also renowned for their terrible treatment of their employees, from scheduling problems to low wages to poor management. Because they can't afford to be picky, they hire just about anyone, leading to fast turnover and lots of poor performers. Nevertheless, it's rare to find grocery stores that are willing to sell food to demi-humans, let alone cater to any of their unusual dietary needs.

It's important to remember that SaveFast employees aren't *evil*, they're just overworked, underpaid, and poorly supported. This kind of work environment is inexpensive to fund, but results in massive turnover and a kind of corporate soul-suck that turns even the nicest saint into a grumbling dullard after a few shifts. On one

hand, it'd be nice if they could pay everyone better and treat their employees a little more like human beings, but on the other hand, the only reason they're able to keep stores open for demi-humans is because they're so stingy.

- **Human Bully:** 0 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★
- **Grumpy Demi-Human:** 2 armor, 4 health, 2 harm. Power: ★
- **Some Kind of Slime That Eats the Garbage:** 3 armor, 8 health. 3 harm, Melee. Power: ★★

KAHUNA BURGER

"I guess it's alright for a sheet of burned animal flesh slathered in goo."

"Oh man, come on, I'm trying to eat here."

—Theranfella, a drider newcomer, and her host, Jim

Motivation: Sell as many burgers as possible as fast as possible

Moves: Someone Unsavory is Hanging Around, There's Another Domestic Going On

Kahuna Burger is in the business of selling burgers. It's not *that* hard to think up a couple recipes that might be appealing to demi-humans, and that's an untapped market. To Kahuna Burger, demis are just more customers. Because it's one of the few places that demi-humans can go to get food they might actually enjoy (without offending American sensibilities) it's become a relatively popular hangout for demi-humans who aren't too far off of human baseline. And due to this new crowd, management (obviously called the Big Kahuna) has started hiring demis on. While the hours are often chaotic and unstructured, the outfits are sort of embarrassing, and the job itself often sucks, it could be worse.

Kahuna Burger has been the center of an interesting inversion of culture. Formerly known for the Hawaiian bent to their food,

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they've become more known for their demi-human clientele than their exotic burgers. Through no fault of their own, it's become a human fad to go to Kahuna Burger to look at demi-humans in a relatively controlled environment.

- **Gawker:** 0 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★
- **Armed Gawker:** 0 armor, 4 health, 4 harm. Power ★
- **Overworked Kahuna Staff:** 2 armor, 4 health, 3 harm. Power: ★
- **Big Fish Boss:** 3 armor, 6 health, 5 harm. Power: ★★

GLOBALMART

I don't understand. Why are these people so sad? You said they work here, don't they know what kind of riches and wonders are on all these shelves? This store would have changed the entire world, back where I'm from! How can they not see that they're inside a miracle?

—Princess Yuaris Sky, a naive harpy noble

Motivation: Labor is labor, and we have a lot of product to move

Moves: Objectify Someone, Mess With the Work Schedule

A combination department, electronics, and big box retail store, GlobalMart keeps costs down mostly through economies of scale. They sell cheap products by manufacturing more than they can get rid of, and they pay minimum wage to just about everyone in the store. So far, corporate hasn't made it a policy to kick demi-humans out, so it's the place a lot of them end up going to shop for household goods. That doesn't mean they're equitable, though. They've taken wholeheartedly to the minimum wage loophole for demi-humans, paying them a pittance for long, arduous hours. They also employ exclusively human cashiers and management and often have department leaders watching over the every move of their demi employees. On top of that, demi-human employees can expect to be forced into tasks based purely on their looks or

apparent physical abilities, as well as the things no one else wants to do.

Many GlobalMart locations now suffer from a kind of split personality. Because a lot of humans know that demi-humans shop there, they mostly avoid it, and because the demis know that people don't like to see them out and about, they stay home during the day and shop at night. Since GlobalMart is open 24/7, the night shift is full of furtive, nervous customers, suspicious loss prevention agents, and weary clerks. Many of the demi customers act like they're not allowed to be there and skulk about cautiously, making the security guards nervous, and keeping the management running around the entire shift. Ultimately, though, most of these "security events" turn out to be simple purchases by shy newcomers.

- **Slinking Demi Customer:** 2 armor, 4 health, 3 harm. Power: ★
- **Demi Staff:** 2 armor, 4 health, 2 harm. Power: ★
- **Security Guard:** 3 armor, 6 health. 4 harm, Ranged. Power: ★
- **Loss Prevention Squad:** 4 armor, 9 health. 5 harm, Ranged. Power: ★★★

SJORS INC.

I don't understand this fascination with "equality." I am strong. I lift things. If I am stronger and lift more things, then why must I be equal to someone who cannot?

—Epharant, a confused minotaur applying for Sjors Inc.

Motivation: Make use of cheap local labor for moving goods

Moves: Press-Gang a Demi Into Work, Dispose of Unneeded Laborers

With great big purple trucks and a name no one knows how to pronounce, Sjors is a shipping, trucking, delivery, and logistics company. They've recently overtaken the top spot in the American market, and are spreading across Asia and Europe as well. What

Enemies of the Snake

few realize is that Sjors hires a fair number of demi-humans for their workforce. Unfortunately, these demis are often paid pennies for their labor, and often teams of homeless demi-humans are rounded up for short-term transportation gigs. They are locked in a constant battle with the labor unions, but so far nothing has been able to stop them from making use of the resources available to them, and they claim to be proud to give desperate demi-humans jobs, if only temporarily.

Sjors is extremely well practiced in the art of smuggling. They have a solid reputation with US customs and border patrol, well-placed turncoats and fences, and vast reserves with which to bribe or eliminate those who get in the way. While the operators are kept in the dark, the higher-ups never take a blind deal; they can't charge you right for their services if they don't know what they're transporting. Once the deal is set up, all information about the contents is destroyed, leaving no paper trail. Since Sjors intentionally keeps their manifests encrypted and scrambled, it's basically impossible to find any illegal goods in the containers unless you were to check every single one while still at sea. But that's why they arm the boats.

- **Sjors Demi Longshoreman:** 2 armor, 7 health. 4 harm, Melee. Power: ★★
- **Sjors Foreman:** 3 armor, 6 health. 4 harm, Ranged. Power: ★★
- **Sjors Tactical Team:** 4 armor, 9 health. 5 harm, Ranged, Area. ★★★

✈ PURITY SECT

I'm sure I don't have to tell you gentle folks what I've come before you today to talk about. There is a blight on our country, an infection in the blood of America. Demons walk this land, out there, in broad daylight, and they think that we'll turn a blind eye to them, but we won't! We will cast them out, vanquish, and destroy them! We will render this land pure once again!

| —Preacher Giles Martin Bystrom

Motivation: Deport or destroy all monsters in the USA

Moves: Shield Hate with Law, Form a Lynch Mob

Known for their spectacularly racist protests and hilariously offensive remarks from their own Messiah William Stanley Carpenter, Purity Sect has been roundly disowned or branded heretics by most Christian denominations. They advocate for every possible way of getting rid of demi-humans, which Carpenter calls “the spawn of Satan himself,” including such fan favorites as burning at the stake, summary execution by guillotine, public lynching, and even *bombing campaigns on American soil*. Widely condemned as a hate group, Purity Sect nevertheless grows year by year, as fear and violence involving demi-humans spreads. They depend completely on US legal protections for religions for their continued existence, which many groups such as the SPLC and ACLU have been trying to get revoked for years.

Before the Surge, Purity Sect was merely one among many hate group cults, but when demi-humans started appearing, they took this as a sign from God that they’d been right all along. They use that as evidence that their views have been and always will be vindicated. Like other modern hate groups, their members generally use intolerant and vicious language to stir up trouble, use “freedom of speech” as a shield, and sue those who interfere with their “protests.”

- **Hatespeech Picketers:** 0 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★
- **Bodyguards:** 4 armor, 8 health. 4 harm, Ranged. Power: ★

✎ GETF

Do people actually feel safer with these jack-booted thugs strutting around town with assault weapons and full armor? I don't know, but what I do know is that my shop has taken a 30% cut in customers since they showed up.

Enemies of the Snake

| *–Rufus Allaway, Owner, Rufio's Slice*

Motivation: Secure Gates, contain demi-humans, and protect the American population

Moves: Track Down a Demi-Human, Deploy a Fancy New Gadget

This section of the Department of Homeland Security was organized in response to the threat presented by the Surge. As time goes on, GETF's legal powers and responsibilities grow. Presently, they investigate all Gate entries, though much of the time they simply aren't able to get resources to the site fast enough to intercept those coming through. This means their task is mostly one of investigation and tracking down demi-humans who have either arrived unannounced, not acquired the proper paperwork to enter the United States, or caused damage or trouble since arriving. This means virtually *all* demi-humans will be under investigation by GETF at some point or another. Despite the fact that they're unable to apprehend many newcomers on arrival, their success rate at tracking them down afterwards is very nearly 100%.

What GETF does with their detainees is essentially random. The guidance they're given from the Director changes almost every week, and each district chief has control over how investigations are conducted, what they try to uncover, and how long subjects are kept confined for investigation. On top of that, individual agents are given tremendous autonomy to conduct their duties.

- **GETF Field Agent:** 4 armor, 7 health. 6 harm, Ranged. Power: ★★★
- **GETF Operations Squad:** 5 armor, 10 health. 8 harm, Ranged, Area. Power: ★★★★★
- **Prototype Vehicular Demi-Human Neutralizer:** 6 armor, 15 health, 12 harm, Ranged, Indirect, Area. Power: ★★★★★

☠ MACNEILL CORPORATION

It's beautiful isn't it? Just look at it. Eight and a half pounds of pure stopping power. Long rifle and bullpup configurations. Fully automatic, and still legal here in Texas. The MacNeill U-19 is the top of the line, the creme de la creme of Gate Defense weapons. None better, we guarantee it.

Motivation: Make the most powerful and reliable anti-demi arsenal

Moves: Call in the GETF, Abduct a Demi for Testing

Labeled a knock-off by their competitor, Stark, MacNeill is a defense firm that has recently put vast funding into the research and development of weapons and systems designed specifically for GETF and other Anti-Gate forces. This is, of course, a euphemism for anti-demi weapons technology. They capture demi-humans for research, develop new weapons from their discoveries, weaponize those discoveries, then test their new weapons on captured demi-humans. This has led to a surge in advanced weapons, and MacNeill's lawyers and spokesmen are the first to tell you that it's not the fault of the company that any random yahoo can get ahold of one of their weapons.

A lot of the test subjects that are used by MacNeill are acquired through shell companies posting ads for low-wage, demi-friendly jobs. Those who reply are abducted and taken to black sites for testing. There are no survivors of these tests, only escapees. When one *does* escape, MacNeill often notified GETF immediately, rather than get their own hands dirty on American soil, where they might be questioned about their operations.

- **MacNeill Experimenter:** 0 armor, 2 health, 6 harm. Power: ★★
- **MacNeill Subject Handler:** 4 armor, 6 health, 6 harm. Power: ★★ ★
- **MacNeill Test Squad:** 5 armor, 7 health. 8 harm, Ranged. Power: ★★ ★

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- **MacNeill Experimentation Pod:** Induces catatonia (DN 4) from severe pain (DN 4). Power: ★★★★★

☠ THE PALADINS

We know justice when we see it. It's time for us to fight back. To take a stand. The world just became a war zone. Whose side are you on?

Motivation: Show those monsters whose country this is

Moves: Remove Witnesses, Secure and Contain the Area

Not all of the agents in GETF are there with the honorable intent to protect and serve the people of America. Some are just mean-spirited, others murderous. They often become members of gang embedded within GETF known as the Paladins, who abuse their rights and privileges to assault and murder innocent demi-humans. The Paladins sometimes take direction from the Coalition, who supplies them with funding and contacts to keep doing their heinous work.

The problem for demi-humans is that it's essentially impossible to determine whether the agent or officer they're dealing with is a member of the Paladins or not. By maintaining discipline, giving away nothing about their activities, and limiting their membership, they have become perfect chameleons in the law enforcement industry.

- **Paladin Brother:** 4 armor, 7 health. 6 harm, Melee, Ranged. Power: ★★★
- **Paladin Unit:** 5 armor, 12 health. 9 harm, Melee, Ranged, Area. Power: ★★★★★

☠ BRYANT TAYLOR INC.

Just think. What if you could bottle the regenerative powers of a vampire or the self-replication of a slime or the strength of a dragon. Imagine what that would sell for. Forget a cure for cancer, we could make every American Steve Rogers if we wanted. If they had the money.

Motivation: Medicine is money, and Magic is the next Medicine

Moves: Make a Deceptive Offer, Turn Medicine Into a Weapon

Bryant Taylor is a massive pharmaceutical conglomerate that has purchased nearly 70% of multinational drug company stock in the past 10 years. Their current goal is a complete biological teardown of all demi-human sub-species, which they intend to use to build ever more potent and valuable drugs for humanity. Specific departments differ as to how they acquire their samples, but considering that the actual average payout per subject is around \$4.75, it's likely that most of their subjects aren't part of the program willfully.

Bryant Taylor employs private contractors, shell corporations, and even organized crime in order to move subjects from collection locations to test sites, most of which are outside the USA, where governmental enforcement of medical and ethical standards are poorly enforced or non-existent. The company is so large and wealthy that has a whole department devoted to bribes, payoffs, money laundering, tax evasion, and illegal deals.

- **Doctor:** 0 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★
- **Private Contractor Squad:** 4 armor, 8 health. 4 harm, Ranged. Power: ★
- **Delayed Effect Poison:** Causes nausea (DN 2), sedation (DN 2), and eventually paralysis (DN 2). Power: ★★★

☠ THE COALITION

Look, some naive kid from the Times comes into my office every week, claiming they got dirt on me. That they'll lock me up "for all the evil I've done" or for the good of the country or whatever.

But let me tell you something. It's never the same kid twice. Why? Because I own that newspaper. I own everything in this city. And my friends and I own this whole world.

You think you're some heroic David locked in a heroic battle against Goliath, but you don't even realize that war is over. We won, decades ago. So go home and forget you ever came to my office. Or you'll find out just how much of you I own.

Motivation: Retain the Stranglehold, Balance the Books

Moves: Under New Management, The World Turns Against Them, Always a Bigger Fish

There exists a stratum of super-powerful, ultra-elite, mega-rich that very nearly live on another plane from the rest of us. These are not the men and women who own corporations, these are the people who own nations, industries, and ideas. They bankroll wars, destabilize religions, and forge secret alliances so obscure nobody even knows they exist. These men and women are called the Coalition, and they decide the course of history.

One way to understand the power of the Coalition is to think of them as the makers of the rules the game of life is played by, rather than other players. They put into practice the systems of government and banking, the very foundations our civilizations run on.

Whether the Coalition was blindsided by the Surge or in fact *caused* it is a matter of speculation even among those who are aware of its existence. It's quite possible that they agreed it was time

for a new resource to be introduced on Earth, once that they could take immediate advantage of.

- **Coalition Spy:** 3 armor, 10 health. 9 harm, any range. Power: ★★★
- **Coalition Spymaster:** 6 armor, 15 health. 9 harm, any range. Power: ★★★★★
- **Coalition Transcendent:** 6 armor, 20 health. 11 harm, any range. Power: ★★★★★

PEOPLE PROBLEMS

These threats are generally single characters or small groups. Depending on their power and abilities, they range from annoying to more difficult to deal with than some factions. Some people listed are more social threats than physical ones, while others are in charge of or part of a larger organization that may come to back them up.

CANDACE SPARROW

Are you telling me, a four star general, how to run a national security agency, Mrs. Sparrow? You have the spine of a jellyfish!

—General Rusty Mondo, on national television

Candace Sparrow is a TV host, celebrity, and commentator on the Surge famous for her childish disgust, inflammatory remarks, and vapid personality. Formerly the star of a poorly-written daytime TV program, she switched gears to political commentating when she realized that more fame awaited her there. Now, she represents a certain contingent of middle-income white folks who share her distaste for demi-humans and follow her vocally on social media.

Sparrow claims she “calls them like she sees them,” but she’s renowned for her cowardly, prissy attitude towards not just

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newcomers, but everything from movie theaters to public restrooms to grocery stores. She has an intense but squeamish dislike for anything that's not perfectly clean, sanitized, and mass-produced. Whenever she hears the slightest hint of an issue with something—whether person or product—she publicly denounces it.

- **Candace Sparrow:** 0 armor, 2 health, 0 harm. Power: ★

PHOENIX AND CHRISTEN WATTS

WELL MAYBE IF YOU ACTUALLY DID SOMETHING AROUND HERE, WE WOULDN'T BE UP TO OUR ANKLES IN SHIT AND TRASH!

FUCK YOU, PHOENIX! I WANT A DIVORCE! YOU GET BOTH OF THEM!

—Tuesday at the Wattses'

The Wattses are the worst neighbors ever. They're loud, obnoxious, don't take out their trash properly, leave their toys and junk laying around, and have routine domestic disturbances.

The father, Phoenix, thinks of himself as God's gift to day-trading, while his wife Christen, is a stay-at-home mother who has absolutely no intention of keeping up the house, nor raising her children properly, spending all of her time on her phone. The two of them often argue about who's putting more of themselves into the relationship. Tissy, their oldest, "plays" violin, in that she has no training and the poor instrument is completely out of tune, bent, and missing strings. Brent, their youngest, is renowned throughout both the neighborhood and the internet as having a truly incredible set of lungs.

- **Phoenix Watts, Patrick Bateman Wannabe:** 0 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★
- **Christen Watts, IDGAF:** 0 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★

- **Tissy Watts, Violin/Cat Torturer:** 0 armor, 2 health, 0 harm. Power: ★
- **Brent Watts, The Screamer:** 0 armor, 2 health, 0 harm. Power: ★

SENATOR SELENA LAUWENS

Senatory Lauwens proposed new legislation on demi-human newcomers today, called Path to Integration Via Education. The bill is expected to pass easily, and is already being hailed as "The Lauwens Bill."

The Line: Selena Lauwens loves demi-humans. She's your senator, and she's doing everything she can to help newcomers adjust to their new lives here in the good ol' US of A. She is a proponent of integration and likes to personally meet every newcomer who appears in her constituency. She always offers them reeducation classes and makes sure to get them signed up for the right programs, and is always friendly and polite. Unlike many politicians, she never shows an ounce of fear or apprehension, even when meeting the most intimidating demi-humans.

The Truth: Selena Lauwens hates demi-humans. She promotes mandatory reeducation up to and including brainwashing and electroshock therapy. She believes that all demi-humans must immediately convert to American culture and her church to be saved from their sins. To her, demi-human cultures from Otherworld are abomination, a bunch of barbarous tribes hunting and murdering each other in complete anarchy.

- **Senator Lauwens:** 1 armor, 2 health, 1 harm. Power: ★
- **The Lauwens Bill:** Mandatory reeducation unless one can Get Some Respect DN 3. Power: ★★★

VICTORIA DRAPER

You stay away from Vicky, demon fuck. She's my girl. Keep your filthy evil hands off of her and get the fuck out of here.

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| *–Barry*

Victoria Draper is the cute girl next door. She's very nice, mostly unbothered by demi-humans (unless they actively *try* to scare her, which elicits a little squeak) cooks delicious food, and is fun to talk to. She'll gladly tell you about her (unfortunately unsuccessful) small business, her time in Europe and Asia, or the ins and outs of gardening. While she currently works as an industrial designer, she's working towards a career in architecture and loves to go and see foreign buildings. She dreams of being able to see Otherworld.

She's also crazy about you. *Crazy*. Obsessed crazy. Not the good kind. She's made a neat little shrine with "collected" items and photographs. She takes sick days at work so she can watch you. She hangs on your every word. She never blinks in your presence.

- **Victoria Draper:** 0 armor, 7 health. Power: ★★★
 - Tranquilizer Hypodermic: Unconsciousness DN 3
 - Victoria's Rope-Tying Skills: Remain bound DN 3
 - Knife: 2 harm, Melee
 - Saw: 4 harm, Melee, Slow, Messy
- **Barry Fonella, Victoria's Ex:** 3 armor, 6 health. Power: ★
 - Illegal gun: 4 harm, Ranged
 - Baseball Bat: 2 harm, Melee

✧ SERGEANT GEORGE AUTEBERY

I don't know about Autebery, man. Don't think he's on the take. Got a real pretty girl though. If we need put some pressure on 'im, I think that's the spot to do it.

–Officer Carlo de Campo, to his conspirators

George is an average kind of guy. Sure, he's a police detective, but he sits firmly in the middle of almost every kind of polarizing argument. He's right on top of the golden mean. Unfortunately, his weakness is his ignorance. He watches popular TV and is thus misinformed about a lot of things, including just about everything

concerning demi-humans. Nevertheless, once informed he's wrong, he's quick to correct himself. George is fundamentally a nice guy.

George's problem is that his precious daughter is dating a dehu. Since he hasn't had much experience just *talking* with them, George doesn't understand many of the finer points of newcomer lives, for example that there are many different cultures a newcomer might come from, or that they're as diverse as humans are. He's likely to fly right off the handle when the truth is revealed, but he's a smart guy and kind person so he'll probably come around if things don't get out of hand first.

- **Sergeant Autebery:** 3 armor, 8 health. Power: ★★
 - Sidearm: 4 harm, Ranged.
 - Baseball Bat: 2 harm, Melee.
- **Kylee Autebery:** 0 armor, 3 health, 0 harm. Power: ★
- **Another of Kylee's Suitors:** 1 armor, 4 health, 1 harm. Power: ★

✧ INSPECTOR ROLF BOTWRIGHT

Trust me. I'm not doing this because I enjoy it.

It's for your own good.

Rolf Botwright looks like a haggard, used, '80s cardboard cutout of a man. He could easily be mistaken for a zombie, now that demi-humans are known to exist. Botwright is a health inspector with a very unique position. After an accidental lateral move that he nor anybody else made intentionally, he is now in charge of inspecting homes and activities of demi-humans living in the city. Unfortunately, his job puts him in the position of accidentally terrorizing the uninformed newcomers he's sent to inspect. Few realize that he's not there to capture them directly, but to take stock of things first before turning in a report. He usually gives people advice on how to fix things up before he has to return.

Though he can seem heartless, dispassionate, and world-weary, Inspector Botwright is actually very good at his job. Part of it is that

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he fully believes in the health laws and rules put in place, and that they help people live healthier lives. The other part is that he doesn't care *at all* about people on an individual level, and has essentially no compassion when it comes to breaking the law.

- **Inspector Botwright:** 1 armor, 9 health, 1 harm. Power: ★★
- **Fleeing Demi:** 2 armor, 4 health, 2 harm. Power: ★

☠ CLAYTON SLOAN RANDALL

I want you to know that this is very important to me. It's one of my favorite pieces. Look at how beautiful it is, especially under the UV light of the sun. Watch how it glimmers like opal or pearl. Isn't it just beautiful? And the girl it came from was just as beautiful, let me assure you. That's why I sent it in, because everything is fleeting, life, beauty, perfection. I won't be able to keep all my pieces forever. So I thought I'd share with the paper, for all to enjoy.

Sincerely, The Horn Collector

Known to the press as the Horn Collector, Randall is a serial killer who murders demi-humans. The Horn Collector always takes a souvenir of his victims, thus the name. By day, Randall sells home security systems, giving him both the skills to penetrate any home defense and an alibi for why he might be spotted casing a building. He's mild mannered, skinny, and kind of geeky-looking, which belies his wiry, psychotic strength and speed. He always takes his glasses off before he murders a victim.

The Horn Collector targets female demi-humans, with a strong preference for the more unusual types; catfolk, wolves, and lizardfolk are rare, while arthropods, cephs, and angels are more frequently among his targets. Perhaps this has something to do with the kinds of souvenirs he can collect from them, or perhaps it's just his preference. He already has dozens of known murders to his name and the speed of his attacks is increasing, possibly as he

refines his methods. The most telling evidence of his activities is the artistic, visionary way he describes his crimes and souvenirs.

- **The Horn Collector:** 3 armor, 10 health. Power: ★★★
 - Hatchet & Machete: 6 harm
 - Booby Trap: 5 harm DN 3
- **Disappearing Act:** Evades capture DN 3 and removes evidence DN 4. Power: ★★★★★

💀 AGENT NED ERIKSSON

| GET DOWN ON THE GROUND RIGHT NOW! DOWN!

Ned Eriksson is an agent with GETF, and he's damn good at his job. Ned prides himself on being first on the scene, ever prepared, and ready with a response to every situation. Ned is the kind of guy with a disaster-preparedness plan in his home, a concealed carry license, and EMT training. He's often described as "keyed up," and "a little too intense." Even his partner, Carson, sometimes tells him to tone it back or bring it down a bit.

Ned Eriksson's father was killed trying to deal with one of the very first newcomer arrivals in the US. He says he doesn't hold a grudge, but he is hyper-conscious of the danger that they possess, and would never think of putting a demi-human before a human life. Nevertheless, he doesn't attack peaceful demis, he's just overly vigilant and applies disproportionate force early and effectively to neutralize problems, because he knows what can happen if they run rampant.

- **Agent Eriksson:** 5 armor, 12 health, Impressive. Power: ★★★
 - Custom Assault Rifle: 9 harm
 - Sidearm: 5 harm
 - Combat Knife: 3 harm, Melee
- **Agent Carson:** 5 armor, 8 health, Impressive. Power: ★★★
 - Assault Rifle: 8 harm
 - Sidearm: 5 harm
 - Combat Knife: 3 harm, Melee

💀 LAUREN GARRETT

You may be in danger here, ma'am. We need to get you somewhere safe, out of sight. They could be here any moment. This way, please...

Garret, usually known only by the codename Angel, is a spy and assassin hired to work on United States soil. Her clients include senators, representatives, lobbyists, princes, presidents, CEOs, and the Coalition. Her marks are mostly demi-humans, but not because she hates them, just because that's who people want dead these days. She's also sent after rabble rousers, key witnesses, and outspoken proponents. She's fast, effective, clean, reliable, and untraceable. She's also very, very expensive.

Lauren Garrett is a career spy, she has no home life, no friends, no "true" identity anymore. When she first joined the CIA, she was already an undercover agent for another agency, and by the time she left she was the center of dozens if not hundreds of covert operations and conspiracies. Garrett is a consummate professional and extraordinary social chameleon, able to fit in just about anywhere.

- **Lauren Garrett:** 3 armor, 15 health, Stealth. Power: ★★★★★
 - MacNeill R6 Prototype: 11 harm, Ranged, Stealth
 - Poison: 6 harm, Undetectable, DN 3
 - Keep Her Out: DN 4

💀 VALENTIN WERNER IVANOV

What's better than being rich? Being a superhuman. And being more rich.

Ivanov is a Russian-American business magnate, CEO, and investor. He has become one of the most famous and polarizing figures in modern media because of the way that he does business: first he decides what he wants, then he finds someone working on

inventing it. He offers them massive funding in exchange for a controlling share, then waits for them to finish. Once they've completed the task, he exchanges the rights, liquidates the original company, then sells the rights and technologies to other companies for billions, then the cycle repeats. He's always got at least a handful of these schemes running at a time, though the more money he accumulates, the more he simply hires people outright to make things for him.

At heart, Valentin is still a teenager with too much money. He's brash, impulsive, and lacks good foresight. Even when he keeps strategists on staff, he completely ignores them when he sees something he wants. And on top of that, he's got a narcissistic streak as wide as the Hudson. He sees himself as the god of the media age, and routinely refers to himself as various superheroes. He even carries a utility belt.

But Ivanov isn't content to be Batman. He'd much rather be Superman, and to that end, he uses his vast resources for some of the most cutting-edge surgeries and treatments on Earth, using demi-humans as the ingredients and research materials. His quest for more powers is unending.

- **Valentin Werner Ivanov:** 6 armor, 16 health, Impressive, Rich.
Power: ★★★★★
 - Personal Laser Pistol: 9 harm, Unreliable, Dangerous
 - Pheromone Glands: Seduce someone DN 3 and cause hallucinations DN 3
 - Flame Breath: 6 harm, Area, Melee
 - Paralysis Eyes: DN 2
 - Arm Blades: 8 harm, Melee, Stealth

BEYOND MORTAL KEN

These are cosmic forces, the kinds of things that science denies and that the Otherworld is plagued with. Merely mentioning any of

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these is enough to send demi-human newcomers running for the hills.

✧ THE KNIFE OF WHIMSY

When God and the Devil play cards, they wager worlds.

It is the Knife of Whimsy who deals.

There are many rumors, among the demi-humans and humans alike, on Earth and Otherworld, about how the Gates came to be opened and why the worlds are so messed up. Some believe that wizards of Otherworld opened them to escape The Great Dark One. Others that the gods, with their last breath, opened them to free their people. Conspiracy theorists believe that the “real world” has simply been uncovered, and that the massive operation participated in by all world governments is coming down.

They are all wrong. All is the will of the Knife of Whimsy.

The Knife is the boogeyman of the Foul Legions, the Fate that the Dead Gods of the Otherworld spoke of (in whispers, to themselves alone), the strings and the puppetmaster. The Knife of Whimsy is that which causes chaos, and by which chaos is made. It is creation and destruction, rebirth and karma.

The Knife is not “conscious” the way one might think of a god. It’s more accurate to think of it as a cosmic force controlling the flow of events and the direction of history. It is the answer to “why,” the gap in the circular timeline that exists between the end of the multiverse and the beginning again. The Knife is the pain you feel when life uses irony against you.

- **Butterfly of Consequence:** Cause an unintended but unstoppable consequence to come to pass: DN 4 Power: ★★★★★
- **Agent of Chaos:** 0 armor, 1 health, Stealthy, Meddler. 10 harm. Power: ★★★

- **“Hand of God” Temporal Storm:** Transported to another cosmos for *some unknown purpose* DN 4 and confuse those transported DN 2. Power: ★★★★★
- **Go Mad From the Revelation:** DN 4. Power: ★★★★★
- **Meaningless Avatar of Irony:** 10 armor, 1 health, 1 harm Past Armor. Power: ★★★★★
- **Tie Two Together With Coincidence:** DN 4. Power: ★★★★★

☠ THE HATEMONGER

Did that man have a knife? Perhaps a gun? Maybe he wants to rob you. Maybe he was a serial killer. Is he following you? He's not like you. He's different. You should kill him.

Part daughter of primordial chaos, part weapon created by The Great Dark One, The Hatemonger is a mimetic virus that pervades almost all races, cultures, and people, across all of time and space, and in all worlds. Without her, there would be only peace and animal necessity. She is the cause of war, the mother of fear, and the enemy of utopia.

The Hatemonger exists in all of us, and is transmitted from person to person like a vast ocean of rage set on an adjacent plane to our own. Hate moves through people and societies with tidal force, crashing against itself and causing violence wherever it peaks. She is not conscious in each of us, but together, she is a wicked and malign intelligence that leads us towards disaster.

Any mortal can be the Hatemonger's pawn, even the most venerable priest and the most enlightened penitent.

- **Escape the Hatemonger's Control:** DN 4. Power: ★★★★★
- **Break the Spell Over Someone Else:** DN 4. Power: ★★★★★

☠ THE FOUL LEGIONS

We saw them come through the walls. They didn't even notice as they burst through the stone ramparts that had stood for a thousand years. They flooded across the city like a burning black liquid. The screams, Almaril save us, the screams...

What kind of self-respecting dark lord is without minions. The Foul Legions are the minions of The Great Dark One, and it is their overwhelming might that has sent the demi-humans fleeing from Otherworld and cascading onto Earth. They come in every conceivable shape and size, not to mention sizes and shapes *inconceivable*. Most do not have minds of their own, and are filled only with The Great Dark One's wrath and the Hatemonger's loathing.

The ones that *do* have minds of their own are the ones you have to worry about. They are the generals and kings of the unending legions. They are the conquerors of worlds, the poison in the minds of leaders, and the agents of corruption that bring the downfall of nations. When a heroine or hero brings down a dark lord, thinking they've defeated The Great Dark One, they've merely cut down one of these sinister generals.

- **Foul Scout:** 1 armor, 7 health, 6 harm. Power: ★★
- **Foul Soldier:** 3 armor, 10 health, 9 harm. Power: ★★★
- **Foul General:** 6 armor, 25 health, 12 harm. Power: ★★★★★

☠ THE GREAT DARK ONE

LIVE AND DO MY WILL, OR DIE, AND DO MY WILL ELSEWHERE.

There is an evil force that moves through the cosmos, consuming worlds and laying low civilizations as a farmer cuts grain. He consumes the souls of the dead and the living, and he gains power

through fear and suffering. He has many names, often more than one in a given culture, but he is always there, spoken of in whispers.

The Great Dark One drives his enemies before him and breathes screams as men breathe air. The World Ender's armies are in the process of destroying the Lands of the Otherworld, and his minions have already fought the heroes of those lands to a standstill. He has killed their gods and pushed them to the brink of extinction. He fears nothing, as entire pantheons have fallen to his evil sword. His only concern is the Knife of Whimsy.

- **Whispers of The Great Dark One:** causes insanity DN 4 and then corruption DN 4. Power: ★★★★★
- **Child of The Great Dark One:** 5 armor, 20 health, Impressive, Cosmic. 10 harm. Power: ★★★★★
- **Shadow of The Great Dark One:** 8 armor, 30 health, Impressive, Cosmic. 15 harm. Power: ★★★★★



APPENDICES

Libraries. Get a library card. That's my advice. It's warm, they're usually friendly, they have bathrooms, and places to sit inside. On top of that, you can teach yourself to read, then learn about any topic you want. They have computers to use too, and some of them will even show you how they work.

—A Newcomer to a homeless friend

CONSPIRACIES

Included for the sake of completeness, these conspiracies are included because they mostly involve the interference of demi-humans prior to the Surge or other metaphysical activities.

- **Project Blue Book:** In the early 1950s, a team was assembled by the United States Government under Captain Edward Ruppelt. It attempted to study, with scientific rigor, the phenomenon of UFOs. Like its predecessors, it was plagued with accusations of poor science, resulting in the project trading hands several times. This was caused by a Grey-type demi-human, codenamed Ghostly Light, trying to cover up her own involvement in US arms development.
- **Roswell:** In 1947 a farmer found several patches of tinfoil, rubber, and wood debris in a field in New Mexico. What followed was one of the most talked about UFO investigations in history, which in turn was a cover-up for another demi-related incident, this time a high-altitude test of a creature known as “Cetus Prime.” The project was set up to investigate whether the creature could be used to fuel a nuclear-powered bomber, which resulted in a crash and the death of Cetus Prime, whose body was then moved around the country to maintain secrecy while further research was conducted.

Appendices

- **JFK:** John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, by Lee Harvey Oswald, who was in turn shot by Jack Ruby, who in turn died of lung cancer. No less than 8 official investigations followed, none of which turned up evidence conclusive enough to satisfy the public. What had actually transpired was a tremendously complex crime of revenge by a powerful demi-human who Kennedy had had a relationship with sometime during his service in World War II. Documents about the mastermind were expunged from the federal record archives between the Warren Commission and the Rockefeller Commission, and thus the final fate of the demi-human perpetrator is unknown.
- **Eye of Providence:** While it does appear on the Great Seal of the United States of America, and it has had Freemasonry connotations, the Eye of Providence is somewhat more sinister. Created as an infectious spell-virus by overzealous alchemists, it was intended to help them find demi-humans to use as reagents in their theosophical experiments. Originally, it was intended to both locate these creatures (God Sees All) and protect the alchemist (The Providence of God). The spell still exists, but is inactive.
- **Freemasons:** Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that dates back hundreds of years and is heavily focused on symbolism and ritual. While Freemasons are often seen as the center of a vast conspiracy, this is not the case. They are simply another order dedicated to their own practices. What is actually unusual about them is that many of the older secret demi-humans have long used Freemasonry lodges as places to meet and communicate about their own secret dealings. These covert activities have contributed to the mystique of Freemasonry despite being completely unknown to most members.
- **Scientology:** Founded by science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard, Scientology is a cult that operates worldwide and uses electronic devices and social pressure to control its adherents. What adherents and critics alike do not understand is that Hubbard accidentally tapped into something much bigger and more dangerous than his own imagination. All around the world, some of the most influential people are practicing a religion that is slowly but surely drawing spiritual beings from the Otherworld towards Earth.

- **Big Corp:** Big Corp refers to the (already achieved) goal of the Coalition, which is to unify the world under a single common system of control. In this case, the system of control is economics, otherwise known as Capitalism. By directing with various forces and powers over the past two hundred years, the Coalition has arranged the modern world into a single system, where power can be applied uniformly across any nation or state. Big Corp thus refers to the global economic system that the Coalition uses to control events around the world.
- **Charles Manson:** One of the most famous murderers in American History, Charles Manson believed that a race war he called “Helter Skelter” after the Beatles song was inevitable. While it was widely reported that this meant war between black humans and white humans, what he actually meant (and was subsequently covered up) was war between humans and demi-humans.
- **Chemtrails:** What many people believe to be “chemtrails,” or toxic or volatile compounds sprayed into the air from commercial jet aircraft, are actually a complex series of hydrological travel paths maintained by various aerospace companies for the purpose of allowing high-altitude weather spirits easier access to larger parts of the globe. This is in accordance with the 1976 Endelwenn Act, which allowed for the sharing of the atmosphere with its natural citizens.
- **Black Helicopters:** The black helicopters noted in many other conspiracy theories are easily explained by the covert use of such vehicles by the private component agencies of the Coalition and its various members. Other unmarked vehicles noted, in use, and found in popular culture are black vans, black SUVs, and black drones.
- **The Illuminati:** This name has been applied to several distinct groups throughout history. The most recent incarnation is often misrepresented to be a part of the Coalition, but it is more closely aligned with the ancient and unseen forces of the elder Earth-native demi-humans.
- **Reptilians:** This theory is actually somewhat more an example of good PR than a dangerous conspiracy. There are in fact “reptilians” who wear skin suits in order to assume specific identities, but they’re not very good at it, and they’re very rare.

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Popular culture has taken a few reports and some carefully-designed propaganda and conflated it into something much more impressive. The reptilians derive no small joy from this.

LANDS OF THE OTHERWORLD

There are so many different worlds and nations described by newcomers that an entire wiki has been written documenting their existence. Nevertheless, there four that are substantially more frequently attested than the others, sometimes called “the main lands” by Earth-humans trying to make sense of the other side.

ENTOPIA

- **Gods:** Almaril, Sendrec
- **Climate:** Tropical, Monsoon Forest, Sea

Entopia was a paradise world, where tropical merfolk, cephs, and squids plied the waters, trading with the lizardfolk, dragonewt, and wyvern people of the volcanic islands. The reptilian land-dwellers tended to build large rafts of boats and move nomadically between the islands, where they fished and cut wood and other materials to trade with the Deep Cities of the water people. When the Foul Legions came, they had no military to stop them and were quickly overwhelmed. The Deep Cities lasted longer, but were ultimately crushed by the King of Ice and Glaciers, master of the Lord of Seas who had conquered the reptilians earlier.

BALEFRUST

- **Gods:** Yuraggon, Leoris
- **Climate:** Tundra, Taiga, Arid Desert

Balefrust was a hard, cold, unforgiving world of cold winds and wide spaces. The people of Balefrust were mostly mammalian demi-humans like bears, wolves, and cats, but there were also

pockets of reptilians and avians in the mountain strongholds. Balefrust stood long against the Foul Legions; the steppe tribes worshipping Leoris made pacts early on with the mountain folk of Yuraggon, and waged war on two fronts against the demons. Unfortunately, their power was broken when the King of Lies and Pain murdered their gods. After that, they drew back to the mountains to make their final stand, taking the steppe tribes with them. The relentless siege that followed was a war of attrition that slowly eroded the population away to nothing.

YORDENHEIM

- **Gods:** Fyera, Yuragon
- **Climate:** Temperate, Steppe, Boreal

Even before the Foul Legions arrived, Yordenheim was a land of war and battle. Among the immense trees, various nations of arthropods, reptilians, and avians did battle constantly, each fief fighting for rights to land, resources, and honorable placement of their ancestors in the Halls of the Ages. So hard were these wars that the warriors put a swift end to the first two invasion attempts made by the Foul Legion, and they did so without even forming a complete alliance. Instead, the wily and cunning strategists of each army took advantage of the chaos created by the other groups in order to win their own battles. Yordenheim would never have fallen at all if it hadn't been for Syldaris the Betrayer, who used his magic to feed intelligence to the King of Blades and Stones.

THE GOLISH STEPPE

- **Gods:** Leoris, Sendrec
- **Climate:** Dry Steppe, Shrubland, Taiga

Home to nomadic tribes and imperial cities, the Golish Steppe was a high, windy place of war and pillaging. While the tribes herded sheep and cattle across the grasslands, the Empire of Arabirg expanded its territory and furthered its agriculture. The two

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civilizations came into contact regularly, resulting in raiding eras and extermination wars back and forth until the Foul Legion arrived. The King of Glass and Screams sent spies and diplomats to both kingdoms separately and negotiated in secret with both. In the end, both sides swore fealty to the King in order to crush their enemies, and he turned their final battle into an utter bloodbath by ordering his legions to turn on all the natives at the same time.

DEAD GODS OF THE OTHERWORLD

Once, Otherworld was home to entire pantheons of gods, each independent from one another. This offended The Great Dark One, who sent his Foul Legions to destroy not only the worlds but their gods as well. Few stood against his legions long enough to face World Ender himself.

ALMARIL

Renowned for her beauty and generosity, Almaril was a sea goddess who ascended to divinity from a mortal life of saintly compassion. The tale of her ascension is told as part of her church: she was the beautiful daughter of a harsh slave master who turned against her father. When she demanded he stop his business, he forced her to take on the responsibilities of his slaves, which she did without question. The slaves tried to help her, but she gave them back the riches her father had taken from them and sent them out to live their own lives. She then worked until she died. Overcome with grief, her father begged the stars to bring her back. They resurrected her as a goddess, but she refused to see her father again until he pledged to free *all* the slaves he'd kept.

As a goddess, Almaril was wise and generous. She is the Sea that Provides, the Wind that Guides, and the Sun that Shines. She taught her worshippers that kindness and charity are the greatest

virtues, and they are among the easiest. Her priests preached forgiveness and goodwill to all.

SENDREC

Resplendent in his green and yellow scales, Sendrec was a reptilian god of song, dance, and romance. He taught his worshippers to sing, not just for him, but to enrich their own lives. He is said to have had many lovers and that he gave each of them one of his perfect scales. In some cultures this was interpreted as a scale-shield that was passed down from generation to generation as the mark of the rightful ruler.

As a god, Sendrec was compassionate and forgiving. He accepted the flaws of his people and encouraged them to work at bettering themselves. Many of his cults were internally focused, seeking to eradicate weakness within the self before seeking to change the external world.

FYERA

Burning with holy light and wielding the holy flame, Fyera was an arthropod warrior goddess. She was stern and ferocious, fierce in love and in war, and challenged all before her. Having won her divinity in a grand tournament, she hated weakness and valued strength, tenacity, and courage. She was fond of danger and combat, propounding that it built character and showed one their own limits.

As a goddess, Fyera was cruel and austere. She picked her chosen ones from among the strongest and provided challenges and wars for her worshippers to fight in. They called her the Source of All Glory, and she sat at the Head of the Table in the Halls of the Ages. Despite her harshness, Fyera could also be flirtatious and sensual, but only with those heroes and heroines who had proved themselves worthy of her adoration.

LEORIS

The Pridemother, Leoris, was a mammalian god of family, hierarchy, and order. Her domain was the household, and the lives of her worshippers were organized around family units. Leoris was seen as the great grandmother of all extant tribes, clans, and families, and was the ultimate mother to which all would give their respect. It was Leoris who gave us laws and contracts, and who enforced them. To swear on Leoris's name is to give an oath one cannot break even beyond death.

As a goddess, Leoris valued respect, order, rationality, and knowing one's place in the world. Her priestesses inherited their positions and kept extremely detailed records of the families under their care, sometimes dating back to the birth of their species. Leoris rewarded those who put the family before themselves and bestowed greatness upon those who were noble and just.

YURAGGON

The Daughter of the Dark, Princess of the Flame, Yuragon was a dragon goddess who was sired by The Great Dark One himself. After eons of ruling a world of destruction gifted to her by the World Ender, she fought him and escaped to another world, where she raised her own children, away from the hateful destruction of The Great Dark One.

As a goddess, Yuraggon was a harsh but powerful mistress, charging her worshippers with the duty to become strong enough to fight their enemies. It was said that Yuraggon saves you by leading you through the fire. Her worshippers were honorable and steadfast.

LANGUAGES OF THE OTHERWORLD

HADUADIL

Haduadil, Almaril, Throndunil, Aladil, Olramil, Landrilia, Fonthilia, Amalia, Hadil, Ondunil, Alia, Almalandun, Andril, Landunilia, Magilia, Ondilionath, Ordinas, Yrdenos, Yrdriskil, Yrdrilia, Onthron dun, Almalmalion, Duadaelion, Yrdinath, Yrdil, Hadilia, Fonas, Adaelion, Lionth, Almarisk, Ildaril, Ildronath, Ilduadil, Isildrinath, Alionas, Thronath, Yrdron, Yrdrildaris

TEMEREL

Temerel, Benemel, Lemerer, Lem, Sen, Felren, Melreten, Drenfel, Grendel, Sendrec, Brendec, Gretende, Meretend, Gren, Fendrel, Merel, Tremel, Prentel, Senfel, Tel, Merenfel, Prel, Senemere, Senfelre, Temere, Brende, Gretel, Grenemer, Felrente, Grenfel, Lemerent, Telre, Bren, Dec, Grem, Merec, Lemerec, Prementec, Meretendr, Ben, Tenfelre

SKYORS

Haarskyo, Kylden, Varsyork, Harskoda, Vorda, Kyodetta, Korkylda, Korsylda, Kors, Korden, Haroden, Vorsylda, Vorkorda, Skyorden, Haalden, Haarkin, Hyl da, Voda, Vorden, Kroden, Skerda, Varskord, Kettarky, Vorskord, Kers, Vordersk, Syorda, Hars, Kin, Vaald, Bretta, Skyors, Kylda, Skordaa

DROGOK

Drogok, Arobok, Forglok, Borogok, Gimblok, Shra'ak, Krok'a, Shrok'a, Gorok, Glogok, Gok, Shimbalak, Bimslak, Cromsmak, Gramstok, Kramflok, Grobak, Alakroral, Gokralok, K'ala'al, Glora,

Appendices

Fokramak, Slorakrok, Alalok, Kralalora, Bimbok'ar, Grak, Akrak,
Goralak'a, Alara, Smalorogl, K'akrga, Florak, Bimsmalal, Gramak,
Blora