



Neverwhere

Neverwhere

A Co-Operative Story Game 3rd Edition

Credits

System & Rules © Postmortem Studios (James Desborough) 2009

Neverwhere setting, Derivative Works & Television Series © Neil Gaiman & Crucial Films 1996

Neverwhere Comics/Graphic Novel © Neil Gaiman & DC/Vertigo 2005-2006

Neverwhere Third Edition:

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Designer's Note:

There are some conflicts between the TV series, graphic novel and book. Having access to all of them we have chosen what we believe to be the better option for the overall story in each case. Additionally a great deal has been speculated upon from as little as two word mentions in the book and a lot more made from whole cloth or by looking up street names in the A-Z. Your vision of London Below may be quite different to ours, so feel free to change anything you want.

Permission:

Permission for home printing is granted but under the terms of the agreement on file, profit cannot be made from this game so it is not for sale. Nor should the game be printed at a professional printing service or via a Print on Demand service. Home printing only – or you could play it from your laptop.

Disclaimer:

Permission was gotten from Crucial Films for the development of this game as a non-profit enterprise way back in 1997 or so. The letter is on-file at Postmortem Studios or can be seen in the Second Edition of the game. It has been omitted in this version of the game as unnecessary and not in keeping with the overall design.

This game is not for profit, if you have been charged for it in any way then you've been ripped off and should seek restitution. Full permission is granted for anyone to freely distribute this game as they see fit, in any form so long as nobody profits from it.

Dedication:

To Neil Gaiman, his fans and to those who cared enough about this game to help it return again, harnessing the kind of social-media effort and internet power that we could barely have dreamed of back in 1996 or even in 2002 when the Second Edition was produced. Let's all give ourselves a pat on the back, we all rock.



Introduction

Falling Through the Gaps
Introduction
World of Nowhere
London Below
What is Roleplaying?
What you need to Play?
Theme and Mood
The Homeless

The Rules

Play by the Rules
Why we need Rules
Description System
Terminology
The Basic Rules
Character Creation
Checklist
The Description
The Tribes
The Fiefdoms
The Basic System
Making a Roll
Hurting People
Learning New Things
Playing for Real
Playing in Fora
Playing in Chat

Player Advice

You're new here, Aren't you?
Player Advice
The Nature of the Game
Depicting your Character
Fitting into the Group
Not being an Arse
Communication

Conductor Advice

Lords and Ladies
Conductor Advice
Depicting the World
Depicting the People
Handling the Rules
Barter
Haggling
Other Belows
People, Places, Things
Adventure Seeds

London Below

Raven's Mourning
London Below
The Laws
Unnatural Laws
Tribes
Fiefdoms
History

'A' to 'Z'

Abess Close
Bagley's Spring
Cadogan
The Daily Current
Earl's Court
Figgis
Galleon's Reach
Sir Grenville Hackbridge
Iliaster
Jolly Jacktar
Jack Ketch
The Labyrinth
Macavity
Natural History Museum
Old Tate
Pagoda Gardens
Quick Road
Ranger
Brother Sable
Tanner's End
Undercities
Vale of Health
Wandsworth
Young Street



Falling Through the Cracks

Not so long ago everything was normal. I drove my cab around, picked people up, dropped them off, took their money and that was it. Alright, so occasionally I'd misuse 'The Knowledge' to take scenic detours so the meter would rack up a bit but who doesn't take advantage of tourists now and again eh?

So, anyway, I get a pickup at The Isle Of Dogs and I make my way there, finally pulling up at the address to find the geezer waiting for me by a phone box. He opens the door and hops in pretty quick, like.

What you notice first is the smell. I've been around the city for the longest time. I've smelt it all, boozy students and their girlfriends, reeking of cider, businessmen stinking of guilt, hotel sex and cheap cologne, kids' nappies, blood, you name it its happened in the back of my bloody cab. This guy smelt of the street. Stale sweat and socks worn all month long, dirty teeth and lingering bad breath. I adjusted the mirror and started rolling, the meter starting to tick over.

"Where to, guv?" I ask. The usual taxi banter puts most of the punters at ease. Not this bloke, he's as nervous as a monkey in a lion cage, looking out the back window and peering into this little covered box he's got with him.

"Night's Bridge," he says. Just like that, two words only.

Foreign I figure, Albanian maybe, so I don't argue I just drive on autopilot. 'The Knowledge' takes me where I need to go and no roundabout routes this time. This bloke won't have any money to speak of and I want him off the upholstery as soon as possible. Looking in the rear-view mirror I see someone jogging along the pavement after the car as I turn the corner. Great big brute of a bloke dressed in rags and tatters, another homeless I reckoned, his two pikey dogs trotting along beside him, great big Rottweilers, all teeth and attitude. I'm so busy keeping an eye on him I don't see another dog run under the wheels.

My feet slam on the brakes and I let out a heartfelt; "Shit."

The fare isn't impressed with my stopping, his package has tumbled onto the floor and I hear squeaking and scrabbling. Looking over the back to reason with him I see what he's dropped. An enormous, great, big, fucking rat. Not one of your loveable domesticated rats either; this is a big, dirty, brown bastard that stinks of the sewer and looks like it could take on a terrier single-handed. Not at the moment though, right now it looks like its already been in the wars, a great big series of nasty teeth marks running down its side and blood getting on my leatherette.

"Look mate." I start, "I've hit something and I need to go take a look-see to check whether its alive or not, you understand right?"

"No!" He says. "We have to get out of here! His Lordship is wounded and the dogs pursue us, we have to get away before he gets us!"

Now, I'm used to dealing with loonies, I get all sorts in the cab after the clubs close, so I smile sweetly like I always do and get out of the cab anyway to check the dog. It's nowhere to be seen. The big bloke with the two Rottweilers though, he's close. Close enough I see his yellow eyes and teeth and the teeth on his dogs. Close enough that I jump back into the cab and start off right away, foot to the floor. My fare cheers me on as we speed away but I start to see dogs at every traffic light and crossroads. No collar, no lead, just big nasty looking mongrels all over the place.

In the back the fare is cooing over his rat, squeaking and wiggling his nose like he can talk to the damn thing. Takes all sorts to make a world I suppose. I pull up and stop the meter, reading off the price without even looking at it, before I realise I'm nowhere near Knightsbridge. Not that the fare seems to care, he hops out and drops some money in my palm before he legs it down an alleyway.

I look and at first I think he's given me chocolate money like the kids get for Christmas. I'm out of the cab like a shot in hot pursuit, then I hear claws on asphalt behind me. More dogs, chasing him, chasing me. The alley turns dark and misty. The streetlights are gone save for a couple of old Victorian gas lamps. The fare vanishes into the mist on the bridge and I shout after him:

"Oi! You owe me fare!"

I don't like the sound of the dogs so I follow him onto the bridge. The dogs have more intelligence, stopping at the end of it and whining, refusing to chase any more. There is a moment of... Nothing. I feel horror and loneliness, I feel suspended in the dark for the longest moment until my foot hits the boards again and I come off the other end of the bridge. The fare is there, waiting for me it seems. He grins, showing me the rotting stumps of his teeth.

"They won't follow here, animals have more sense," he says, which fills me with a great feeling of security, I can tell you.

I look at the coins again. Now, I'm no history expert but I know gold when I see it and I can take a guess about big-nosed Romans. I smile to him and back away, taking the long way around back to my cab.

So, things are back to normal now then, sort of. I kept one of the coins as a keepsake and I keep getting strange fares that want to barter. I'm getting less flag-downs so that suits me, the barter's almost always worth more in any case. So yeah, if you're after a lift anywhere, just ask or give me a call.

No dogs though eh? Hair gets all over the seats.



Introduction

This is the third edition of the Neverwhere Role-Playing Game that I've written. The first existed only as a bare-bones HTML webpage with a scant system and a smattering of ideas. The second edition was an early PDF effort and – while ragged and not very well done – had its charms. It massively expanded and filled out the world of London Below with the ideas of the authors and several other gamers and made for a much more complete and playable game.

It's now been more than ten years since Neverwhere first came out as the BBC TV series and the book, plenty of time to reflect upon it and its influence, particularly on the newer wave of Urban Fantasy books and upon certain lines of games, as Gaiman's books have often been. Time, again, for a new edition.

The permission letter I have for the Neverwhere RPG doesn't permit it to be done for profit, only for personal pleasure and enjoyment and it's on that basis that I am proceeding. That does also mean that there can never be a hardcopy of this game since any print-on-demand service would take a profit cut – something that can't be done – so this book is formatted for PDF and to be viewed on screens or printed out at home.

This edition takes into account the other material around Neverwhere that has been thrown up and revealed by a newer edition of the book, the author's commentary on the DVD (and close examination thereof), the examination of the comic book version and listening to the audiobook version of Neverwhere. A lot of new material has been added, but you can – of course – ignore this at your discretion. Additionally where ideas are skimmed over in the book or only appear briefly in the background, they've been fleshed out.

The big difference for this edition will be a revised and more concrete system, though still one based on descriptive paragraphs and adjectives, allowing for a much more free-flowing and negotiated type of play. In this edition this system will be a little more tied down

and quantified, for those who wanted a slightly more robust system in order to play. There will also be an alternative system that can be used – potentially – for Live Action, salon-style play.

I hope you enjoy this new – and most likely final – edition of the Neverwhere RPG and never grow tired of playing it or exploring the whimsical – and dark – take it has on the cities we all know and love.

World of Neverwhere

The world of Neverwhere is that of a kind of whimsical urban fantasy, combined with some rather pressing real world issues, a metaphor for the life of the homeless in today's cities and the issues, in particular, of the mentally unwell who are all too often found wandering the streets.

In Neverwhere urban legends come to life and place names take on a much more real existence. The world is made up of dreams, imaginings, nightmares and the detritus that 'fall through the cracks' into the world 'below', be it people, items or treasures. Past and present meld into one, history comes alive in the form of remnants from that time and fairytales and imaginings are made real – often in forms one might not expect and knitted together in ways that defy reason. It's a darker, seedier, lost and forgotten version of Alice in Wonderland or The Wizard of Oz.

Place names, in particular, become something else in the other world. Whether it be Hammersmith – an area in Fulham, London, becoming a literal blacksmith in London Below or whether it be Knightsbridge, a rather posh and upscale area of the same city becoming a terrible and fearsome place, Night's Bridge, literally a bridge that belongs to the night and the things that lurk in it.

Other parts of 'The Underside' might come from fiction or history, or from things that never really happened at all but which people think or believe might have.

The Marquis de Carabas, for example, stems from certain adaptations of Puss in Boots where the Marquis de Carabas is the cat's – supposedly fictional – master.

All these elements combine with the leftover dregs from the world 'above'. The homeless, the lost, the rejected, the mad, the unconventional and those dragged in by events within the world below, torn away from their own world and rendered all but 'invisible' to the real world, given no choice but to try and adapt to life on the 'underside'.

Every city – and a few other places besides – have their 'underside' version and these are referred to as 'below'. For London there's London Above and London Below. London Above is the vibrant, cosmopolitan city we all know, all West End theatres, street markets and shopping centres while London Below is the rubbish, the history, the idle dreams and the transient areas, the secret city within, beneath and scattered throughout the 'real' one.

London Below

London Below is the counterpart to the 'real' city of London. Where London is dirty, London Below is filthy, where London is mad, London Below is Insane, where London is exciting, interesting and wonderful, London Below is magical.

London is rich with history, stories and folk tales and so London Below, like London Above, is a very, very important city worldwide in the culture of the Underside. The Beast of London is the greatest beast of any city. The sprawling expanse of London plays host to an army of Underwellers and all that really brings it low and keeps it as being less than it could be are its divisions.

London Below is divided into many competing baronies and fiefdoms, as well as individual tribes and powerful entities whose allegiance is negotiable or who try to stay apart from the machinations of the various courts and houses.

These powers include Earl's Court, Raven's Court, Baron's Court, The House of Arch, The House of Temple, The Blackfriars, The Sewer Dwellers and many, many, many others. Each of these groups vies with one another for the scraps of power and magic that filter down to London Below and while they could work together, as Lord Portico of the House of the Arch tried to bring about, they seem to prefer to fight and bicker amongst each other.

Even more so than usual, following the events of the novel, London Below is in a state of turmoil. The purpose of the Labyrinth has been revealed as a prison for The Angel, Islington, who has turned out to have more in common with Lucifer than with Gabriel. His prison now lies empty and along with that both The Beast of London and Hunter lie dead, Lord Portico and most of his family are deceased, leaving Door, his daughter, in charge of one of the most respected – but now most enfeebled – houses. There's plenty of opportunity for ambitious upstarts or conniving villains to make headway in all this chaos, or for new heroes to take up the cause and try to unite the Underside as Portico did.

London Below is a dark, dirty place, much of it centred around the tunnels and pipes of the Victorian sewer system and the sprawling underground city of known and forgotten places. The London Underground, the Royal Mail trains, the old gaols, storage rooms, warehouses, train tunnels, bunkers, warrens and hidey-holes along with all the fenced off industrial buildings and closed houses, rotting away, waiting for someone to buy them. Invisible but present, much like the people of London Below themselves.

What is Roleplaying?

A role-playing game is a game of 'let's pretend' just like you used to play as a child. Whether you were playing cops and robbers, princesses or even playing Doctor or House it was all pretty much the same thing, you were adopting a make believe role and playing out scenes and ideas with the other kids around you. Role-playing games are basically the same thing, only for adults and with a few changes...

- *There are rules: Role-playing games have rules, not just conventions like in Monopoly such as 'roll a dice and move that many squares' but rules for governing all sorts of situations like whether you can swim across the Thames or how badly you hurt that Bravo when we stabbed him in the leg.*

- *Someone's in charge: Games as kids are a matter of mutual negotiation and argument which can rapidly degenerate into 'I've got a force field' or 'It's my ball, I'm going home' which isn't terribly helpful. Role-playing games have a 'referee' or a Conductor who calls the shots, officiates the rules, comes up with plots and storylines and helps you to play your character through them.*

- *Characters are defined: You have a character sheet, a record of what your character can do, it describes them and defines them. This description can also improve over time as you play.*

When you play Neverwhere, or any other role-playing game, you're taking part in a consensual fantasy between yourself, the Conductor and the other players, moderated by the rules to help describe what your character can and can't do and how they succeed and fail, which all sounds terribly complicated written down, but it really isn't! The best way to understand role-playing is to do it yourself, describe what your character is doing, how they feel, what they're after and let the Conductor tell you what the result is – then keep doing that until you get to the end of the story.



Introduction

What You Need to Play

You need a few things to play Neverwhere, a few items of equipment without which any trip into London Below is doomed to failure!

- *Some dice: A handful of six-sided dice, such as you get in most regular board games, serve as randomisers and play the role of fickle fate and luck, bad or good.*

- *Some paper: You'll need a piece of paper to keep track of your character and what they can do, as well as the various vicissitudes of injuries, equipment, barter items and other things that chop and change throughout the game.*

- *Some pens and pencils: You'll need to write down your characters on the paper with something and make changes and notes as you go along. Pens and pencils are good for that. Or jabbing other players with if they get too annoying.*

- *At least one friend: You can't really play the game alone, you need at least one other person to help you. Games work best with more than one player (in addition to the Conductor) and the best size is probably between three and six players. More than that and things get a little hectic. If you don't have any friends, you could always play the game online in a chat room or forum.*

- *Alternatively: A laptop can perform the same function as many of these items, with the right programs. Plus you're unlikely to lose your character sheet down the back of the sofa if it's on a laptop.*

Theme and Mood

The themes of *Neverwhere* – and thus the RPG – are those of an innocent person stumbling into a magical world and the events that transpire there. It's also about the unexpected, how events and experiences change us, whether it's Richard Mayhew undergoing his trials and becoming *The Warrior* or *The Marquis de Carabas* becoming an unlikely hero, initially in pursuit of his own ends but ultimately through his bonds to his companions, becoming softer.

The people of London Below live a hardscrabble existence, depending on what falls through from our world and whatever small magic and tricks they can come up with themselves, so it's also a story of making do and of desperation, even for the powerful houses that, really, are just fighting over the scraps.

The mood is humorous and somewhat surreal, tempered by darkness, genuine loss and a sort of resigned acceptance of the horrific things that lurk in London Below. That doesn't make them any less horrible; perhaps it makes them more so that people are so used to them that they don't even pass comment on many of them. It takes a new person coming in, ignorant, to really throw up how dangerous it all is and how much of a miracle it is that anyone survives for long.

While *Neverwhere* is very much about fantastical adventures in an interesting other-world it's not a fairy tale world without consequence. People die, things are dark and nasty and there's always the possibility that none of it is real, that Richard's 'ordeal' was the actual truth...

The Homeless

Neverwhere is very much bound up the story of the homeless of London and it was a worry that the series or the book would somehow glamorise the plight of the people on the streets. So, let's be clear, it's no picnic out on the streets of London, or any city, without a roof over your head and there are nowhere near enough facilities, charities or government money to take care of these people. If you can afford to do so and if you like the game, please consider donating to Shelter:

england.shelter.org.uk



Introduction

Play by the Rules

Alan stopped, a dead stop, in the middle of the soot-covered tunnel and sat down heavily with a thump on the dirty floor, soiling his already tattered trousers. He'd had enough.

"This is crazy..." He muttered, half to himself and half to the world. "This place is insane anyway and then, on top of that, it's all bloody chaotic, lawless, dangerous, why did I have to get dragged down here?"

He laid his head in his hands and sighed a deep sigh, the kind of sigh that completely empties your body of all air and, if you were a balloon, would leave you sad, wrinkled up, and damp.

Weils, his guide, a Rat-Speaker of some repute, darted back impatiently, hopping from foot to foot and glancing back and forth, shining his torch into the tunnel in either direction.

"We can't stop here, something will come along in a minute, I can smell it and, besides, you're wrong. It's not lawless." He plucked nervously at the ragged threads at the ends of his sleeves and made as though to lead Alan on again, deeper into the darkness of the tunnels.

Alan picked himself up, shuffling disconsolately after Weils who kept darting back and forth, running ahead and then running back, trying to encourage Alan to move a little faster.

"What do you mean it isn't lawless? We've been threatened, robbed, chased, I've seen no sign of any bloody law and order other than might makes right. You can't tell me otherwise, I've seen it."

Weils slapped his grubby palm against his face and dragged it down, pulling his face like a rubber mask until his hand slipped from his chin and his features seemed to snap back into place.

"Well, besides each Barony and Fiefdom enforcing its laws within its own domains by steel and fist there's various agreements, truces, geas' and laws that apply across the underside and like it or not, they're enforced."

Alan shook his head, disbelieving, still shuffling along at his own pace, kicking up soot from the ancient tunnel floor with every step.

"I don't believe you."

Weils sucked his teeth in annoyance and shook his matted, dreaded hair, frowning and trying to dredge up some tolerance for this new person and their stupid questions.

"There's the market truce, nobody hurts anyone at market, outside the Bravo's circle at least. Then there's the law not to steal from London Above, only to take the leftovers, the cast offs or what's given freely anyway. That's just scratching the surface."

Alan lifted his head a moment and frowned, concentrating as they emerged onto a tiny, thin, tottering platform beside an underground line, weaving amongst pipes and cables as they tried not to fall onto the rails.

"There's no policeman though are there? Nobody to enforce it. You could stick someone with a knife at the market and if nobody saw you, you'd be fine. Right? Same with stealing from London Above, that's just convention isn't it? Who'd stop you? How would they know?"

Weils rounded on him, nearly shoving him from the tiny, crude platform.

"Can you fly Alan?"

"No... but..."

"But nothing. It's against the laws of fizzy-icks, isn't it? You just can't do it."

"Sure, but this isn't the same..."

"Down here, it is!" Insisted Weils, stabbing Alan in the chest so hard with a scabrous fingertip that he nearly toppled back into a fiberoptic cable housing, clinging to some other pipes for support. "There's some things you simply can't do, there's other things you really shouldn't do."

"Like what."

"You can't steal and you shouldn't break the Market Truce."

"Why not?" Alan had a way of pushing his luck – and his points – to breaking.

"It hasn't been broken in three hundred years because the last time it was, what happened was so bad that people have known to steer clear of even trying for three centuries."

"But what happened."

"You really don't want to know, just don't even try to break the rules and you'll be fine. Now shut up. Clan Black is waiting to see you, you don't keep a rat waiting."

The Rules

Why We Need Rules

Role-playing games need rules, rules are good because – usually – they prevent arguments over who can do what and who beats who, whether you manage to scramble over a wall or whether you ‘tumble to a messy death a thousand feet below’. A lot of the time, perhaps most of the time, you won’t need to rules at all, so long as players are limiting themselves to things that they can do every day without breaking a sweat, it’s only when things become stressful, difficult or luck becomes a factor that you need to turn to the rules.

Description System

The Description System, the one that this game uses, relies on a prose description of characters, items and challenging situations. These are used in order to bid various of these traits which are then compared against other characters or against difficult situations – along with a dice roll to represent the whimsy of lady luck – and to determine who succeeded, who failed, who won, who lost and whether you slay The Beast or receive a lesson on kicking.

People are described using adjectives, adverbs and occupations. For example, Dave the Taxi Driver might be described thusly:

“Dave is very *experienced* and is *well-built* with a *husky, solid* frame coupled with a *disarming* air that tends to get people to open up. Despite his experience he *drives like a novice* but is a *professional* when it comes to *The Knowledge*.”

A difficult task, like climbing over a wall, might be described like this:

“The wall is *tall* and *very slippery* with moss and slime. The bricks at the top are *fragile* and look like they might crumble away at any minute.”

If Dave tried to climb over the wall he’d have a hard time of it. He doesn’t have any traits that are appropriate meaning he would only get to roll a dice, all by itself to see if he could climb over. The wall would roll a dice and add four (*‘very’* means the trait counts twice). He might have a better chance of smashing it down.

Terminology

All this word salad can seem a little intimidating but it’s fairly easy once you get to grips with it. Here’s a quick guide to what it all means, most of which will be better explained later on.

Adjective: An adjective is a describing word. In Neverwhere adjectives are used to describe your character and these are then used to determine how good you are at doing things. Your character might be *‘strong’* or *‘tough’* for example, or something more esoteric like *‘sparkly’*. For the purposes of the game other descriptions are considered adjectives like, for example, the phrase *‘good with children’*.

Adverb: An adverb modifies an adjective, so that rather than just being *‘strong’* you might be *‘extremely strong’*, instead of *‘tough’* you might be *‘unfeasibly tough’*. Adverbs are used to describe multiple traits, if you have an adverb in front of an adjective then that adjective counts three times for bidding. The exception is the adverb *‘very’* which is used to indicate an adjective that counts double.

Bid: A bid is the number total you have before you roll. It’s the total of your adjectives and your profession bonus, the higher the better. For example, trying to squeeze down a pipe Sligo bids *very lithe, flexible, squirmy, slippery* (from some oil he stole) and *novice contortionist* for a total bid of six.

Conductor: This is the person nominally ‘in charge’ of the game. They make the rules calls and determine the story of the game as you progress through it.

Description: A description is the information used for anything in Neverwhere from a person to a weapon to a difficult situation. The description contains the information needed to form – or modify – bids.

Down: A ‘down’ is an adjective in your description that’s normally a bad thing that counts against you. If a Down applies then you take one away from your bid where you would normally add one. Downs can, rarely, count as a positive. A character who is *very depressed* for example might count that as a positive bid against a magic spell designed to make people happy, for example.

Explode: When you roll a six on the dice, that six ‘explodes’. This isn’t anything bad, in fact, this is something really good. You add the six as normal to your bid and roll again, if you get another six you add one to your bid and keep rolling until you stop getting sixes, adding one each time that you do.

Implode: When you roll a 1 you take one away from your bid and the dice ‘implodes’. This is bad. You take away the one and roll again, if you get another one you take one away from your bid and keep rolling until you stop getting ones, taking one away each time you do roll a one.

Legendary: Occupation are described as being Novice, Professional, Master and Legendary, rather than being described in the same way as adjectives. A legendary Profession counts as six traits towards a bid.

Loaning: If you help someone else out with something they’re doing you can loan them an appropriate trait, adding to their bid total. For example, if two people are trying to move a piano up some stairs then the one with the highest bid total makes the roll, but he could be loaned powerful by the other fellow, increasing his bid by one.

Master: Master describes a level of an occupation, the highest someone can normally aspire to. A Master profession counts as five traits towards a bid.

Non-Player-Character: A non-player-character or NPC is someone played by the Conductor, a person in the background, an enemy or anyone else your characters run into.

Novice: A Novice is just starting out in their occupation and having the Novice level counts as a single trait towards a bid related to that occupation.

Occupation: Occupations are the sorts of things you might describe yourself as and depending on the level they're at (Novice, Professional, Master, Legendary) they add between one and six traits to your bid. A character can have multiple occupations, there's usually more than one string to someone's bow.

Player Character: A player character or PC is one of the characters played by the players of the game, the main protagonists of the story.

Professional: A professional does their occupation as well as someone who does it for their living; being a professional in an occupation counts as three traits towards a bid.

Prose: Prose is the sort of written description you will be giving your character. Rather than numerical statistics, characters in Neverwhere are described by adjectives and other words.

Roll: When you make a roll you roll a six-sided dice and add the result to your bid to give you a final total. That final total determines whether you succeed or fail at what you were trying to do. This gets complicated by the exploding and imploding dice rules, but not by too much.

Traits: Traits is the catch-all term for all the words that describe your character, the adjectives, the occupations and everything else that helps you do things in the game.

Up: Normal adjectives and professions count as 'up' traits. Things that – if they apply – add to your bid total. Rarely some 'up' traits can become 'down', or negative, traits, just as 'down' traits can become positive ones sometimes.

Very: 'Very' is a special adverb that, when used, makes an adjective in your character description count double. Someone who is very fast and gets to include that in a bid gets two points for the bid, rather than one.

Wobbly: A wobbly trait is one that can be taken as either an up or a down trait with about equal chance. A character whose description included the adjective *bland looking*, for example, wouldn't normally have that trait apply in most bids and it could just as easily be a negative as a positive. That's a 'wobbly' trait.

The Basic Rules

Most of the time you don't need to worry about rules, most things that a character does during the course of a game. If a character is opening a door, getting dressed, walking down the street or some other fairly mundane activity then they don't need to worry about making any sort of roll. It's only when you're attempting something more challenging, something with possible consequences or that you're directly opposing someone that you need to make a roll to see how you do.

In this instance you make a bid, totting up all your adjectives and occupation points to come to a numerical total, the Conductor can dispute what traits you can use or can't and their word is final. Once you have a number total you roll a six sided dice.

• If you roll two-five you add that on to your bid to get a final total.

• If you roll a one you take that away from your total and roll again. If you get another one you take that away as well and keep rolling until you stop getting a one. Then you get your final total. This is called 'imploding dice'.

• If you roll a six you add that on to your total and roll again. If you get another six you add one to your total and keep rolling until you stop getting a six. Then you get your final total. This is called 'exploding dice'.

Example:

Barney is arm wrestling Kingston in order to win an intricately made metal flower. Barney can bid very strong, determined and beefy to win, giving him a bid of four in total, maybe what happens is...

1. Barney rolls a four, giving him a final bid total of eight.

2. Barney rolls a one, then another one and finally a three. This gives him a final bid of two. (Four; minus one, minus one again and the three is ignored).

3. Barney rolls a six, then a six, then a two. This gives him a final bid of eleven. (Four; plus six, plus one for the second six and the two is ignored.).

There are complications to how all this works, some of them optional, these will be described later on.



Character Creation

In order to play Neverwhere you'll need to create a character. A character is your alternate persona for the game world. They needn't be anything like you, they could be completely different in any number of ways but they should be something – or someone – that interests you and they should have some sort of 'hook' that can get them into adventures. Perhaps they're just a bad luck magnet, perhaps they trade in favours like the Marquis de Carabas or perhaps they're a Bravo or Guide, hiring their services out to anyone who needs them.

In order to make a character, you need a clear view of what they are in your head and then you can scribble down a few notes about them and work up a character sheet.

A starting character consists of five adjectives, strung into descriptive sentences, and up to three occupations. You can take a 'very' adjective, that counts as two or a different adverb connected to an adjective, that makes it count as three. You probably shouldn't do this with a new character though because you won't be able to do very much. You can double up an occupation to make yourself a 'professional' or triple it up to make you a 'master'. This will limit you though, just like with the adjectives.

Depending on what barony, tribe or fiefdom your character is a part of you may also get a 'knack'. This is a special ability, usually something supernatural or otherwise strange, that you can tap into.

Example:

Melanie is making up a new Neverwhere character and fancies playing a Rat-Speaker. She decides to name her Rat-Speaker Chlamydia. She then picks five adjectives out for her new character. Whimsical, pixieish, cute, fast and wiry. She decides that Chlamydia is a professional guide and a novice cook. As a Rat-Speaker she has the ability to speak the Rat language for free as her knack, as well as a Master. So she's a Master of the Rat-Tongue. She then picks out a few bits and pieces that Chlamydia might have with her as equipment and she's ready to play.



Character Creation Checklist

You can use this as a handy list when creating your character:

1. *Grab a piece of paper and a pencil.*
2. *Think about what sort of character you want to play.*
3. *Try and think of a suitable name.*
4. *Scribble down five adjectives to describe that character. Remember you can have 'very [adjective]' counting for two, or '[adverb] [adjective]' counting for three! If you want to complicate matters even further you can take 'down' adjectives and 'wobbly' adjectives. This is covered later on.*
5. *Scribble down your occupation or occupations. You can select three of these at 'novice' or you can double or triple up. A double is a 'professional' and a triple is a 'Master'.*
6. *Pick a few bits and pieces that your character might be carrying on them, the clothes they're wearing and so on.*
7. *Check over everything with the Conductor and then you're good to play.*
8. *For extra fun, make up some background for the character. Who are they really? Where did they come from? What was their family like? Where do they live when they're not out on adventures? Anything else you can think of to describe them.*

The Description

Your character description is made up of traits. These include adjectives, occupations and knacks.

Adjectives

Adjectives are descriptive words. As applied to your character these describe the things they're good at, the way they look and so on. You should try to be a bit more creative in your selection of adjectives rather than just describing a character as 'strong' or 'tough'. A thesaurus is very useful for this as it can give you any number of synonyms of more mundane words. It's said that English has more adjectives than any other language, so you shouldn't have any trouble coming up with creative words.

Here's some examples that all derive from the word 'strong' in one sense or another, just to show you how broad you can go!:

Able, able-bodied, active, acute, aggressive, athletic, big, brave, capable, clear, cogent, courageous, dedicated, deep, draconian, durable, eager, enduring, energetic, fervent, fervid, fierce, firm, fixed, forceful, forcible, gutsy, hale, handful, hard as nails, hard-nosed, hardy, hearty, heavy, heavy-duty, in fine feather, independent, intelligent, intense, iron-willed, keen, mean, mighty, muscular, perceptive, plucky, potent, pushy, reinforced, resilient, resourceful, robust, rugged, sagacious, secure, self-assertive, severe, sharp, sinewy, solid, sound, stable, stalwart, stark, staunch, steadfast, steady, stout, strapping, strict, sturdy, substantial, take charge, tenacious, tough, unbending, uncompromising, unyielding, vehement, vigorous, violent, well-built, wicked or zealous.

You can make an individual adjective stronger by putting a 'very' in front of it. This makes it count twice whenever it applies. For example, Billy the Ogre might be 'very strong'.

You can also make an individual adjective even stronger by putting a different adverb in front of it. If Billy works out for a couple of months, perhaps he can make himself 'extremely strong' which counts three times whenever it applies.

You can also take strings of similar adjectives and they'll all count – when it's appropriate. You might be, for example: 'stout, strapping, extremely powerful and very enduring'.

Occupations

Occupations are the other, big, important aspect of your character and they're more wide ranging and applicable than adjectives. An occupation is a broad description of what you do though it can also be used to describe particular, individual skills such as being able to speak rat, pigeon, cat or dog languages.

Occupations come in three main levels with a fourth that very rarely applies.

- *Novice: Adds one to any bid where it applies.*
- *Professional: Adds three to any bid where it applies.*
- *Master: Adds five to any bid where it applies.*
- *Legendary: Adds six to any bid where it applies.*

A starting character gets three 'levels' of occupations. They could take one occupation at Master, two occupations – one at Professional and one at Novice – or three occupations at Novice.

Example Occupations

Here's some possible occupations that a character might take:

Aristocrat, Assassin, Blacksmith, Bravo, Cave-Painter, Confidence Trickster, Cook, Cutthroat, Engineer, Fortune-Teller, Guard, Guide, Hunter, Market-Stall Owner, Office Manager, Personal Assistant, Salesman, Scientist, Securities Manager, Security Guard, Sewer-Fisher, Thief, Weaponsmith, Witch, Writer.

Optional Rules: Ups, Downs & Wobbles

Normally an adjective is an 'up' trait, it adds positively to bids where it applies. Sometimes though, as a result of an injury or some other cause, you can end up with 'down' traits. These count against you and take away from your bids. Some Conductors will let you take down adjectives at character creation, though you can't have more than two. For each one you take, you can take another up adjective. So if you were, for example, 'very weak', you might be able to take 'very intelligent' in exchange.

Traits that are 'wobbly' are neither positive nor negative, or can't reliably be said to be one or the other. Someone who is 'average looking' for example, might find it easy to hide in a crowd (a positive use) but might equally find his blandness a disadvantage when trying to impress someone (a negative use). Wobbly traits may only be taken at the Conductor's discretion.

Even some up traits can become down traits in certain circumstances. 'Hulking' is great when you're beating someone up, but not a lot of use when you're trying to squeeze down a pipe.

Knacks

A knack is a special, supernatural or peculiar ability or skill that a character has. Something so out of the ordinary as to need to be its own thing. Examples of knacks from the book might include the opening abilities of the house of the arch, the Marquis' ability to create binding promises, Richard's prophetic dreams, or the Velvet's ability to drain the heat from a person to feed.

You can pick your own knack but it's more likely to be dictated by the tribe or fiefdom to which you belong, though you can swear fealty to a fiefdom without taking on its associated powers. You only get to pick one Knack, at novice level, with a new character, so choose carefully, some of them are essential if you're playing a member of that tribe or fiefdom and you cannot be a member of that group without it. Others can be learned later on, if you become a member of that fiefdom. You can take your knack from a tribe, a fiefdom or it can be something of your own, created with the Conductor's help. You can also elect to wait, and get one in play.

The Tribes

Amazons

The Amazons are statuesque women who travel the underside, usually in groups of two or three. Nobody really knows where they're from, where they're going or where they stay. Many hire themselves out as bravos, guards and guides. Their hair is usually as big as they are and they increase their already considerable height with stacked shoes and platform heels. They're often pierced, tattooed and can appear quite 'fetishy'. Some Amazons are apparently cast out, to be on their own though they don't tend to talk about why. These often fall in with groups of new friends but usually only form close bonds with two or three.

To be an Amazon you don't get a Knack but, in its place you gain the adjectives *statuesque, powerful and tall*.

Baker Street Irregulars

The Baker Street Irregulars are a gang of savvy children who have a young/old rivalry with Earl's Court over who has dominion over the lost. The Irregulars are all orphans or runaways, banded together to look after each other and who have gotten a reputation as being able to find and/or steal anything from the underside.

To be an Irregular you have to be a child, no older than fifteen – when they cast you out. The Irregulars have a psychic knack for homing in on particular objects, the more sentimental value, the better. They have the *Knack of 'Find the Lost'* and start with it at *Novice* level. Irregulars can retain this ability into adulthood.

Cave Painters

The Cave Painters are children and teens that roam the underside, covering any and every available surface with cartoons, save paintings and scrawlings. The layer upon layer of scrawling and images can leave imprints and information that isn't readily available to the naked eye.

To be a Cave Painter you must be a child or teenager, no older than nineteen and you get the *Infranet ability as a professional*. The Infranet is a combination of gossip, rumour and encoded scribbling that leaves recent information up on walls around the underside, sort of like a bulletin board or newsgroup. Anyone can learn this knack, but they have to be taught. Infranet scribbling can also convey emotions and even seem to move against the wall, playing out little scenes, if done well enough.

Crouch Enders

The Crouch Enders are a tribe of acrobatic and preternaturally fast dwarves. Often found as bravos and guides – they know the secret ways and tunnels better than most – the Crouch Enders are a formidable clan when they get their act together.

Crouch Enders have no Knack per se, other than being small and fast, but they start with the extra adjectives *short, quick and tough*.

Darkling Children

The Darkling Children are the subjects of Sister Saturday and dress in funereal attire, all but worshipping the Wights and the Velvets. The Darklings make their way through parlour tricks and petty magicks.

Anyone can learn the Darkling Children *petty magic* but they start with it at the *professional* level. A combination of chicanery, stage magic, bullshit and a smattering of real power it can be used to put on a magic show, play a trick on someone with cards, create a sparkling light in the darkness, read a vague prediction in entrails and other little, whimsical uses of magic such as the Conductor thinks is apt.

Half-Lifer

Some people get caught between the worlds, neither of London Above nor London Below properly. While most transition from one to the other, some are able to eke out a living on the fringes of both societies, begging, busking or otherwise playing a trade as an agency between the worlds. Half-Lifers are exempt to many of 'the rules' of London Below, such as not being able to steal from London Above.

A Half-Lifer's knack is special and is simply called *half-life*. It means they can steal from London Above and can be noticed by regular people, this can be a drawback as much as a benefit however as it also means they can be recognised and even arrested.

Mice

Like most other city animals the mice of London have developed their own intelligence and are a tribe of their own. Unlike the rats they don't claim a ragged band of human followers and instead earn their crust as information merchants and eavesdroppers, spies for hire, concentrating their efforts around the tube lines.

Tube mice have no special knack but start with the extra traits *extremely small and quick*.

People can talk to the mice with the Rat-Speaker Knack.

Pale, The

The Pale are albinos, natives of White City, home to many of the oldest secrets of the underside. The Pale who venture beyond that place's walls are usually their hunters or soldiers but some are outcasts or their descendants. Dressing in grey and wearing dark glasses The Pale are living ghosts, memories, secrets, a shadow people that somehow seem barely real.

The Pale are a bloodline as much as anything else and you must be born a Pale to have their power. The Pale have the Knack of being able to walk through solid objects, for very brief periods, the more skilled they are the more they can pass through. They start with the Knack of *phasing at novice level*.

Pigeons

Given that rats are intelligent and talkative in London below it's little wonder that the flying vermin, the pigeons, are too. Like the mice the pigeons don't have followers but they will carry messages and spy for people they have alliances with.

Pigeons start with *very small* as an adjective boost and have the *Knack of flying at professional level*.

Characters that want to learn to speak to pigeons can learn the pigeon-speaker knack.

Rat-Speakers

The Rat-Speakers are as numerous and perhaps as powerful as a fiefdom but their servitude to The Golden and the other rat-clans means they tend to be looked down upon and regarded as lesser, a tribe. Clannish and living together in large groups the Rat-Speakers are protective of their own but open up once you get to know them.

Rat-Speakers start with *rat-speaker at professional level*. Anyone can learn to rat-speak.

Serjeants

The Serjeants are defenders of the Temple and are chosen by divine providence to manifest their powers. Dressed in their uniform, a business suit and a bowler hat, they're also never seen without gloves and they view themselves as paragons of law and order in the underside, helping to maintain the peace.

A Serjeant has the knack of turning people to stone with their touch, they start with the *stone-touch knack at novice level*. The stone touch can be used to make attacks, disabling appropriate adjectives or adding stiff, very stiff and extremely stiff. A big enough margin on their roll can turn someone completely to stone.

Sewer Folk

The Sewer Folk live in the dankest, darkest, stinkiest parts of London Below's sewers, fishing in the foetid streams for turds to dry into fuel and other junk to sell at the market, as well as recovering bodies. Most people avoid them, but they're canny negotiators and make for good guides.

Sewer folk must be born as sewer folk, others can join their society but don't gain their special abilities for doing so. Sewer folk gain the down trait *very smelly* and *hand-sign at professional level*. They're also completely immune to any disease or poison.

Time Lost

The Time Lost are legion in London below, almost everyone there is lost in time somehow, immortal, slipped frame of reference or just slightly out of phase. Time is a tricky thing in London below. There are all sorts of people around from the past and even the near future of the city, from the Kilburn Legion to someone who swears they're an alien. They all have their own abilities and understandings but the Time Lost all share a knack of being unstuck in time.

The Time Lost can slip, slightly, forward and backward in time using their *time-step Knack*, which starts at *novice level*. They can slip one second forward or back for each point they get over the target though they can only slip backwards once in each scene of the story. The Time Lost gain their power as a result of becoming unstuck in time, but other folk can get 'infected' by it.

Trolls

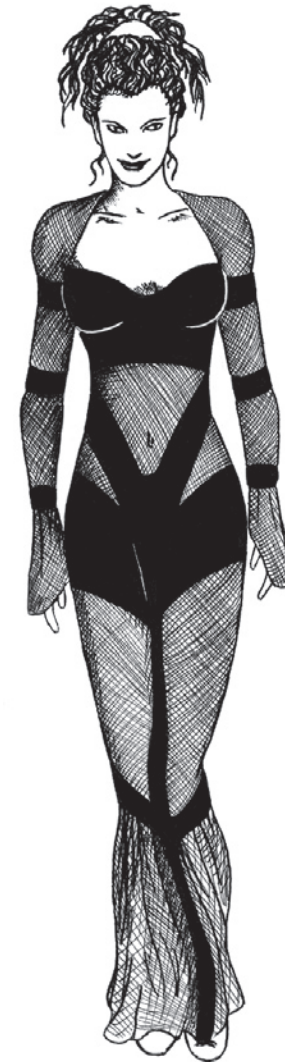
Trolls are hulking brutes that lumber through the underside, clinging onto life where they can here and there and most often finding work as cheap bravos. Some are a little more organised, here and there, but their fearsome reputation makes for a large amount of prejudice.

You have to be born a trolls don't start with a Knack per se, but rather have additional adjectives. Trolls are *very big, scary and very tough*.

Velvets & Wights

Velvets are heat vampires, resembling beautiful goth girls and gliding about the underside – and London Above – in search of 'food'. The Wights are their male counterparts, gorgeous, androgynous boys in the finest attire that the darker side of the club scene has to offer.

A Velvet can make another Velvet by draining them of heat and breathing a little of their icy essence back into them. All Velvets are *beautiful and seductive* and gain the *heat-drain Knack at novice level*.



The Fiefdoms

Aeroville

Aeroville exists above London Above but is, confusingly considered part of London Below. A bright, airy place there are no particular knacks associated with Aeroville but people who lay claims of loyalty to that fiefdom may develop *bird-speaking* or perhaps have a *Knack that's a flying machine* of some sort.

Barking

Barking is a mixed community of men and dogs living in harmony with each other. These are intelligent dogs of course, capable of speaking and they lead the community in partnership with their companion humans.

Humans from Barking can start with or learn the *dog-speaking Knack*. Dogs from Barking are *strong and fast and have sharp teeth*.

Barkingside

Barkingside is an outcast community of stray dogs who resent the atrocities and poor actions of humans. Unwilling to go completely rebellious and to join the feral wolf-dogs of the Isle of Dogs they, nonetheless, largely keep to themselves away from humans.

Dogs from Barkingside are *vicious and fast and have sharp teeth*.

Baron's Court

Reclusive and secretive since the battle the Marquis instigated at White City, Baron's Court accepts no visitors and his men at arms and adventurers from his court only rarely venture beyond the walls to see what's what.

Natives of Baron's Court have access to the *Knack of a commanding voice*, the instructions of which cannot be disobeyed. This cannot be learned by outsiders.

Black Friars

The Black Friars were intimidated with the knowledge of who – and what – Islington really was and entrusted with guardianship of the key. The Lady Door returned the key to them and they guard it still, allowing new petitioners to come seeking it. The key is the key to all reality after all, not just to Islington's prison. Their duties have no extended to guarding the door to heaven as well and keeping an eye on those who might try to bring Islington back.

The Black Friars have access to guns, something which is terribly rare and difficult in the underside save for the most noble and wealthy of houses and the Black Friars. *Any Black Friar may start with a firearm of their choice.*

Royal House of Cats, The

Amongst the many other intelligent animals of the Underside are the cats, based out of their demesne in Catford. There are intelligent cats all over the Underside but those of the royal house are a breed apart.

Cats start with no particular Knacks, just their natural abilities and the adjectives of *small, fast and aloof*.

Members of The Royal House of Cats are able to ask a *free favour, once in their life, of the Marquis de Carabas* but only the Marquis and the King of the Cats know why.

Human servants may learn the *Knack of cat-speaking*.

Duke's Court

Duke's Court lays claim over the forgotten in the same way Earl's Court claims dominion over the lost. Forgotten languages, secrets, techniques, poems, stories, all end up as part of the Duke's domain.

Native members of Duke's Court have the *Knack of never forgetting*, which starts at *Novice* level and which grants them a photographic memory.

Earl's Court

Earl's Court claims dominion over the lost, anything misplaced and lost in London seems to make its way to the Earl, eventually. This overlaps somewhat with the remit of Duke's Court and the Earl is vied with by many of the powers of London Below but tenaciously clings on.

Native members of Earl's Court have the *Knack to control the underground*, starting at *Novice* level, able to command the machines with the underground train system to do their bidding whether it be to switch the lights on or off or to dispense drinks and chocolates.

Golden, The

'The Rats' to anyone else, these are the true power behind the throne. The Rats are divided into separate clans and castes, each with their own duties. The Golden are never seen, remaining in their warrens beneath the Earth, nested in an old mammoth skull, but the other rat clans are, often accompanied by their Rat-Speaker servants.

All rats are *very small and fast*.

The Golden are the leadership caste of the rats, hidden away beneath the Earth they are a little like a hive mind, assimilating the information their huge network of rats brings them.

Clan Black are the warriors, assassins, disease carriers. They enact the fighting will of The Golden.

Clan Grey are the trader caste, doing favours for others, carrying messages, finding trinkets to sell at the Floating Market and dealing in information.

Clan Brown are the workers of the rat-empire, the collectors of food, the diggers of nests.

Clan White are the loremasters and scientists, though looked down upon as being 'domesticated' by the other clans the whites are also their eyes and ears in London Above.

Grey Friars

The Grey Friars are neither good, like the Black Friars, nor evil, like the White Friars. The Grey Friars serve balance and live ascetically, wandering warrior monks who survive on the charity of others, lending their skills to all sides, good or evil, depending how they view the esoteric balance.

Grey Friars are consummate martial artists with abilities not normally seen outside of films. They start with the *Fu Knack at Novice level*, which enables them to perform reality bending feats of martial arts.

House Arch

The House of the Arch is one of the most peaceful and respected houses of the underside, though small, especially since the demise of Door's family. The house is rebuilding, though its reputation is now even greater since the death of The Beast and the removal of Islington, reputation doesn't equal power and it's worrying what a hold the Marquis has over Door.

Members of the Arch bloodline – and there are stray lines of the blood in the Underside – have the *knack of being an opener*, able to open any lock or door, even where there aren't any, starting with *Novice* ability.

Isle of Dogs

The members of the Isle of Dogs, following the Mad Lord, are the most treacherous and evil scum anywhere on the Underside. Thieves, murderers, rapists, dogs who have turned on their masters and reverted to wolves, it is a place of feral degeneracy, but strength of arms that cannot be denied.

Those who don't already have a Knack or set of racial traits from their homeland succumb to the Mad Lord's frenzy, gaining the adjectives *feral*, *vicious* and *tenacious*.

Order of Isolation

The Nuns of the Order of Isolation are a lost order of nuns, living in Abbess Close now in the underside. While normally quiet and peaceful, keeping to themselves, they're also healers and nuns raised in their cloistered walls must spend some time in the outside world, ministering to the sick and deciding if they want to remain in the nunnery.

Nuns of the order of isolation can have the *healing touch Knack at Novice level*.

Raven's Court

Raven's Court is a relatively vigorous, but impoverished power in the Underside with many followers and scattered alliances but no real direction other than ruinous obsessions with revenge.

Members of the royal bloodlines of Raven's Court, or those favoured by the court, have the *Knack of being able to transform into a raven*, with *Novice* ability to start with.

Members of Raven's Court can also learn *bird-speaking*.

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Houses, The

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Houses has dominion over the unloved, abandoned and demolished houses of the city, dragging them, or copies thereof, into the Underside where they are preserved and nurtured, despite having vanished from the world above. In return the grateful houses take care of them

Members of the Royal Society can enter any abandoned house without a key and the house will take care of them, restoring water, power, gas and any other creature comforts that it can. This *house-warming Knack starts at Novice level*.

Seven Sisters

The Seven Sisters are terrifying and poorly understood by most of London Below. While not really a house and in no way unified they are accorded the respect that only the truly terrifying and powerful can. They have many agents and followers, some would say slaves, enthralled to their will and power. Those loyal followers are given trinkets or taught magicks that are their Knacks, but which could be almost anything.

Shepherds, The

Shepherd's Bush is the centre of the slave trade in London Below and is ministered by their shaved-bald agents, lead by their matriarchs and the Shepherd Queen at the head of it all. Almost universally loathed there are a few runaways or rebellious young matriarchs who want to escape their society, as well as those who've been educated on 'morals'.

Shepherds have the ability to *enthral* their slaves, breaking their wills and turning them into puppets, starting at *Novice* level.

Temple

The House of the Temple is the sprawling and chaotic ecclesiarchy of London Below. Made up of a mish mash of different religions, all headed by a chaotic mix of shamans, pontiffs, priests and cults the House of Temple rarely agrees on anything and rarely needs to deal with their own safety, protected as they are by the Serjeants.

Members of the House of the Temple have the *Knack of praying at Novice level*, though their prayers may not be answered by their gods in the ways they might think.

White Friars

The White Friars were a secretive cult, dedicated to Islington and serving him, trying to find ways to extricate him from his prison, despite having no openers. Now of course, everything has changed, they are looking for ways to bring him back and they may be the ones holding Door's sister...

The White Friars are drawn from other houses and tribes and have their Knacks, none of their own.

Wild Court, The

The Wild Court is headed by an avatar of Herne, the Hunter and includes men, animals and time-lost remnants from pre-Christian Britain.

The Wild Court has no Knacks of their own, animals have their own animal knacks and traits while humans get to have an extra level of skill in an appropriate occupation, such as hunter.

Witches, The

The Four Witches are a power unto themselves, much like the Seven Sisters. Their few followers are granted gifts and minor cantrips in payment for their service, just as with the Seven Sisters through The Witches are united and tend to be much more active than the Sisters.



The Basic System

When you need to make a roll you make a bid, totting up all your adjectives and occupation points to come to a numerical total. The Conductor can dispute what traits you can use or can't and their word is final. Once you have a number total you roll a six sided dice.

- *If you roll two-five you add that on to your bid to get a final total.*
- *If you roll a one you take that away from your total and roll again. If you get another one you take that away as well and keep rolling until you stop getting a one. Then you get your final total. This is called 'imploding dice'.*
- *If you roll a six you add that on to your total and roll again. If you get another six you add one to your total and keep rolling until you stop getting a six. Then you get your final total. This is called 'exploding dice'.*

Note:

Down traits count against you, if they apply they take numbers away from your bid total. Wobbly traits can be up or down, depending on the circumstances and sometimes down and up traits become the opposite, depending on the situation. It's all down to the Conductor!

Making a Roll What Are You Doing?

When you're called upon to make a roll you need to decide – and describe – what exactly it is that you're doing. This can affect the adjectives and the occupation that you're bidding in order to make the attempt. For example, if you described yourself as breaking down a door using brute force, then appropriate adjectives might include ones describing your strength, size or toughness. If you decide to try and pick the lock then ones that describe how dextrous and nimble you are might be more appropriate.

You won't be able to do some things without the appropriate occupation or Knack. If you're not, say, an electrician, then the odds of you being able to work out or fix a wiring system are... remote.

How Difficult Is It?

Like everything else in Neverwhere a problem is usually described by adjectives. A lock might be very tricky, solid or even magically protected, bidding what's appropriate to foil your lock picking attempts. If you're breaking it down it might be very thick, seasoned oak and bound with iron. If the Conductor can't describe the problem in such terms then they should pluck a suitable number out of the air.

An average challenge for a professional should have a counter bid of around five. Challenges for unskilled people should start at around a bid of two or so and creep up as they get more challenging.

Once the bid for the opposition is established, either via traits or via guesswork, a roll is added on top of that, just as if a player were making a roll. Whoever gets highest, wins.

If the player is working against another player or one of the many opposing characters in the control of Conductor, then they make their actions and bids as normal.

What Did You Bid?

You can only bid traits that are appropriate to what you're doing but, obviously, you should try and play to your character's strengths. Obviously you can't be good at everything and you're unlikely to be able to do things the way you want all the time so it's generally a good idea to have a good spread of traits as well as a focus, something you're good at.

The total bid you make in any challenge is equal to...

- *Adjectives bid, plus...*
- *Occupation bonus (one occupation), plus...*
- *Dice roll value.*

What Did You Roll?

The dice roll represents the vagaries of chance and its effect on whatever you're trying to do. Your dice roll adds on to or takes away from your bid to give you a final total.

- *If you roll two-to-five add this to your bid total to get your final result.*
- *If you roll a one, take this away from your total and roll again. If you get another one, take it away again and keep rolling. Otherwise stop with your current total.*
- *If you roll a six, add this to your total and roll again. If you get another six, add on another one to your total and keep rolling. Otherwise stop with your current total.*

The Outcome

Whoever gets the highest result is the winner, whether it be the character, an inanimate object or a rival. The more you beat your opposition by, the better and if you beat them by five or more, than can be considered a pretty devastating win. If, for example, a lock beat your lock-picking attempt by a good amount, whatever you were using to pick the lock might break. If it beats you by four or more, the snapped tool might be caught in the lock, stopping you trying to open it that way again.

Trying Again

If you fail at something, not against an opponent but against a task like picking a lock or searching through the Earl's lost-and-found to find something, then you find it harder to keep going. Each time you fail and try again you get tired of doing it, then very tired, then really tired. Then you can't try any more without at least a day's rest. Each tired trait bids against you when you try to do it again.

Helping Someone Out

Several people can work together on a task and that can greatly increase their chance of success. In such a situation one person is chosen as the leader but the other people involved can each loan them a suitable adjective to bid. This all boosts their bid total up higher, giving them the chance to accomplish things that they might not, otherwise, be able to do.

Hurting People

When it comes down to hurting people, beating them in a fight, things can get a little more complicated, but only if you really want them to.

If you want to keep things really simple then the two opposing combatants both describe what they're going to do and what the consequences are – within reason. Such as:

'I'm going to kick him so hard in the balls he collapses, vomiting, to the floor'.

The person on the receiving end might describe how they dodge out of the way to escape then both sides bid traits and roll, whoever gets the highest wins, otherwise they swap around and the victim now becomes the instigator, choosing what they want to do next, fight back, run away or whatever else they might want to do.

If you want things to be a bit more formal and to prevent people from just declaring 'I kill him' all the time, there's some more complicated but satisfying rules you can use.

Advanced Hurting People

If you need something a little more definite for when two people clash with each other then you can use the optional rules about 'Degree of Success' to do so. In this version of combat you can take away people's adjectives, replicating injuries, or give them down adjectives in the same way, or you can choose to do various other nasty things to them

- *One success – to push someone around, manipulate them, force them into cover, to retreat or similar advantage without hurting them.*
- *Two successes – to give someone a down trait or to remove one of their up traits, that's appropriate.*
- *Three successes – to stun someone, meaning that they can only make a defensive type move on the next turn and can't take an action back at you themselves.*
- *Four successes – to knock someone out or put them out of the fight.*
- *Five successes – to kill someone outright.*

Optional Rules: Degree of Success

As a rough guide to how well you do, you can apply these guidelines to how well you beat something...

- -1: Barely failed, such a close run thing.
- 0: Barely succeeded, just by the skin of your teeth.
- 1: You succeed with a normal, acceptable level of competence.
- 3: You do really well, good work.
- 5: Exceptional, beyond normal expectations, you were in 'the zone'.

Optional Rules: Equipment

Optionally, items, weapons and equipment can loan you traits which you can bid as though they were your own. A suit of chain mail, for example, might be hardy, protective and light. Weapons have their own traits but remember that these adjectives have to fit what you're doing, the action you describe, you can't just throw them in anyway.

Here's how this can work in practice:

Jynx, a bravo and guard, is pursuing a White Friar who has escaped with an important item – one of Islington's feathers – from Lud's Gate. Jynx is in pursuit and decides to stop and take a pot-shot with his crossbow.

Jynx is *fast* and *very accurate* as well as being a *professional bravo*. The crossbow is *well made*, *accurate* and *powerful*. This gives Jynx a total bid of nine. He then rolls five, giving him a grand total of fourteen. A very good hit. The Conductor rules, however, that if he missed, the White Friar will have gotten away.

The White Friar is *fleet of foot*, *very paranoid* and a *master thief*. This gives the White Friar a total bid of eight. He rolls a two, giving him a total of ten.

Jynx beat him by four and now gets to spend his successes. He chooses to give him the down trait *bleeding*, so he can be tracked more easily and is probably slowed down; he also eliminates the White Friar's *fleet of foot trait*, describing how he shoots the fleeing man through the leg.

Healing times depend on the wounds and the Conductor's discretion but without any other guidance you should get your traits back, or get rid of the down traits, at the rate of one per day of in game time.

Learning New Things

People learn and grow from their experiences and things that they're taught as they progress through life and whatever doesn't kill them, makes them stronger. Simple farm boys become Jedi masters, the peasant who never knew his destiny becomes a great king and our simple undersiders become something far more than they used to be.

Every session you play every character gets one improvement point, if it's a really long session – four hours or more perhaps – you get another one. If you're a good player and bring attention to your down or wobbly traits – or your up traits when they're against you – through the game you get another one.

You can then spend these improvement points to make your character better, stronger, faster.

- *Increasing your adjectives costs a number of improvement points equal to the total value of all your adjectives thus far. For starting characters, this would normally be five. Down and wobbly traits don't count. Wobbly traits cost half as much, rounding up.*

- *You can buy off a down trait or a wobbly trait for five improvement points.*

- *You can buy a new occupation for three improvement points. You can raise one from Novice to Professional for five improvement points, Professional to Master for ten improvement points, Master to Legendary for twenty improvement points. Some Knacks – like learning animal languages, cost the same as occupations. More supernatural and powerful Knacks cost double.*

Playing for Real

Neverwhere lends itself very well to salon style live-action roleplay. These are the live-action role-playing games where you get together somewhere, in costume and mostly talk, rather than running around and actually hitting each other. If you want to play this way it takes quite a bit of work to get a good game up and running, but once it is players can almost keep it going themselves.

Live Action Roleplaying has different demands to normal role-playing, it can be fiddly to much about with dice and character sheets while you're trying to play and it can slow things down. Some alternative systems on how to work out who wins are presented here:

- *Use dice anyway: If you want a completely 'true' to the standard game feel, just carry a dice around with you in your pocket. The system is simple and light so this shouldn't be too much of a problem.*

- *Rock-Paper-Scissors: You can work out who wins by totting up bids and then playing rock-paper-scissors. The aggressor or challenger is the one whose bid is modified. If you win, you add one to your bid and play again. If you lose you take one away from your bid and play again. If you tie you stop and leave your bid as it is.*

- *Coins: You can carry six coins in your pocket and, when called upon to make a bid, draw these out in a handful and slap them down on the table. Each head is plus one while each tail is minus one, giving you your final total.*

- *Cards: Get the 1-6 cards from each suit and make them into a deck. When called upon to make a bid, draw a card from the deck and treat it like a dice roll, complete with implosions and explosions. When you finish a bid, shuffle the cards again and put them back in your pocket.*

- *Finger Counting: You and whoever is doing the bid for the challenge or the other person put your hand behind your back and choose between one and five fingers, on the count of three you both reveal your hands. Add the total number of fingers together, if you go over five, start again at one. Add the final result to your bid and do the same for your opponent. Whoever gets the highest, wins.*

- *Hitting Each Other: Feel free to come up with your own system to govern hitting each other with latex weapons, but given Neverwhere has an urban setting I really don't recommend running around down belting each other or wielding toy guns. The police get really, really shirty about that sort of thing.*

Playing in Fora

Playing in a forum environment can be tricky, but is very popular, especially amongst people who role-play but who don't really know about the culture of role-playing games as a whole. Playing in a forum tends to be much more free-form and a forum is unlikely to have the necessary tools for handling dice rolls or other conventions for solving problems.

If you're playing in a forum it's important that someone – or several people – are there to act as moderators or Conductors, as referees. They will tell you who wins an encounter or challenge and by how much, determining the result via dice rolls or other techniques at home and passing the result back for the players to determine the consequences of.

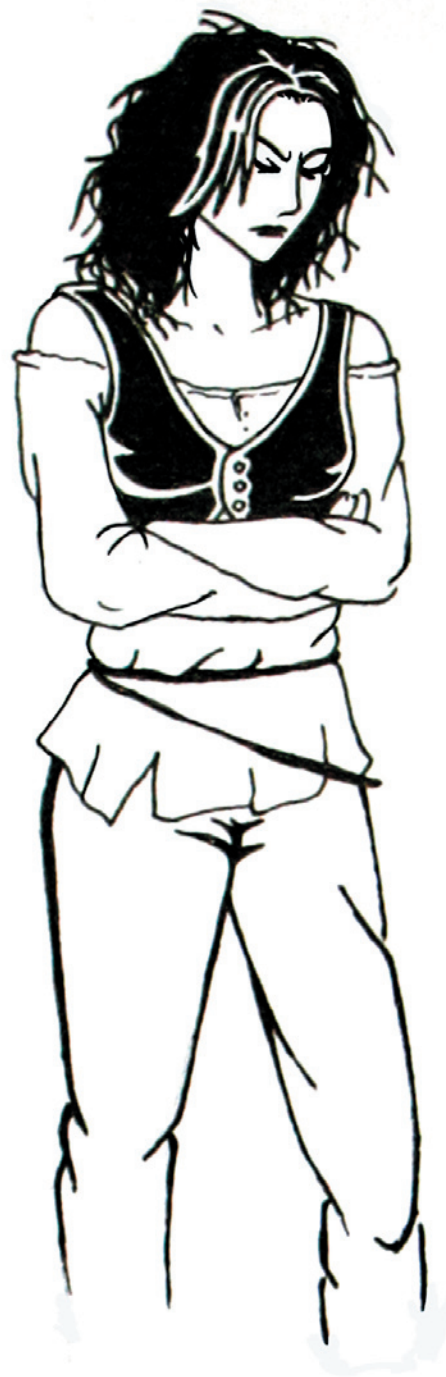
Forum posts should be longer and more detailed than normal role-play and, as otherwise fights and encounters can go on for days, combat encounters should try to be limited to a single roll and an appropriate outcome.

If players can be honest and accommodating with each other, there's no reason they can't post the rolls they get themselves and self-moderate their role-play, after all, winning all the time just isn't that interesting!

Playing in Chat

You can also play online in chatrooms or over Internet Relay Chat (IRC) or across instant messenger or conference calls over Skype. Many dedicated role-playing chat services exist – just be careful you’re not getting into a Cybersex room – and many of them have tools, or ‘bots’ for handling dice rolls. This makes it quite easy to play and text-chat role-playing has some of the advantages of both tabletop and forum play, it’s quite easy to get into your character and suspend disbelief. The disadvantage of computer-chat play is that people don’t take it as so important a commitment and miss sessions more frequently, it also takes longer to play things out, especially if you have slow typists in your group or people whose English skills aren’t so great.

Another possibility would be to set up some sort of Underside ‘sim’ on Second Life, a 3D, customisable, online game world. There are all sorts of scripts, props and costumes that could be used in Second Life and public dice rolling scripts to help handle bids as well as live combat systems to handle that side of things. An RPG community could be built up easily enough around a Neverwhere sim in Second Life but this would cost a bit of real world money and a lot of time and effort by a group.



You're New Here, Aren't You?

Unbelievably, the taxi stopped when none of the others had. Jake grasped the handle and leap inside, barking out his home address as the taxi started moving, pulling away from the side and trundling down the road unhurriedly.

"Fifteen, Tower Bridge Close, and quickly please... something weird's going on."

The cabbie didn't answer, just kept his own pace, trundling along the road, making turns seemingly at random down streets Jake wasn't sure he recognised.

"Did you hear what I said?" He asked, tapping nervously on the window and slowly becoming aware that things weren't quite the same as they should be on the inside of the cab either, now he came to think about it.

It was the smell that tipped him off first. The cab smelt of stale cigarette smoke, that worked in, rank stink you only used to get in elderly cabs and long distance coaches that had a lifetime of post-war cigarette stink worked into their upholstery. After years of smoke free transport, the stink seemed thick as smog and made Jake choke and gag.

The bottom of the cab was thick with rubbish but it wasn't rubbish he recognised. The club fliers were all, odd, talking of musical genres long past, never existed or yet to exist in clubs with names he could barely comprehend.

They were trodden down, virtually composted with food detritus that didn't make any sense either; containers he hadn't seen in years and that looked like they'd been used more than once.

The seat was threadbare, less leather than duct tape, the stuffing falling out, replaced with crumpled newspaper and rubbish and almost every inch of the inside was covered in scribbles and graffiti, none of it what you might expect, instead numbers and patterns and little occult symbols, quotes from Shakespeare and even more esoteric quotations he knew nothing about.

Swallowing his nervousness he leaned forward and wrapped his knuckles on the partition, so dirty, scarred and plastered with 'Have You Seen This Girl' that the driver was all but invisible.

"Hoy! What's going on? Where are you taking me?"

The driver's voice sounded like that of a man who'd died from smoking, harsh and scratchy, but somehow not actually that threatening.

"Not home. You can't go back there any more." He said, with an honest, sincere, but failed attempt at injecting a tone of sympathy into his voice. "Nobody will know you, your home will disappear, you've got no money, you've got nothing to go back for. You're one of us now."

"One of you?" Jake blinked and slumped back into the seats. "Like those freaks that chased me... like that... thing on the underground? A freak, a nothing... god, I'm going mad."

"Oh, I hope so Sir, that would help a lot."



Player Advice

It should be simple enough to play a character but it's not necessarily as easy as all that. Advice tends to concentrate on the Conductor as they have the most important and difficult role and so players can feel neglected but there is some advice that can really help a player who needs a bump-start to get into playing their persona. Here's a few tips, tricks and rules that can help you be a more productive and better player and really to help the game along.

The Nature of the Game

Role-playing games aren't the same as normal games. There's no board, no set goal and the rules are much more flexible than in a game like monopoly, they have to be to allow you to do all the things you might want to try to do.

- *The aim of a role-playing game is not to beat the other players. You're working together towards a mutual goal. Not competing with each other.*

- *The Conductor is not your enemy either, you're not trying to beat them and they're not trying to beat you. They're trying to give you an interesting challenge and a good story to take part in.*

- *The aim of the game is not, even, necessarily to 'win', to beat the bad guy and save the world. It's just as valid for the aim of the game to be to create an interesting story and sometimes losing can create just as interesting a story, if not more interesting, than winning.*

Your Character

There's lots of different approaches to playing a character and none of them are 'correct', whether you're playing a representation of yourself – 'if' this happened to you. – an idealised, fantasy, wish fulfilment or a full on alternative personality, experimenting with and exploring how it might be to be a different person with their own hopes, desires and wishes, different from their own. Whichever approach you're taking to your character it's a good idea to work out where they've come from, where they fit into the world of Neverwhere and what their goals are – achievable or not.

Where Are You From?

- *Where does your character come from?*
- *Who are they?*
- *What's their name or their nickname?*
- *Who have they left behind?*
- *How did they come to London Below?*
- *How old are they?*
- *What do they look like?*
- *What did they used to do?*
- *What were some of the key, important events in their life?*
- *What are they afraid of?*
- *What brings out the best in them?*
- *What brings out the worst in them?*

Where Are You Now?

- *What do you do in London Below?*
- *Where do you stay?*
- *What's your barony/tribe/fiefdom?*
- *How do you survive?*
- *How do you get on with the other PCs?*
- *What's your relationship with key NPCs?*
- *Are you in trouble or at the top of your game?*
- *Who do you know?*
- *Who do you trust?*
- *What possessions do you have?*
- *What's your trade, if any?*

Where Are You Going?

- *What's your goal in life?*
- *Are you ambitious?*
- *Do you just want to be left alone?*
- *Do you have any unfinished business?*
- *What's the one thing you've always wanted?*
- *Do you need to make amends for anything?*
- *Is there anyone you need to take revenge on?*
- *Is there anything you need to overcome?*

Fitting into the Group

Odds are your first few games are going to be with friends, people you know well and may have even played with before. Sometimes though, you'll get into games with people who are new, whom you don't have a friendship with and it's a good idea to try and make a good impression and to avoid problems that can occur in gaming groups.

Even with the best of intentions and the greatest care in the world you might not get on with the people you're role-playing with. If the game is still good that doesn't have to be a problem. You wouldn't expect to get on with everyone in a guild in an MMO or in a team death-match game, but you can still have fun.

Not Being an Arse

While it might seem obvious, acting like an arsehole at the gaming table is far more common than you might think. Some of the issues are no-brainers while others can come up without you really realising that you're doing them, though they still cause problems.

• *Don't Hog the Munchies:* Snacks are often shared between the group when you're playing and people will often chip in together to buy pizza while they're playing. Don't take more than your fair share and try not to scoff all of someone's favourites. Make sure you chip in something while you're at it. Even if you're poor.

• *Respect the Homeowner:* You're quite likely to be playing at someone's house. That gives them some basic veto rights over things like the stereo. You should also remember to wipe your feet and to be respectful of whoever else lives in the house.

• *Don't Steal the Conductor:* It can be very easy to get carried away with your role-playing, to dash off on your own, get caught up in your role-playing interaction with a particular non-player character or some scheme you're cooking up. These things all tend to hog the Conductor's time and there's only one of them. Try not to steal too much of the Conductor's attentions or the other players may resent you.

• *Let Someone Else Have a Go:* Your character might be really good at something and you might be a genius player who's full of great ideas about how to do things but, if you completely take over and dominate the game, if your character deals with every challenge, if you solve every puzzle you'll just end up looking like a prick.

• *Don't Argue:* Sometimes the Conductor will make a bad call or something you don't agree with. Sure, if it's really bad you can argue the toss a little but turning it into a knock-down, drag-out fight just isn't going to accomplish anything but ruining the game. Choose your battles, be gracious and don't screw up the game.

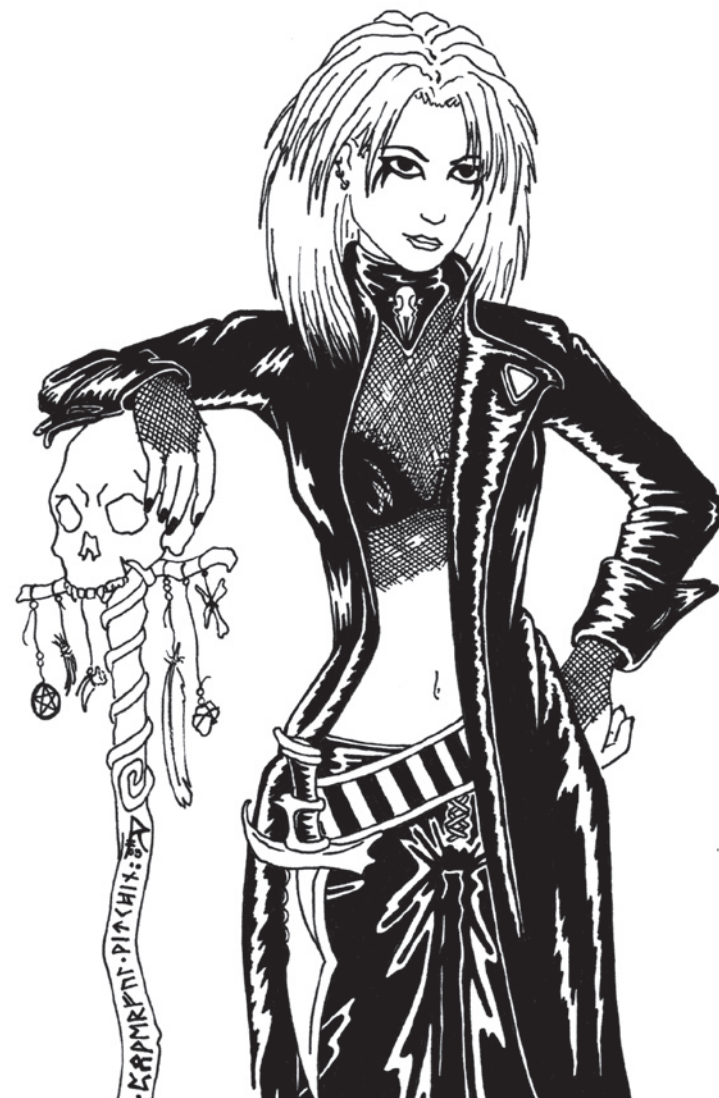
• *Turn Up:* If you've promised to turn up for a game, to play, then turn up. If you can't make it, give people plenty of warning. Treat turning up for a game like you would any other important social engagement.

Communication

What's absolutely vital to any game is that all the players, including the Conductor, are able to communicate with each other. Don't be afraid to tell the Conductor what you like – or don't like – about the games that you're playing. You should also feel free and able to talk about what you want from the game and to talk with the other players.

The more you share ideas between each other and the Conductor the more likely you are to all have a good game. Equally you need to be able to listen to the other players and the Conductor yourself and willing to compromise for the sake of the game as a whole.

There's no point whining, complaining and keeping everything to yourself, you'll only get more and more frustrated and nothing will change. If there's a problem with the game you need to raise it – tactfully – and the sooner the better.



Lords & Ladies

Fill my mug and take a seat and I'll tell you all how we got into this stupid mess we're all in... ah, thank you, that'll do nicely...

Once upon a time, a long time ago, in a time that might as well be another country, London Below was united under the power of King Lud.

Lud was a wise and canny King and kept a tight rein during his reign, keeping the fractious tribes and peoples of London Below at loggerheads with each other, at each other's throats, dropping favours and punishments to keep the members of his court equal and locked in competition with each other for the King's favour.

The King kept this balance going for a huge number of years, raising some underdwellers up to the status of nobility and casting others down from high position to that of the peasantry. Even while he kept those who could rival his power fighting each other, he made a great number of enemies in so doing.

Lud's reign came to an end with a dagger in his back and another across his throat. His court, discovering his death, immediately began to blame each other for it and the delicate balance between the various powers was shattered. Lud's Kingdom fractured into tribes, baronies and fiefdoms and chaos and war descended upon London Below, tearing it apart.

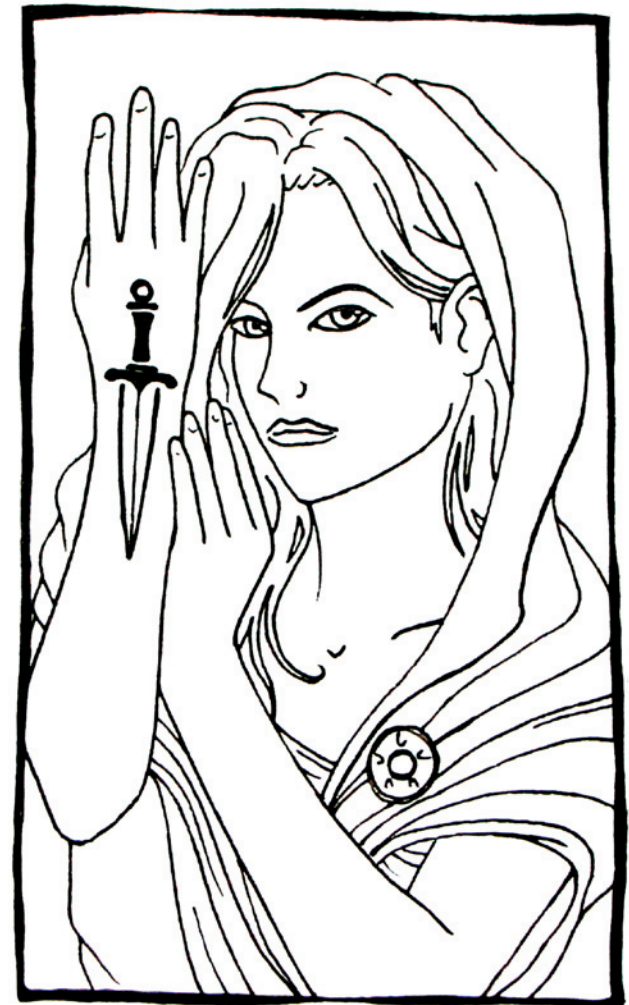
The baronies and fiefdoms emerged from these wars, these alliances, carving London Below up into their territories and laying claim to their dominions, both physical and mystical. Without Lud's army and organisation other shadowy powers moved into the city, The Seven Sisters, The Shepherds, The Velvets all emerged from the shadows and became powers of their own, operating openly, even feted and courted by the nobility of Lud's court, still vying for power and the empty throne.

The squabbling has continued unabated throughout the ages with the baronies and fiefdoms tearing each other to pieces, manipulated by those who promise them advantage. Lud's palace has vanished into the dark of the underside, lost, along with his body and his crown and the baronies and fiefdoms have all but forgotten what it is that they're even fighting over.

Some still dream of a united underside, but the death of Lord Portico of the House of the Arch is considered a warning against such foolish idealism, the baronies and fiefdoms are all but spent as a force in any case, it would take a strong person indeed to unite the underside, not a diplomat, but a warrior, someone with the respect of all the powers and willing to shake hands with angels and devils alike in order to bring peace and unity and a new golden age for London Below.

There's fat chance of that though, at least so long as everyone thinks that they're better off by themselves and that they can somehow 'win', even if they no longer know what it is, exactly, they're fighting for.

Now, give us another drink and I'll tell you the real story of the Beast of London and the Labyrinth, not that anyone believed me until it was killed mind you...



Conductor Advice

The Conductor has the hardest job at the table, playing every part, maintaining the story and coping with the mad schemes of the players as they try to negotiate the story or throw it wildly off track into something altogether different. As well as all this they have the unenviable task of trying to replicate the work of Neil Gaiman without making it look half-arsed and maintaining the feel and themes of the work in yet another medium (besides book, comic and television series).

Here we try to offer some advice, based on our interpretations of the world and the sources, as to how best to present the world, how to handle the rules, how to play the parts of the people and to handle some of the strangeness of London Below. Along with that there's some adventure ideas to get you started with your first few games and some ideas on how to create some 'belows' for other towns and cities.

Depicting the World

The world of Neverwhere is one of faded glory, leftovers, junk, discards, detritus and antiques. It's a 'distressed' world, like a set of worn jeans. Everything there – including the people – are cast out, cast off, set aside, forgotten, overlooked and ignored.

London Above and London Below coexist and bleed into one another but they are separate worlds and the two only touch where half-livers live and where people from London Above fall into London Below. The reverse virtually never happens, save with the case of Richard Mayhew and even he came back to London Below again, drawn by how alive it made him feel.

Nothing down here should be new, unsullied, perfect. Everything should have – or have had – another use, be junk, be cobbled together from leftovers or taken from what others have discarded. Clothes should be worn, patched out desperately out of style – though they may be vintage. Weapons are dented, well loved but well used and anything that does appear tailored and new, such as the suits of Croup and Vandemar, should also seem somehow a little... off.

While it's called London Below and much of it is underground, that isn't true for all of it. Forgotten and empty buildings also sink into London Below, lost places, back alleys, corners, rooftops and landmarks also exist within London Below, or at least aspects of them do. Even in public places, hidden from the eyes of the people passing by, strange buildings housing stranger people can exist, never seen, never even considered.

Where the people of London Below live they leave their mark, strange child-like cave paintings, peculiar apparatus, devices that shouldn't work, roasting pits left by the Rat-Speakers or the autumn leaves and melted candles of Islington. Their strangeness is infectious, which is how people get drawn into London Below and the longer they live in one place and use their knacks within it, the more it reflects them and their powers.

Despite the strange nature of the place London Below is also a place that is hidebound, stuck in the amber of history and legend, slow to alter but when it does, things change rapidly and terribly, fracturing like a shattering glass. The social structures that exist are hidebound and while some few may rebel against their roles – such as the characters – most remain within the system of fiefdoms and baronies and don't step out of it, relying on their lords for safety.

How people travel between the different 'Belows' is not made clear, though the Channel Tunnel rail link now links London Below and Paris Below quite conveniently. Hunter travelled between the Belows and must stay in the underside, so there must be routes for the people of the undersides to travel to each other, ancient tunnels and roads perhaps, magical gateways, or strange vehicles belonging to an elite few.

Depicting the People

The big names of The Underside, the ones who draw their being from myth, legend and the place names of the cities are somewhat rigid, somewhat two-dimensional, but only in that they fit certain archetypes. What else would Hammersmith be but a great giant of a blacksmith? A figure found constantly throughout British mytho-historical tales. They're stereotypes for a reason, they're the lynchpins of The Underside and they draw their power from drawing on their myth, much as Richard becomes the archetype of The Warrior, against all odds and the Marquis fulfils his role as 'Loki', a liar and a cheat but a powerful liar and a cheat who you want on your side.

Outside of these powerful individuals most of the people of The Underside align themselves and define themselves by the barony, fiefdom or tribe to which they belong. While they have their own individual personalities, tendencies and beliefs these are subsumed to the overall character of where they're from. This is a god-send for Conductors who can use broad strokes and stereotypes to predictably play out how the various people the characters are likely to meet will act, only needing to give them their own personalities and individuality if the characters get to know them a little better.

Outside of this are the occasional individuals, too powerful or too stubborn to align themselves with any of the powers that be. If they're strong enough this makes them personalities – as many of the placename people are – if they're not it makes them the downtrodden and the forgotten, left out of everything and forced to live on the scraps of the scraps that do make it down to the Underside.

Very few people in The Underside are born and raised there, it's a tough and difficult life and many children born in The Underside don't make it to adulthood. The overwhelming majority of people down there are those who have slipped through the cracks at some point in their lives, drifted into or been dragged into 'Below', almost everyone, then, has a past life in the world above, a story of how they drifted away, got pulled into The Underside or what lead the Rats or some other power to seek them out from the streets, even how they were on the streets in the first place.

Almost everyone in The Underside is tired, stressed, predominantly self interested, grubby, dirty, dressed in patchwork and armed with something. Outside of The Floating Market the default is suspicion, with good reason. There's no real law and order and if you can take something – not that there's a great deal to take – it's yours.

Handling the Rules

The rules for Neverwhere are pretty simple, even with the extra complications of the more advanced combat system. A simple system keeps things relatively quick and easy to run and allows you to know the rules well enough to make more intuitive and personal decisions. The downside of simple systems is that they're down to interpretation more than more complicated game systems are. This means there's a lot more potential for argument if people don't agree. The Conductor should be in charge and their word should be final but, on the other hand, a good Conductor should be willing to know when to bend and when to say 'damn the rules' and to go with what makes a better game.

The Golden Rule

It's your game, do things how you like in a way that's best for your game and your players.

The Silver Rules

1. *The game is more important than the rules.*
2. *The Conductor's word is final, accept it and move on.*
3. *You're not the only player. (Even if you're the Conductor).*
4. *You're all in this together, everyone deserves to have fun.*

The Bronze Rule

It's just a game.

BARTER

The Underside – in most cities below – doesn't use coinage or currency, though some old gold coins and curiosities may be bartered as having value, if not their monetary value. Barter is a tricky thing to handle as different people place different value on different things. This section offers a very rough guide on how to determine what an item is worth in barter and how the rules might reflect a bit of haggling over the 'price'.

Low Value Items (Worth 1 Low Value Item)

Basic clothing, favours, good sized drink of beer or a double shot of spirits, hankies, meal's worth of food, unimportant information.

Medium Value Items (Worth 5 Low Value Items)

Big favours, bullets for a firearm, day's hire of a Bravo or guard, Earl's Court Timetable, Escort to the Floating Market, fancy clothing, glittery trinkets, knife, new pair of shoes or boots, simple magic charms or devices, skilled craftsmanship, basic body armour, important information.

High Value Items (Worth 25 Low Value Items)

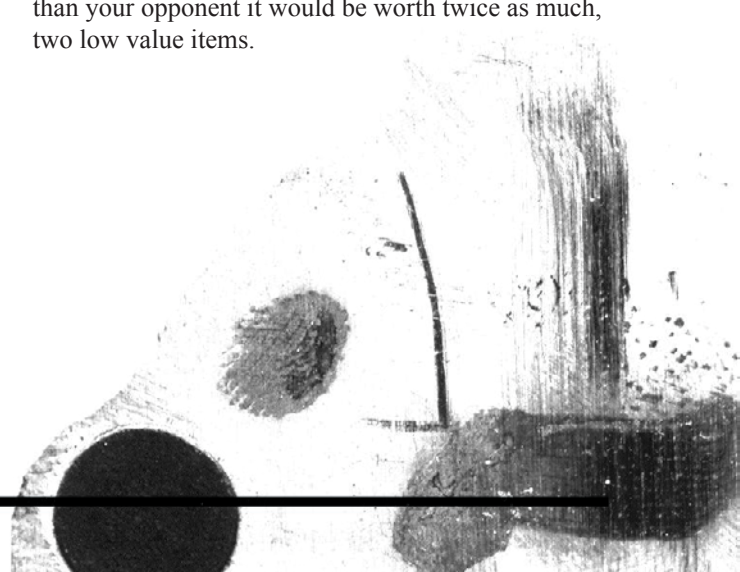
Decent body armour, firearms, important secrets, key information, magical tricks, powerful magic charms and devices, prepared life egg (you'll pay again for the secret and again to have it done), really big favours, superlative craftsmanship, week's hire of a Bravo or guard

Haggling

The comparative value of items can be artificially inflated or reduced by haggling. There's no trades descriptions act in The Underside and no laws about not lying outright about what you're selling, so it's buyer beware on the one hand and seller beware (of being lynched) on the other.

The best way to handle haggling in the game is to leave it down to the role-playing. Let the characters try their best to be convincing and play out the other side of the argument to the best of your ability. If you reach an impasse in your role-playing negotiations or one side or the other thinks someone isn't being fair you can use the dice to resolve it:

Make your bids and roll as usual, for every point the opposition is beaten by the value of the item is either raised or lowered by half of its original value, round down at the end of calculations. If, for example, you were haggling over the worth of a low value item you were trying to trade away and got three points more than your opponent it would be worth twice as much, two low value items.



Other Belows

London Below isn't the only city in The Underside. Virtually every city and town has some sort of reflection on the underside. Several of these cities are mentioned by Hunter, recounting the great beasts that she has slain beneath New York and other locations. Not every location is as glamorous as London Below, or New York below, these are great, international cities with a huge amount of urban folklore behind them and locations heavy with meaning but other belows can be just as strange – in their own way.

The Soul of the City

The one big thing you need to determine in creating another 'below' is the overriding theme, the feel of the city as a whole. London is a big city and can carry many themes, London Below reflects the commerce, the diversity, the filth and the callousness of London along with its quirky and eccentric side. Other cities may have more singular themes. This needn't be what the town or city is traditionally associated with but it might be something more historical. You might consider just brainstorming by yourself or in a group, everything you can think of associated with the town or place and then plucking out the themes you like best.

Example:

John is going to set his game in Basingstoke, of all places. It's a London overspill market town with pretensions of grandeur, often the butt of jokes from many sources, including its own residents. John scribbles down the first handful of things that come to mind in thinking about Basingstoke...



'Boringstoke'
Boring
Chavs
Civil War
Commuter town
Dull
Festival Place
Grey
Roundabouts
The AA
Ugly

On first glance, not particularly exciting but there are some themes to work with there. Why is Basingstoke so dull and boring? Why is it such an exemplar of grey, concrete, depressing slab-like building despite innumerable makeovers and efforts to make it a more colourful and welcoming place? Is there something sucking the life, energy and joy out of the town and is the mysterious 'Festival' something that's supposed to counteract this, stave it off or even sate it?

People, Places & Things

Once you've settled on your city and its overriding theme you can start to populate it – and its history – with interesting characters, locations and items for the eventual players to encounter. This can even be a great deal of fun if simply done for its own sake and not even for a game – perhaps you want to inflict some more fanfic on the world or just enjoy making things up.

When deciding who, what or wear something is your first instinct is probably the best one to go with. If a name conjures up an instant image for you then odds are it will do the same for someone else and make sense to them in some way. Some other places will rely on local knowledge to understand and, for your gaming group who probably live in the same area – unless you're playing online – that's fine too. Just to throw a bit of change into the mix though, you should probably make a few of the things, particularly people, a bit more in depth and thought out, rather than being the immediate hook that most will be.

It's important to get a good mix of people and places, 'things' should be a bit more rare and special, otherwise you'll just have a ramshackle group of items and monsters with nowhere to put them and nobody to talk about them. Here's a few examples, taking Basingstoke as the 'inspiration' again, the first few things that immediately leap to mind...

Basing House: Basing House was the site of a very important battle in the English Civil War of the 1600s. This seems like a good, divisive theme to have for Basingstoke overall, Roundheads and Cavaliers, monarchism and parliamentarianism still squabbling after so many years. The partially ruined site of Basing House itself can make a good site for the Royalist fiefdom, camping out there still, lost in time in much the same way they were lost in battle, along with their sympathisers and petitioners.

Black Dam: In reality a suburb near parkland and water this becomes a mythical dam where, literally, the 'blackness' of night it dammed and held up, creating an area of perpetual twilight and allowing the darkness to be captured, traded, studied and used. A magical substance that's traded around, allowing 'night' to be brought in an instant to an area by smashing a bottle of the inky black stuff. The place is looked after and maintained by 'The Dammed', whose punny name indicates the distrust with which they're treated by other 'Stokers'.

Buckskin: Buckskin is one of the areas of Basingstoke. The Buck Skin is ancient, but as supple and glossy as though it were new. Reckoned by some to date back to the Stone Age tribes that 'mined' flint in the area The Buck Skin is a dark and bloody trophy that is thought to lend power, prowess and fertility to the wearer. It's currently hidden away as a last ditch weapon to use against 'The Gray', the life-sucking force that threatens the town.

Dummer: In reality Dummer is an area just on the border of Basingstoke. Dummer is a pariah of Basingstoke Below, the lowest peasant, the village idiot. He goes beyond mere stupidity however and his very presence makes those in close proximity to him even stupider, something that is viewed with amusement by those familiar with the famous aristocrats and 'it girls' who have their origin in or around the village.

Festival Place: Festival Place is actually a fairly depressing cookie-cutter shopping centre. In Basingstoke Below this is The Festival, a tradition that started almost as soon as The Grey turned up in the town. The Festival is an attempt to stave off the stultifying effect of The Grey through drinking, feasting, performance and decadence. Over the years the fitfully celebrated festival has increasingly become a chore, rather than a pleasure, The Grey still at work, chipping away at their defences.

Hatch Warren: Hatch Warren is a slightly more upscale suburb in Basingstoke, but crushingly normal. London Below has its pigeons, rats and other urban vermin. Basingstoke Below has its rabbits. The Hatch Warren is their great home, riddled with tunnels and chambers all of which allegedly surround a great stone egg that some legends suggest is the resting place of the apocryphal goddess Eostre.

Lychpit: Lychpit is the name of a modern housing development in Basingstoke but it, charmingly, gets its name from a burial pit, 'lych' or 'lich' being the old name for a corpse, as with the lych gate in churches. In Basingstoke Below Lychpit is the dwelling place of the dead, ghosts and spirits, living corpses, the half dead and those who serve them, all in service to The Lych, a saxon mystic who was killed and buried here after a battle with the Danes.

Old Basing: Old Basing is a relative to Old Bailey and the other 'olds' from London Below. He prefers life in the market towns, wandering from town to town plying stories, spreading news, playing discordant tunes on his harmonica and criticising anyone and everyone who can put up with him for more than five minutes.

Popley 1-4: Estates with the worst reputations in the town as being scum pits, the sections of the district don't even have proper names, being instead referred to as Popley one, two, three and four. In Basingstoke Below Popley 1, 2, 3 and 4 are vicious criminals, controlling the dark and nasty underbelly of Basingstoke Below, styling themselves after 1980s American 'gangstas' and being singularly unconvincing, though they are vicious and nasty.

Ringway: The creatively named 'Ringway' is a ring road, encircling Basingstoke, built in the 1960s. Basingstoke is also infamous for its sheer number of roundabouts. In Basingstoke Below The Ringway describes a series of mystical links between the various 'circles' in the town that allow the denizens of Basingstoke Below to travel magically from one circle to another, moving rapidly 'underground' through the town.



Adventure Seeds

A New Beast

The Plot

With the death of The Beast of London at the hands of Richard Mayhew – though Hunter did most of the work – The Labyrinth is laid bare, undefended. While it is so twisting and complex as to be almost impassable the secrets and dangers buried there – most especially Islington’s prison and his Atlantean artefacts. Bravos and guards hired to secure The Labyrinth run into the same problems as those trying to rob it, they get lost, meaning it’s pure luck and pure chance whether they run into anyone who shouldn’t be down there or not. There’s only one workable solution to the problem and that’s to get a new Beast for London and more specifically, for The Labyrinth.

Complications

Where do you even find a Beast in the first place? Do you make one? Do you hunt down a new urban legend? How exactly does one go about building – and installing – a monster?

The Blackfriars want to protect The Labyrinth and keep it inviolate. They want to take custodianship of the items to be found in Islington’s prison and to post a guard on the gate. They don’t think such a task can be entrusted to some cobbled-together or press ganged Beast and are against the idea.

The Whitefriars on the other hand, twisted servants of Islington’s will, want to take over his prison for themselves and a Beast would get in the way of their plans, preventing them accessing The Labyrinth. They’re dead set against the introduction of any new Beast and are more than willing to kill to prevent it.

A rag-tag group of explorers and chancers have taken to exploring The Labyrinth, dragging forth pieces of ‘old time’ and other strange finds and selling them at The Floating Market, getting good deals for them too. A new Beast would threaten their investment. The only people really for a new Beast are the heads of the baronies and fiefdoms who are above the day to day worries and dangers of their people and aren’t, therefore, likely to be eaten, gored or otherwise done in by any new Beast, especially when there’s no guarantee that The Beast will even stay in The Labyrinth and not wander further afield...

Twists

1. The whole thing is a wild goose chase to keep the characters – significant players – away from their usual haunts and from The Labyrinth while something goes on down there. It’s also intended to distract people and get them in a flap over the new Beast, perhaps while the dangerous artefacts and problem areas are finally dealt with, once and for all.

2. The Labyrinth attracts and fashions its own guardian. The Beast that the characters come up with and try to take there will be what finally draws out the real guardian of The Labyrinth from where it has been formed. Caught between the two monsters they’ll have to work out a way that they can safely escape.

3. The making of the new Beast has been put out to rival tenders. Each group is making their own bid to create the perfect monster to protect The Labyrinth and many of them may end up going after the same ‘ingredients’.

Epilogue

With the new Beast in place, terrorising and protecting The Labyrinth, those who want to get past it will be wanting to create new tokens and wanting to learn more about The Beast. The characters are the ones who created the thing and so may well find themselves the subject of the attentions of those who wish to learn more about it, how to avoid it and how to overcome it.

Croup & Vandemar

The Plot

When Croup and Vandemar disappeared there was a collective sigh of relief from all concerned. Save one group, Raven's Court. Vandemar's crow-head silver rings are part of that house's lost treasure and Raven cannot allow this last legacy of the house to be lost. Croup and Vandemar are known to be able to move through space and time, wherever they've gone – apparently limbo – they may be able to make their way back, or they may still be stuck in limbo. There may be a way to get to them out again, even to offer them freedom in exchange for the rings. Raven is willing to beggar her house to convince a group of suitable undersiders to steal the key from the Blackfriars – now that it's known what it is – to penetrate The Labyrinth and open the gate – it should open to last place it opened to, limbo, offering any brave – or stupid – undersiders an opportunity to enter, perhaps on a long rope, and parlay with the killer pair.

Complications

Nobody in their right mind wants to see Croup and Vandemar come back into the world. They're vicious, horrible psychopaths, though they have a twisted sense of honour to their employers. Many forces will align against any attempt to rescue them and – of course – there's also the concern that Islington fell through the hole with them.

Because of this all the Friars, of every colour, are concerned with what might happen, particularly if they steal the key from the Blackfriars. They could undergo the trial, which is still possible, the key still having its own powers that can be tapped into by the worthy, but this cause is unlikely to be worthy.

Anyone who has ever suffered at the hands of Croup and Vandemar – and that's a lot of people – will regard this as a terrible, terrible idea and will do all they can to prevent them coming back as well. Even within Raven's Court there are those who serve under her who think her obsession with the treasure is simply too dangerous.

Then again, there are those obsessive who believe that banishment simply isn't punishment enough for Croup and Vandemar and who do want them back, if only to destroy or torture them...

Twists

1. Stranded in limbo for what could, prospectively be eternity, along with the client who so wronged and misused them. An angel can survive a lot of punishment and even with little to work with they tortured him for a very long time before Vandemar's appetite finally got the better of him and he ate Islington. Something of that divine power has now entered him, making him even more powerful.

2. The door opens, but not to limbo, instead it opens to heaven where Islington was trying to get to. The angels guarding the gate will allow no-one entrance but can reveal the secrets and history of Islington and make it clear – in no uncertain terms – why Croup and Vandemar cannot be gone after, the risk of freeing Islington simply being too great.

3. The real hirer behind the task isn't Raven, but rather Croup and Vandemar themselves. Their space and time bending powers allowed them to – eventually – escape. The fake job is to test who they might be able to call on and use, those still willing to look beyond their hatred and the danger that these two represent in order to make themselves useful. Croup and Vandemar have many promises to keep but don't want to reveal their presence... yet.

Epilogue

With Croup and Vandemar freed they unsettle the balance of power across The Underside yet again with those who dealt with them in the past terribly afraid that they'll come back to find them. A more permanent solution to the Croup and Vandemar issue is required but where the hell did they come from and how do you kill them? Can you kill them?

Whatever Happened to Hunter?

The Plot

After Hunter was killed Serpentine and her attendants came to collect the body. Hunter was, in some way, Serpentine's 'thing' and while she may not have hidden her life anywhere Serpentine is not one to let things that belong to her slip away. The fate of Hunters remains, not found when Undersiders returned to the corpse of The Beast has been a matter of some speculation ever since with many theories competing with each other as to her fate. There are many who might have taken her and any number of explanations for her disappearance but being such a legend, as she was, even if she's gone, the stories live on, long after she has ended. Someone needs to get to the bottom of the tales before they get out of hand and, suspicious of their sister, some of the other Seven Sisters are willing to foot the bill in order to have the truth about the fate of Hunter's remains put to rest.

Complications

The stories about Hunter have made it possible for some talented Bravos and other hunters to pass themselves off as her reincarnation or even weirder things. Many of these fighters have reputations to protect or scams that they can't risk being exposed and so they may well come after or get in the way of the characters as they try to get to the bottom of things.

Serpentine is an obvious complication, especially since whatever has happened to Hunter's remains is her fault and her responsibility. She tires, even of her friends, rather quickly and isn't someone to be trifled with, by any means. Even with the backing of others amongst the Seven Sister, Serpentine is the stuff of nightmares and a clever and wily foe to rival even the Marquis.

Twists

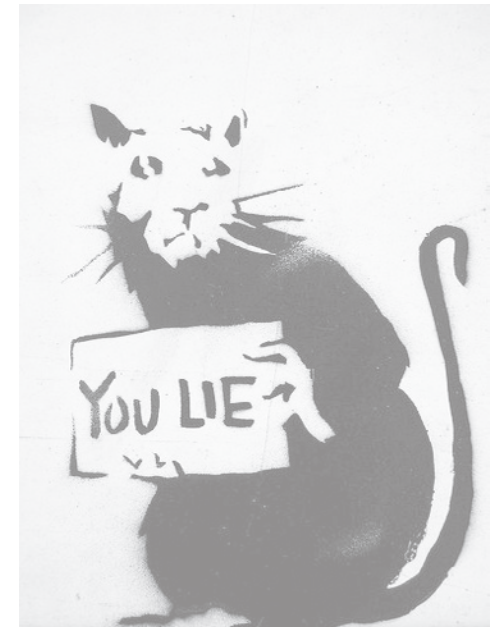
1. One of the 'fake' Hunters is actually the real Hunter. She may not have kept her life hidden but Serpentine did and used it to bring her back. Hunter feels dishonoured by it but is working to work off that dishonour and to repair the name of hunter by assuming her old mantle amongst a group of those who want to be like her. She hopes to prove her worth and worthiness again, by emerging from this group as the 'New Hunter' but will do almost anything to protect her plain-sight secret in the meantime.

2. The children Serpentine steals away, her staff, her playthings, these are all dead. Reanimated by her will, puppets on her strings. Hunter promised Serpentine her body in exchange for certain favours, long ago and Serpentine has simply made good on that deal. Hunter – or what remains of her – is now one of her virtually mindless servants though, perhaps, there may be something left of her in there. There may also be some people from the characters' past living in Serpentine's demesne.

3. Hunter is, but isn't, dead. Heartbroken over her betrayal and still healing from her terrible wounds she is undertaking servitude for Serpentine, owing a life debt to her as she does. Serpentine is abusing this trust, controlling Hunter and using her as a personal assassin and plaything without Hunter's conscious knowledge. Hunter may find this revelation... upsetting, making her a useful ally against Serpentine at the last.

Epilogue

With the Hunter legend laid to rest one way or another, those who sought her mantle now have the legitimacy, given her death or her stepping aside, to truly try to claim it. The Undersides across the world will face a torrent of would be Hunters, searching for their beasts and other worthy foes in an international bloodbath, one that many forces and groups may take an interest in.



Unity

The Plot

Lord Portico's desire to see The Underside united in peace and prosperity has been taken up by his daughter, the Lady Door, with as much – if not more – vigour than her father. If The Underside could be united, if the squabbling factions could be put into good order then the lot of the majority of those living in London Below would improve and the fight for survival could become somewhat secondary to other concerns, including the relationship with London Above. Lady Door has tapped into her family's remaining wealth, her contacts and the goodwill felt towards her due to the deaths in her family to forward her agenda and to start to bring people together.

Complications

None of the various factions actually seem to want to work together for peace. They've all carved out their niche and the Lords and Ladies of The Underside are wealthy and powerful and have fought hard for what they have. Giving it up, now, or at least risking it on the fool's errand of peace is going to be a tough sell. Even to the sympathetic like The Earl. Each of them will want some demonstration, some reward, some bribe – if one is to be entirely truthful – to even consider the idea. To gain peace concessions will also need to be made to the nastier parts of The Underside, such as the Shepherds and then one must also consider the lesser powers, the tribes and their chieftains, not to mention the inhuman powers such as The Golden.

The Underside is a complicated mess of competing desires and generational conflicts, peace will not be easy.

Twists

1. While most will begrudgingly admit that there is something to be gained from working together and that it is only the risk and worrying what they get out of it that holds them back, there are those who work against any possibility of The Underside being brought to a unified whole. The Shepherds might entertain an envoy and make the right noises but they profit from the divisiveness and hatred between the various powers. The Whitefriars still serve Islington's creed, one of arrogance and supreme self interest over collective interest. Then there are those on the rougher end of the Bravo and Guard business who also note that less conflict, less trouble, means less work for them.

2. Something is moving ahead of the characters, wheeling and dealing and clearing the way for them to make their deals and get the various factions on board. This whirlwind of progress turns out to be the Marquis de Carabas, spending the favours that he's owed like water, the stockpile of a lifetime going into making this proposal for peace and prosperity a real and true thing. What's his motivation for such a generous act or is he accruing new favours from those who are about to be in a position of far more considerable power?

3. Agitators working against unity are working for a cell of agitators from the undercity of Paris. The Parisian underside sees a united London Below as a threat to them, especially since the two cities have been joined by the Channel Tunnel. The people of London Below want peace, especially after recent upheavals. Their fear and paranoia is being played upon by those who want to prevent peace from coming about.

Epilogue

A unified London Below may bring its own issues under control – at least a little – but it may also find itself becoming a target as a whole. The darker forces at work within The Underside may see unity as a threat and unify, or work together at least, in order to try and undermine or destroy whatever new leadership does come together. Other Underside cities – such as Paris – may also see this as a threat and, similarly, seek to undermine the new leadership making it hard for them to prove themselves and making any peace that is brokered all too fragile.

A Really Big Favour

The Plot

Before Islington was banished he let slip to Lady Door that she wasn't, after all, the last of her family left alive, that Ingress, her younger sister, still lived. Ingress was not fully grown into her power, was not strong enough or skilled enough to fulfil Islington's needs so she was hidden away somewhere, known only to Islington, Croup and Vandemar. This opened up a possibility to The Marquis de Carabas who is, after all, more of a self-interested villain than a hero per se. The 'really big favour' that Lady Door that Lady Door owes him relates to Ingress, the Marquis wants to 'join the family', once Ingress is old enough, believing that the future and power lies with the Porticos. He's also the only one who knows where she is, thanks to the loose tongues of Croup and Vandemar. Of course, all things take time and must be performed at the right time. The time, he believes, is now right to have Ingress rescued and for his plan to move forwards.

Complications

The Marquis is not liked, but he is owed a great deal by a great number of people. They are willing to help him, but only reluctantly and that help does not necessarily extend to his lackeys or hirelings – people he will use to keep himself at a remove. There are also those suspicious of his motives, Lady Door amongst them, though she feels a grudging loyalty to him due to his help. Even the revelation that he has known where Ingress is for so long will not entirely demolish that.

Of course, that information is old, it's where she was – certainly – but it's not necessarily where she is now, especially without Islington's influence to keep people in check.

Twists

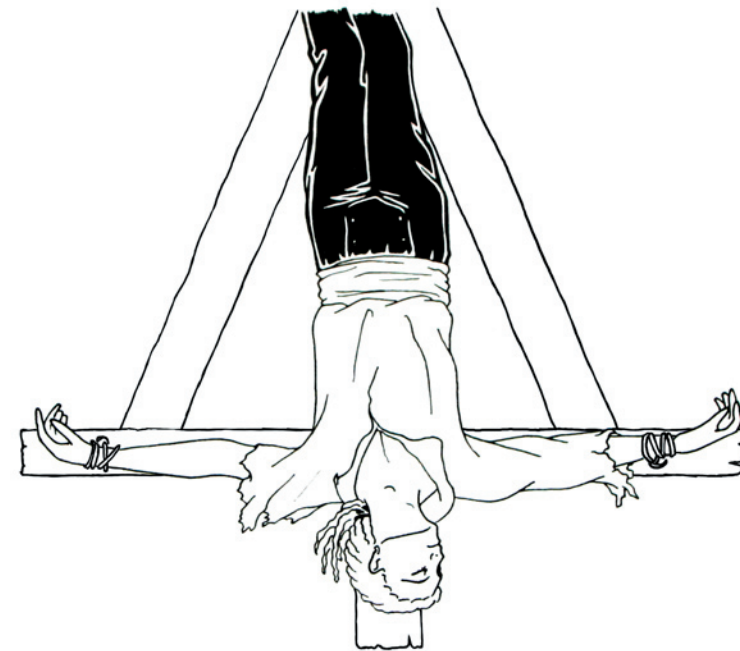
1. Ingress has already freed herself and assumed a new identity, resentful to her sister and her companions for not following through and saving her. She's now a ball of resentment, becoming hatred, aimed at the very people who want to save her (or exploit her as the case may be). Their chief problem in 'rescuing' Ingress may be Ingress herself.

2. The sheer extent of the Marquis' ambition and self interest is laid bare by these events and his secrecy. Many of those who have encountered him have previously considered him to be an essentially good person but this reveals that to be a lie and the hostility of The Earl towards him to be a more proper response. As hostility to the Marquis builds, so it will for those assisting him.

3. Ingress may well turn out to be more pragmatic than her sister or her allies. Despite being young she recognises the debt that's owed to the Marquis, even without his strange power to render such agreements absolutely binding. The Marquis is a devious and capable agent and there are worse choices than him...

Epilogue

With the Marquis' backing and his ability to enforce agreements House Portico suddenly gains a great deal of power and the ability to enforce the agreements it extracts from the other houses. This makes them a force again in the politics of The Underside but also raises the spectre of a future; unified Underside ruled by 'the devil himself' having attached himself to the Portico family. Forces may well draw against the Porticos, even those who love and support them, purely through fear and hatred of the Marquis.



Raven's Mourning

The young woman's eyes flashed a deranged and icy blue. Her look was thunderous and full of ill omen.. Her guest froze in mid- sentence; all too mindful of the crow cages he had seen at the gates. In a surprisingly quiet voice, made all the more chilling for its calm, Raven said:

"I will not have that name spoken here. Your bard's tongue may have won you the questionable favour of Sister Saturday along with the pity and lenience of the rest of the Under-side..." her pale eyes bore into his, inexorable, merciless, "but I, for my part, do not believe you're as mad as all that and I do not forgive trespass so easily." Her anger departed in the face of his wide, dark eyes as swiftly as it had come, like a summer squall, and she dipped her head in apology. "I have so few guests at court who are truly welcome here. My manner is, perhaps sharper, than need be. You came to me with the promise of news. Please, say on."

He noticed the slightest of frowns on her brow, the only outward sign of her suspicion and her curiosity. After all, what news could Mornington bring to Raven's Court that the lady herself did not already know? A little nervous now, he tugged at the panels of his dark, velvety coat. Temple and Arch! What had possessed him? It had been a dream, his affliction, his secret. He never spoke of what truths he witnessed while he slept. Yet this time, before first light, he had found himself in front of the black rusted gates, being eyed suspiciously by Crowthorne as he asked leave to speak to The Raven. He swallowed his ever-growing anxiety - it was too late for uncertainty - and continued to deliver his message, forbidden names and all. He spoke softly in doggerel verse, the very rhyme that had awoken him in a cold sweat and set his feet on the unwelcoming path to Raven's Court.

"Door and her companions three, Won for Islington-white the Key, But she refused to set the angel free, So his will it was denied. Devils Croup and Vandemar, Flung to the void deep and far, With them the silver of Ravenscar, So your blood it was denied."

She stared at him; her thin fingers reaching up to touch the shining pendent that nested at the nape of her neck. "Gone then, beyond my reach whether dead or no." Her hand clutched convulsively at the heavy trinket and she closed her eyes with a grimace.

"I swore on my brother's corpse I'd slice that poxy morsal-bastard's throat and his weasily arsenic-breathing brother too."

A fault line of bitterness had underscored her words as she used her anger to steady herself. The bard wondered what a 'morsal' was even as he marvelled at her articulation. He'd never known a lady so well presented to use such, interesting, language. Had he spoken his thoughts aloud she would have laughed at him long and harsh, telling him that for all her authority and fine dress she was no lady. Raven had always known her oath to be a hollow one: the likelihood of Croup and Vandemar falling by her hand was on a par with the unification of the entire Underside, in the faint realms of possibility but considered by the majority to be impossible.

"It seems the vengeance I seek as well as the rings which are rightfully mine is lost to me." She looked at Mornington Crescent as if noticing his presence for the first time but having no idea what he was doing there. "In all the old stories..." she told him suddenly, "...always there were crowns and corvids and never the one without the other. An ancestor of mine, Melchior Ravenscar, made a deal with the king of Upworld. Our kith and kin would guard the heart of the land, ensuring that the Sceptred Isle never fell. In return Melchior was gifted jewels of silver and precious stones. A casketful by all accounts - the pride of my family, and their due." Slowly her fingers uncurled from the pendent. "Over time they were lost and stolen, hidden, bartered and gifted away... When Rook..." She stopped, unable to force out the words. "After..." She halted again, the name of 'Vandemar' lodging like a bloody caltrop in her mouth. "My brother wore the rings," she said at last. Her fingertips lingered at the silver by her throat. "This is all that's left of the treasures of Ravenscar." She blinked her kohl-heavy eyes, forcing a smile to her lips. "Beak!" she called. "Fetch wine for our guest; the 1812 from the Tower vineyard if you please. After all, his news calls for a celebration of sorts."

Mornington looked up at the silent man who bowed and left to fulfil his lady's request. Beak was gaunt with skin the colour of fresh milk and hair almost as pale. The only colour in him came from his ash-grey eyes that always looked faintly mocking, laughing at the world and deriding all they beheld there. In his worn suit of lace and ivory he looked antiquated, an ageless enamel portrait brought to life. Watching him step neatly across the chequered floor the bard was suddenly put

in mind of a chess piece. Yes, Beak was a white bishop in the court of the black queen... He realised she had asked him a question.

"I'm sorry?" With a soft rustle of ragged silk sounding like a thousand feathers, Raven stood up.

"I asked how it was that you could bring me this news when my subjects could not." She walked over to the edge of the hall as she spoke to where a small forest of polished and sculpted wooden branches reached into the room, the bows home to innumerable roosting shadows. She turned to look at him, her hair falling past her shoulder in a straight-cut wing, as sable as the bird whose name she took. Mornington Crescent winced inwardly and studied his shoes on the marbled floor; the leather was polished but the right shoe was missing its buckle.

"I... I dream." He admitted quietly, glancing up at her once more, his treacle dark eyes sincere and frantic. "I swear to you, if what I speak of has not already come to pass then it shall. Before moonrise, three nights hence." Her cool look unnerved him, seeming to doubt his every word. "I swear by my blood, by the old kings, by the city wall, by the Thames, by the crow cages that hang at your gates!"

"And so you are bound," she replied with almost mocking gravitas, her head askance as she regarded him with interest. "Why do you honour me with these tidings of your vision?"

He looked down again, tugging distractedly at his buttoned cuffs. "I don't know," he muttered. "But... But I know soon I'll need your help."

Raven arched one eyebrow and her lips curved into a slight smile. "Hm! So long as you're not picking up habits from De Carabas... When the time comes you may rely on the aid of myself and my house."

The bard closed his eyes in relief, opening them a moment later as Beak returned with two crystal goblets of dark wine. He handed one first to Raven and then to her guest. The syrupy liquid smelt of blackberries and cloves. Mornington Crescent raised his glass in a modest and silent toast. "Your health."

"Your health," she echoed. "And to that of the House of Corvid."

London Below The Laws

London Below has very few laws and most of them are more guidelines than laws per se. Some of them, however, have a little more power behind them.

1. Your word is your bond: The Marquis de Carabas can make this bond supernatural in its strength but even without his powers a promise is a promise. In a world of barter and favour there's few things more valuable than your reputation and if you don't keep your word, if you're known to be a liar and a cheat, then you're not going to get very far and someone might take it upon themselves to correct you.

2. Never steal from the world above: You can only keep what's thrown away or what's given to you. Some of the half-lifers can make a bit of a living begging and then spend that money to legitimately buy things from the world above, but other than that everything must be cast-offs, rubbish or that which is given away. Function buffets are fine, helping yourself from an all-you-can-eat buffet without paying, not so fine. These rules are enforced by the fiefdoms, the serjeants and the forces of law and order in the underside, sporadically, but effectively.

3. Never, ever, break the market truce: It's not that you can't, it's that you shouldn't and that you won't. Whatever it was that happened to the men that broke the last market, it was so hideous that it still works as a deterrent decades, centuries later. This is one that nobody breaks, not even Croup and Vandemar.

4. Respect the domains: The different tribes and fiefdoms lay claim not only to different areas of The Underside or even London Above, but also to particular remits, such as the Earl's dominion over the lost and found of The Underground. Failing to give due deference and to observe protocol when travelling through domains or intruding upon their remit will see you disciplined or even hunted by those who claim those domains.

Unnatural Laws

London Below follows some peculiar laws of nature that don't correspond to the world above and which can catch many of those who drift there from London Above, unawares.

1. Time flows strangely: Day and night seem to flow at their own aesthetic pace in The Underside, capricious and changeable. A night might last – subjectively – for days. A day only a few hours. Leaving The Underside for London Above and vice versa aggravates this, stretching and distorting time in peculiar ways though most undersiders have at least a vague idea and remain in temporal relation to each other.

2. Space bends strangely: The places in London Below don't necessarily correspond to those in London Above, or to each other. Ducking into a tunnel in one part of the city can have you emerging clear across the other wise and the routes – which Undersiders intuitively know – are capricious and strange, following no logic but their own.

3. Most clocks and watches don't work: Digital and electrical watches pack up and stop working when they enter London Below, though they may still have some value as jewellery or to be cannibalised for bits in The Floating Market. Old, clockwork, antique, wind up watches however, do continue to work and adjust to the peculiarities of the time of The Underside.

4. The spiritual is physical: In The Underside the non-physical is physical, dreams have substance, will can change the world and magic works. You can buy lust in a bottle, a broach can carry the spirit of someone you once loved and you can hide your life – your soul – in another vessel.

Tribes

The Tribes of London Below are second class citizens, independents are the only ones worse off than them. The baronies and fiefdoms stand above them, a goal for the more ambitious tribes who want the legitimacy of being thought of as an established house.

The chief merit of a tribe is its people, tribes are a collectivised bunch, looking out for each other ahead of all other considerations, a family in name, and often in nature. A tribe's power comes from its people and their skill, not heritage, not treasures, not politics and deeds long past but the people themselves in the here and now.

Some tribes are independent, due to being too strange or too weak to attract a sponsor or any real interest. Others try to make it by themselves in order to establish themselves as being worthy of respect while still others strive to attach themselves to a fiefdom and reap the rewards of their association.

There are innumerable small tribes and it would be the work of a lifetime to identify them all, by which time many of them would have disappeared and many more would have sprung up, making the whole thing a completely pointless exercise. Some few tribes have lasted long enough to make a proper impression upon The Underside though and these are worth noting.

The Amazons: statuesque and taciturn warrior women of The Underside, are influential bravos and guards and work – for a fee – to supplement the fighting forces of the various factions as and when they decide to take things to a more serious skirmishing level. The Amazons are respected for their prowess and feared because they're so secretive about who and what they really are, they use both these aspects to remain truly independent but don't seem to have any real ambitions of their own.

The Baker Street Irregulars: a small and independent group, vying directly with a Fiefdom – Earl's Court – over who precisely has which dominion and what that means. The Irregulars are too useful to other forces in The Underside to be left out to dry and Earl's Court doesn't want the bad reputation that would come with wiping out the uppity whipper-snappers. This, coupled with their association with Constable Close and other forces of law and order keep them relatively safe, though they are skirting a thin edge.

The Cave Painters: are another group of children but they include teenagers in their number, all the way up to nineteen. They're also independent and not really regarded as anything much by most of those living in The Underside. Their ability to transmit information via their paintings and graffiti, 'the infranet', makes them useful though and anyone who stops to think about it realises how important they actually are. Beneath notice and essential to those who do notice they're also kept from harm by keeping their heads down.

The Crouch Enders: like the Amazons, respected for their fighting abilities and the preternatural speed with which they can sprint and tumble through the tunnels and pipes. Unlike the Amazons the Crouch Enders are not united and tend to spend as much time fighting each other, fractious and divided, rather than working together. If they were organised and united they could easily be considered a fief, considering their knowledge of the deep places and their skill.

The Darkling Children: are one force that would very much like to be a fief. Sister Saturday at their head has carved out their niche in Camden and their role as purveyors of petty magicks, prophecy, charms, trinkets, dubious services and even more dubious substances. As yet the Darkling Children haven't managed to amass enough respect or influence but Sister Saturday has taken on many of the affectations of the nobility and is indulged by her followers who fawn upon her every word.

Half-Lifers: not a tribe as such, more of a loose affiliation of those like Iliaster or Lear who can make themselves seen, after a fashion, by those who live in London Above on a more permanent basis than slapping them in the face or screaming into a microphone. There's a vague fellow feeling amongst the Half-Lifers but as individuals they'll usually associate themselves with a stronger power, exchanging their services for protection.

The Tube Mice: not as powerful or influential as the rats but they do eke out a living (pun intended) as spies and information brokers. They have no ambitions and view themselves as chancers, loveable rogues and as being a little bit on the dodgy side. They play up this reputation and affectation as a way of not caring about their status compared to the rats.

The Pale: they rarely venture beyond White City where they all congregate despite their ability to pass through solid objects such as walls they seem to choose – instead – to hem themselves in. Hunters or soldiers are those who are seen beyond the walls and yet it is this usual hiding away, out of sight, that prevents them from being considered a fief. They don't often interfere in outside issues and those that have challenged them tend to end up hurt or ruined. For that reason everyone's far happier just leaving them alone.

Pigeons: almost as ubiquitous as rats in The Underside and carve themselves a place in much the same way that the Tube-Mice do though the necessity of learning another language means that Pigeon Speakers are relatively few and the pigeons largely left to their own devices. They do have relationships with many of those in power for whom they act as messengers, in exchange for juicy bits of gossip.

The Rat-Speakers: hard to disentangle from the rats that they serve but despite their close affiliation they are a tribe in their own right. While the rats choose their servants they do not overly care what else they get up to so long as they are appropriately worshipful and helpful when called upon. The rats lend the Rat-Speakers their legitimacy and the Rat-Speakers lend the rats their hands and help, the each benefiting from the other.

The Temple: defended by The Serjeants, who also act as paragons and enforcers of what passes for law and order in The Underside. Selected by mystical methods at a young age the Serjeants are more like a monastic order of knights than a tribe per se but their singular focus and lack of interest in power prevents them from being considered a fiefdom.

The Sewer Folk: in many ways, the quintessential tribe. They are clannish, insular, nigh incomprehensible to outsiders and have their own peculiar ways that others wouldn't want to emulate and wouldn't even try to emulate. Stinking, mute, with their own hand-signing language they eke out a living on the trash of the trash, whatever floats past their little villages. They're pitied more than anything else by the rest of The Underside but there are far more Sewer Folk than most would credit.

The Time Lost: thanks to the strange properties of London Below, come from such diverse times and places that they cannot in any sense be unified. Individual groups of reasonable size that come from a similar time, such as the Victorians or the Kilburn Legion might be considered tribes in their own right but as a whole the time lost do share similar abilities and a common sense of being an anachronism that brings them together.

The Trolls: a rare tribe, mostly made up of conspicuous and noticeable individuals. Rarely are any two trolls the same and most of them are fiercely independent but will look out for each other – or feud – in much the same way as an extended family might. Individually they might be powerful or important but they are apart from the politics and infighting of The Underside and thus, as a group, wield little or no power.

The Velvets and the Wights: live separately and are each their own tribe even though the female Velvets and the male Wights are, ostensibly, the same species and each tends to 'father' the other. While they're deadly, aloof and beautiful both the Wights and Velvets are so caught up in their own internal squabbles and disputes over who rules their respective roosts that they do no present a unified force or purpose to the rest of The Underside. While individuals are useful and may ally themselves to one side or another these heat-vampires are no real threat to any force as a whole, unless it threatens them.



Fiefdoms

Where the tribes vary from disorganised rabble to dangerous freaks and are as much a description of ‘race’ as well as fealty the fiefdoms are more a matter of loyalty to a cause, a person or a noble house than to anything else. Members of a tribe might leave and choose to swear fealty to a fiefdom and this needn’t contradict their loyalty to their tribe.

The fiefdoms are the real powers of The Underside, able to field soldiers, claiming dominion over locations or even concepts, storing ancient treasures and great wealth or knowledge within the walls of their homes and squabbling, constantly, with each other for the greatest influence and power over The Underside, squabbling over the right to succeed the great King Lud.

Aeroville: exists above London in walkways and amongst balloons, flags and rooftops. Where most of London Below is The Underside, Aeroville exists – equally out of view – hidden amongst the chimney-pots, kites, streamers and clouds above the city. A place of smoke, steam and cloud Aeroville is well hidden and well protected, close to the birds – especially the pigeons – but otherwise generally holds itself aloof, above the squabbling of the other fiefdoms and tribes below them. Their remoteness allows them to do this and they value their freedom and independence, only a threat to these things could turn Aeroville into a force in Underside politics worth noting.

Barking and Barkingside: two sides of the same coin, a house – and fiefdom – divided. In Barking the men and the dogs live in harmony with each other, working together, keeping each other warm. Man and man’s best friend. In Barkingside the strays, the resentful and those hurt by human indifference and cruelty have parted ways with Barking and claim to be the ‘true’ fiefdom of the dogs. Unwilling to go all the way and join the ferals of the Isle of Dogs the dogs of Barking and Barkingside are allied, loosely, with the Earl but spend most of their time at each other’s throats – physically or metaphorically – trying to resolve their differences.

Baron’s Court: once a significant power in The Underside but, like Earl’s Court, was ruinously weakened in the attack on White City foisted upon the two debtor fiefdoms by the cunning Marquis de Carabas. Many men from both fiefdoms died and for no good reason or profit for either house. Like the Earl the Baron holds the Marquis in contempt and has sworn revenge. Unlike the Earl the Baron has retreated into his court and closed it up while he licks his wounds. The Baron’s agents are to be found throughout The Underside still, searching out secrets and news and always keeping an eye on the Marquis and his doings.

The Kingdom of the Cats: rooftops aren’t only home to birds and the back alleys are not only home to rats. There are many stray – or part wild – cats that roam the streets of London as well and these almost universally owe fealty to The Royal House of the Cats. This house is closely associated with the Marquis de Carabas and about as trusted. The cat notion of ‘fealty’ is also remarkably flexible and there’s practically no unity to The Royal House of Cats at all, not that this stops the King of the Cats from making grand proclamations, issuing orders and making alliances in the full knowledge that most of his kingdom is not paying him a blind bit of notice.

Duke’s Court: lays claim over the forgotten, forgotten languages, forgotten people, forgotten stories, forgotten knowledge. All these – and more – can be found in the libraries and amongst the followers of Duke’s court. The Duke provides protection and assistance for the unique, the special and the forgotten but the jury is still out on whether this is used to exploit them – through obligation – or through a genuine desire to be philanthropic. The secret and hidden knowledge that The Duke can put his hands to makes him an important spymaster and information broker and lends his court considerable power through blackmail and specialist knowledge.

Earl’s Court: by comparison Earl’s Court is concerned with the lost rather than the forgotten. Lost property, lost items, lost people. This overlaps a little with the remit of Duke’s Court – and others – which has led to conflict in the past. Like The Baron the Earl was bound to help The Marquis de Carabas and paid a heavy toll in both personal injuries and the loss of his men. Unlike the Baron the Earl has stayed in touch with the rest of The Underside and has spent his strength trying to keep going like he did before. In spite of all that’s thrown at him The Earl and the rest of his retinue cling to existence and power and are still one of the first ports of call for those who need help or, admittedly creaking, muscle.

The Rats: one of the most important fiefdoms in London Below, perhaps the most important. The rats have almost universal respect and the service of the Rat-Speakers. While numerous every rat is considered to be noble and the different lines take different duties upon themselves and instruct the Rat-Speakers as best they can in each way. The Golden, leads of the rat clans, are at least as old as the last great ice age and their age and continuity of consciousness make them a powerful and wise force, though they are never seen by anyone other than other rats. The rats are constantly manipulating and tweaking the political status quo of The Underside to their own interest and ends.

The House of Arch: almost universally respected at its height. Lord Portico, while leader of a house that consisted only, really, of his family and friends was respected because of his powers and because of the long lineage of his bloodline. His ambition was to bring peace and unity to The Underside, a project which stalled with his and his family’s death. Door has taken over the house since and his ambition, drawing the stray bastard lines of the house to her bosom in an attempt to rebuild its power. Even so, Arch is seen as a respected but eccentric irrelevance, to fixated on high ideas and failing to see reality for what it is.

Raven's Court: vigorous and youthful under the leadership of The Raven but utterly impoverished, reduced to rags and tatters from what was once a lofty and unparalleled position of strength and wealth. Successive generations of leaders and disasters have whittled Raven's Court down to a nub of what it once was and Raven seeks to try and return it to its former glory, as does her rag tag band of followers and allies. Raven's desire to rebuild her house is only undermined by her vindictive and vengeful nature, a trait many of Raven's Court share.

Shepherd's Bush: home to The Shepherds and their queen. A feared force, once little more than a tribe of hated slavers and now a power to be reckoned with. As London Below has fractured into bitter infighting and feuding so The Shepherds have grown stronger. Even those who break free from their queen are not trusted but their power and the threat of kidnapping and enslavement makes this former tribe the equal of any fiefdom.

The Wild Court: the last of the recognised fiefdoms, presided over by one who claims to be Herne. Many of the stray, intelligent animals, time lost and feral homeless of The Underside claim The Wild Court as their home. A loose affiliation of barbarians and misfits The Wild Court are hunters, trackers and monster slayers extraordinaire and a powerful, if undisciplined, force on the rare occasions that Herne calls them to battle.

History

London Below has existed almost for as long as there has been a settlement on the site of London. Once the area was swamps and bogs, holy land to the people who lived there and who tossed offerings into the murky waters, the water being seen as a gateway to the other side, the realm of the dead, the land of the spirits. This otherworld, perhaps, in this huge swamp, formed the basis, the foundation upon which London Below was formed.

Before even this, perhaps, the Labyrinth existed and at the heart of it, the prison of Islington, sunk beneath the stinking swamp as he had sunk Atlantis beneath the waves. The otherworld of the tribes and the prison of Islington interacted and the place became a nexus of land and water, this world and the next, light and shadow.

The holy site was replaced with villages and towns, with the Roman city of Londinium and grew and grew in layers, always adding, mixing, never quite erasing all of its past. Each time the city is rebuilt it builds over and around itself, pushing more of its past into London Below which has continued to grow.

London Below and London Above used to be more closely linked, in the tribal days they were virtually one, in the days of Roman temples some of the populace moved freely back and forth from one world to the next. Since then however the two worlds have drawn further and further apart until London Above is barely aware of London Below and those of London Below can barely interact with the world above.

London Below used to be unified, it was unified by the force and personality of King Lud, High King of London for hundreds of years until he finally died under mysterious circumstances, though it's said he is preserved in a bubble of time, somewhere in the labyrinth.

Since his death the various baronies and fiefdoms below him, which he kept in check squabbling with each other, have fought and warred over the empty throne for centuries to no avail. Houses have risen, fallen, been created and destroyed but no progress has been made towards uniting the underside and most have accepted that this is how things are always going to be.

London Below is 'pliable' and unstuck in time, every major event, every war, every style movement, even lesser things like people's dreams and imaginations help shape London Below. The really big things leave the biggest impressions, World War Two, Shakespeare's plays, punk, The Civil War, the monarchy and the machinations of the nobility, these give it structure but somewhere in the junk and rubbish and down in the dark can be found echoes of almost anything of any note that has ever happened in the capital.

London Below is history, as it's imagined to be.



Words Have Power

His hand slid around her waist and drew her against him, his body was lean, warm, his eyes intense, sharp as he stared into her eyes and leans in close, his lips almost brushing hers as his low, unctuous voice tickled at her ears.

"I love you." He said, slowly, with absolute confidence and sincerity.

"Why, Mr Robinson..." She said, affecting the tones of a lady of quality, her façade only quavering slightly, trying to hide the effect his presence, his words, had upon her despite her

"You can call me Jack..."

"Jack then, even with your reputation I think you've got more wind in your sails here than you're due."

Jack slipped his arm from around The Pirate Girl's slip of a waist and grinned to her, brushing some of the dust from her battered old admiralty jacket.

"Merely reinforcing my point, I presume nothing." He reassured her, hopping down onto the deck from his more precarious perch next to her at the railing.

A little put out The Pirate Girl stayed where she was, folding her arms across her chest, covering her grubby vest and her modest chest, feeling that she was being played with, stilling her beating heart that was fluttering

despite knowing that he was toying with her. She pouted, petulantly and stared him down, aloof, mistress of her ship.

"And what is your point, before I keelhaul you for messing me around." She demanded.

"Only this." He said, raising his fingertip, arrogant, amused, pacing impatiently, full of nervous energy rounding on her as he found his words. "Words have power. Even though I didn't mean it and you knew I didn't mean it, when I told you that, it had an effect upon you. Words are everything in London Below, you miss it all, out here on the river. You're called The Pirate Girl, a pirate is something to be feared, a thief, a fighter, a raider, a girl is a slip of a thing, a slight and soft, it's what you might call a lover or a daughter. Your name is a contradiction and that, my girl, is why you are not taken seriously by the powers that be."

She huffed and squirreled up into rigging which overhung the deck, peering down at him with angry eyes, he was telling her things she didn't want to know. "This is how you pay me for river passage? You said advice, not insults."

He bowed slightly, trying to placate her at least a little, making conciliatory gestures with his hands. "The best advice is usually uncomfortable I'm afraid but, consider... The Lady Door is a waif with almost no power to her name, but the title 'Lady' affords her power, prestige and respect."

"So what?" The Pirate Girl spat out, sitting on one of the arms protruding from the mast, swinging her legs.

"So... if you want power, if you want respect, then you need to understand and to comprehend the power of words. Think about the power of the word 'deal' in the mouth of the Marquis, or the terror that the name of one of the Seven Sisters can invoke. Words are but one part, you need to lend them meaning."

"So perhaps I should change my name to the Terror of the Thames then!" She laughed, dismissing his advice with a mock snarl and a slash of an imaginary cutlass.

He sat, heavily on a coil of ropes and shook his head, jerking his leg, his foot tapping impatiently on the deck. "I can only give the advice Pirate, it's up to you whether you take it or not, it's still good enough to pay for the crossing – I hope..."

"Just this once... but short change me again and I'll leave you on the Isle of Dogs." She grabbed a rope and swung up into the rigging, vanishing into the sail and out of his sight."

Abbess Close

Through a hidden door in an ivy covered wall in this part of town you come into a small, but dense, garden overlooked by a dilapidated but serviceable Nunnery. The older stones of the abbey are shored up with scavenged beams, odd bricks, slates and bits and pieces taken from building sites. The Abbess's rooms overlook the garden and allow her to keep a close eye on the nuns who maintain the garden. The garden itself is pleasingly aesthetic but is primarily a working garden for fruits, vegetables, chickens and the odd pig in a pen.

The Nuns of the Order of Isolation fled to the Underside in the time of Henry VIII and are still somewhat reluctant to take visitors for fear it will compromise their security; they support themselves with the healing arts and selling vegetables at the floating market for the things that they need and are recognisable for their patchwork habits, dirty hands and heavy workboots.

The Current Abbess is Abbess Margaret, a doughty woman of late middle age who wears an array of different spectacles on chains around her neck, each one with a different purpose from seeing up close to seeing at a distance or for glowering through at patients who won't behave.

A typical nun of The Order is *chaste and pure, demure and self-effacing*. While *stalwart and tough* from working in the gardens they are unused to outsiders, which makes them *shy*. The nuns are *professional healers and gardeners*.

Abbott, The

The head of the Black Friars, the Abbot is an amiable and friendly man and the duty of being a Black Friar weighed heavily upon him until Richard liberated the key from their possession. A good man, the Abbot is a polite and ingratiating host with a deep and comforting voice. Given to making little humorous jokes at other peoples expense the Abbot is nonetheless wise and knowledgeable in the ways of the Underside and of the key.

The Abbot is a *Master at making tea* and his brew is considered one of the better ones in London Below. He is also a *Master of healing and of Underside lore*. He is *affable, amiable, good humoured and very patient* as well as being *empathetic, caring* and just a little *cynical*. Though he is also *very old*. The Abbot is *blind*, with milky cataracts, though he never lets it get him down or much get in his way within the Abbey. He forgoes the weapons of his brothers but is gifted with a *knack for prophetic dreams* and is a *professional at interpreting them*.

Abel House

A three storey Edwardian house at the edge of Hyde Park, Abel House is a dark and dismal affair. Every surface of the wall and ceiling is covered with paintings, sketches and other portraits of everyone ever to have been murdered in London be it above or below, even if it's not known whether they were murdered or simply disappeared. If they were killed their picture will appear here.

Where the pictures come from is not known, all that is known is that however hidden or covered up no murder escapes the eye of the mysterious artist. Many visitors have been shocked to see pictures of relatives or friends who have disappeared or died of 'natural causes'. This is not such an aid to justice and revenge as one might think as the house has likenesses of everyone ever to have been murdered within Greater London dating back as long as humans have settled here. Spotting the new pictures, let alone finding one of someone you know, is difficult at best.

Accommodation Road

When you have nowhere else to stay in London Below there is always Accommodation Road. This narrow street is filled with flophouses and filthy rooms, which are ridiculously overpriced at a minor barter item for a single night, just for floor space. They don't ask any questions, and a roof over your head is important in the depths of winter, more important than the risk of picking up lice or fleas, which you almost certainly will.

Achilles Way

A winding alley carving its way through a twisted knot of lost time Achilles way is a confusing jumble and assortment of images and time periods. The shadows are long and the darkness whispers to all who traverse its length. While it provides a fast shortcut to almost any part of London Below much like Night's Bridge it extracts its toll. In this case by exposing those who wander through it to their greatest weakness in a way they cannot ignore, be it a battle, a situation or a relived memory that pains them. Some Bravos regard traversing Achilles Way as a final rite of passage before they can truly be considered a Bravo.

Acorn Gardens

A rusted gate in a high brick wall leads to a small patch of greenery, overgrown with moss, thick with cobwebs and home to seven great oaks that tower into the sky and cut out almost every trace of light leaving only a deep green, dusty, damp murk. The acorns gathered here never fail to germinate and grow tall and swift. It is said these are the ancestors of the great English oak, which loaned its strength to the navy and the buildings of old. The Wild Court regards it as a sacred duty to protect this stand of trees from any who might harm them and the last wild bear in England is the guardian of the trees.

The Last Bear is *bloody enormous* with *very sharp talons and very sharp teeth* as well as *thick fur*. He is *grumpy, resentful, bitter, extremely powerful, incredibly cunning, unbelievably tough* and has the *knack of human speech*. It's said he sounds a lot like Brian Blessed. He has a bit of a *weakness for mead* and will become more affable and less gruff if he's given a bucket of mead to drink.

Acton Green

Scraping a living and merely surviving in London Below takes a great deal of effort and leaves little time for gaiety and frivolity. Entertainers usually garner a bare living as Half-Lifers or by performing their arts at The Floating Market where people are more relaxed and inclined to give generously. This small park houses those entertainers; their tents and shacks. Day and night they practice here. In good weather Acton Green hosts open air performances on the grass. Acton Green is watched over and maintained by Bill Poster, also known as Play Bill.

Play Bill is a *raggedy-arse* fellow with a *balding* head and a *bad comb-over*. He wears a ragged long coat made of pieces of other coats and presses playbills into the hands of everyone he meets, no matter where he meets them. Despite these shortcomings he is *incredibly charming and very convincing* with a *fine voice and a confident air* about him. He's *nimble* on the stage and while not wonderful at any single stage discipline is a *professional actor, singer, dancer and director*.

Adam & Eve Court

An early Romano-Christian mosaic depicting the progenitors of mankind, this tiled floor lies deep within the darkest parts of London Below. It is said that when one stands upon it one's voice cannot utter anything but the whole and absolute truth and that anything said while stood upon it can be believed entirely.

Of late a carnival sideshow has pitched up around Adam & Eve Court which claims to house the strangest and most wonderful – and more importantly genuine – oddities from The Underside of the world. A claim that must be true since the hawker uses the power of Adam & Eve Court to verify his claims. Still, something seems a little suspicious...

Addle Hill

Here the mad ones gather when the moon is full, Half-Lifers fraying at the edges from life on the streets and the insane inhabitants of The Underside, meeting to howl at the sky, feeding on each other's madness. The impression of their visitations is left upon the hill and those who come here often feel ill at ease and more than a little paranoid. On the night of the moonlit revel a spring bubbles from the crest of the hill whose waters are said to twist the most stable of minds to gibbering insanity but the mad ones guard it with their lives for the duration of the revel. More threatening than any deadly poison, vials of the water are hard to come by and worth a fortune at The Floating Market.

Admiral House

The abode of Admiral Mews, Admiral House is a rounded four storey building right on the banks of the Thames surrounded by a thin bar of stinking mud and connected to the shore by a rickety rope bridge that doesn't look like it could take the weight of a terrier. Here The Admiral stays, surrounded by mementos of past naval glories, flags, figureheads, Spanish gold, muskets, pistols and sabres as well as chests full of spices and tea – though many are turned to rot. The Admiral is a very rich man in terms of barter with all this lifetime of goods stuffed within the rooms and attics of the house. Attended by his servant Shaka the Admiral watches the river, the third floor of his home bristling with cannon, ever vigilant for trouble coming up from the sea.

Admiral Mews sits resplendent in his uniform, threadbare though it might be. He is prideful of his appearance and always tries to look his best. Filigree shines on his eye patch and he spends his days watching the river from his house attended by his servant Shaka.

A just and honourable man the Admiral is often run rings around by more unscrupulous and dishonourable folk – such as The Pirate Girl or the Marquis, for whom he has an instinctual dislike – and this wounds him deeply though he would never sacrifice his honour for simple advantage over an adversary.

The Admiral is a *staunch and very honourable* man with *impeccable dress sense* and a *strong moral code*. The Admiral is *intolerant* of anyone who doesn't fit his views and while *quick* enough on his feet and *wiry* with it he's starting to *feel his years* in his bones and wonders if age is finally starting to catch up with him as the Royal Navy becomes a shadow of its former self, his fortunes and theirs linked. The Admiral is a *professional with the sword and pistol* and a *legendary sailor* even if he is stuck on land at present. He is still a *master of cannonry and tactics* often consulted by the houses of the Underside.

Manservant to Admiral Mews, Shaka was one of the first slaves freed by the change in British law. Treated well by Mews he agreed to stay on as a fully waged manservant in the same capacity he was in before. Shaka is a *huge and proud* man of *great brawn, solid and unflinching* in the face of danger he is *loyal* to the Admiral and assists him in all things. The Admiral never leaves his house, so Shaka travels to market for him these days, bartering for the items Admiral House needs with items from its extensive stock of memorabilia. Shaka is a *professional fist fighter, barterers with equal skill* and is a *master servant* who knows all of Admiral Mews's preferences.

Adys, Lady

Lady Adys is a brown skinned and dark haired beauty of half- Indian descent, who dresses in the manner of English ladies of the Raj. She is *unfailingly polite* and *circumspect, tactful to a fault* and she refuses to see anything but the best in people. Her *delicate* and *meek demeanour* hide an *iron will* and the *patience of Job* in waiting for the right time to exact revenge for slights made to her. Lady Adys is a *master of etiquette and diplomacy* and her *gardening skills are legendary*. She's also a *professional cook*, at least in regard to tea, biscuits, scones and cucumber sandwiches with the crusts cut off. She also makes mean kedgeree and delightful vegetable samosas with homemade brinjal pickle.

Adys' Lawn

Lady Adys takes fine care of the grounds of her house along with her small army of expert gardeners. Her lawn is a rich green, as flat and smooth as the pitch at Lord's Cricket Ground, an inspiring swathe of verdant grass uninterrupted by trees, flowers, borders or anything else but the walls around the garden. Here Lady Adys hosts tea on the lawn for the finest and most noble denizens of The Underside, playing lawn games until late. The lawn is the platonic ideal that every English gardener aspires to in his heart, pure, flat green and perfect but also boring and conservative.

Aeroville

High above the tunnels, high above the streets is the rooftop world. Still part of London Above but loftier and lighter, so far above that it becomes 'below' again. Here amongst the rooftops bridges and ropeways span the gaps and cats prowl from rooftop to rooftop. Higher still is Aeroville, brightly coloured balloons and baskets strung together with ropes and nets floating higher and higher into the sky to the very clouds with all manner of strange flying and floating machines and people floating from one spot to another. At the solstice one can step from Aeroville to walk amongst the clouds as if they were solid and watch the sun or moon rise. The Underside's intelligent pigeons roost here at night, neatly avoiding attempts to cull or medicate the dumber pigeons that are far more numerous in number.

Agnes' Gardens

Agnes, or Black Agnes, is a dodderly old lady whose tiny garden is one big improvised greenhouse, all brown-stained plastic, whitewashed glass and rotting wooden framework covered in fungus and oozing mould.

Every window of her modest terraced house has a great big window box overflowing with what, to the untrained eye, would appear to be weeds. What they actually are, are herbs; rosemary, basil, thyme, chives, onion grass and the more esoteric mandrake and belladonna. Herbs and plants used in potions and witchery all arranged in little rows like a conventional allotment. Agnes is too old to make it to the Floating Market and so operates from her house, which by quiet agreement is generally considered to be truce-ground. Agnes is popular with the Kingdom of Cats and has a great many of them as semi-permanent houseguests, watchmen and protectors.

Agnes is a failed witch and one of many 'mad old cat ladies' who live within London Below doting on their feline charges. Agnes is *very old and very frail* and she is slowly becoming more *weak-minded and dotty* in her dotage. When it comes to her garden though, she is as *sharp and knowledgeable* as she has ever been, dispensing advice and herbs with *quiet* expertise and occasionally giving them away for free. Agnes isn't well regarded by the Seven Sisters or the Four Witches but to many Undersiders she's a *godsend*, with her skills making her a *master of herbalism* and a *professional at urban gardening*. While an *unsuccessful* witch she's still able to toss off a *professional curse or blessing* if pressed.

Air Street

To make the trip from the rooftops to Aeroville one must travel up Air Street, an invisible set of steps climbing into thin air that leads up to the bright and airy balloon town of Aeroville. This is understandably nerve racking to do by oneself since one false step can mean tumbling to a messy death, but guides are always available, for a price, if you don't want to risk it yourself.

Albion Gate

This stone gate sits deep in the Underside carved with Lions, Unicorns and crowns. The doors are firmly shut and not even the most powerful of Openers has been able to unlock its secrets. What lies beyond is unknown but the door opened the tiniest crack during World War Two and remained open until the end of the Cold War and the pulling down of the Berlin Wall. All that could be seen beyond were mists and there was an abiding scent of apples.

Aldgate (Old Gate)

The Aldgate is a one-way trip to the past and some of the time-lost take this route in the hopes of getting back to their own time. The gate can deposit you in any part of London's history though from any of the eras humanity has lived here. The odds of getting back to one's own time are incredibly slim. The door is guarded by members of the time-lost who have faced the temptation and decided not to make the trip after all and the gate is locked and barred at all times. Only those who are truly certain and who can convince the guards are allowed to pass through to whatever awaits them beyond.

All Souls Place

Part of Jack Ketch's domain and the one time home of the Sanctuary Keeper, Hayes Murphy. Although his reasons remain obscure, Ketch ordered his lieutenant, Sable, to dispose of the Keeper. Sable's assassination attempt failed and Hayes called upon the Temple to witness a duel. Since that time All Soul's Place has been a favourite site for formal duels between the nobility of London Below and it's said that 'all souls' are bared here to trial by combat and that the measure of a man's true spirit can be sensed by a fight on this square of stone.

Alliance Court

Back in the deep and almost unknown past of The Underside the city was united under a single Lord, considered by most to be King Lud. This King of the Underside formed a powerful Baron's alliance and the fiefs existed side-by-side, pulling together in a common direction. Alas the King was eventually slain by unknown assassins, or so some versions of the stories go, and the Baronies and Fiefdoms reverted to their former behaviour and set upon each other with a new degree of ferocity and jealousy.

Their meeting place when they were united, The Alliance Court is overgrown and thick with dust now, full of broken statues and rotting tapestries, an unwelcome reminder of a bright past. Lord Portico was known to come here to think and the Marquis appears to have affection for the place, in as much as he shows loyalty or consideration to anything.

Alligator King

The Alligator King was the biggest, baddest and strongest of the white alligators that lurk in the depths of the New York sewers. He was thirty feet long, blind, pale as moonlight and a truly terrible, terrible monster until Hunter killed him dead on one of her hunting trips. The Alligator King may be dead but there are still white alligators in New York and it's rumoured some have been imported to London Below.

A white alligator is *truly gigantic* with *impenetrable scales* and *great weight*. They are *fast*, surprisingly so, with *terrible jaws* and *exceptionally brutal teeth*. Despite their *pale* skin they are *masters of stealth and hunting*, more than a match for most Undersiders.

Ambassador Square

A cobbled square in the courtyard of an old coaching inn, Ambassador Square is open to the sky and its wooden barrels are overflowing with flowers. It is here that peace is made between warring houses of The Underside, all four sides of the inn filling with observers to watch the parties make their peace and swear their oaths upon their treaties, bearing witness. The last agreement made here was to bring a close to the White City debacle, an ill considered venture on the part of the Fiefs at the encouragement of de Carabas who at least seems to have got what he wanted from the whole affair.

On the rare occasions that dignitaries visit from other cities of The Underside they stay here and receive visitors in the inn while they go about whatever business it is they are in London Below to take care of. With the advent of the Channel Tunnel, Paris Below has stationed a permanent ambassador here, or at least a permanent ambassador's position. The actual ambassador changes so often it makes little difference.

Ambergate

A street of merchants and artisans whose wares run to the more exotic and semi-magical in nature, as well as the more expensive. Their trinkets are well crafted and many of the noble houses commission them for statuary to guard and bring luck to their families. Those in Ambergate tend to be close friends with the Seers of Seers Green and the two groups look after each other's interests.

Apothecary Road

An entrance to the monastery of the Black Friars, Apothecary Road is a place of healing, replete with quacks, barbers, snake oil salesmen and others who take advantage of those unable to be seen and tended to by the Friars. At the end of the road is the entrance to the monastery; a hidden gate in a high stone wall protected at all times by two stern shotgun wielding friars who will only admit people if there is space or they were summoned by the abbot. Care is assigned strictly by need and by no other criteria, at all.

Anaesthesia

One of the Rat-speakers, Anaesthesia took Richard to the Floating Market and was taken by Night's Bridge in toll when they crossed it. Despite being taken by the dark she was still able to help Richard in the Black Friars Ordeal, appearing to him as a vision that warded him from taking his own life.

Anaesthesia's story is typical of many Under-siders. Her family dead or mad she was taken in by an aunt who didn't want her, whose partner abused her. She ran away to the streets of London on her eleventh birthday and lived rough for a couple of years before growing deathly ill. Found by the rats and valued for their own esoteric reasons, she was brought across to London Below and gained a new lease of life with the Rat-speakers before being taken by the bridge. There may yet be some way to rescue her.

Anaesthesia is *thin and bedraggled*, a girl in her late teens although her badge proclaims, proudly, that she is eleven. She is also *forthright, helpful* and possesses a *quiet inner strength* that occasionally shines through as *unexpected bravery*. She can be *vicious* when cornered, just like a rat, scaring off people much bigger than her. Anaesthesia is a *professional Rat-speaker* and also a *professional guide and loremaster*. She remembers her past and is still *as good a thief as any novice* can be.





Angelus, The

An entrance to Islington's abode, the Angelus is the quickest and easiest route to the bottom of Down Street. Only accessible to an Opener – and even then only once – the Angelus is a tall, gilt work of art from medieval times that opens like a doorway to the right hands, leading directly to Islington's sanctum though the journey can be disorienting and even painful.

Arcadian Gardens

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle believed in fairies. He believed in them so strongly he was taken in by a hoax perpetrated by two young girls and a primitive camera. Indeed he and they both professed to still believe long after the hoax was exposed, so convinced and convincing were those involved.

Here in a forgotten corner of London a derelict house filled with cobwebs and faded photographs backs on to a wild and overgrown garden that contains much of what remains of England's fairy courts. Sprites play in the weeds and goblins leer from overgrown bushes. Sometimes the fae leave the confines of their gardens to seek their fortune in the wider world but it is harsh and unforgiving to them.

Those who drink fairy mead or eat fairy food may lose weeks or even years here in the revels of the fae who still enjoy tormenting and playing with mortal men in their dusty old house

A typical fairy is *tiny and frail, very fast and very nimble* with a *wicked* streak and a *keen eye*. *Fairies can fly* at a fair speed and can make themselves *invisible with legendary ease*. They are *professional with their fairy darts and at flying*.

Arch

An ancient and crumbling stone arch this place is said to be the first gateway in the wall around the very first city on the site of London, the birthplace of the city and of London Below itself. An aura of sanctity and respect permeates the area. This is one of the 'holiest' sites in the Underside and its name is invoked in oaths and as a swearword. Nobody, no matter how evil, would attempt to harm the arch.

Arch, House of

Lord Portico's household.

Before Croup and Vandemar thinned the numbers there was Lord Portico, Ingress, Door, Portia and Arch. All were killed save Door, though Ingress may still be alive and hidden somewhere, if Islington spoke the truth. The family has many offshoots however; the result of past indiscretions amongst the family, and Door is far from the only Opener below.

Lord Portico was trying to unite the Underside again as it was in history, to pull together rather than apart. The Lady Door has undertaken to follow in his footsteps, which has made her dreadfully unpopular in some quarters.

Arches, The

A community made up of Half-Lifers, the Arches is a rag-tag band of box-dwellers, drunks and madmen huddled in their blankets and rags, burning cardboard in oil drums for heat and living off what they can scavenge from bins or barter for with their spoils from London above. They live here in the shelter of old red-brick viaduct arches deafened by trains and harbouring any new Half-Lifers who come amongst them, always glad to see another body to add their warmth to the community.

Arena

When Bravos have a disagreement it generally ends with one of them face down and bleeding in the gutter, having been attacked suddenly from behind. When it is a matter of public insult or honour, or a point needs to be made publicly, then they will bring their disagreement to the Arena.

The Arena itself is a round chamber in the Underside, lit by dripping torches when there is any light at all. The ring is filled with grey Cornish sand stained here and there with blood and rat pizzle. The walls are hollowed here and there with half finished statues residing in the alcoves.

The rules are very simple indeed, two men enter, one man leaves, anything goes other than that.

Arsenal

The Arsenal was once the weapon store for the united London Below of old. Long since looted and picked clean of everything worth taking it is now nothing but an empty chamber, dusty and smelling of wet stone a testament to past glories. Varney kept a hidden cache of weapons here for reasons of simple-minded sentimentality and they are likely still here somewhere, whatever else he was he was a creative weaponsmith with a particular fondness for traps.

Associative Houses

An Associative House is a building where all the rooms are housed in many different locations around a city, or even the world. The rooms are accessed through pictures of them hung in an entrance hall that appears as a clear white room. Only Openers can create an Associative House and access its rooms. The rooms exist outside time and space and can even be historical, frozen in the moment of the picture.



b

Bailey, Old

Old Bailey is a rooftop hermit who makes a living selling rooks and starlings for the stew pot or for use as pets as well as trading information. There's little Old Bailey doesn't know, thanks to his contacts and while he comes across as an eccentric old bugger he's a man of his word and has the trust of many influential powers in London Below. He's a lot more canny than he lets on.

He dressed in an old coat, covered with feathers and has a blunderbuss hidden away in his tent on the rooftops where he fashions crude cages for his birds out of television aerials. When he's at the Floating Market he sells information, cages, birds, stew (not pleasant), secrets, history and roof maps that correspond to parts of London Below.

Old Bailey is an eccentric, kind and friendly old man, beneath a gruff exterior. Very hospitable in his home he is forever offering his guests a bit of stew and claims to be a Master chef, trained by Egon Ronay. In spite of his habit of eating birds he is not actively hated or disliked by them or by Raven's Court, many birds regard him as a philosopher of the human condition and will risk the stew pot in an attempt to get more information. Absent-minded Old Bailey is fond of long shaggy dog stories ending in terrible puns though he tells them poorly. Claustrophobic and agoraphobic he only ventures below with his birds for market time and otherwise is a nomad, moving from roof to roof. A Master at the language of the birds and a professional in the tongue of rats Old Bailey is a mine of information with his Mastery of Underside Lore and navigation. Since running his stall he has become professional at bartering. His true claim to fame is his legendary knowledge of London's rooftops.



Bagley's Spring

Clean fresh water is a hard won commodity in London Below. It was even harder to come across in the past. Disease that ravaged the above world was always two or three times as bad below, especially in the case of waterborne diseases. In great thirst Bagley, the guide, stumbled across this spring and drank his fill, swearing that he'd never go thirsty again. Jealously Bagley guarded his clean spring killing all encroachers until he finally died, ironically of hunger. Bagley's spring bubbles still, cool and clear but to drink from it is said to be bad luck and Bagley is used as a cautionary tale of being too greedy and too fixated upon a single thing.

The spring lies deep underground in a cave, the walls painted with an illustration of Bagley's story, drawn by the cave painters in their crude – but compelling – style. Some of the more superstitious collect the water to give to their enemies in order to curse them with bad luck.

Baker Street

Baker Street is home to a large gang of waifs, strays and street urchins who call themselves 'the Baker Street Irregulars', Baker Street is known to most from the stories of Sherlock Holmes. The Irregulars can be hired for odd jobs; most often they are called upon to track down anything missing, misplaced or lost. As a consequence the gang has a (mostly) good-natured and long running feud with Earl's Court who also claim dominion over the lost.

A typical Irregular is *young and scrawny*, all *wiry muscle and tough sinew*. Ever *alert* for trouble and with a *keen eye* for a good deal they are *shrewd* wheelers and dealers. They are *professionals at Underside navigation*, *scouting, hiding and their knack 'Find the Lost'*.

Banner Street

In times past, for tailor-made clothes, those with wealth and influence in London went to Piccadilly. Those in London Below went, and still go, to Banner Street where the odds, ends and scraps of cloth from London Above and Below wend their way to the tailors and seamstresses who do their best to restore fading cloth to its former glory. In Paris the output of Banner Street might be called couture and command the highest prices, but since it's rag-tag and make do, with something of a punk aesthetic it's really just the everyday for London Below though the occasional designer or seamstress sparks a little trend.

Banqueting House

When the market is closed and nothing can be found to scavenge above or below, the house will provide for the hungry – by which they mean the starving. The fare is simple and uninspired - thin soup that tastes like shoes, potatoes and meat of extremely doubtful provenance - but the long tables are heavily weighed with it and a little simple trade will give you a full belly. Mealtimes are raucous but a pair of Bravos on retainer ensures that the rivals who sit down to dinner together do not cause problems with each other. The proprietor, John Bull, takes great and perverse pleasure in eating well in front of the desperate that gather in his house, tossing his scraps to his bulldogs or the beggars, whichever will give him the most amusement.

The *round and bullish* proprietor of Banqueting House, John Bull is a *great tree-trunk of a man* with a *deep booming laugh* and a shaking belly usually restrained by a Union Jack waistcoat. Bull is a *gluttonous pig* but in spite of his size his *fat* is backed by a *very muscular strength*. *Firm-gripped and resolute* Bull makes an *intimidating* opponent, his *tenacity* ensuring he sees every conflict and petty vengeance through to its fullest. Combining the worst excesses and best traits of the *conservative*, Bull is *defensive* of his friends and *respectful* of tradition but *cruel* to those worse off than him, giving of his own good fortune only grudgingly. Bull is a *professional and hearty cook*, a *master boxer*, *bully* and *orator*, able to stir emotions in others with his speeches.

Barking

Barking is the home of the Dogs' Parliament, a great debating society of dogs whose howls, barks and growls argue into the small hours. The Dogs' Parliament spends its time chewing – sometimes literally – over important matters such as territorial demarcation, the admittance of new breeds to the great roll, division of duties and the ongoing debate over the worthiness of man as a companion to the hound. The Dog's Parliament is the whole area, there's no specific building, dogs simply find themselves a good spot and proceed to howl and yap in order to conduct their business. Non-dogs that need to address the Parliament are forced to stand at 'speaker's corner', a stinking right turn in an alley that the dogs don't like.

Barkingside

This place is home to dogs that are outcast from Barking due to their controversial views on companionship with man. Most believe dogs are destined to be man's best friend and this orthodoxy is close to religion. However, many dogs have suffered at the hands of man and choose to take a different view; that man is unworthy of the companionship and protection a loyal hound provides.

While debate is tolerated at Parliament many dogs take the argument too far, even attack humans, and are outcast because of it. They live on the streets away from their mistresses and masters in Barkingside, denied the comforts of other dogs but fiercely proud of their independence. Those who go further and take the step of hating man, even advocating killing him, returning to the 'wolf' because for all he has done to them move to the Isle of Dogs and serve its feral master.

Barnet

In a world of unwashed homeless and grubby matted hair Barnet is a beautiful jewel of tonsorial magnificence. From her patent leather booties to her checked plastic dress she is the most perfect model of a 'groovy chick' straight out of the sixties, but not looking a day over thirty. She's topped with the most perfect and gleaming beehive 'do' in the history of hairdressing and totters on her heels moving through London Below with the grace of a dance floor diva. Perpetually chewing bubblegum and occasionally with a plum coloured biba hat perched atop her towering hairstyle Barnet is a force to be reckoned with and a whiz with scissors and brush, able to turn the most tangled mop into an impossibly beautiful crown of curls within minutes.

Barnet is *tall and beautiful, painfully sarcastic and extremely strong willed*. Her tongue is *extremely sharp* and she is *completely tactless*, able to destroy someone's self image with a single ill thought out remark. Her fingers are *slender* and *extremely nimble* and she is a *legend of hairdressing and fashion*, albeit with a tendency to the *kitsch*.

Baron's Court

Once a force to be reckoned with, the Baron Chambers stood with Earl's Court against White City on behalf of the Marquis de Carabas. Since the defeat in that battle he has never regained his former glory, suffering worse losses than the Earl, and prefers to remain a recluse, observing rather than participating in the politics of the Underside.

The Baron and his few men-at-arms stay within his house, the doors barred, receiving very few visitors and helping even fewer. The Baron loathes the Marquis, blaming him for the fall of his house and expends what little resources he has left in pursuing vengeance.

Like many of the major fiefs, Baron's Court trades on reputation, its coffers and its strength are largely spent.

The Baron of Baron's Court is *tired* of life and battle, tired of London Below. The machinations of the fiefs have brought him nothing but pain and now he is a *grim* and *embittered* figure. *Lean and strong* still, his malaise is mental, his *vengeful* nature conflicting with his lack of power and eating a dark hole inside him. Once *inspired*, a *leader* of men, he is now a *spent* figure spending what remains of his *wealthy* treasury and his loyal men on his vendetta against the Marquis. A *professional soldier* he is skilled with bow and blade and a *master of tactics*. The Baron once claimed *dominion over the streets and back alleys, the hidden*. Unable to protect his domain the court is losing more and more power to the other houses, the rot unstoppable.

Bartram, Jessica

Jessica is Richard's fiancée at the start of things, though he later comes to his senses. She is an up-and-coming businesswoman and everything for her is to do with her career first, including her choice of potential husband. She met Richard at the Mona Lisa in Paris, he trod on her feet while backing away and he's been apologising for himself ever since.

Jessica is *Regal, ambitious, very English and totally self-possessed* her *domineering* attitude mars her *beauty* and makes her seem *callous and scary*, when it's really a compensation for her *anxious* nature. A *professional marketer*, she's equally good with *deceit, etiquette and the critique of art*, she is also a *novice in learning how to intimidate* despite her *unintimidating* stature. Jessica's *selfish* nature is proven by the way she broke off her engagement with Richard when he broke a date with her and her boss, Mr Stockton, to save Door's life.

Beak

The sardonic, albino fool at Raven's Court. Beak cuts a pale, gaunt figure in his lace and ivory suit, his clothing as white as his skin. Rather than tomfoolery and antics Beak's humour comes from his deeply cynical and sarcastic outlook on the world. The slightest glance from his ashen eyes can be enough to instil a deep understanding of Beak's contemptuous view of them. Neat to a fault and precise in his movements Beak is loyal and never questions Raven. A master of the put down and a professional in matters of courtly etiquette Beak is equally professional in being intimidating or being a gracious host.

Bear of Berlin

There was a bear beneath Berlin, in that underside, before Hunter got to us. It was said to have killed a thousand men and its fur was stiff, in spikes, its claws back from their blood. It had terrorised the city for over a century before it fell to her blade and it is said to have whispered secrets to Hunter as it died, in human words.

It's dead now, but there's said to be another bear beneath Moscow, much the same.

The Bear of Berlin was a *truly enormous* beast, *unbelievably powerful, incredibly strong*, its bellow was *terrifying* and its *bloodstained hide* formed a *thick armour* of clotted, black blood. It had *terrible claws and hideous teeth* but also a *genius intellect*, knowing many *legendary secrets* that it would give up to those who could wrestle it to a standstill. The *stink* of its hide was almost as fabled as its other traits and was said to choke those who tried to fight it, its *skill at wrestling* was *legendary* and until Hunter few had ever managed to wrestle it to a standstill.

Beast of London, The

Legend has it the beast was a pig, a pig that back in the past of hazy memory someone was fattening up for Christmas or some other feast day. The pig escaped (if it were a pig and the tales differ) into the sewers, feasting on the foulness there and growing huge and ill tempered. Every man that went to search for it came back without it or not at all. It grew larger and fouler as the years passed, growing ill tempered and vicious. As it killed and maimed it's legend grew and hunters came to seek it and Bravos went to kill it, still returning fruitlessly or not at all, their broken weapons bristling in its hide and only aggravating its temper more. Eventually the Beast came to the Labyrinth, bound into place to guard Islington's prison from foolish visitors. The Beast was finally slain by Richard Mayhew marking the final stage of his transformation from bumbling fool into the Warrior.

The beast was truly enormous, gross, vast, evil a thing of foulness and great toughness. Unstoppable and possessed of extreme strength the Beast was fast, despite its size, and armoured from the broken blades stuck in its skin. Belligerent to the last its foul tempered nature was its undoing as it focussed on finishing off Hunter and disregarded Richard. It was a legendary fighter with its razored tusks and thunderbolt hooves.

The Beast's Blood contained the Beast's power and the ability to navigate the ever-changing labyrinth.

Bench, The

In Alexandra Park is a plain wooden bench, bolted together with green-painted iron bolts. The Bench was laid here to commemorate someone or something but time and constant vandalism have robbed both memory and the Bench itself of the knowledge of who, or what, it commemorates.

The Bench is an island of calm in the city, benign and restive. A night on the Bench under a sheet of paper is as restorative as a stay at The Ritz though no-one may use its hospitality for more than a single night. Many Half-Lifers come here to die in a final night of peace, in luxury, soothed by the bench which seems to grant them that final peace.

Berrylands

After the bombings of the blitz many areas of destroyed housing were left to rot for quite some time. Berrylands is one such bomb-site that was never recovered. Taken over by brambles it's a thick nest of thorns, blackberry bushes, woven tight and thick like a hair snarl and almost perpetually in fruit. Good pickings for some, until you get sick of the sweetness and the juice. The tangle of brambles makes a good hiding place for the smaller members of The Wild Court.

Bethlehem Alice

Often called 'Poor Beth', she is a saviour and saint to those unfortunates with whom the Underside has dealt most harshly. She resides in St Bethlehem Hospital in Cheapside and aids all those who come to her door. It is thought that amongst those in her care are the celebrated Miss Liddle and the notorious gentleman known only as 'Albert' whose true station in life and connection to the royal family is still cause of great speculation.

Poor Beth is a *mild mannered* and *gentle* woman of *saintly* disposition and *endless patience*. She takes care of her charges with *diligence and duty* that would shame Mother Theresa, though she is *fierce and indomitable* in their defence. A *master of psychiatric care* despite her many *outdated* and *quackish* methods, Beth is also a *professional healer* and has the *knack of alleviating her charges' madness* by drawing it into herself or making it manifest in physical form and able to be overcome. *Her ability to manifest madness is that of a master.*

Bexley, Old

As Old Bailey is the hermit of the rooftops, Old Bexley is the hermit of the streets. Dressed in rags and wearing an unzipped sleeping bag like a cloak Old Bexley wraps his head in foil and wears a folded tricorne hat made of newspaper over the top.

Raving mad, Old Bexley occupies a tiny deadend passage at the end of which he has constructed a cardboard and plastic fort, which is much bigger on the inside than it appears on the outside. Old Bexley is an *eccentric and lonely* old man but has a *fear of crowds* that keeps him away from the main streets. Any who are granted an audience with him are subjected to tirades about lizard men and mind control though his ravings do, often, contain nuggets of truth. *Insightful*, perhaps as a result of his madness, Old Bexley can be *very empathetic and sensitive*, often turning up in the dead of night to offer aid, comfort and advice to Half-Lifers. Old Bexley has a *legendary knowledge of the streets of London* and *master level knowledge of Underside lore*. He is *professional at first aid and street survival*.

Big Ben

A *very imposing* figure Ben is as *large*, as *inhumanly strong*, as *supremely tough* and as gifted in the beard and hair department as Hammersmith. With his *truly deafening voice* and his *charismatic* and *undeniable presence* he brings news to the Underside by the time-honoured method of screaming it at the top of his lungs while ringing a bell. Dressed in the manner of a town crier, Ben is festooned with clocks, watches and other assorted timepieces all attached by chain, pin or string to his enormous, thick leather waistcoat. In his hand he carries a great bell which doubles as both massive club and ringer to draw heed to his announcements. Ben is a guardian of time and looks after the Time Lost while at the same time dealing harshly with those who play ‘silly buggers’ with space and time too often. As such he is a *master tracker and club user* knowing his *Underside navigation equally well*. Ben has the *knack of moving through time and space at will*, though he has to follow rules nobody else quite understands. *At this he is legendary.*

Big Red Bus

The Big Red Bus is a battered old double-decker bus, a number 42, which does the rounds of London Below. To outsiders it looks like a tourist bus, full of people taking pictures and talking in braying foreign accents. To those who are part of London Below it looks like a battered old bus, resembling what Mad Max would have looked like if designed by Rowland Ematt.

The bus makes a long tour around London Below, half at random, half to the demands of its passengers and travels constantly, day and night. Only the downstairs is accessible to passengers, the upstairs is the home of the Driver and Conductor who are not known by any other names and have tricked out the bus with all manner of gadgets to ensure the safety of their passengers.

Black Cab, The

A battered old black taxi cab of nineteen-sixties vintage, the Black Cab picks people up from London Above and ferries them into London Below as well as taking fares from London Below around the city. The cabby is never seen and never leaves the cab, though he talks through a grille from the front, perpetually hidden from view by cigarette smoke and sounding like Ray Winstone gargling hedgehogs. The back of the cab is a festering pile of fliers, discarded takeaway menus, beer cans and cigarette butts. The Cab doesn't take you where you want to go, but where you need to go and only ever charges what you can afford.

Blackheath

Spoken of in chilled whispers of horror, Blackheath is a very, very, very creepy place. Under the heath is an ancient system of primitive earthworks and tunnels, which are filled with a pervasive green-black mist and old, stinking, midge-infested water.

It is almost impossible to not get lost in there and most who have gone in have never come out. Some say the Green Witch herself made it this way so that she could hide things that are best left unseen. At various times Blackheath has filled with the evil and the corrupt creatures and things of the Underside, who have chosen to make this dank place their home. The last time in recent memory that this happened on any grand scale was in 1768 when Lord Rayner led a crusade against the army of shadows and beasts that were gathering there. It was in this battle that Black Keziah disappeared.

Blacknest

An outpost of Raven's court near Cheapside, Blacknest is a fragment of Dickensian time, a rookery, a rough and tumble tangle of lodging, gambling and prostitution that serves as a garrison for Raven's less endearing vassals.

Black Tiger of Calcutta

Another of the great beasts of The Underside to fall to Hunter's spear the Black Tiger of Calcutta was a man eater, but fearless and brilliant, said to have absorbed the minds, the spirits, of those it had killed and eaten, keeping their souls alive within it to empower it. There are other tigers below other Indian cities, but this was the greatest, the iconic beast of India.

The Black Tiger was a *terrifying and horrific* creature, as *black as night*, *insubstantial as a shadow* and as *silent as the grave*. It had *feline grace* and *great speed* as well as *enormous jaws and fangs*. It was a *legendary man-eater* and a *legendary intellect*, though *bitter and cynical* with it. It had *great strength* and a *deafening roar*. Blows would move through its flesh as though it were smoke and only its eyes had any real substance until it was slain and their horrible light was finally dimmed

Blackwall

Brunel built the Rotherhithe Tunnel for the convenience of London's citizens. London Below, however, already had the Blackwall. Nicknamed, with little affection, ‘Night's brother’, the tunnel spans a stretch of perpetual twilight that is not always kind to those who traverse it. It should be noted that the price occasionally extracted from travellers is nowhere near as dire as that of Night's Bridge, tending to the inconvenient and the annoying, rather than the deadly. There have been documented cases on separate occasions of Blackwall taking a traveller's hearing, left boot, eye colour, ability to count, childhood memories and shadow. More usually Blackwall satisfies itself with some small trinket such as jewellery, keys, keepsakes and spectacles. Occasionally the stolen items, even the stolen traits, turn up, bottled, boxed or wrapped and on sale at the Floating Market though the sellers of curiosities never seem quite sure there their stock came from.

Black Friars, The

The Black Friars are a holy order of monks who have been dedicated, through time, to the protection of The Key. A mystical artefact that could open the door to Islington's prison and allow him to ascend once more to heaven. The Friars are just the latest incarnation of the order, which has changed and adapted through time from one religion to another.

A martial and medical order, the Friars live within their Abbey, which is linked, to various parts of London Below via doors that work to their command and knowledge. Within the Abbey is their shrine to all those who, under their guardianship, undertook the ordeal in their quest for The Key. It is a great wooden cross and a triptych wall, covered in photographs, paintings, etchings and miniatures depicting all those who tried and failed.

Once Richard Mayhew had used the Key it was returned to the possession of the Black Friars and they protect it once more, people still come to try their luck for the ordeal, the key still has the power to grant one's heart's desire – to the worthy. The Friars mostly concern themselves with healing the sick and protecting the newly fallen.

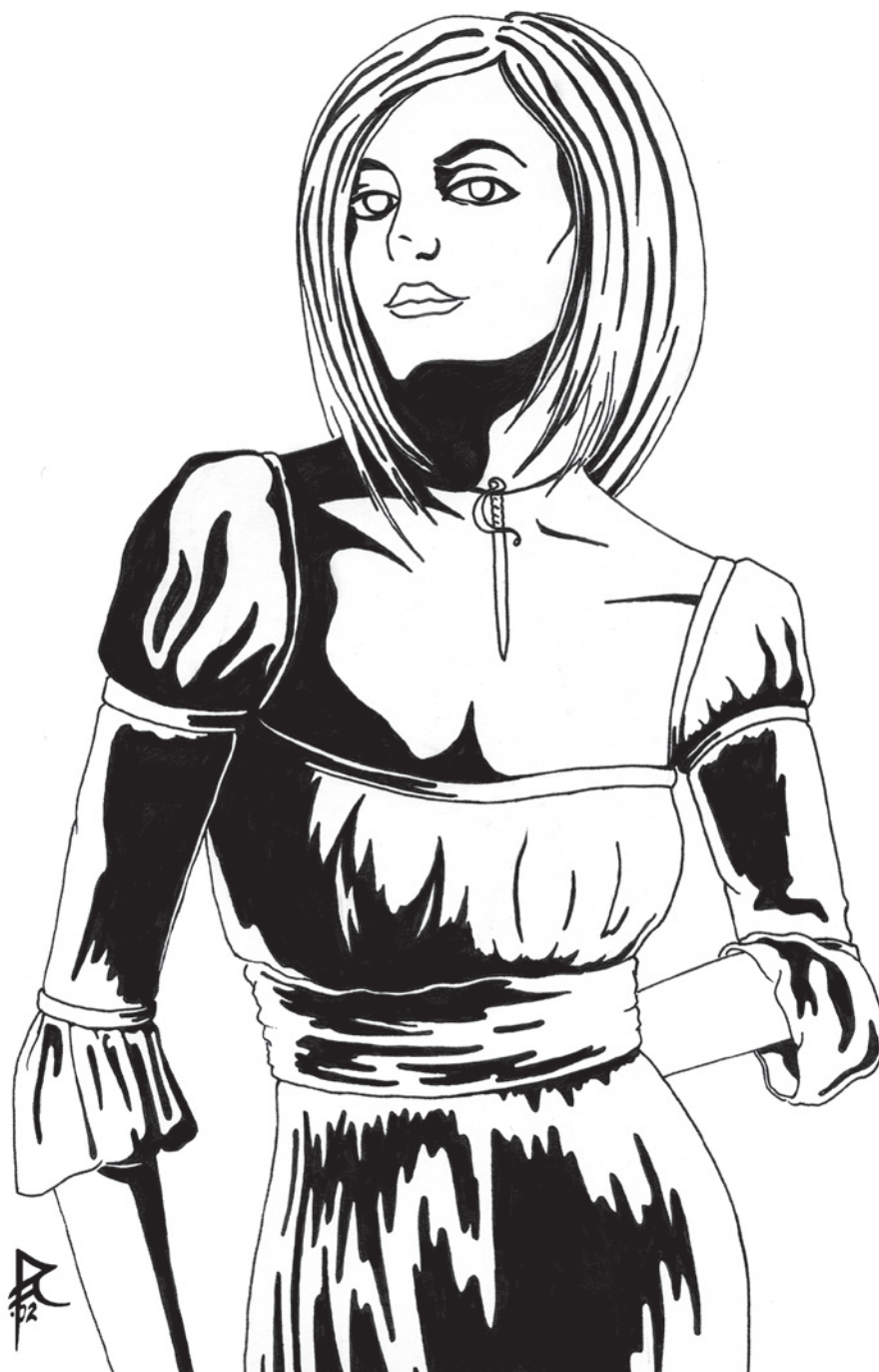
A typical Friar is *fit and strong, fast* on his feet and *resolute* in his duty. *Quiet and meditative* they keep their own counsel. A friar is a *master with one kind of weapon and professional with another*. They are also *professional at healing*. All Black Friars are of African descent and take names that evoke the colour black such as Brother Jet, Brother Swart and Brother Pitch. The Friars also have a considerable arsenal of weapons and are one of the only groups in London Below to be typically armed with guns.



Blade

Like many of the residents of London Below, Blade is significantly older than she looks. She is to be found at the Floating Market selling pastries and pies – the finest in the Underside, or so she and many others claim. Originally a slave in White City, she was purchased by a master butcher who in time freed and married her. Blade took over the business from her late husband Mr Todd, after his sudden and baffling disappearance.

Blade is a *tall and broad shouldered* woman with a *very muscular* build. Her hair is short having never properly grown back since her days as a slave and her smile is somewhat *sinister*. Her eyes are *broken* in some unidentifiable way, giving a *sense of unease* to those who catch her gaze. She is *reticent* and does not like to talk about her late husband, also *shy*, not liking to discuss her pies or to take credit for their goodness or flavour, assuring people that it's nothing to do with her. She is a *master at cooking* but she is right, it's far more to do with fine ingredients than anything else. She is also a *master at using her knives for fighting* having had to defend herself and her wares many times with a brutal cut and a cruel slice.



'A' to 'Z'

Bloomsbury

Manning a fruit and flowers cart that can be found almost anywhere at any time in London Below, usually when you least expect it, Bloomsbury is a lifesaver... for the right price. While his fruit and flowers are wilting and maggoty at best, and truly rotten at worst, Bloomsbury also carries other things, useful things, and always seems to have what you need, though not necessarily what you want. Alleged to be one of the few people the Marquis actually owes a favour to, Bloomsbury likes to build on that reputation with lies and half-truths. Whether useful or not, he's expensive.

Bloomsbury is a *short, greasy, oily* stain of a human being. *Tousled and ever happy* he grins the stumps of his rotting teeth constantly and drinks home-brewed cider from a tin. Bloomsbury is a *master at barter* and *professional at Underside lore and navigation*. He has the *knack of always knowing what you need at Master level*.

Boar of Koln

The Boar of Koln was another of the great beasts of the Underside to fall to Hunter. The Boar of Koln was similar to the Great Beast of London, a 'warm up' in many ways for Hunter. Unlike the Beast of London this very definitely was a boar, a great, tusked, trottered boar with broken splinters of shattered weapons lodged in its hide. Hunter impaled it through its mouth when it roared and it's great skull hangs on display in Koln, testament and fitting tribute to her hunting prowess.

Bond Street

In London Above, Bond Street is one of the most exclusive and expensive streets there is, lined with glittering shops, filled with hand crafted and imported treasures beyond the reach of most, where those who have sold their souls for the favour of mammon exchange that currency for material possessions.

In the Underside the metaphor is a lot less complex. Here tanners, rope makers and artisans toil to create bonds and chains of the finest quality and strongest materials. Whether for leisure or restraint, the gear made here is known to be the best though most shy away from it due to the ever present Shepherds browsing for chains for their slaves and leading their mute, broken-spirited charges along, shuffling miserably from stall to stall.

Boots, Puss In

Boots, as he likes to be known, is a close ally of the Marquis de Carabas and the two share many qualities with one another, including their bad reputation. As a cat, however, Boots has his fur and people's silly expectations to fall back on. Boots is rich, beyond dreams of avarice and only amuses himself in the machinations of London Below for his own amusement or to back up the Marquis. An official advisor in the Kingdom of Cats, Boots rarely bothers to actually earn that title.

Boots is *small, fast and aloof*, like most cats. Boots is also *arrogant, lazy, disreputable, untrustworthy, manipulative and self-centred* though once he does give his loyalty to someone, he remains *loyal*. Boots is a *conniving, silver tongued* rogue, a *legendary liar* and a *legendary thief*, reputations well deserved.

Both Worlders

"Nobody gets both," they say. You can belong to London Above, only ever seeing London Below out of the corner of one eye, or you can belong to the Underside, only ever able to make the most fleeting of contacts with the Upworld. Nobody gets them both at once

The Both-Worlders, who are rare and immediately recognisable by their mismatched eyes, are the exception that proves this well-known rule. Caught between the two cities they are, by day, wholly and entirely creatures of the Upworld, but by night they are part of London Below. These unfortunates find themselves flitting between Upworld and Underside with the rising and setting of the sun, barely sleeping and completely unaware that they are living a double life.

When in London Above they believe that other city to have been no more than a dream, and when abroad in the Underside, they lose all memory of their daily identities, jobs and friends. The strain, of course, is terrible and few Both-Worlders live very long due to both their confusion and the lack of confusion of the enemies that they have made.

Bow Church

The Underside does not have a religion as such and most of its denizens have little time for faith of any sort, there's plenty of fantastical things that they have to believe in, because they're real, without worrying about things that may or may not be real.

There are some exceptions however. The crypt of Bow Church is held as sacred and there is an effigy of and shrine to St Beckworth of the Knots, patron saint of the Underside. Who he was and why he is revered remains a mystery, even the most knowledgeable of Undersiders, and those who do hazard a guess point to his mystery and obscurity as reason enough for him to be the patron saint of a mysterious and secret place.

Bravo Ring, The

The only place where fighting is allowed, the Bravo Ring is a marked out area where Bravos and Guards may fight each other to prove their prowess to their prospective employees. Occasionally a murder is engineered through a false hiring but people going into the ring are reckoned to know what they're getting themselves into and so the truce rule does not apply.

Brentford, Old

Bailey claims the rooftop world. Bexley claims the streets. The third famous hermit of the ‘three B’s’ is Brentford, the one who claims the sewers and tunnels as his own, personal territory.

Old Brentford lives below the ground in the tunnels and the dark and suffers from *acute agoraphobia*. *Pale* as milk he dresses in a moleskin suit that has seen better days and has been patched with cat fur. Milky eyes peer from behind thick glasses at the world trying to compensate for his *myopic* vision. Gifted with an *acute sense of smell* and *fine hearing* to compensate for his lack of sight Old Brentford makes his hovels on the abandoned tube stations, nesting with his friends the tube mice and living on the bounty that they both cull from the platforms and tunnels. Many people lose things over the side of the platforms and it is Brentford, *brave* enough to risk electrocution and the Gap, who gains these rich spoils. *Hardy* and with good *strong hands* Brentford is allied to the Earl and helps maintain the security of the tube lines that form the Earl’s domain. Old Brentford is a *legendary scavenger* and a *master of Underside navigation*.

Briars, The

A sprawling growth of thorny bushes, the Briars can sprout up anywhere in the Underside in minutes reducing a passable tunnel to a mess of razor sharp thorns and tangled brush. The Briars are quickly cleared but can trap and even kill unwary travellers. They exist permanently in very few places, the tunnels of Blackheath being one. Otherwise they can sprout from the walls and shadows almost anywhere at any time.

British Museum Station

The station at British Museum has been abandoned since the nineteen-thirties and has been absorbed by the underside. Still rarely visited it is, nonetheless, a key crossing point between The Underside and London Above, it’s just that leaving the underside to enter a museum, without having paid entry or without having the keys to leave if it’s locked down, is tricky.

Brixton

A *very big*, and *craggy* troll of *very tough*, obsidian-black skin, Brixton speaks with a deep Jamaican accent and dresses in a porkpie hat, grey suit and slip on shoes. Brixton is a *colourful character* given to the telling of tall tales and is *fiercely loyal* to his friends, exerting his *great strength* and his *scary* demeanour in their defence but if crossed he is *brutal and violent* which makes him seem almost schizophrenic in character. When he grins his gold-capped teeth shine like a miniature sun in his dark face. Brixton has a deep and abiding love for Ska, even that “watered down chart crap that Suggs does.” You’d best keep out of his way when he’s skanking. Brixton is a *master musician* and is *equally as good at dancing*.

Burke’s Emporium

Burke specialises in those hard to find items, things that, perhaps, are no longer available in this benighted day and age. There are pockets of old time in London, trapped like bubbles in amber, and Burke mines them for all they are worth. If it’s lost, forgotten and definitely past its sell-by date, then Burke’s your man. Burke’s showrooms are visited by appointment only, but the man himself attends most sessions of the Floating Market. If you haven’t the means to buy his wares, Burke might be willing to hire you to find a choice trinket for him. Time-bubbles can be dangerous things, and Burke isn’t getting any younger or finding it any easier to delve into them, just to fulfil someone’s nostalgic wish for Marathon Bars and Opal Fruits.

Burke himself is a *pinched* and *wizened* old man, *bald* as a cue ball and – in appearance and aspect – much like a vulture, looking at everyone who crosses his path over his *grimy* pince-nez as if sizing up their possessions for their worth and resigning himself to wait until they perish to collect them. Burke is *tasteless and indiscrete* with all the selectivity of a colour-blind magpie, seizing upon anything and everything from the ages of man that he likes. Thus his clothing is a hodgepodge of styles and periods. His long and *dextrous*, nicotine stained fingers wriggle like worms and his *keen senses*, especially his *sensitive touch* are notorious across London Below. His *knowledge of history and Underside lore* are as *masterful* as his interpersonal skills aren’t.

Burnt Oak

This blackened and half-fossilised tree serves as one of London Below’s gibbets. Jack Ketch performs many of his hangings here and those bodies that haven’t been scavenged yet hang, slowly rotting, from the topmost branches attended by crows and the morbidly curious.

Bushy Park

Bushy Park is a small, green park with spotty grass but excellent evergreen bushes, snipped into a variety of bewildering shapes through the art of topiary. The old men who maintain the park are nominally members of The Wild Court but are more sociable and human than most members of that group. They cut their beards and hair into similar constructions to the bushes with the aid of Barnet.

Butcher Row

Not much meat makes it down to the Underside and though the houses of Dog, Cat, Rat and Bird are always at each others' throats it can be impolitic to eat any of them, not that that stops many people including those that count themselves as a friend to those houses.

Nonetheless vermin are pretty much the only thing on the menu and given that dogs, cats, rats and birds are not averse to eating the occasional dead body a sort of uneasy balance has been maintained where neither side really asks any questions about what the others are doing.

Butcher Row is where the mystery meat is brought to be prepared, cured and cooked into pies, pastries and stews. Its smokehouses, salters and picklers are always busy either with the produce of the Underside or the spoils and waste of the world above, desperately trying to both preserve and make edible everything from rotting rat to rancid ratcatcher.



'A' to 'Z'



Cadogan

Cadogan is an architect, if you can truly call demolishing walls with your fists and carving pillars with your teeth and talons architecture. Cadogan is commissioned by various parties to extend the tunnel network of London Below and to lend his artisan's skill to stonework and carving.

Cadogan is *massive*, even for a *very big* troll and is *very tough*, possessed of *enormous strength* as well as an *accurate* and *delicate touch* that enables him to produce his finely wrought stonework. As *impenetrable* and *hard* as the stone he works Cadogan is grey of flesh, *scary* to look at and wears nought but a heavy waist-mat of triple-layered chain mail. Cadogan's *stonework and tunnel building is masterful* and his skill with his fists that of a *professional boxer*.

Camden Town

Ruled by Sister Saturday and inhabited by the Darkling Children Camden is a place where the gap between the two Londons is very small. Here almost any Undersider can attract a little more attention from the Upworlders, just as a Half-Lifer can normally. Camden is a great centre of alternative culture within the capital, familiar with dark thoughts, dreams, tribalism and the use of shamanic drugs. It is perhaps this that weakens the walls along with the chaotic bustle of the nearby streets which resembles nothing so much as the Floating Market. Camden's Underside is barely distinguishable from the world above at night with drinking holes and improvised clubs blaring loud music in celebration every night seeking to gain Sister Saturday's blessing and patronage with wild displays and feats of petty magick.

Canary Wharf

This towering, sleek building, topped with a great pyramid is a physical representation of modern, efficient, dreamless, soulless London. When it was first erected it was physically painful for those who dwell in the Underside to go near the place, let alone enter it. As time has passed the inhabitants of the building have lessened its starkness and stories about the pyramid at its peak have spread, humanising the structure and slowly bringing it into the being of London Below. While it is no longer painful to Undersiders, plans to hold a floating market in the Pyramid and the top floors are thought to be premature and potentially dangerous

Candy Street

Every indulgence known to man or beast can be gluttonously engaged in on Candy Street to your heart's desire. This tiny winding passage is thick with every pleasure known to any sense and a few new ones. While there is a sweet shop selling old fashioned sweets not seen in decades there are also prostitutes male, female and in between, tattooists, purveyors of pain and even a Velvet taking a little heat to give her clients the thrill of a cold gamble with their lives.

Canning Town

This short street houses several shops run by doughty old men and women dedicated to the art of preserving. In fat, in oil, in vinegar or in crude tin cans their boast is that they can preserve anything and everything. The street constantly smells of spices, vinegar, alcohol and other preservatives and it almost always a haze of steam. The preserves and jams made here will last virtually forever though, given the nature of The Underside it's probably best not to speculate too much on exactly what's in the pots.

Cash

Trade in London Below is always a matter of boon and barter. Few in London Below can find a use for money. Since the mundane Upworlders are blindly unaware of their presence it is useless to them as a trade bridge between the two cities, save through the hands of the half-lifers. Coins are occasionally collected to make a variety of things including jewellery and scale mail. Money belongs to London Above, and will always find its way home in short order; only currency that is no longer legal tender has the ability to remain and only that of gold or silver is worth anything in and of itself in The Underside.

Castlegate

Castlegate is the location of a subterranean entrance to the Pagoda in Kew, private watchtower of Emilia Lockhart, the Lady of the Gardens. Castlegate is a clean cut stone gate, the doors of red oak and grown over with flowering creepers and roses.

Catch Points

Catch-points form the heart of the life of Sewer Folk and other sewer scavengers, being places where the flotsam and jetsam of London's network of rivers and sewers wash up. This might be a poorly maintained area of sewer, a sandbar across the Thames or even an artificial barrier or net placed by the scavengers themselves. Needless to say, each scavenger community depends on its catch-points as surely as a desert community depends upon its oases. Conflicts over ripe catch-points are usually brief but bloody and rewarding to the victor.

Caledonia

One of the Seven Sisters, Caledonia is a *powerful and immortal* sorceress. Of early middle age she is white haired and very regal, looking like nothing so much as an, airbrushed, Oil Of Ulay advert sprung to life. Clad in a simple, black, shapeless dress Caledonia is the least effusive and most reserved of the Sisters. Her power lies in her *legendary ability to traverse time and space*, so much so that she derides the Underground Map as a 'useless piece of frippery'. Like all the Seven Sisters Caledonia is *greatly feared* and Undersiders tell their children stories in which Caledonia steals away naughty children to her palace far away and works them until they die so she can live in luxury and feast upon their youth to retain her own. Caledonia is *extremely prideful* and takes great exception to anything that damages that pride. *Eternal and undying* she knows as much as the other Sisters, her mind containing a *mastery of Underside lore* and history that very few other Undersiders can match or exceed, complimenting her *legendary magic*.



Catford

Home to the Royal house of Cats, Catford's rooftop Kingdom belongs entirely to them. Catford is a monarchy and is currently ruled by King Snaresbrook. Royal blood is determined by pedigree or by deed with alley cats, strays and moggies able to earn their titles in battle against the rats, their servants the Rat-speakers, dogs or birds. The Cats have a long alliance with the Witches and the Seven Sisters whose magic helps protect their rooftop realm in exchange for the servitude of a tithe of cats as familiars, consorts and protectors. Snaresbrook has yet to produce an heir, which has prompted sniggering speculation amongst courtiers that he's been 'snipped'. This is yet to produce open revolt but the Dukes and Barons of the Cat dominion are manoeuvring for power.

The King of the cats, Snaresbrook, is a *small, fast and aloof* Siamese, a born *aristocrat* with a *pedigree* as long as your arm. Slightly *batty* and *more than a little inbred* the court chooses to ignore Snaresbrook's eccentric excesses which includes eating only fresh fish and playing with a catnip mouse while court is in session. *Regal*, when he's behaving, Snaresbrook is as *agile* as any housecat with a *masterful knowledge of the rooftops and streets of London* and a *hunting skill, which has lapsed to a merely professional level*.

Cath Cart

Before Richard ever came to London he was accosted by a strange old homeless lady who told his fortune. This strange old lady was Cath Cart, a fortune teller and an important seer from Glasgow's Underside who already sensed that Richard would go on to be something important in the underside. Cath wanders the streets of Glasgow Above and Glasgow Below, handing out esoteric advice to those with interesting destinies, tweaking the fate of The Underside one person at a time as she pushes her little shopping trolley around from place to place.

Cath Cart is *very old*, creaking and decrepit with a beaky nose and a *grimy* face. Even so, she's *extremely wise* and is gifted with a *legendary knack for second sight and fortune telling*. She claims to have been a gypsy in her old life, and a dancer, but there's precious little indication of either story being true.

Causeway, The

When the tide is out this bar of thick grey mud provides a foot crossing clear across the Thames for those of London Below, though it does not exist to the above world. The mud is thick, cloying and cannot be crossed in normal footwear, only good strong boots or 'snow-shoes'. The Causeway is the last catch point before rubbish and detritus is washed away out to sea and sewer folk, mudlarks and other scavengers gather here for whatever final pickings they can find.

Chalk Farm

Part of Sister Saturday's domain and bordering on Camden Chalk Farm is home to the Wights, the male counterparts to the Velvets. Their hall is a great, white-painted cave where they hang from gantries and hooks built into the ceiling, nimbly dropping and turning to land on their feet on a great stone platform before they make their way outside.

Chase Side

Of the many punishments meted out to transgressors of Underside or House law the Chase is one of the fairest. The lawbreaker is publicly marched to this place and stripped before being flogged out of the area and allowed to run for seven minutes before pursuit may begin. If they can escape London they are free to go but may never return. If the punishing Lord wishes them to live he will offer no reward for their slaying, removing the motivation for anyone to hunt them.

Cheapside

Part of the territory of the Shepherds of Shepherds Bush, the first ever site of the Floating Market is now theirs and, here, they occasionally hold their own markets. Vengeful or morally outraged Undersiders have often tried to shut it down but none have ever succeeded in doing so. The flesh markets of the Shepherds are successful despite the fear that so many have of them.

Clapton

The Leader of the Crouch Enders, Clapton is a dwarf's dwarf.

Hard drinking, lecherous, hardy and a tough scrapper Clapton's halls are always filled with laughter and song and he sprawls on his concrete throne overseeing his people with a *ready smile* and a *quick wit as fast as his fists*. Clapton is all of three and a half feet high, *well proportioned* for a dwarf. He is shaved bald with a short dark beard and many heavy gold rings hanging from his ears. He dresses in leather motocross armour and gauntlets and carries a rusted and filthy punch-dagger at his side. Clapton is ever *restless*, unable to settle to any single thing and *bores easily*. He *craves excitement* to fulfil his *mischievous* nature and is liable to get his people involved in *unwise* ventures just to ease his boredom. In spite of this he is *well loved* by his people and *respected* across the Underside. He is a *master with his blade and a master of wrestling with an equal skill at evading the blows of his enemies*. A *professional leader* he is held back only by his impatience.

Clarence

Technically Jessica's assistant, Clarence is younger, more ambitious and ticks all the politically correct boxes, all of which makes Jessica very upset while at the same time being worried that by being upset she's somehow being prejudiced.

Very much the 'buppie' Clarence is a *smooth operator*. *Efficient and decisive* Clarence cuts a *stylish* figure and feeds off the media expectations of a *well-dressed* young black man to his advantage. Always *groomed* Clarence is *ambitious*, *competent* and takes opportunities that present themselves to upstage his boss and make himself look good. *Utterly selfish* he is a *professional manager* and equally good at the *organisation of events*. He is *very gay and very black*, which combined with his other qualities makes Jessica apoplectic.

Clayhall

Clay Hall is one of the main settlements for Trolls in The Underside. A muddy pit on the banks of the Thames, crammed under one of the bridges, it opens out into a great hall where big fires are kept burning, baking and rebaking the walls solid. Every time they need to expand they dig out a little more of the walls and use their crafting skills to shape the fresh wet Earth into faces and shapes that then bake in the heat of the fires, the Clayhall is a constantly updating and changing façade of fine craftsmanship. The Trolls here give good hospitality, but they don't much care what they burn on their fires and the toxic fumes can be overwhelming.

Clink Street

In London Above the site of Clink Street Prison is now a museum, dedicated to the history of the place, with all sorts of mannequins and informative placards telling you about this and that and the history of this important place. Outside the streets here are still cobbled, giving it that olde-world feel. For those of London Below, however, it still very much is a prison and beneath and within the fake prison, behind the bars with the fake prisoners, are real prisoners held here at the pleasure of the various Dukes, Earls, Barons and so forth and watched over by Bravos and Guards paid a retainer by those noble houses. The only way out is appeal to the leaders of the fiefs and if you're in the Clink you're not going to get much opportunity to hobnob with nobility.

Clipstone

A craftsman, Clipstone is one of very few people who still knows how to flint-knap properly, producing stone knives, axes and arrowheads of wonderful quality for any who feel the need for such. He makes his home in Chislehurst caves working away on fine quality flint brought to him from The Shires. Dressed in rabbit skins he mainly trades for food, his only nod towards modernity being a pair of swimming goggles he wears whilst working.

Clipstone is a *filthy* man, a mass of *unkempt* beard and hair. His hands are *sure*, *steady* and *dextrous* and he has a *fine eye for detail*. His body is *rangy* and *wiry* and he is able to move with *agility* through the caves. He's not seen light in a while and is quite *pallid*. His *flint-knapping* is *masterful* in quality and he has a *legendary knowledge of Chislehurst caves*. Some speculate he's one of the time-lost, but there's no real evidence of that.

Clock House

One of Big Ben's abodes, Clock House is filled with clocks of all descriptions. Digital, clockwork, water, grandfather, alarm, carriage the only common denominator between them all is that they are all stopped and that time does not pass outside when time is spent in the house. When Ben is feeling hospitable this is where he takes his guests, treating them to tea and cakes, the house being set to what he calls 'perpetual tea time'.

Coin Street

In Southwark by the Thames, Coin Street is one of the few trading spots that deals with those from outside London Below. It has erratic trading links with other Undercities around the globe and takes its name from the traders' preference to trade using antique gold and silver coin rather than barter goods which may not maintain their value in other cultures. Most notable are Paris, Berlin, New York, and Hy Brasail. (The exact location of Hy Brasail has confused cartographers on both sides of London. The two most popular theories at present are that it is the Undercity of Sao Paolo or Tokyo). Coin Street is, then, even more exotic and cosmopolitan than The Floating Market and three times as confusing to the senses.

Coldblow

Prime Minister of Dogs, Coldblow is a *regal* looking Alsatian of greying fur who is slowly *going deaf* and *myopic*. A *traditionalist*, he regards the Dogs' duty to their human masters as the pillar around which dog society stands. Coldblow is a *large*, *strong* and *heavy* dog with *sharp teeth* and he served as a sniffer for the police before being retired. He is traditional and *moral* with a *weighty personality* given to long and *emotional* speeches. While he is *respected* by older dogs, many younger ones rebel against his attitude saying that humans have changed, and more puppies have gone to Barkingside and The Isle Of Dogs during his leadership than at any other time this century. Coldblow is *experienced* and *knowledgeable* but is starting to go a bit *senile*, nonetheless he is a *masterful orator and leader of dogs* though his *sniffing skills* have lapsed to novice level.

Compass Point

The very centre of London Below, a properly prepared needle will always point to this place in the Underside. A small round chamber at a crossroads of tunnels, the point is indicated with a simple stone marker and is otherwise unremarkable in every way, but the compass needles must be rubbed against the stone in order to be attracted to it. The stone is dark brown and leaves the needles rusty, leading some to speculate that it might have been cut from a shooting star.

Constable Close

Law and order, such as it is in London Below, is enforced by the Baronies and fiefdoms and their Lords and guards. Elsewhere it is the rule of convention and of the mob. Only Constable Close and Constable Crescent take a wider view of law and order and seek to bring any kind of uniform justice to the Underside.

Constable Close is a *plump and short* man dressed in the kind of police uniform an American tourist would expect to see on a bobby. Close is always *red-faced and sweaty*, as though he has been running a marathon. He is *slow and unhealthy*. What he also is, is *friendly, approachable and charming, easygoing and easy to talk to*. Most people take an instant liking to Constable Close and feel able to confide in him. A *professional hand with truncheon when he needs to be he is equally good at convincing people of his good intentions* and using his charm to get the information he wants to know.

Constable Crescent

Constable Close's partner, Constable Crescent couldn't be more different. *Thin and pinched*, bent over, his body shaped like a hook, his hair is *greasy* and he wears an ill-fitting suit of a seventies cut. He carries a cosh in his pocket and is *cruel and unforgiving* with it to any 'villain' who gives him short thrift. Despite his thin appearance Crescent is *extremely strong* and given to breaking fingers to make a point. Crescent is a *master of interrogations* and *professional with his cosh*, especially good at helping suspects to 'fall down the stairs'. Close and Crescent put a lot of people in mind of a sort of law-abiding and much nicer Croup and Vandemar.

Corvid, Lord

The deceased father of the Raven, Lord Corvid met his end in battle at the siege of Crossharbour, killed, like his son Rook, by Croup and Vandemar. Lord Corvid was a powerful and honourable man, but given to dark appetites that he struggled with his whole life. His end was not swift and his loss, along with that of Rook, has affected the Raven deeply and cast a long shadow over the fortunes of Raven's Court.

Covent Garden

The name is a corruption of 'Convent Garden'. There used to be a convent whose sisterhood was similar in form and function to the Black Friars. The convent itself was destroyed in the Great Flood of 1737, now only the ruins and the rose garden remain, overgrown and flowering fitfully. The Floating Market comes here frequently, and Bloomsbury claims a home in this area. The Nuns of the Order of Isolation hold vigil here and pray for their fallen sisters from so long ago.

Craven

Craven is a dark brown troll who produces the tiniest, most delicate miniature watercolours using his craggy hand as a palette for his paints.

Craven is *very large, very tough, strong and scary* as any troll but is *nervous of his own shadow, jumpy and always on edge*. An *abject coward* Craven's flight from any threat has earned him the scorn of other trolls which only makes him more *reticent and shy* and even more nervous. Because of this he retreats into a quiet *introspection*, speaking only at market where he sells his little paintings. His *watercolours are masterworks* and he is *professional at barter* using his long empty silences to make the other party nervous and keen to part with more goods if only to get away from the creepy troll.

Cricklewood

A dark tunnel, deep in the Underside, Cricklewood is a long avenue, down some polished stone steps to walk between pale white trees on a shingle of crackling white. The shingle is made up of teeth, knuckles and other small bones, the trees are cobbled together out of ancient wire and rope and the bones of the dead and the walls are set with skulls. The maker of this macabre artwork is unknown but it's thought to date back to the plague years and rats can sometimes be seen in the walls, scurrying from skull to skull, perhaps a monument, or a warning, about what a rat could accomplish in the past.

Crossharbour

Site of a siege battle between House Corvid and The Isle Of Dogs. The feral master of the Isle Of Dogs committed his forces to stalling the invading force from House Corvid at the docks while the agents Croup and Vandemar, working on his behalf, killed the leader and heir of House Corvid breaking the morale of the invading force and saving the Isle Of Dogs from defeat. It is now much more well-defended and the Raven is not yet placed to seek revenge.

Crouch End

The Crouch Enders are all dwarves and are all preternaturally fast. They know most of the ins and outs, tunnels and byways of London Below. Lambeth is the name of the premier Crouch End Bravo at the market and they have some of the best guides in London Below. Their leader, Clapton, is renowned across the Underside as a carouser and brawler. Visitors to their area will have to crawl on their hands and knees to fit their tunnels, something the Crouch Enders find hilarious and an open invitation to be kicked in the bottom.

Croup & Vandemar, Mister

Mr Croup and Mr Vandemar, the fox and the wolf, are the elite assassins of the Underside. They are expensive to hire, but fulfil their contracts with relish, moving around through time and space to execute different contracts. Many of these tasks bring them to London Below working for the more disreputable Baronies and Fiefdoms. Their last task saw them working for Islington before they were sucked through the door to god knows where. Still, given their talent for slipping through time and space and their immortal tenacity, it is unlikely that this will hold them for long – though it may well have stranded Islington.

Neither of them are human, they don't bleed or appear to feel pain in any meaningful way. They've worked together so long that they finish each other's sentences and work together like a well oiled machine.

Mr Croup

Mr Croup is *short and plump*, a *greasy* little man with eyes of faded china blue and a *fox-like* aspect. He is *short of temper* with *too many teeth* and *sharp*, piggy little eyes. He has a fondness for destroying unique and irreplaceable art, particularly T'ang dynasty sculpture. Mr Croup is *extremely verbose*, padding every sentence with unneeded complexity. While *eloquent* he has a tendency to overdo it making him seem *comical* in an *evil, cruel, petty* little way. Croup is *extremely cunning* and his *great strength* is hidden by his short stature. *Hardy and nigh invulnerable* Mr Croup is possessed of a *legendary ability* with his hands and 'claws' and a *masterful degree of intimidation, torture and knifework*. Mr Croup has the *knack of shifting through time and space* and can use this ability to teleport short distances, carrying Mr Vandemar with him if necessary.



Mr Vandemar

By contrast to Mr Croup, Mr Vandemar is *very tall* and *perpetually hungry* with brown eyes that make him look more than a little *wolfish*. Possessed of a *lower cunning* than Mr Croup Mr Vandemar is *enormously strong* and *extremely tough* – as *invulnerable* as his partner. Mr Vandemar has *keen senses* especially his sense of smell. Vandemar is *vicious and brutal* but it is in the *childlike* fashion of one who likes tearing the wings off insects, scaled up to *monstrous* levels. Mr Vandemar takes *perverse* delight in killing and is rather *simple* and *straightforward* in his approach, much less sophisticated than Mr Croup, *monosyllabic* and *very literal*. Of *legendary ability* with his *knife* and *masterful at kicking and torture* he is an *equally good tracker and mechanic*, with a *similar ability to mimic voices*. He shares Mr Croup's *knack of shifting through space and time* but cannot teleport in the same way. Mr Vandemar's rings are silver, fashioned from Crow skulls. He claims to have made them himself but in fact they were looted from Rook's corpse and are part of the Ravenscar treasure.



Crowthorne

The Man-At-Arms of Ravenscourt, Crowthorne was as much a friend to Lord Corvid as he was his guard and he now takes a fatherly interest and concern in the Raven.

Crowthorne appears to be a *very fit* man in his early forties, a streak of white runs through his hair and beard like a badger stripe and his eyes are bright gold. Dressed in black leather and a dark feathered cloak, he wears a silver chain at his neck and carries a pair of shortswords. *Stylish, efficient and feared* by the enemies of Ravenscourt, Crowthorne is *stern and intimidating, utterly professional and extremely deadly*. *Wiry and agile* he moves well for a man of his age and his *fatherly* concern for the Raven hides a deep and abiding love for her that is anything but fatherly. A *master of the blade* and a *master at spotting troublemakers* Crowthorne possesses the *knack of leaping long and high distances and perching on the tiniest purchase with the skill of a master*.

Croydon, Doctor

Doctor Croydon stands out amongst the other medical professionals of London Below in that he uses medical science. Alright, so it's junk science and he's forever waffling on about 'vibrations', 'quantum', 'vril-ya' and other nonsense but, nonetheless, his strange contraptions actually work, perhaps once or twice, before exploding spectacularly and never working again.

Croydon cuts a memorable figure, dressed in heavily patched tweed and steel toed work boots he perches innumerable pairs of glasses on his bald pate and wears fingerless woollen gloves, leaving his fingers free to tinker and poke at things with a screwdriver. Eccentrically he always keeps himself 'grounded' by tying copper wire around his calves and letting it dangle down the back of his trousers to the ground.

Doctor Croydon is an *extremely intelligent* man but he's also *completely bonkers*. He has no conceptual filter or discernment at all and will believe any *wild and crazy*, pseudo-scientific idea presented to him from homeopathy to the law of attraction. Combining these ideas in *brilliantly ridiculous* ways he uses his *masterful scavenging and engineering* skills to produce medical contraptions based on these ideas and his *legendary junk science knack* to make them 'work'. At least for a while.

Crrpllr

Crrpllr is one of the many intelligent pigeons of London Below. A noted courier she is a particular friend and client of Lady Door who uses her for her most important messages. As such an important confidante Crrpllr has considerable standing amongst the flock.

A *masterful flyer and courier* Crrpllr is *very small* but has *very neat and pretty* plumage for a London pigeon. *Very fast* and with *masterful knowledge of navigation* Crrpllr is justifiably *proud and haughty* and loathes being patronised just because she's a pigeon.

Crystal Palace

After the Great Exhibition of 1851, much of the show found its way to London Below. This was thanks to the eccentricity of Colonel Flemming who had an unquenchable passion for the achievements of the Empire. It is also thanks to London's reluctance to relinquish the treasures that had graced its streets; instead pulling them down to clasp to its secret heart in the Underside.

Curzon

Curzon is the leader of the Trolls of Trollstone. Pale grey and green in colour Curzon is more of a warlord than anything else.

Very big, indeed truly enormous his *massive and ponderous* bulk provides him with *fantastic strength*, makes him *very tough* and renders him *nigh unstoppable*, not to mention *scary*. Curzon's mind is as *sharp* as the weapons he crafts and his *insightful* leadership has earned the Trolls a better reputation than that of monsters to be feared and loathed. Curzon is reluctant to involve the Trolls in the battles of the Underside fearing that they will still be thought expendable and used cheaply in such conflicts. He is a *master weaponsmith and leader, equally skilled in sussing out people*.

Cutty Sark

An old tea clipper sailing ship that rests in the docks at Greenwich. The ship is home to a curious pale-eyed barefooted ragamuffin who calls herself 'the Pirate Girl', though she also has her own 'ship' for plying the Thames. Oft running afoul of Admiral Mews the girl lives up to her name in most regards. The Cutty Sark – and its dock – have been used for Floating Markets in the past.

Cygnets, The

The Cygnets are three faerie swan-maidens who live on a barge in little Venice. As Swans they take mates and nest, producing a single egg each and every year. Each of these eggs can store someone's life force and soul, enabling them to be restored after their body 'dies', life eggs, just like the others in London Below but these ones are special, they heal all harm and require no special preparation or secret knowledge. Convincing one of the Cygnets to part with her child, or stealing it from her, is a daunting prospect, though it has been known to happen and the knowledge of how to craft the lesser life eggs is said to come from them.

The Cygnets are *lithe and graceful, utterly beautiful* and possessed of *otherworldly charm*. As faerie beings they are *immortal and incorruptible*, preferring to keep to themselves. In place of hair they have fine white feathers. Each of the Cygnets has a *masterful singing* voice and has a *professional ability to do minor illusory glammers*. They also possess the *knack of changing into the form of a swan*.



Daily Current, The

The Daily Current is The Underside's only newspaper. Produced sporadically on recycled paper and distributed haphazardly by anyone willing to take them around the news is often the 'olds' by the time you get to see a copy of the paper. Usually little more than one, big, double-sided sheet, printed close with small type in the old Victorian style the paper also includes advertisements by the more well-to-do buyers and sellers of London Below, talking of their goods and services in glowing and wholly unrealistic terms.

Darkling Children

Subjects of Sister Saturday and a tribe unto themselves, they live in Camden Town and deal in petty magicks and parlour tricks as well as hucksterism and grifting. When creative they tend towards the musical, when destructive they tend towards the most vicious of acts, apparently for no more consideration than the kick they get out of it. In appearance they often appear to be well-heeled pallbearers of the Victorian era and all but worship the Wights and the Velvets whom they see as something to emulate and aspire to.

A typical Darkling Child is *pale and wan*, Darkling Children are at great pains to look dour and serious though in their own element they party hard and can be *raucous and rowdy*. Usually *graceful* and always *stylish* they are *professionals in a creative art of some kind* and *in hand to hand combat as well as at their knack of petty magic*.

De Carabas' Coat

The coat of the Marquis de Carabas is one of the great treasures of The Underside. It always seems to have what you need tucked away in a pocket somewhere and you can put an endless amount of pocket sized items into it and always retrieve them safely later on, merely be reaching into the inside. After his untimely death and before his resurrection the Marquis' coat was taken away from him by Croup and Vandemar before they, also, subsequently lost it. Quite where it is and who has it isn't known at the moment, but the Marquis is quite keen to have it returned to him.

Deepdale

Empty vaults, forgotten when fire engulfed the old Westminster Cathedral, Deepdale is now home to those Undersiders unable or unwilling to face the surface world any more in either night, or day. Some of those here look like death and smell suspiciously of formaldehyde. These are amongst the most regular customers of the Shepherds though precisely what they do with all the slaves they buy isn't exactly clear...

Destiny Trading

A stall that is often found at The Floating Market, the Destiny Trading Company buys and sells destinies. If you're unsatisfied with yours or are looking to trade yours in for something more tangible then they're the people to see. For a rather steep price you can buy yourself a more grandiose destiny or escape the weight and expectation of history by trading your grand fate for something more mundane. Mr Zig is the barker, calling in the business and handling the transactions, while Miss Zag handles the reweaving of your fate on her hand loom.

There are no refunds.

Dickensian, Ichabard Mordaunt

A self-styled 'expert and everyman' on all matters, he is most readily to be found at the Floating Market. There he offers his aid and advice on all subjects from alabaster vases to the zoology of fabulous creatures. How sound his teachings are is a matter of personal opinion, but no one has yet thought themselves so cheated as to employ a Bravo and make their grievances felt.

Ichabard is a *grovelling, little, toady, eager* to please and *desperate for attention* and adulation. While *knowledgeable* he lacks expertise and is merely a *gifted amateur* at most things. *Convincing* and a *masterful liar* he makes up for his ropery and partial information with conjecture and supposition. Icabard is a *novice at everything*.

Diogenes Club

The Diogenes club, named for the Greek Philosopher of cynicism, is a holdover from the Victorian gentleman's clubs of their day and is exclusively for men. Only relatively well-to-do gentlemen – by London Below standards – are permitted to apply for membership and the club, aside from one room, is maintained as utterly silent at all times. Gentlemen come here to contemplate and to escape the annoyances of other people for a time.

Dog of Paris

The Dog of Paris was yet another victim of Hunter's depredations. The great guardian beast of that city the Dog was more wolf than hound and claimed to be descended from the Beast of Gévaudan. An unknown but definitely canine species the Dog was gigantic, something akin to what a particularly large Dire Wolf may have appeared to be.

In legend there was more than one Beast of Gévaudan so there may be other Dogs of Paris out there, somewhere. They would be *truly enormous* creatures with *very tough* hides, *extremely acute senses* and *terrible jaws*. *Wickedly strong*, few things could stand up to them and they would hunt with *tireless* tenacity and a special, *vicious*, hatred of humans.

De Carabas, The Marquis

The Marquis de Carabas is known and hated across the Underside as an untrustworthy and mysterious piece of work but is grudgingly and resignedly accepted by most as being the best fixer in London Below, able to get just about anything done, for a price. That price is invariably a promise, secret or boon that will add to the Marquis' leverage over London Below as a whole. He collects favours as other people collect coins or stamps. Utterly irreverent, arrogant, condescending and callous the Marquis borders on the sociopathic while maintaining a humorous and eloquent manner that helps him still seem human. Moving with catlike grace and always with style the Marquis is confident and sure of himself, laid back and debonair whatever situation he is thrust into. Sardonic and sarcastic he is impatient with fools and prone to settling into a sort of smug, self-satisfied. Legendary at barter and hustling the Marquis has a masterful knowledge of Underside lore and navigation. He always carries a few light trading goods upon him and knows many secrets including the reels he taught to Lear, the location of the Velvets' cavern and the power of the life-eggs which he was forced to use in his confrontation with Croup and Vandemar. He has the legendary knack that any promise or deal made with him must be upheld, to the letter of the agreement and cannot be avoided.



Don

When Richard fell into London Below he was forgotten by London Above, including his fiancée, Jessica. In his absence she found herself a new paramour, much to Richard's dismay, a man who was everything Richard wasn't at the time.

Don worked for Stocktons, the same as Jessica, he was a *big, broad-shouldered, Adonis* of man, *very confident, very competent*, with an *easy-going* manner and that inherent *smugness* that comes from being *well-off* and good at just about everything you try. He was a *professional PR guru and probably just as good at sports*. The kind of guy you just want to punch in his smug, handsome face.

Dream Seller

Another popular stall in The Floating Market is the Dream Seller, a slightly sinister looking man in a top hat and tailcoat who sells bottled dreams of just about anything you can imagine and can even mix them up to order out of the special vapours he keeps in his machinery. Nightmares, however, are only sold under the counter along with some other, more dubious dream effects like lucid dreams or sleepwalking, things that can be potentially deadly.

Down Street

A street that descends straight down into the earth. The street starts in a house. The house has a plaque beside its door that reads...

"The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Houses. Down Street. Please knock."

The street is looked after by a liveried footman who mans the lift, which says it's out of order. The lift is at the bottom of four flights of stairs – posh, threadbare, sacking and bare boards respectively. At the bottom of the lift shaft is a bottomless pit crossed by a board and beyond that the road spirals down and down and down until it reaches the Labyrinth. Beyond the Labyrinth is Islington's prison and door to heaven and within the labyrinth many other strange and possibly terrible things.

Duke's Court

The Duke's court claims dominion over the forgotten, whereas the Earl claims the lost and Raven claims the taken, the stolen. The Duke was tutored by the Black Friars and remains devout and ascetic. All that is forgotten by others winds up in the Duke's home, deep in the vaults of the Natural History Museum.

Languages, knowledge, peoples, and places, the lore that has faded from memory comes here to its final resting place. The Duke's role in the politics and machinations of the Underside is limited but effective, lending his weight to the side of good or the preservation of knowledge, whichever has the strongest pull at the time. Duke's court is not especially wealthy and not especially powerful but his men-at-arms are well trained and faithful to the Duke and his family.

The Duke is a *healthy* man in his early fifties with salt-and-pepper hair and a thin beard that is little more than stubble. His eyes are a *piercing, steely* grey and his gaze seems to penetrate the soul granting him *deep, insightful* knowledge of those he looks upon. *Extremely intelligent and very knowledgeable* the Duke is *sophisticated and devout* thanks to his upbringing with the Black Friars. The Duke's wife died some years back which has rendered him somewhat *hard and introspective* but his children live, and his heir, Camberley, now fifteen, is his pride and joy. The Duke has a *legendary knowledge of Underside lore and secret history* and is *professional with the blade and at the etiquette of court*. He has the *knack of never forgetting* as do all his line and hence his coat of arms is an elephant and a castle.

Dunnikin

The Leader of the Sewer Folk, Dunnikin is as rich in odours as he'll never be in trading goods.

Dunnikin is a *tall and stooped, raggedy* man with a *fantastically odorous* stench. *Expressive and magnanimous* Dunnikin makes a fine leader for his people, *concerned and watchful* as he is for their well-being. Dunnikin is a *master trader and a masterful fisherman* able to pull treasures of all kinds from the filthy sewer water. He is also a *master at finding his way around in the dark with his Underside navigation*.



Dull Witch, The

One of the Four Witches the Dull Witch has the legendary magical ability to erode anything. Blades dull in her presence, stone wears down, everything becomes too much bother to concentrate on and the most exciting activity begins to induce boredom and yawning.

The Dull Witch herself is everything you would expect of someone with this power. Grey of skin, grey of hair, grey of personality and grey of dress, the Dull Witch is *rounded and flabby*, though she covers this with a glamour. Always sighing and yawning she must be cajoled by her sisters to do the tiniest thing. *Dulling* and *eroding* everything around her comes as little more than a reflex. *Limp and slumped* she is nonetheless *immortal and inviolate*. If ever roused her *steely* muscles and *indomitable* toughness ensure that she will be able to endure any battle. *Lazy and constantly bored* the Dull Witch can only ever be engaged, however briefly, by something entirely new, which will usually occupy her for all of five minutes before being rendered dull and lifeless. As well as her *legendary powers of erosion* the Dull Witch has a *masterful knowledge of Underside lore and cursing magics*.



E

Earl's Court

Earl's Court claims dominion over the lost and the London underground. Everything on and in the underground owes fealty to him from the ticket machines and gateways to the vending machines that keep his court supplied with coke and chocolate.

The court itself takes up a train made up of six cars. The first is the Earl's private quarters, the second the hall where he receives guests and holds court. The third and fourth are lined with stone and piled high with lost property and knowledge. The fifth serves as a barracks for his men-at-arms and the sixth is split into two guest chambers providing accommodation for the Lords and Ladies of his domain.

The Earl keeps two of his men as personal guards, Halvard and Dagvard. Tooley is his jester and Buffer is his falconer. The Earl keeps an elderly wolfhound as his faithful companion and has no heir, nor is he likely to produce one at this late stage in his life.

The Earl of Earl's court was once a *respected, hawkish warrior and a ladies man* but *time has not been kind* to the old fellow. Pottering about in his dressing gown and slippers and increasingly *senile* in his dotage, the final blow to the Earl was the loss of his eye in repaying a debt to the Marquis by involving himself in the most recent attack on the White City. The loss of his eye and a great deal of his men brought age crashing down on the Earl and he has collapsed inwardly. Still a *broad and strong man of great endurance* the Earl is nonetheless *doddering and unsure* of himself. *Genial and friendly* he compensates for his *teetering health and lapsed mind* by being a *fine host* and doing all he can to help the forces of good within the Underside. The Earl claims dominion over the lost and the underground he is a *masterful swordsman with a mastery of the lore of the Underside*. He is a *professional leader* who was once greater than he is now, those times have passed.

The Earl's Court train can travel to and stop at any station, even ones that have been closed off for decades. The wolfhound that lives at court is an ally and diplomat from the Dog's Parliament named Gere. Like the other nobles involved in the debacle at White City The Earl has a special and abiding hatred for the Marquis.



East End

Down an alley and up some steps in the easternmost parts of London you will find this wooden doorway. Through it only mists can be seen but the scent of spices and the sound of chanting can sometimes be made out drifting through the opening. The door itself is impassable, but it's claimed that diplomats from the Undersides of Tokyo and Shanghai appear through this door.

Ectoplasm

Ectoplasm is vaporous, grey fluid which is associated with ghosts and other psychic phenomena. In The Floating Market you can buy bottles of the stuff though it's really little more than a plaything, able to be shaped and coloured into temporary illusions by the purchaser, though they dissipate like smoke within a few minutes.

Elephant & Castle

A small band of Bravos has mounted a small wood-and-rubber castle on the top of an aging bull elephant 'liberated' from London Zoo. Three or four of them at a time can mount the crotchety old elephant, taking cover in their castle (constructed from driftwood and old tyres) and taking pot shots with crossbows or slings at anyone who comes into range. The elephant also wears armour, also fashioned from old car tyres, and seems remarkably happy with its lot as a war mount and only grumpy because that's its natural temperament. Things have been fairly peaceful of late and so the band hires out their mount's muscle for transportation and construction work as much as conflict.





Figgis, Mister

Mr Figgis is the security guard stationed on reception at Richard's place of work. He is *flabby*, made *corpulent and unhealthy* by sitting all day watching people go to and fro, and *smells of linctus*. Despite his *diligent* watchfulness he is an *inefficient* paper pusher. A *stickler for the rules* (every rule) he is a *stubborn little Napoleon*. Figgis enjoys his pornography a little too much and doesn't particularly like himself for it, he has – nonetheless – amassed an encyclopaedic collection of soft porn. Figgis is a *novice security guard*, despite years at the job. He has a *masterful knowledge of soft porn and of building regulations*. Ironically he hides his pornographic magazines within a copy of The Sun, which might also be termed a porn mag, just with worse writing.

Flemming, Colonel

Flemming's career matches the progress of the Victorian age. Twelve when Victoria ascended the throne he participated in many of the shaping moments of that era, serving with distinction in the military as well as being involved in the sciences. The Colonel saved a great deal of memorabilia all through his life and stopped aging when Victoria died leaving him permanently at the age of seventy-six.

Flemming is a *spry and gentlemanly* man possessed of *extremely conservative* views and an enormous, bushy white moustache. *Very experienced and very knowledgeable* he is a *little slow* but his mind remains *keen and sharp*. Always *animated* when talking about his collection, the Colonel is a *master in his knowledge of science and history* though time has dulled his military skills to that of a *novice with the sword, pistol, rifle and horse*.

Floating Market, The

The Floating Market is called that because it floats from place to place, not because it is on water – though, sometimes, it is. Anything can be bought or sold at market and the whole place is under an enforced truce that nobody has broken in centuries, due to the bad things that happened to the people who did last time. No violence is allowed there; all may come and ply their trade in peace and safety. It is also considered bad form to jump people on their way to and from the market, though this still happens.

All the various sub-classes of underdweller be represented by stalls here. Everything is bought by barter and money has no meaning here. It is also bad form to steal things from London above to barter; they should be discarded or freely given to you. Older underdwellers will be able to tell if something is stolen, though minor transgressions are ignored and Half-Lifers sometimes are able to purchase goods from London Above to bring below, provided they've somehow earned it.

Good locations for the Floating Market include the Cutty Sark, the Natural History Museum, the British Museum, HMS Belfast, Harrods, Tower Bridge, Parliament, Trafalgar Square, Kew Gardens, Westminster Abbey and the courtyard of Buckingham Palace.

It's impossible to lie about when or where the market is, some deep magic makes that so. Nobody really knows how the knowledge disseminates about when and where the market is either, it just happens – somehow.

Fog, London

A 'pea-souper', or London Particular fog like this, hasn't been seen in London Above since the 1950's, which is a source of great disappointment to tourists but of great joy to anyone old enough to remember them. Caused by mist rising from the Thames meeting sewage miasma, industrial waste and the smoke from thousands of houses and factories London fog had a 'taste' and consistency all of its own.

Romantic looking as it may have been London fog was a cover for crime including the murders of the Ripper and even without the criminal element the worst fogs were responsible for thousands of deaths from illnesses and respiratory conditions. Remnants of the fog still exist in London Below in foul patches blocking sight and choking Undersiders, as well as providing cover for nefarious deals.

Fop with No Name, The

An effeminate bravo who resembles nothing so much as Hugh Laurie in Blackadder the Third, the Fop With No Name tries very hard to project the image of an eighteenth century rake while only having access to jumble sale clothes and face powder made from grinding up chalk.

The Fop is as *thin as a broom* and of *delicate* mannerism and constitution. His strength lies in his *extremely fast* reactions and his *lithe and fluid* movements. The Fop is a *professional with the blade* but his real strength lies in his *hand-to-hand skills, which are those of a master*.

Four Witches, The

The Old Witch, mistress of decay, the Green Witch, mistress of growth, the Dull Witch, mistress of erosion and the Wool Witch, mistress of creation, are some of the most potent conjurors in London Below and deal with most of the undesirables of below, including the Shepherds, without reservation or a second thought. It is dangerous to bargain with them but it can be very, very useful, if you're willing to pay the price and they're a lot less scary or Machiavellian than the Seven Sisters, which isn't to say that they're mild, meek or approachable in any way.

Fox Corner

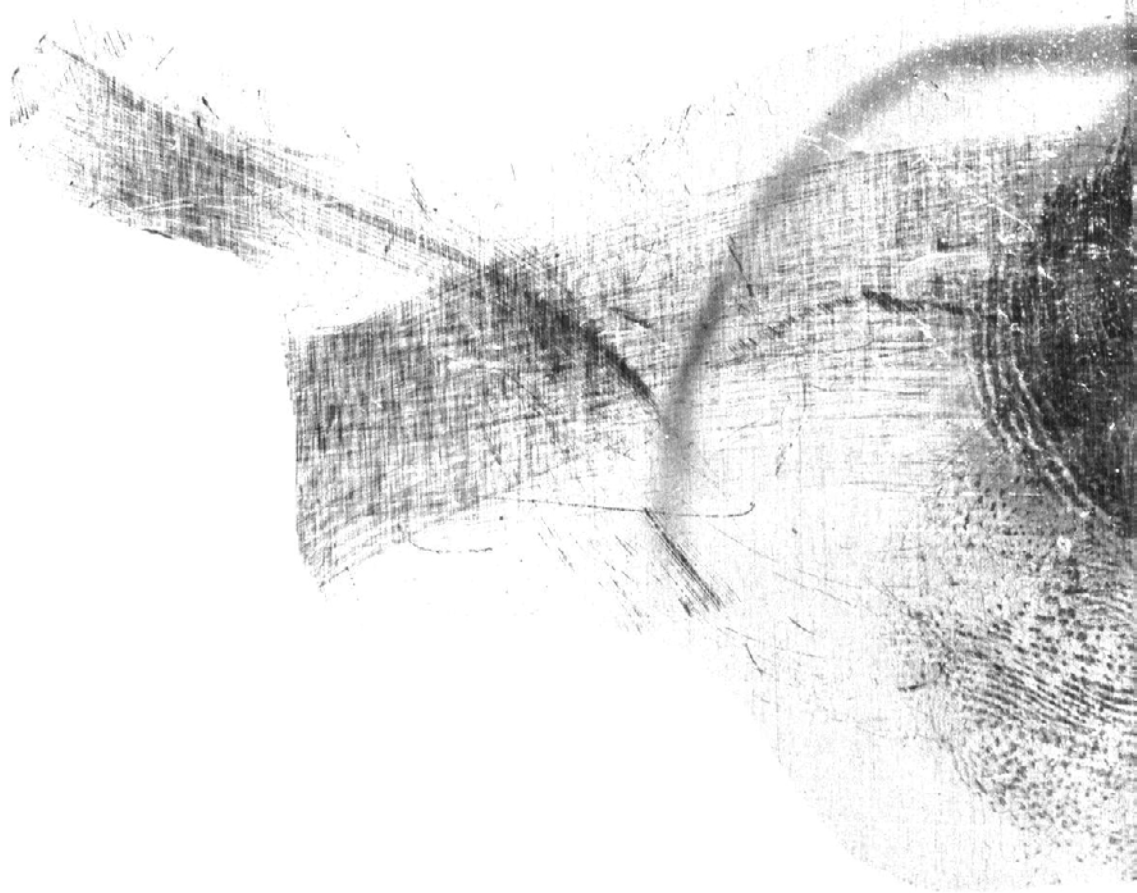
Owned by the Wild Court, Fox Corner is a tangled, green and hidden plot of land left abandoned since the second world war when it was bombed. Once a furriers, it is now a jumble of collapsed red brick, grass and tangled plants.

In amongst the wreckage a couple of families of urban foxes make their home untouched by the Underside for fear of invoking the wrath of Herne. The foxes grow sleek and healthy on London's refuse and produce healthy cubs each year who migrate through the city out to the greenbelt bringing urban magic and city cunning to the foxes of the Shires.

Fulginious, Brother

One of The Black Friars, Brother Fulginious works as the Abbot's main aide-de-camp and helper leading him along in his blindness and caring for him.

Brother Fulginious is *brisk, brusque and organised*. *Devoted* to the abbot he does all he can to be *helpful*. Despite his less martial role Brother Fulginious retains the *trained physique*, the *strong muscles* and *tough body* that all the brothers maintain through their martial exercises. Brother Fulginious is a *professional quarterstaff fighter* and a *novice boxer* as well as a *master aide*, well-trained by meeting the Abbot's, sometimes eccentric, requirements.





Galleons Reach

Galleons Reach is a tiny little ‘port’, right at the outer limits of what can legitimately be called ‘London’, out on the Thames, towards the sea, on the estuary. It’s a lawless little place where the boats and ships of The Underside, as well as a rusty old submarine, can stop, trade, brawl and drink their crews into a stupor before heading into London proper. It’s little more than a ramshackle collection of beached boats, shacks and shipping containers but for river-faring Undersiders it’s a place they can consider their own, home.

Gap, The

A *mist-like* and *tentacled* force that exists along the train tracks and in the tunnels, the Gap are rumoured to make their homes in the Underside line and Blackheath. *Wispy* looking, like shadows, they are still solid enough to grab you, burning your skin and trying to drag you down onto the track to feast on your body and your soul. Its touch *stings* and is *icy cold*, leaching colour as well as life and energy. The Gap is *endlessly patient* and *extremely powerful*, able to drag even strong Bravos down onto the tracks. It is greatly *feared* by all Undersiders and is one of the chief reasons so few use the Underground trains save in emergencies, or to get an audience with the Earl. The Gap is *sinister, dark and cold*, its wispy form *extremely resistant to harm*. The Gap is a *professional at grabbing people* off the platform to feed its hunger and may even occasionally feed on those from London Above.

Gherkin, The

As a relatively new building The Gherkin (30 St Mary Axe) hasn’t really sunk into London Below quite yet. The Floating Market hasn’t even exploited the space yet and the real estate that the strange building represents is available to be snapped up by a power in The Underside with the appropriate resonance for a gigantic glass dildo.

Globe, The

Underneath the rebuilt and restored theatre lies the Underside reflection of the original building, which harks back in its audience as much as its structure to Elizabethan times. The Players of Acton Green perform here fairly regularly to an audience of jeering or cheering Undersiders craving a little entertainment. At other times The Globe plays host to less savoury entertainments such as gladiatorial bouts, dog fights, gambling and slave trading. The sawdust is filthy, the wood is rotten, but somehow the filthy old place continues to persist, perhaps only to spite the glowing historical view of Bill Shakespeare.

Golden, The

‘Mutant’ rats with shining, golden coats; the Golden’s long stay in London Below has changed them far beyond normal recognition. Rats have always been able to eat anything that they come across and some say that the Golden just managed to adapt to eating the weirdness and magic that occurs everywhere in London Below. They rule London’s rats from deep down in the city, nested in an ancient mammoth skull, never appearing to others. Their agendas are anyone’s guess.

The Golden are *supremely intelligent* and *large* for rats. *Immortal* they are no less than *living gods* to the other clans of rats and are possessed of *great cunning* and *great ferocity*. The Golden have a *masterful knowledge of Underside lore and history* (from a rat’s perspective). Long pampered the *skills in combat that once felled that mammoth have atrophied to a mere professional level* and they rely on their people to protect them.

Gray’s Inn

A stop-along-the-way for many travellers, Gray’s Inn sits neatly at the heart of London Below, straddling many of the most travelled routes through it. The same treaty that covers the Floating Market covers this place at all times. The ale is cheap, the beds are straw. The food is simple and of suspect providence but the hearth is always warm and the welcome always hearty. Provided you can pay your way, otherwise you’re out on your ear.

Green Dragon Yard

A narrow street in Aldgate and the second entrance to the White Chapel, its name comes from the two large sconces that stand sentry either side of the door. Crafted of heavy copper they form an arch of two great dragons, each with a torch clasped in their talons. There are many popular stories of the dragons coming to life and eating wrongdoers though these are likely ‘bollocks’, which is how Old Bailey invariably ends his tales about the place.

Greenwich

Providence of the Witches, best approached by river boat, though there is the tunnel that also provides access. Undersiders are advised not to take the tunnel route as it has been often proven to be their undoing. The Witches must keep some secrets down here that they don’t want anyone else getting their grubby little paws on.

Greyling, The

The Greyling is a spy, a *loathsome* creature whose knacks keep him unseen to almost everyone. Those of Raven’s Court and very few others know of him. The Greyling is a *thin and emaciated* creature, *silent* in movement and *slippery as a silverfish*. Milky white eyes peer out of a *pale* grey face, its limbs long and loose, its fingers *wickedly dextrous*. The Greyling is *very alert* and *very sneaky*, able to pass unseen in all places. Those few who have seen him, and only Raven’s Court and The Marquis are certain to have, have power over him. He is a *legendary sneak* and has the *knacks of becoming invisible, silent and odourless*.

Green Witch, The

One of the Four Witches, the Green Witch is the most *powerful* of them and has *legendary* power over all living and growing things as well as a *masterful* skill with *potions* and *curses*. The Green Witch appears as a wrinkled, *old* woman whose skin appears to be bark and is certainly as *tough* as *wood*. Her hair and the highlights of her skin are greenish and her nails long and black. She dresses in sackcloth and her *cackle* can cut glass. While she has power over all living things she prefers to create thorns and *twisted* trees, mushrooms and all manner of *unpleasant* and dark vegetation. She, herself, reflects her creations, twisted and *very unpleasant*. *Perpetually sneering* and *condescending* she is as *brawny* as the roots of the trees and as *hard* as *oak*, not to mention seemingly *immortal*. She hides this appearance under the glamour of a beautiful young woman, though some think the twisted crone may be the true glamour.



Gropecountelane, Bordhawelane, Puppkierty Lane

Gropecounte, Bordhawe and Puppkierty are three lanes, surrounding a little square known as 'the hole' where the adult services of The Underside can be procured. No matter your taste or the depths of your depravity you'll find something here to slake your lust and probably things you never imagined anyone, let alone yourself, might find erotic. Some of the stranger beings to exist in The Underside play their trade here as exotic sweet-meats for the jaded

Gutter

The leader of the Cave Painters, inasmuch as they have a leader.

Gutter is a *cheeky and bullying* lad on the verge of his teens at which point the tribe will cast him out for being too old. For now, however, he is the *big cheese* on this smorgasbord and intends to enjoy it. Gutter is a *wily* brat, *fast on his feet and quick with his hands*. A *professional with the switchblade* he is able to *dash off quick wall paintings to a similar standard with his infranet knack*.

Gutter Lane

In the right circumstances anyone may chance to find themselves newly fallen to the Underside, having slipped through the cracks of London above. It seems true, however, that in some places the cracks are considerably wider than in others. Gutter Lane by St Paul's Cathedral is one such place and some Undersiders, both unscrupulous and charitable, stake out the area hoping to catch new people as they fall through.





Hackbridge, Sir Grenville

Sir Grenville Hackbridge is a minor and barely noteworthy noble of the Underside and of interest only through his son's unfortunate demise at the blades of Harrow and Wealdstone.

Halfnoon Passage

A small alleyway in Aldgate. Halfway down - if you know how to look - is the first entrance to the White Chapel.

Hall, The

Rumoured to be the home of the Greyling, but it's just spurious legend. Of course, since it concerns him and is also dangerously close to Blackheath, no one has yet seen fit to go and find out for certain. The Hall is little but a long straight stone passage, lined with dim, guttering torches. Here and there the stone panels can be moved, revealing tiny stone chambers behind containing bones, dust or nothing at all.

Halvard

One of the Earl's two bodyguards, the other being Dagvard.

Halvard is an *elderly* man dressed in a chain mail hauberk and a pot helmet. While getting on in years Halvard is still *strong and steady*, his *steadfast* grip and *accurate* aim as good as it ever was. Halvard may be a bit *slow* in his later years but he's *loyal* to the Earl in spite of his *grumbling* comments. Basically *good-natured* he tends to be the most *welcoming* face in the Earl's court. *A master with the crossbow and the halberd* Halvard minimises his involvement in court to following the Earl's instructions, not exactly aloof, more *weary*.

Hammersmith

The best blacksmith and metalworker by far in London. Below, he knew Door as a child.

Hammersmith is a *great, big, giant* of a man. *Spectacularly bearded* and *extremely imposing* in his *towering* eight foot frame, clad in his leather overalls and wielding his hammer with *amazing dexterity*. Hammersmith never misses a market and his price is high but his goods are of fantastic quality. *Amazingly nimble* with his fingers and *supernaturally accurate* in his work Hammersmith turns out the most detailed and *perfectionist* metalwork seen in the Underside. Hammersmith is a *legendary smith and welder* and a *master with his hammer as well as wrestling*. While a bit *simple* he is as *honest* as the day is long and a *diligent* worker

Handsome Cab

Cab is one of the leading 'persons of negotiable virtue' in the underside, his catchphrase is that he'll 'get you where you need to go'.

Devilishly handsome and *flagrant* in his pansexuality, Cab will do anything, anywhere, anytime, to anyone or anything if paid sufficiently well. He's *very good with his hands*, as you'd need to be in such a job and *remarkably resilient*. While he's *crude and disgusting* much of the time he's also *extremely charming* with a *quick wit and ready smile*. He's a *master in the bedroom and at flirtation*, able to entice many who wouldn't normally pay for such services to do so as well as having the *masterful knack of knowing your heart's desire*.

Hayes Murphy

The Keeper of the Sanctuary possesses a special *knack*. *Able to sense danger and trustworthiness in others with masterful skill*, able to project to see if they will harm him, Hayes looked all through the Underside for the safest place but saw nothing but death and harm that would come to him wherever he went. Hayes eventually found his safety behind a locked door in Parliament Square and made his home in the chambers beyond. Water, light and heat were his. Food could be brought to him and there was room, room for others who needed safety and whose safety he could grant in exchange for service. Hayes is *extremely nervous, timid and paranoid*. *Slim and quick* he is ever *alert* for trouble. Hayes dresses all in black and stutters when under stress. He is a *professional cook and at the art of healing*, providing what care he can for those guests who pass muster and who he deems safe. Getting him out of his bolthole will prove extremely difficult, he's excellent at avoiding harm.

Headstone

Headstone is the most commonly seen of the inhabitants of Deepdale. He is the one who is sent out to purchase the slaves that they need.

Headstone is *tall and bald*. Often mistaken for one of the Shepherds he strikes an extremely *intimidating* figure. *Gaunt and steadfast* his body is *strong and extremely tough*, able to shrug off otherwise fatal looking wounds. Headstone is *monosyllabic*, never saying more words than absolutely required in the execution of his business and he never stays out of the crypts any longer than absolutely necessary. *A master with his fists and a professional tracker*, few slaves manage to get away from him. Headstone is to all intents and purposes a zombie and *cannot be killed by conventional means unless hacked to pieces, this is his knack*.

Harrow & Wieldstone

The twins. They possess an almost *preternatural speed and fantastic grace* that has been the undoing of many petty felons and larcenists as well as rivals and challengers of the more ambitious variety. They are weapon masters extraordinaire, specialising in the art of the sword to the exclusion of most other interests and *deadly* in every duel they have fought to date. The most famous of these duels, perhaps, being their quarrel with the son of Sir Grenville Hackbridge in 1807 and the subsequent duel on Hampstead Heath, the outcome of which is well documented in the underside. The monument to Sudarium Hackbridge's memory can be seen on the Heath itself. Identical in every regard the twins finish each other's sentences and mirror each other's moves. *Acrobatic, athletic and balletic* they are legends across the Underside for their swordplay and their insistence on fighting to the death in any challenge that they are given.



'A' to 'Z'

Herne Hill

Owned by the Wild Court, Herne Hill is said to be Herne's resting place and it is kept clear and sacrosanct by his followers.

The head of the Wild Court, Herne is a mythic figure, only ever glimpsed. Those who owe fealty to the Wild Court do not follow his lead so much as worship him and the nature he represents. Herne rides alongside the Wild Hunt, which rides out twice a year to take those who have most offended the court and dispose of them. Herne appears as a tall man, hooded and cloaked with antlers protruding from his head.

Highgate

In theory Highgate is still Sister Saturday's dominion, but in practice no one owns it. This is largely due to the cemetery that serves as the final resting place of many members of the noble houses. An unspoken truce is kept in the cemetery, allowing any resident of London Below to pay their respects to the dead that lie there. The Highgate Vampire remains a mystery though Velvets and Wights alike manage to look both annoyed and self-satisfied when the tale is brought up.

Hither Green

A smallish patch of well tended grass and trees, the Green has a mystical quality known only to those resident in London Below – and then only a few. Standing in the centre of the green and burning an image of the person you wish to see will compel them to come to Hither Green and to present themselves to you, though what they do after that is entirely up to them. Those who know the knack try to keep it quiet, not wanting to be summoned away themselves in the middle of something.

Honeysuckle Gardens

A beautiful garden of night blooming flowers, this quiet spot of reflection is a favourite of the Velvets who come here to bask in the moonlight and enjoy the scents after having fed to their satisfaction on the 'cattle' of London Above.

House without Doors, The

Lord Portico's residence, the House Without Doors, is an associative house. Each room taken from another house, or from the imagination and represented in the great hall by a gallery of freely hanging pictures. How Croup and Vandemar managed to move from room to room without being openers themselves is the subject of some discussion and suspicion.

Hugh & Cry

Hugh and Cry are London Below's premier animal breeders, without equal. Operating out of Battersea, Hugh and Cry, a pair of down at heel gentlefolk, can supply guard-dogs the size of pit ponies (if that is what you require) as well as more exotic, unusual and even mythical beasts – should your tastes and account stretch that far. The Seven Sisters are known to speak highly of their work as is the Green Witch, which is a ringing endorsement of effectiveness if not safety.

Hugh is an *urbane and well-mannered* gentleman, right up until the point alcohol enters his system. Then he's a *rampaging, insulting, bastard*. Drunk, he'll cajole anyone who will listen with his *meandering* tales of former glories, riches and what an absolute bitch Cry is. *Uncoordinated and utterly tactless* Hugh is a *legend of animal breeding and of the put down*, only happy when he's drunk.

Cry is as *posh and rakish* as Hugh but barely touches a drop of drink. Caring and even *motherly* Cry is prone to the *hysterical* turn or two but means well. His animals are his substitute family and he has to rely on Hugh to sell them since he's far too *emotional* to part with them. Cry is a *legend of animal training and of animal medicine*, only happy when taking care of Hugh and the other dumb beasts.

Hunt Street

A large barracks here houses the Shepherd's slaves until they are ready to be sold. Occasionally slaves escape and the search for them always starts here, hence the street's name. Still cobbled in sections the uneven surface makes escape for barefoot slaves rather difficult in their first few minutes of liberty.



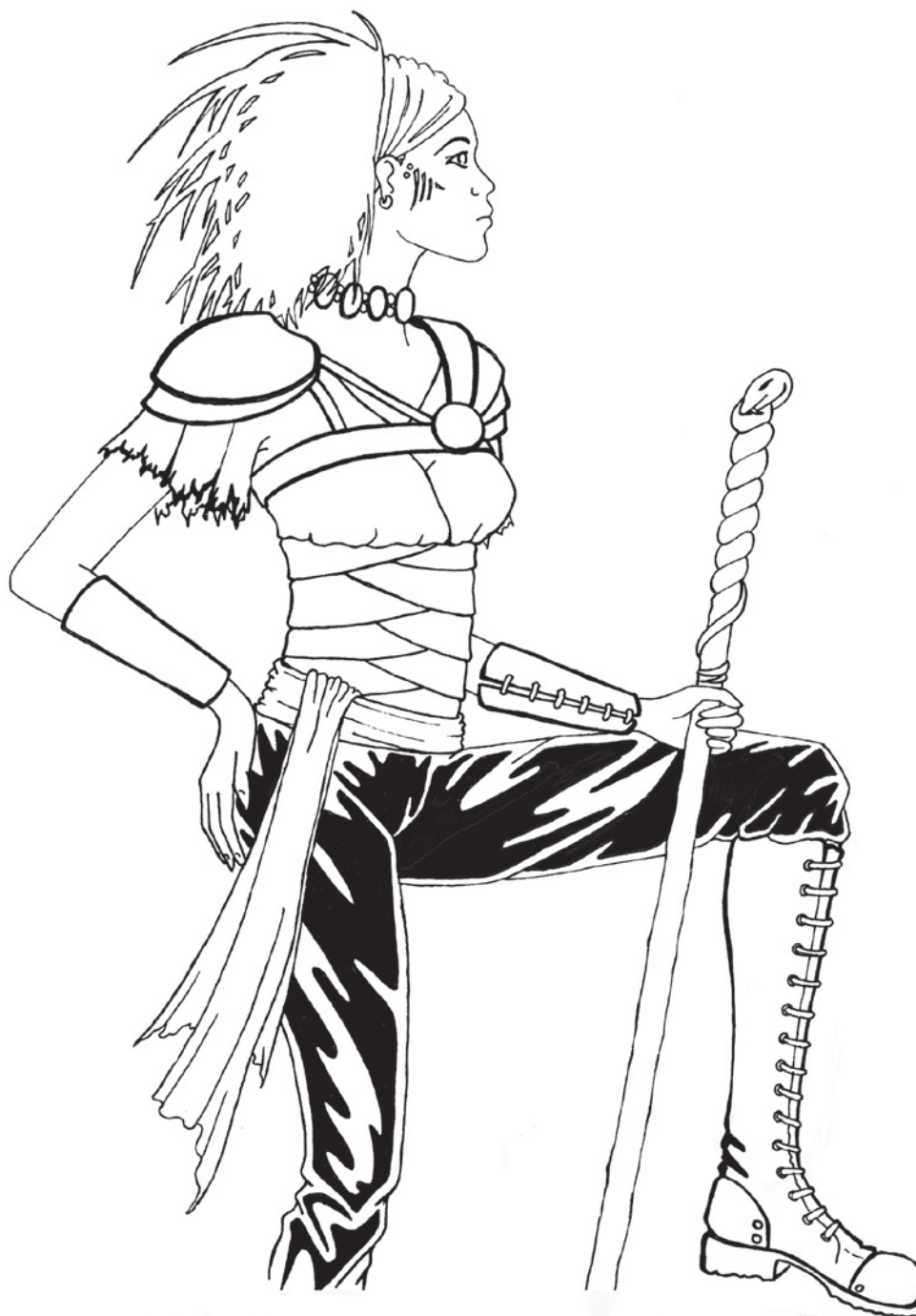
Hunter

Hunter was a legendary warrior who travelled around the world killing the monsters below cities from the alligators below New York to the Great Weasel of Bangkok. This was not through any sense of charity or to protect the common folk but simply for the call of the hunt and the challenge of bringing down the great beasts, the only things that could truly challenge her in combat.

She returned to London Below in search of the greatest prize of the Underside: the Beast, her whole life having been training for the moment when she confronted it. She became Door's bodyguard, but betrayed her to Islington in her quest to find and slay the Beast of London, at which she failed and died leaving Richard to finish off the Beast, full of regret for her treachery.

Hunter was *extremely beautiful, seductive* with caramel skin, long, lustrous hair and a soft mouth that gave little clue to her *hidden strength*, skill and *ruthless* mentality. She was *deadly, balletic, lithe and wiry, quick of hand, precise and accurate, extremely tough and enduring* of wounds done to her. In stalking her prey she was *silent and stealthy*, despite being *tall and striking*. She was a *legendary warrior with the spear and a master of the knife, the art of hand-to-hand and of the tracking of beasts* as well as being a *professional bodyguard and guide*. Her *lore of the Underside* was that of a master in large part because she was *cursed never to be able to leave the Underside* for the world above. This curse may have been levelled on her by Serpentine but the two appeared to get on and may have even been lovers at some point. Certainly Serpentine treated Hunter as a near equal, something she rarely does.

There are rumours that Hunter lives still, after a fashion, bound to Serpentine after her death, a puppet of flesh and bone, or perhaps survived, but broken, trying to atone for her treachery in some way.



Hunter's Spear

Hunter used an old, basic, serviceable spear for her day to day defence and to take on the beasts of other lands. When it came to The Beast of London however, she wanted something special, a spear she had left with Serpentine against such need. This spear, Hunter's Spear, the hunter's spear, is something different, special.

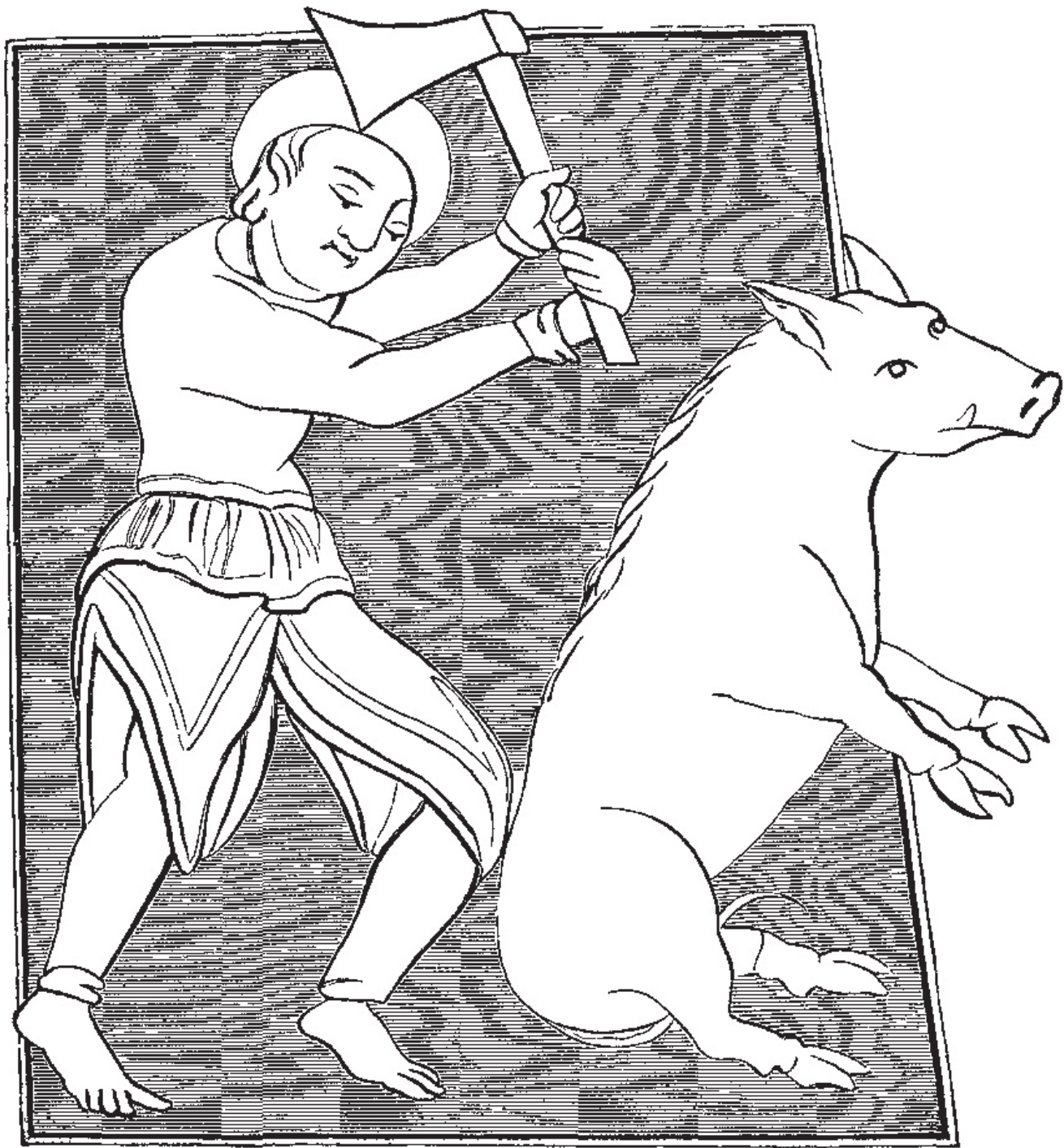
From ancient North Africa this spear had carved, hardened horn for a head and a silver setting, the top of which was carved into a bull. It's said this was liberated from Africa by the Romans from the cult that used it in their rites and hunting and that it found its way into the cult of Mithras amongst the officers of the Roman Army, abandoned and buried in one of their temples beneath London until Hunter found it, was drawn to it.

The spear is *long, sharp and pointed* like any spear but, unlike other spears, this one is *light, quick and magical*, able to be used as an extension of the wielder and to strike down foes that other weapons cannot harm.

Hyde Park

The park is lorded over by the Baron who shares its name. It is advisable not to go there after dark and Baron Octavius Hyde is to be avoided at all cost. Never accept an invitation to dine with him, as one has a lamentable tendency to become the main course. The luckier 'guests' awake with a sore and shaved head, standing in shackles at Leather Market.

The Baron is a *hearty* man, *stocky and full-bellied* with big mutton chop sideburns, red cheeks and nose and a *swaggering, lecherous* air. His teeth are filed into points and he dresses in the style of the twenties, always with a cigarette holder, which he uses to pick his teeth in an *uncouth* manner. The Baron is *cruel and vicious* but is also possessed of a *cutting wit*, which, were he more conventional and not a flesh-eating *monster*, would make him quite popular. The Baron is a *powerful* man and is attended by servants who share his unnatural appetites. A *masterful wit and chef* the Baron was also trained by the military and despite a life of privilege still retains *professional hunting and wrestling skills*.



Iliaster

A Half-Lifer allied to the Rat-Speakers, Iliaster is a typical homeless man from the streets of London. *Wiry and ragged* he's a *tough* survivor, always *nervous* and using his *devious mind, sly nature and obsequious* praise of his 'betters' to see him through. He is a *professional beggar and is equally skilled in his knowledge of the streets*.

Infectious Knowledge

There are many ways to end up in London Below, the rats and their agents sometimes take people on the cusp of death or with nowhere else to go. Some places have weak barriers between the worlds and people can 'fall' through. Impressing your existence, as an undersider, upon someone from London Above for a protracted period almost always has the same effect though, simply knowing about The Underside and the people of it inexorably drags you down to join them in the madness and the dark.

Infranet

The Infranet is a sort of 'collective unconscious' of London Below and its presence is felt in the graffiti, tags, posters and murals that the Cave Painters, amongst others, paint all of the place. The Cave Painters are the glue that holds it together, drawing events of interest and significance, those images being rapidly repeated all over the place. The complex squiggles of overlaid pain, paper and chalk hide more complex messages and these can only be interpreted with the Infranet skill or a special set of junk-science goggles that enables on to more clearly perceive the messages and news written into the walls, as it appears.

Inner Temple

Duels, being a usually public way of airing private grievances, can be held anywhere, Hampstead Heath has always been popular. In the Upworld duels went out of fashion and were made illegal, in London Below, Inner Temple is still one of the places to hold a duel, if one wishes it to be officially presided over and documented. It was here that Hayes Murphy defeated Sable and won himself leave to reside in Jack Ketch's domain without owing the Hangman fealty.

The temple itself is little more than a run down, cobweb filled, circular room with a single archway entrance and filled with marble columns and bloodstained Romanesque tiles. There are three steps around the outside, room for observers and seconds to wait and for the officiator to observe and record the duel.

Island Gardens

Dotted through the Thames, hidden in the mists and magic, are a series of islands, each a tended garden of a different type, such as a vegetable garden or a rose garden. Who built them, who maintains them isn't known but a few of those who ply the river up and down have learned the locations of some of the islands and use them as places to hide, rest or wait out bad weather – or worse.

Isle of Dogs

Add it to the list of things you don't want to know about and if you really do want to know about it, keep your voice down. The place is full of degenerates, 'goblins', and creatures best not spoken of. At least that's what the rumours say. They also say that the place is ruled over by a mad lord with yellow eyes, a Lord whose hounds constantly patrol the island keeping out of sight until Underside prey stumbles into their path.

Like all rumours it probably has a grain of truth to it, but some people think that someone is trying to hide something there and is using word of mouth to discourage others from looking around. Those people are generally not brave enough to go and have a look for themselves, but the stories do seem a little too terrible to believe which encourages some foolhardy undersiders to travel there in search of the truth or whatever treasure they imagine to be hidden there.

Islington's Wings

Islington was stripped of his wings when he was cast down to London Below and, like the key, the door and the jailor these were placed in London Below as a torment and a reminder of his betrayal of his duty. The wings are now one of the great treasures of London Below but their location is no longer known.

Off-white and tattered they have shed a great deal of feathers over the millennia, some of which are treasures in their own right and have been handed from person to person. It's said that one who straps these wings to their back will gain a *legendary ability to fly* and that this is, potentially, amongst the least of the powers of the wings and that, for a worthy soul, they might even make them an angel, to replace the fallen Islington in the choir invisible.

Islington

Islington was the only angel in London Below and remained in his candlelit chambers, viewing the world with a magic pool of water while it revolved around him. Once the guardian angel of Atlantis, Islington somehow failed in his duty resulting in the destruction of that fabled land and its sinking beneath the waves. Islington still had a few artefacts remaining from his time as the guardian there including some powerful wine, which he shared with Door and Richard when they first visited him.

Islington grew mad, or at least more so, in his isolation, the aggravation made worse by having the door to heaven, the key to the door and the Opener of the door all present in his prison in London Below, awaiting the day he would repent and be cleansed of sin. Lacking patience – likely the cause of the demise of Atlantis in the first place - he set about enlisting Croup and Vandemar, as well as Hunter, to get everything into place for his unplanned return to heaven against the will of God.

Islington was thwarted by Door at the last moment by her opening the door to heaven to somewhere else entirely, somewhere further away and far worse than heaven, an empty white limbo into which he was sucked along with Croup and Vandemar. There he remains, if Croup and Vandemar didn't tear him apart for getting them into such a predicament.

Islington was *impatient* and prone to *raging*, though most of the time he managed to project a *calm and serene* façade to keep up the image of the good angel. *Androgynous, sexless and slender* he was nonetheless *powerful, immortal and inviolate* and it is doubtful he is actually dead, rather exiled to whatever limbo Door sent him to. *Devious and cunning, unnaturally clever*, Islington had the *knack of scrying and of seeing into people's hearts to offer them what they most desired*. *Masterful at subterfuge and singing* Islington was able to fool everyone.



Ivory House

Appearing to be a three storey terraced house in Mayfair, Ivory House always has its curtains closed and its doors only open for those of London Below. Inside, every surface, every interior wall, every fixture is carved from or lined with human bone. The entire building is a bleached white necropolis of painstaking craftsmanship though its architect is unknown. On Halloween the walls bleed and the spirits of the dead may be called up and talked to inside, though they may not be happy to be called from where they are and may still extract some sort of 'payment' in exchange for any information that they might have..

Ivy Walk

A long and straight back-alley in Greenwich, the paving stones and the walls are overgrown with thick, dark green ivy forming a tight blanket of leaves. Healthy and green at the end furthest from the dominion of the witches the ivy grows darker and more twisted until at the closest end it is brown and dead, writhing with vermin.



'A' to 'Z'

j

Jacktar, Jolly

Jolly Jacktar is one of the most accomplished sailors in London Below, though never a captain he's much sought after to serve on the barges, boats and ships that ply up and down the Thames.

Jacktar is a *very huge* black man, *black as pitch* with *calloused* hands and a *dazzling smile*. His dreadlocked hair is drawn back into a thick ponytail which is glued together with tar. Bare-chested and barefoot he doesn't seem to care, *tough* enough to withstand the worst the elements can throw at him. He's as *strong as an ox*, able to carry heavy barrels and sacks without any worries and he can squirm up into the rigging as *agile as a monkey*. He's a *legendary sailor* and a *master of brawling*, claiming to have once punched out a mule with his bare fist.

Junk Science

Anything that's thrown away will eventually find its way down to London Below and that's as true of ideas as it is about lost socks or loose change. Junk Science is made up of the ideas that the real world has rejected, these ideas and experts upon them manage to tap into the inherent magic of The Underside and use it to make these strange ideas actually work, it's a knack.

Junk Science devices are unreliable, perhaps only working once or twice before they need to be examined more closely, repaired and maintained. It takes, perhaps, a day of tinkering to make each device ready to use even once and the 'science' behind it is usually impenetrable to anyone but the creator and their apprentice.



K

Ketch, Jack

‘The Hangman’ is the undisputed, but unofficial overlord of Tyburn and Marble Arch. His daughter, Ophelia, is much sought after in marriage, but her suitors and lovers have a habit of falling foul of Mr. Ketch and his hempen rope.

Jack is *cruel and impudent* in equal measure given to falling into a *jealous* rage. Never wealthy he’s fought and killed for all he has and defends it all – including his daughter – with a *ferocious* tenacity. Jack took Tyburn through his strong arm and his *pitbull endurance* defending it against all comers and providing a safe haven for many thugs and less desirable Bravos. In opposition to this action lies the fact that he is still London Below’s hangman. Those who transgress the few terrible laws of the Underside meet their end doing the ‘Tyburn jig’ at the end of his rope. *Stern, steady and careful* in the execution of his job he is much valued for his professionalism and devotion to getting the job done right first time. Jack is a *master hangman and wrestler*, using his rope to catch and hold his victims. Jack builds and maintains London Below’s gibbets with a *professional hand at carpentry*. His rope is said to be magical and has never failed to snap a neck. It cannot be escaped or cut. Jack has the *knack of those of Knotting Hill, able to bind creatures and spirits of ill omen into knots made from spare strands of his noose*.

Ketch, Ophelia

The raven haired and *buxom* daughter of Jack Ketch, Ophelia is *beautiful* in a *rugged, peasant* sort of way and her attitude matches that, despite the power and privilege her father has won. Her hair is glossy and long, her breasts full and her eye *wandering*. Her father’s jealousy and protectiveness leads to the death of any who show favour to her, let alone lovers, and she takes a *perverse* and sexual kick out of seeing them hang. To love her is to love the noose and like the noose she chokes the life from her suitors. A *wicked vixen* she uses her *masterful wiles* to lead men on, straight to the gibbet, like a Judas goat.



Kew Gardens

The Floating Market has been held here on several occasions. Emelia Lockehart, usually called the Lady of the Gardens, resides in unofficial court here. She is eminently more interested in the botanical gardens than she is in people, so has little care for politics. Her knowledge of flora and fauna is astounding and her private collection of plants and orchids is almost entirely original and contains much that does not exist anywhere else and, perhaps, never has. Her private greenhouse is an encyclopaedia of the unusual and the extinct.

Key, The

The Black Friars protected the Key until Door and her companions took it, unwittingly, for Islington. Now it resides under their care once more, the ordeal, reinstated, is now to allow the worthy to use the key now that its powers have been unveiled. The ordeal is a trial by arms, a trial of the mind and, replacing the station, a crossing of Night's Bridge to weed out the worthy. The Key opens the door in Islington's chambers which supposedly leads to heaven, though it has other powers and is able to open opportunities and restore people to London Above as well, it is the key to reality, the key to solve all problems.

Kilburn River

An encampment of Roman soldiers caught in a bubble of Old Time live down by the Kilburn River and have been there for ages. They are pleasant to outsiders; making the best of things, hiring out their services en masse at times due to their guilt at deserting the nineteenth legion and their need for survival. They are lead by Maximus and there are roughly forty of them, all hardened veterans but feeling very much out of their time and isolated because of language and their 'primitive' background.

The Kilburn legion are deserters and are bound together by loyal feelings for each other rather than a rank structure. They follow Maximus because he has not done them wrong so far. Fit and able the legion still practices daily and follows their regime of exercises. Led out of their time bubble they've found that their tactical minds and steadfastness make them valued in London Below as mercenaries and so they fight for their survival and honour as well as for the highest bidder. Outfitted in leather and metal armour and carrying shields, spears and short swords they are amongst the best-equipped fighters in the Underside. Professional soldiers their weapons speak for them when their Latin no longer suffices.

The leader of the Kilburn Legion is Maximus who led them in their desertion.

Maximus is a *strong and experienced* leader who saw the hopelessness of the battle that had been ahead of his troops. Leading them out of the city before getting lost in what was, then, wild country they turned up in London Below as a curiosity before committing themselves to their new life. Maximus is *grizzled and jaded* but wants the best for his men. At present all they have to sell are their combat abilities but Maximus plans to trade off the wealth they win together and to invest it in a villa and gladiatorial arena in the Roman style to provide him, and his men, with a healthy and comfortable retirement. Maximus is as *tough as old boots* and strikes a *very commanding* presence in his Roman armour. This is backed up by his *mastery of the short sword, tactics and command* that enabled him to lead the desertion in the first place.

King Mob

A rag-tag group of 'Ronin' who have lost the tribes or noble houses to whom they used to owe fealty the Mob now serve no masters save themselves and recognise no hierarchy or leadership amongst themselves, organised along anarchistic and free-flowing lines. The Mob wear black armbands and greet each other by claspng fore-arms and offering the greeting 'All hail his majesty!'

Knotting Hill

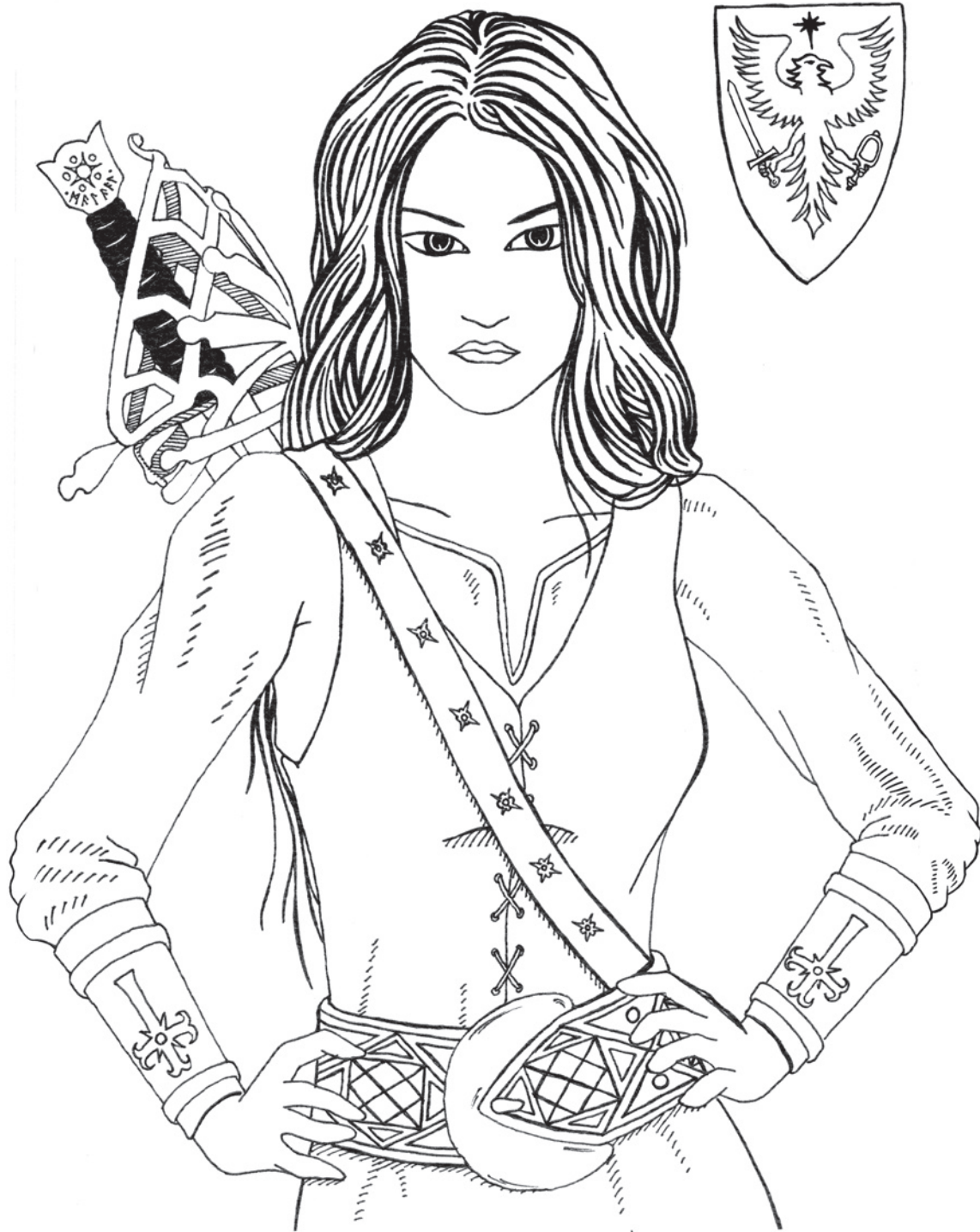
Rope of every kind is made here; hemp, silk, hair. This is one of the few places The Shepherds trade in items other than slaves, selling the longer hair of their shorn captives for use in the rope-making business. The rope-makers will teach all manner of knot work but their greatest ability, the ability to bind entities and monsters within complex woven knots, they keep to themselves.



Keziah, Black

Black Keziah is one of the many denizens of London Below who have fallen to myth more than legend. She is a fierce warrior who was once captain of the guard in Lord Rayner's domain. She disappeared on the battlefield of Blackheath in 1768, although there have been many supposed sightings of her, not to mention rumours of her present deeds and whereabouts. Since her dread sword Malidor was never recovered from the field, it is safe to suppose that it rests still in her hand and Keziah is very much alive. There is an intriguing stained glass window in the White Chapel depicting her slaying a shadow beast, one thing she is not supposed to have actually ever done.

In her time Keziah was known to be a *strong and tall* woman, *noble, terrible and beautiful* in aspect and a most *relentless* foe. As *fast and as powerful* as any man only Hunter came close to a similar reputation, though Keziah's was as a foe of the darkness rather than as a slayer of beasts. As *enduring and eternal* as stone Keziah's disappearance was a surprise to all. She was a *legend in her use of the blade and in her ability to inspire and lead troops*. She was also a *master of tracking evil and darkness*. *Professional at Underside navigation and lore* it is possible she lies still under Blackheath, whether dead or alive, using some secret she learned in her long life.





Labyrinth, The

The Labyrinth is the oldest part of London Below and protects the way to the Angel Islington, guarded by the Beast – when it still lived - and its twists and turns, both working together to dissuade visitors.

Made up of bubbles of old time and always changing, moving, the only surefire way to make it safely across the Labyrinth was with an obsidian token representing The Beast. Now only the most expert guides can find a way across, although if The Beast were replaced, perhaps the power of the tokens would be restored...

Lambeth

A Bravo from Crouch End, one of the best. *Short and very quick* he uses his *fast* movements to avoid harm while laying about his enemies with a series of *powerful blows*. *Stubborn* to a fault Lambeth is so *confident* in himself he will try to do anything, even if it is clearly beyond his capabilities. A *master of hand-to-hand and melee combat* Lambeth is also *professional at finding his way around with Underside navigation and at hiding his small frame in the shadows*, attacking from surprise.

Lamia

One of the Velvets, the *pale, beautiful* girls who drift in London Below, she knows every inch of London Below and thus makes an excellent guide. She demands a chilling price, though, the very heat from your body and if she's too hungry that can prove fatal. *Graceful and seductive, poised and elegant*, Lamia dresses entirely in *stylish* black velvet that sets off her pale complexion nicely. As *cool* of exterior as she is on the inside she only warms up when trying to seduce or cajole someone of his or her heat at which point she can become quite *flirtatious*. Possessed of a *wicked sense of humour* Lamia is fairly *witty* in a *sarcastic* sort of way. A *master of Underside navigation* she is also a *professional seductress*, preferring to get her heat that way, or through trade. As a Velvet she is immortal but her true age is unknown.

Laud Street

Situated in Vauxhall it boasts the city's only opium garden in London Above or Below. Also here is Laud House, a stylish den of iniquity and at this date the only provider and purveyor of opium and laudanum, indeed any drug, in the Underside. As a rule it seems London Below does not have time, resources or energy spare for narcotics or their thralls, at least not in the harder more soul-destroying capacity.

Lear

A busker, the one who stole a piece of T'ang Dynasty sculpture for the Marquis in exchange for a reel 'so beguiling it could charm the money from any pocket'. It worked a little too well and Lear was forced to accept an unfavourable deal from the Marquis, namely stealing the aforementioned sculpture.

Lear is a *grubby and opportunistic* Half-Lifer *cursed by greed* and yet unable to make a true living, above or below, from his music. Dressed in the manner of a medieval minstrel he presents a *raggedy* look and is nominally part of Earl's Court which explains his *knack of creating real and accurate timetables for any train on the Underground*, above or below. It's this talent that could make him wealthy but he can't exploit it above, and below he can only trade for barter. To make up the difference he works as a thief, an arsonist and a murderer. *Dextrous and nimble* with his fingers Lear can play almost any instrument to some degree. Lear is a *master player of stringed instruments and professional with all others*. Lear is also a *professional thief and arsonist* and will kill to preserve himself or better his own lot. He knows two magical reels, one to charm money from pockets and the other a counter to that charm. Traumatized by his near death after the over use of the first reel he has never used it again.

Leather Market

Part of the territory of the Shepherds of Shepherds Bush it is better not to ask the providence of the soft and supple leather that they sell here alongside their main stock in trade, slaves.

Life Eggs

An egg from one of the Cygnets, which can be used to store one's life essence and to release it back into your body. The eggs restore life and (slowly) fitness after one has been killed. Very few people manage to gather one of these eggs (which can resemble any bird egg) or trade for it.

The Cygnet eggs are the best, the most powerful, but some have learned the knack of investing other eggs, typically duck or quail eggs, with some shadow of the same power and many of the more unscrupulous and dangerous characters of London Below keep their lives hidden away in such a fashion.

Little Stanmore

Very short, even for a Crouch Ender, Stanmore is *quick and tough* as any of his brethren but is less willing to enter into the rough and tumble, being more of a *kind and sensitive, artistic* soul, dedicated to his particular art, which is the carving of the most intricate and *delicate* of carvings on the tiniest of objects, right down to a grain of rice. Useful for secret messages as well as artistry he finds his *masterful carving talents* in high demand. That sensitive soul and artistic side evaporate the moment someone makes a crack about his height though, turning him into a *vicious and vindictive* little *bastard*.

Lock Road

Where goods are rare and every commodity is desperately needed, where survival and theft are a way of life, it makes sense to secure your belongings. Not every Undersider is an Opener or has access to a house without doors, so it makes sense either to carry everything with you, take turns guarding a store with someone you trust or to secure your belongings some other way.

Lock Road has the goods to satisfy those who take the last route. Makers of locks, safes and puzzle boxes that can give all but a pureblood opener pause, the locksmiths of Lock Road view their skill as an art, constantly trying to outdo one another with finely wrought security devices of all kinds. A legendary craftsman long ago constructed the most complex and beautiful lock ever known and is said to have placed a great treasure behind it. It is proof to all magic, even that of the Lady Door, and it has never been opened. The challenge remains, puzzle upon puzzle, layer upon layer, less a lock and more a work of art.

London Above

Our London, the 'real' London, is London above. The world of cars, computers, light, bustle, work, drinks down the pub, the rewards and the disappointments of comfort and the daily grind. It crosses over with London Below in the dark places, in the shadows, in the rooftops and the hidden places, in history and the imagination, in the whimsy of people who dream away on the underground, wishing they were anywhere but locked in a tin can on their way to a marketing consultation.

London Below

London Below is an alternate London coexisting with the real one. It is made up of all the sewers, tunnels, rooftops, back alleys and history that have been left in the shadow of the 'real' London. Its inhabitants are the freaks, oddities and historical remnants that have collected and bred in the dark.

Denizens of London Below are usually invisible to those from London Above, but can see and interact with 'real' London. People from London Above can be dragged down to disappear into London Below by Undersiders. This will happen if they involve them too much in their own affairs.

London Eye, The

The site of the real London Eye, the gigantic ferris wheel at the side of the Thames, is a popular congregation point for those of London Below and they can get it to work, even when it's otherwise closed. It has even been the site of a Floating Market already, something that doesn't usually happen to a building or a place for quite some time but the wheel almost feels like it has always been part of London Below.

There's another London Eye, a disconcerting, floating, disembodied eyeball the size of a football that appears, sometimes, following people and observing events with its unblinking gaze, perhaps for some hidden master or mistress. Perhaps it's simply a voyeur of some kind.

Lonesome

Occasionally Undersiders feel as though they are being watched, or something is briefly visible to them. They can never remember quite what it is they've seen and most are of a mind to blame the Greyling. Some theorise that just as London Above has an Underside, so does London Below, that something has fallen through the cracks further than most. The name Lonesome has come about for this feeling, presumably based on the thought that this can't be a regular occurrence and anyone that deep into the substrata of reality must be lonely.

Longtail, Master of the Clan Grey

A *high up & important* grey rat Master Longtail bore Door's message to the Marquis de Carabas and got Richard out of deadly trouble with Lord Ratspeaker. *Small* as all rats are Master Longtail is a *cheeky* rat, fond of *teasing and tormenting* the Rat-speakers. *Good-humoured* in his approach to life he can, nonetheless, switch to an *imperious* tone to get the things he wants done. *Very fast* Master Longtail darts through the sewers acting as a messenger and go-between for other rats and the Rat-speakers. *Alert* for trouble Master Longtail is as *smart* as any rat in London Below. *A master at stealth* Master Longtail is also a master of Underside navigation.

Ludgate

Ludgate is a small trading community at the edge of The City, the Square Mile and the site of the old limits of London and London Below of yesteryear. Leader of this little community of exclusive dealers is Lud, named for the old king, who deals in fine china and who was the victim of Lear's thievery in order to execute his duty to the Marquis. Ludgate is such a thriving and wealthy little area, catering to the needs of London Below's nobility that, other than the strangeness and paucity of its wares, it most closely resembles London Above of all the places in London Below.

Lud is an *obsessive* collector of pottery and only ever sells something he has two of. His shop is more museum than shop and is defended by at least one Bravo at all times. Lud himself is a *haughty, arrogant* man of *discerning* taste and *impeccable* dress, *neat, tidy* and *legendary* in his knowledge of ceramics. He has the *knack of being able to tell the age of anything*, precisely.



Macavity

Almost nothing is known of the form behind this name; those that purport to know otherwise are usually lying. According to popular fancy Macavity resides in Maze Hill. He has a knack for speaking to and understanding felines and plots to bring about the downfall of the rat lords with his feline allies. This is pure conjecture. Macavity could just be an old man who is fond of a cat's company rather than their taste. At any rate he's not been seen in living memory and would seem to be a male counterpart to Agnes in any case, just another mad, old power in a city of hundreds.

Mad Lord, The

Of all the stories of the origin of the Mad Lord or the Isle Of Dogs, it is the one told to puppies in the Dogs' Parliament that is the most likely – although the thought that he might be a werewolf has a great many adherents. At any rate, he gathers the disaffected and rabid to his banner, mostly those who were outcast from the Dogs' Parliament, though he has his human followers as well.

The Mad Lord is an *imposing* figure, yellow of eye and tooth, *tall and muscular and very intimidating*. His howl turns men's bowels to jelly and his *great strength and preternatural speed* are legendary. Enjoying the hunt, he leaves the running down of most enemies to his hounds, saving the most challenging prey for himself. A *master tracker and fighter*, the Mad Lord never leaves his island, which is just as well as he could be a greater force for *evil* than he already is. Despite his *rabid* reputation he has shown *cunning*, enough cunning to hire Croup and Vandemar to dispose of the greatest threats to his rule in the past.

Madame Tussauds

Madame Tussauds is the greatest waxwork museum in the country, quite possibly in the whole world. The retired mannequins and forgotten icons find their way, often mutilated, into the Underside and turn up at market more often than not, either on sale or draped with clothes. Madame Tussauds has also been used as a location for the Floating Market itself, often when a particularly notable new waxwork has been installed.

Magpie & Stump, The

One of the oldest public houses in London, its many layers of sunken and fallen cellars make up a large and popular pub for those of the Underside. The Magpie and Stump is situated north of the Black Friars' abbey and close to Snow Hill, popular and unfounded rumour holds that the Ranger often frequents the house to drink and brood and wait to be hired by those who know enough to seek them there.

Malidor

The fabled sword owned by Black Keziah.

Whether the weapon itself possessed any power or whether it was simply the skill of the woman who wielded it is up to opinion, what was never in dispute was the deadly fighting ability of Keziah when the blade was in her hand. Intriguingly, when asked whence the sword came, Keziah always maintained that it was given to her when she crossed the 'dark bridge'. She refused to say if this was Night's Bridge, Blackwall or some other structure. If she is to be believed it is the only instance ever heard of where the bridge gave a boon instead of taking a toll. Her sponsor prefers to deny the supernatural and does his best to quash the stories about the sword and to promote the idea that it was purely Keziah's skill that made her so deadly and the location of both her and Malidor remains the stuff of legend and rumour.

May Fair, The

The May Fair is like the Floating Market only huge and more exaggerated even than that place of wonderment and commerce. The May Fair is held once a year on Mayday and brings together every single trader and performer in London Below as well as visitors and traders from the Undersides of towns and cities across the country, even the world. Varney used to run security for the May Fair, which isn't under the truce of the Floating Market, now that he's gone, someone else will have to step up.

Maze Hill

The alleged home of Macavity this slight rise is covered in the most complex and dense maze ever devised, second only to The Labyrinth. No one (save perhaps Macavity) has ever reached the centre, though a roof can be seen there along with a wisp of smoke on occasion. Cats do prowl the maze but they do not speak of what is within, a mystical ban bringing harm to any who so much as think of letting slip the secret to anyone.

Memories Lost & Found to Order

Another of the more unusual stalls to be found at The Floating Market, this stall trades in memories. They can take them away or they can give them, memories that hurt you or that you don't want can be traded for the memories of others, each memory invested in a little object that can then be traded, carrying the memories with the objects. Popular with the heartbroken and those suffering from post-traumatic stress.

Merciful Gottfried

Merciful Gottfried is one of the top level Bravos working in London Bellow. Sporting bondage gear, a bare chest, a bald head and a hefty club, bound with iron rings, Gottfried is a *big, muscular* fellow, with *excellent endurance and great patience*. He's a little *slow* but once he gets going he's an *enthusiastic* basher of skulls with the *knack of going into a frenzy where he is all but impervious to pain*. Gottfried is a *master of the clubbing arts and just as good at scaring people*, particularly when he starts screaming in his fake German accent.

Maida

One of the Seven Sisters, Maida is a *pinched and thin* looking woman with a permanent look of disapproval on her face. Dressed in layers of black and white lace, her face veiled, leaving only her *thin-lipped* mouth on show, Maida looks poorly upon anyone who might rival her power and has been known to cull those Underside magicians who threaten to, one day, outstrip her. Maida is *immortal and inviolate*, deadly and consumed by *jealous and spiteful* thoughts. *Incredibly intelligent*, beyond the levels of normal mortals, her plans and machinations can only be understood by someone of a similarly *scheming* bent. Maida has a *legendary ability with the magic of necromancy* and a *mastery of potions and curses*. She is attended by the raised corpses of her victims who serve her as soldiers and attendants.





Mayhew, Richard Oliver

Now become The Warrior, since the slaying of The Beast, a very different man to who he was when he first fell through the cracks. Richard had lived in London for about three years before he fell into London Below and undertook his adventure.

Richard was originally from Scotland, where he had a peculiar run in with a homeless old woman. That old life is now gone, no more collecting trolls, no more moaning and whining. Now he's The Warrior, Sir Richard of Maybury, honoured by Earl's Court and the House of Portico, a true hero of The Underside.

He described himself as *normal, boring and a good laugh*. He *disliked blood, rats and heights*, which was very hard on him during his adventures, though he learned to deal with each of them. He entered London Below by finding and helping Door, unusually, able to see her. He then spent most of his time wanting to go home and feeling *superfluous*. A *naïve* man in many ways he is nonetheless *kind hearted and polite, very thoughtful, slightly forgetful, horribly disorganised* and of the *sensible* and normal mindset usually so *ill-equipped* to deal with London Below. After his adventures Richard tried to use the Key to return to his normal life but found it no longer satisfying and returned. After his ordeals and his slaying of the Beast Richard is a *mature and confident* person who has gained greatly in *strength*. A *professional at making reports* and a *novice at French* Richard is now also a *novice at knife fighting* and occasionally has *prophetic dreams*. Since marking himself with The Beast's blood, he's *able to find his way through the Labyrinth*, about the only person who still can.

Modern Tate

Tate is a girl of perhaps sixteen or seventeen years of age and while most of London Below is obsessed with the old, the cast aside and the forgotten, she's obsessed with the new. Lost mobile phones, new clothing left at train stations, anything new, shiny and modern she has to have it, even if it won't work in London Below.

Tate is a *pretty, little, petite* thing, full of nervousness that makes her *energetic*, even *frenetic*. She is *impatient* and talks in 'txt' speak to 'save time'. She's *very progressive* and *libertine* in her outlook and is always *up-to-date* on the latest news and fashion. If you need a modern item, if anyone can make it work it's her. She has a *masterful knowledge of gadgets and information technology* and has no time for Junk Science.

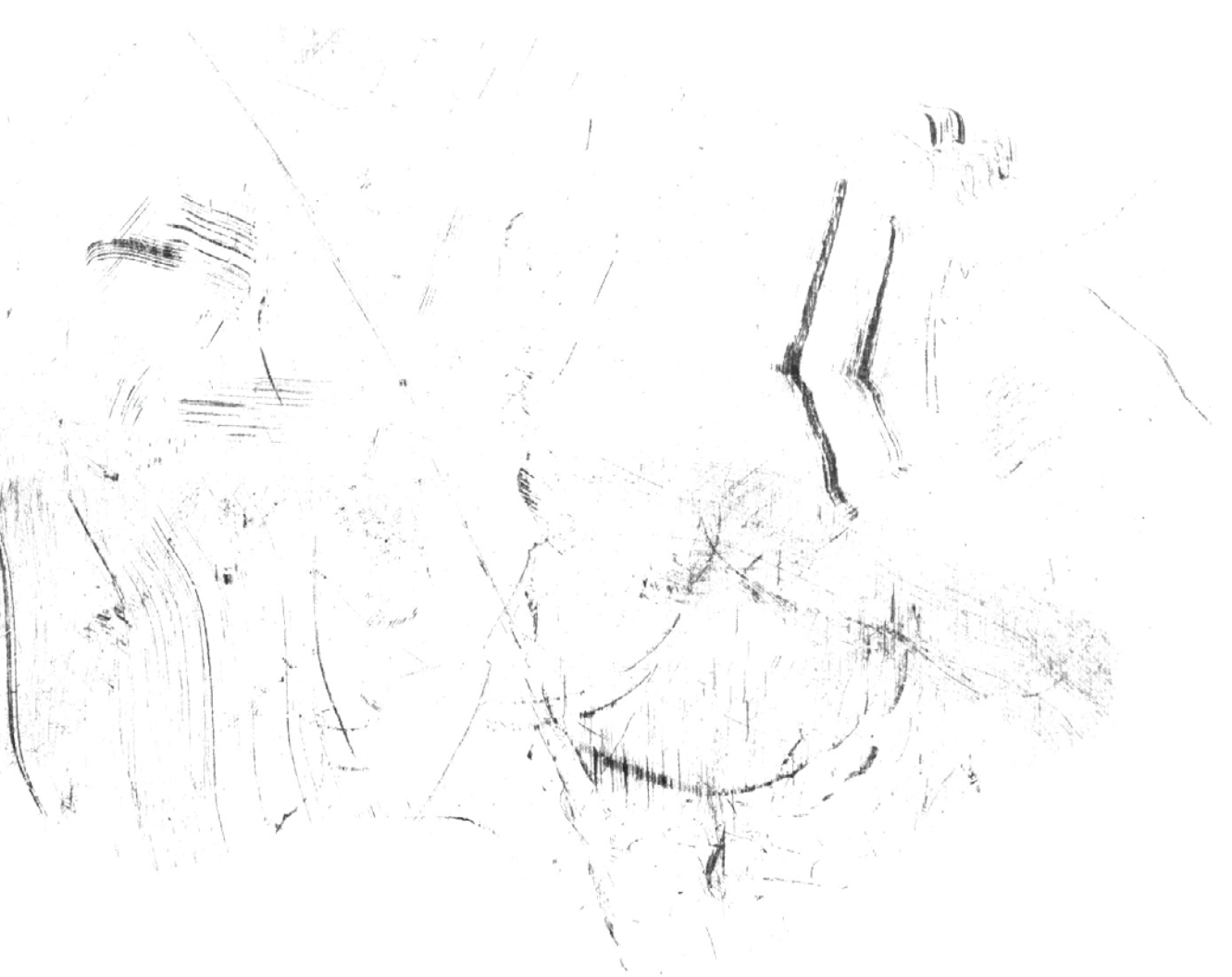
Molson's Infallible Defenestrator

Many weapons and devices are sold at The Floating Market but one particular speciality is traps, Varney in particular used to do a roaring trade in all sorts of devices designed to protect your particular bolt holes, hiding places and homes. One particular device, however, has caught the imaginations of a great many of London Below. Molson's Infallible Defenestrator.

Who Molson originally was is unclear, but his device, improved and made deadlier, is still sold at the Market today. A spring loaded trap, specially angled to fire people horizontally through windows, it comes in all manner of different shapes and sizes, different disguises but is easy to set up, easy to reset and easy to conceal, making it the perfect choice for many Undersiders to protect their homes... of course, it is expensive.

Mudlarks

For a great many years the Thames was London's sewer and London water almost as deadly as its footpads. Thus the Sewer Folk see no contradiction in trawling the river and combing its banks for goods to sell and those who have smelt Thames mud are unlikely to disagree with them about whether it's a sewer or not. Sewer Folk who specialise in combing the mud banks of the river are known as 'mudlarks', but they're still sewer folk.



Morden

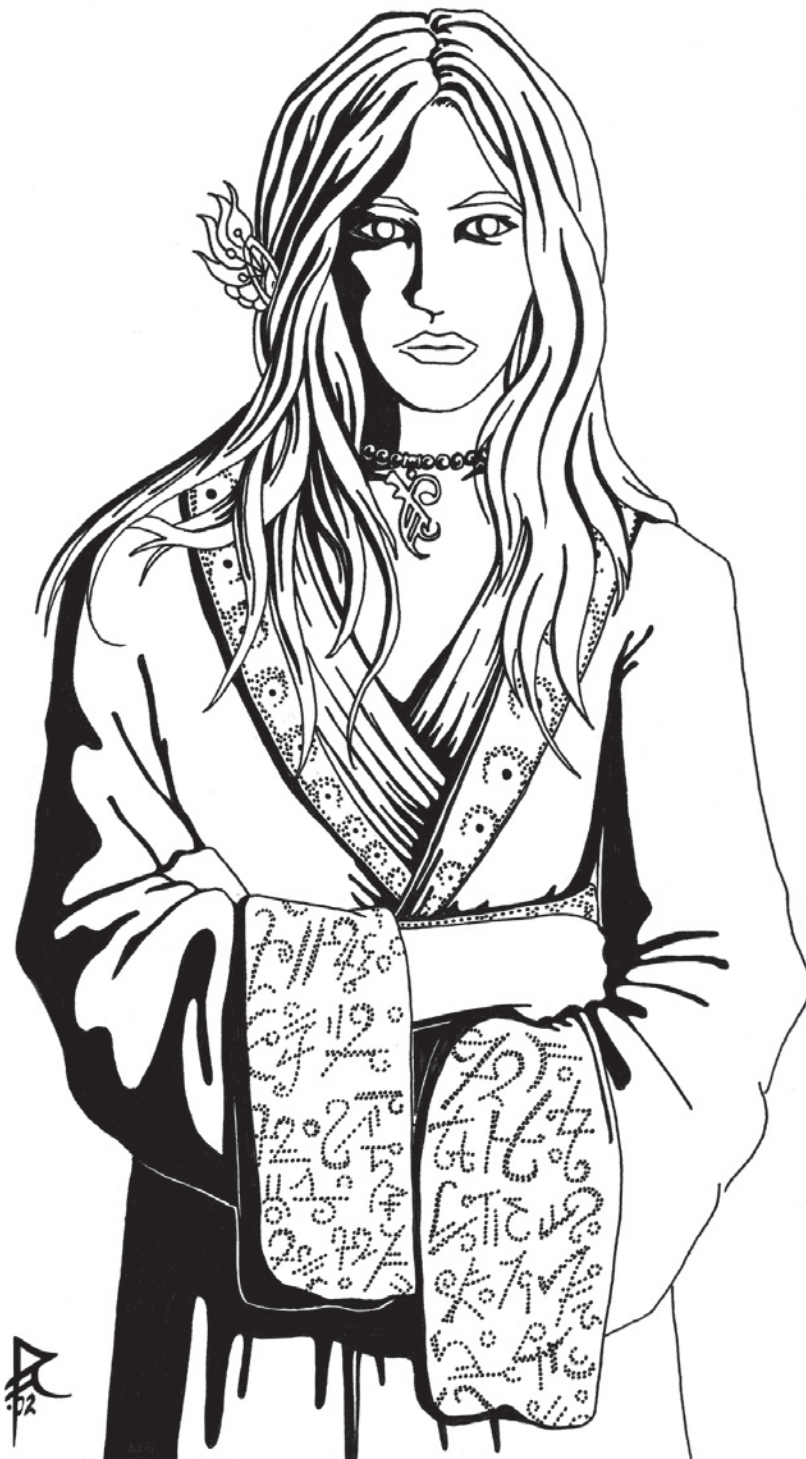
One of the Seven Sisters Morden is a *dowdy and plump* figure with yellowy, parchment-like skin and a permanent *sleepy and tired* expression. Utterly *lazy* Morden has not left her abode since the last time the Sisters convened, using her servants and her magic to provide everything for her as she *wallows in indolence*. *Weak and listless* Morden is nonetheless as *immortal and inviolate* as the other sisters and just as *sharp and intelligent* when she can be bothered to put her mind into action. *Mysterious* rather than *intimidating* her long absence from view is making younger underdwellers question her very existence. Reclining on her chaise-longue and dressed in the same loose gown as she wore the last time she went out, Morden uses her *legendary powers of conjuration* to provide for herself though she also has a *masterful skill with curses and potions*.



Morgan, Wolf

Every city has its secrets and history, London more so than most. For anyone wishing to know of the past and particulars of the Underside, from when the Floating Market was first held to what really happened to the exiled Earl of Stamford Brook, their first port of call should be the British Library and the head librarian of its Underside reflection, Wolf Morgan. In the knowledge of history none can compare, and for a fee she will research any question you care to ask. For secrets there is a special price, which is rarely, if ever, affordable, though she does always come up with the goods, in time.

Wolf is a *slight* woman, *quiet and reserved*, *pretty* in an *elfin and girlish* sort of fashion. *Deeply serious and committed* to her work she is somewhat *humourless*. Dressed in a loose gown covered in the letters of lost languages she *moves silently* through the shelves, reading, writing, organising and collating. Wolf has a *legendary knowledge of Underside lore* and a *masterful grasp of the modern secrets of the Underside*. She is a *master librarian and writer*, chronicling the history of London Below in a series of volumes for future generations and occasionally publishing titbits in the Daily Current.



'A' to 'Z'

Mornington Crescent

Felix Mornington-Crescent is both poet and musician; some would argue the best in all London Below. He is equally at home entertaining the Earl and Baron in their courts as he is playing to the Darkling Children of Camden, changing his style accordingly. It is noteworthy that he is one of the few outsiders welcome in Sister Saturday's domain, although it has been commented that his visits there have not left him unscathed. By all accounts he has become somewhat... more peculiar. Yet all are in agreement that his mania has not lessened his musical or poetic talent in the least.

Mornington is somewhat *effete and nervous* dressing in the manner of a rumpled seventeenth century gentleman. *Cautious and careful* he is able to ingratiate himself with others thanks to his *humble and honest* nature. *Truly talented and creative*, most of the enemies he has made have vowed not to kill him, not wishing to destroy such an *irreplaceable artist*. Were they to think he truly knew of their secrets in toto and was sharing that knowledge, there would, nonetheless, be hell to pay. Mornington is a *legendary poet and musician* and a *master of Underside lore*. He has the *unwanted knack of receiving visions in the form of dreams that tell him of great story-worthy events or villainies* and he is compelled to chronicle them in song or doggerel verse.





Natural History Museum

A grandiose and magnificent building set within a square of green and attached to the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum is a triumph of design. Its massive rooms containing amazing displays and its cellars and back rooms are replete with wonders of the natural world. Some of these rooms and chambers belong to the Underside and contain more outlandish examples of creatures and secrets from myth and history. The large hall as you enter is a valued location for the Floating Market and is, perhaps, one of the most common sites. The dinosaur and mammoth skeletons make a pretty sight when they're all done up with bunting and fairy lights.

Newgate (New Gate)

The Newgate is a one-way trip to the future and some of those trying to escape their enemies, a painful time or just seeking the future through curiosity brave the phalanx of time-lost who guard the gate and ensure only those who really mean it may pass through. The gate throws people into the future a random amount, anything from seconds to hundreds of thousands of years.

Night's Bridge

Night's Bridge squats menacingly across what would, otherwise, be a thriving and busy route across the Underside. Those crossing the bridge are plunged into a deep, cold darkness where things brush by in the shadows. It is cold and terribly lonely there, nightmares are made flesh, darkness seeps into every pore and you're left icy and chilled. Those who emerge from the other side feel only relief but, occasionally, the bridge takes its toll. A person crossing the bridge vanishes and is unlikely to ever be seen again though some have been known to escape its clutches in very rare incidents. The Velvets and Wights tell stories that their origin lies with the bridge, but this could simply be mythmaking on their part, trying to increase their legend.

Night Bus, The

The Night Bus is a blacked out, double-decker bus with the number 22. It's said to be a harbinger of death and to cross, constantly, between the land of ghosts and the dead and London Below. One might be able to hitch a ride to visit with those who have died or to seek something in the underworld but even if you do accomplish this feat, and manage to return, there will be a shadow over your life.

Nonsuch Park

There are persistent stories about a small park where trees with luminous leaves stand tall over lawns of deep blue grass and barely seen creatures, almost invisible, play in the moonlights. There's no record of such a place and those who talk about it or claim to have been there are dismissed out of hand by almost everyone.





Old Tate

Old Tate, sister to Modern Tate (Both daughters of The Tate) is sometimes called ‘Old Tat’. The same age as her twin sister she somehow conspires to be different to her in most regards. Where Modern Tate obsesses over the new, Old Tate obsesses over the historical and the old, wearing a succession of costumes from bygone eras, talking in old slang and eating food cooked in the old styles.

Old Tate is a *pretty, little, petite* thing like her sister, but *confident and conservative*. She’s *very staid and traditional* in her outlook and is quite *cloistered*, away from news and the hubbub of gossip. If you need something old or need to ask questions about anything from corsets to steam engines, she has a *masterful knowledge of practical history* and is more than willing to bend anyone’s ear about the wonders of bygone eras.

Old Time

Bubbles of past times of London exist in places such as Kilburn River, where the Kilburn legion of Roman deserters resides. The Old Time is also responsible for the presence of many of London Below’s more noteworthy figures and their seeming immortality.

Ordeal, The

A descent into madness, the Ordeal was made up of three stages and was the prescribed test that the Black Friars had to put any pilgrims through before they would be granted access to the Key.

The first part of the test was strength and courage. The subject, or one of their companions, would have to defeat one of the Friars in a fair fight.

The second part of the test was a riddle, set by the abbot and changed after being told each time.

The third and final part was the worst. The pilgrim was taken within the abbey and, after a nice cup of tea, would be lead out into a room where they would suffer tormenting nightmares and visions of the worst kind, trying to tempt them to suicide.

Most did die, some lived as vegetables. It was not until Richard took the Ordeal that the key was finally won. In his vision he was on the station, homeless, mad, being driven to despair by the comments of those around him and visions of his friends and lovers. In the end he was saved by Anaesthesia, who had been taken by Night’s Bridge, intervening, remembered, keeping him safe. The train came in and took him away, freeing the souls of all of those who had been lost during the ordeal who appeared, otherwise, as bodies and skeletons on the train.

Orme Passage

Orme Passage is a kind of ‘wormhole’; at its end one can perform a small ritual and the Marquis de Carabas will appear to you – provided he is not already busy and you’re willing to trade.

Outer Baronies, The

The Far Fiefdoms (to give them their other name) ring London Below proper. Some of the Outer Baronies are known to trade with the Shires via a group known as the Tinkers, although contact is sporadic at best. Nobody from London Below has ever been able to pass through the ring of Outer Baronies, and, indeed, many Londoners are hard-pressed to even get as far as that, as they find their passage impeded by tube-stoppages, twisting paths and unseasonable – even unnatural – fogs and storms. It follows then that passage between the London Undercity and its counterparts elsewhere in the world must be accomplished by other means, one of these being the week of the May Fair and others including special passages, rituals, artefacts and strange conveyances.

Oxford Circus

Of the two great circuses of London Below, Oxford Circus is the one that specialises in animals, many of them long extinct in the world above. Some curiosities and some performers the animals are all magnificent – if somewhat tired and dishevelled looking.

The circus is reached through a wooden door, which opens out into a great patchwork pavilion, lined with sawdust. There are elephants and tigers, dancing bears and performing dogs, trick horses and curiosities like the dodo or the two-headed cat.

The circus is poor and threadbare and supplements its income by hiring out its trained animals and training the pets of Undersiders to obey commands, to hunt, to protect or to perform other duties that their owners require.

Old Witch, The

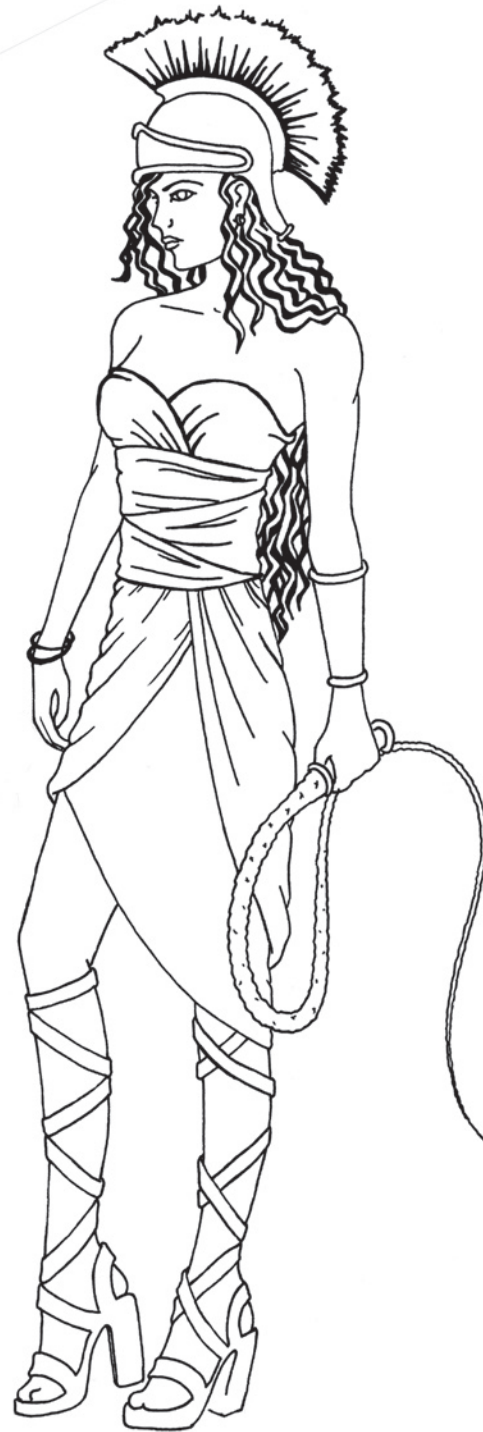
One of the Four Witches the Old Witch is the mistress of decay. A long standing enemy of The House Of Arch the Old Witch has access to a gate which she can use to go almost anywhere in London Below, making nowhere safe from her should she seek to cause problems. Almost bald the Old Witch is so deeply wrinkled and saggy of flesh that her body actually flaps as she walks. Going naked apart from a loincloth she leans heavily on a staff of fossilised wood, about the only thing that isn't affected by her aura of decay and rot.

Truly ancient and very wise the Old Witch takes an *evil and heartless* joy in the destruction and rot of any and every living thing, death by slow, painful degrees seeming to give her joy and to lend energy to her *powerful* magics. *Immortal* the Old Witch bides her time, watching the world around her rot, knowing she will be here to see the last survivors dying of old age. The Old Witch is a *hateful* creature, causing death, but *undying* herself, loving the jealousy this creates in people's eyes. She has the *legendary power to cause decay* and a *masterful understanding of curses*.



Olympia

The terrible warrior of the Seven Sisters
Olympia is *grandiose and statuesque*, proportioned like a Greek goddess, her hair kept in control by a golden circlet or helmet, her dress and boots of white and a thick cloak of raven feathers adorning her shoulders. In her right hand lies a Roman sword, or a whip and in her left a shield embossed with the union flag. She is *extremely quick and very fit, immortal and inviolate, powerful* both physically and magically. *Quick to anger* she takes *horrible, bloody* vengeance on any who cross her and their families and communities. Some Bravos actively worship her as a warrior goddess and she is yet to stop them, finding it flattering and appropriate. She has a *legendary ability to create energy*, creating fires and lightning storms and raining down burning sulphur on those who have earned her wrath. A *masterful understanding of curses and with sword and shield* bolster her abilities.



P

Pagoda Gardens

The watchtower, in Kew, of Emilia Lockeheart – the Lady of The Gardens. The Pagoda is a wooden latticed structure growing thick with plants. From the top the Lady can observe her whole domain of Kew and keep a watchful eye for trouble as well as receiving gentleman for tea and scones.

Paragon City

Also called ‘The Sleeping City’, a supposition first aired by Mordaunt Dickensien. When asked to consider the puzzle of travel between London Below and other Undercities of the globe, Dickensien came up with an – he claimed – well-researched and justified theory. He speculated that there existed a city that in its every atom embodied the epitome of ‘cityness’. Of course, since in a way all other cities were merely a shadow of this platonic ideal, he reasoned that it must be possible to reach any city from said realm.

When asked how one might reach Paragon City, Dickensien offered up the following thought; Night’s Bridge. There are very few who share his enthusiasm for this theory, that Night’s Bridge is actually a portal to a ‘Sleeping City’, and none at all who are keen to try it out.

It must be added that in the unlikely event Dickensien is correct; Night’s Bridge is a portal that opens one way save on the rarest of occasions. More conventional travel routes are far preferred.

Parsloe

Parsloe is a barker for hire at the Floating Market. He doesn’t have a stall of his own but his booming voice and witty banter make him a valuable asset to any stall, all but guaranteed to bring extra business in, perhaps even enough to pay him off for his assistance.

Parsloe is a *ropey muscled, bald* man in a flat cap and glasses, usually wearing braces to keep up his oversize jeans, all this over the top of a string vest and an open shirt. He has a *booming voice* that carries for miles and a *cheeky, cocky* manner that somehow manages to be *charming*, rather than annoying. *Confident and spry* he’ll often work a few tricks or bits of physical comedy into his barking and his banter. *Legendary at barking* for market stalls he’s also a *professional quality singer* and is good enough in a fight to be a *novice bouncer*.

Perennu, Gary

A colleague of Richard’s at his place of work in London Above, Gary is a bit of a *‘lad’* and very *distracting* to his fellow workers. *Laid back* he appears to be *friendly* but is actually a bit *duplicious*. He’s a *joker*, usually at other people’s expense, *outgoing, confident and completely tactless* he is a *master of office work* and a *professional seducer*. Gary appeared to Richard as part of a manifestation of his madness and lack of confidence at Blackfriars station during the Ordeal.

Peter Bonesplitter

Peter is another of the top-tier Bravos, the kind of man you hire to scare the crap out of people. A *big, powerful, very muscular* man, Peter wields a hatchet like a virtuoso and can hack through just about anything with a few *brawny* strokes of his arm and his hatchet. Most famously he does it to bone, hacking apart those who upset or threaten his employers, right down to splitting their bones to expose the marrow for the rats. He’s a *crude and violent* fellow, but a good one to have on your side in a pinch. He’s a *master with the axe and a professional guard*, able to spot and literally disarm trouble in moments.

Phoenix Place

Owned by the Wild Court, the walls of this area are brilliant with red and gold murals. Flickering torches light every corner, bathing the whole place in heat and fiery glow. A place of restoration and repair, those who rest here, with Herne’s blessing and with an appropriate offering, awaken the next day whole and rested of all but the most grievous wounds, though illness cannot be cured.

Piccadilly Circus

The second of the great circuses of London Below, Piccadilly specialises in human entertainment. Clowns and freaks, acrobats and magicians, fire-eaters and unicyclists, jugglers and sword swallowers; all gather here to hone their skills and to perform. Similar in physical regard and access to Oxford, Piccadilly’s acts also hire themselves out to supplement the circus’ income, performing deeds for the houses in exchange for patronage and there are all sorts of uses that circus performers can be put to.

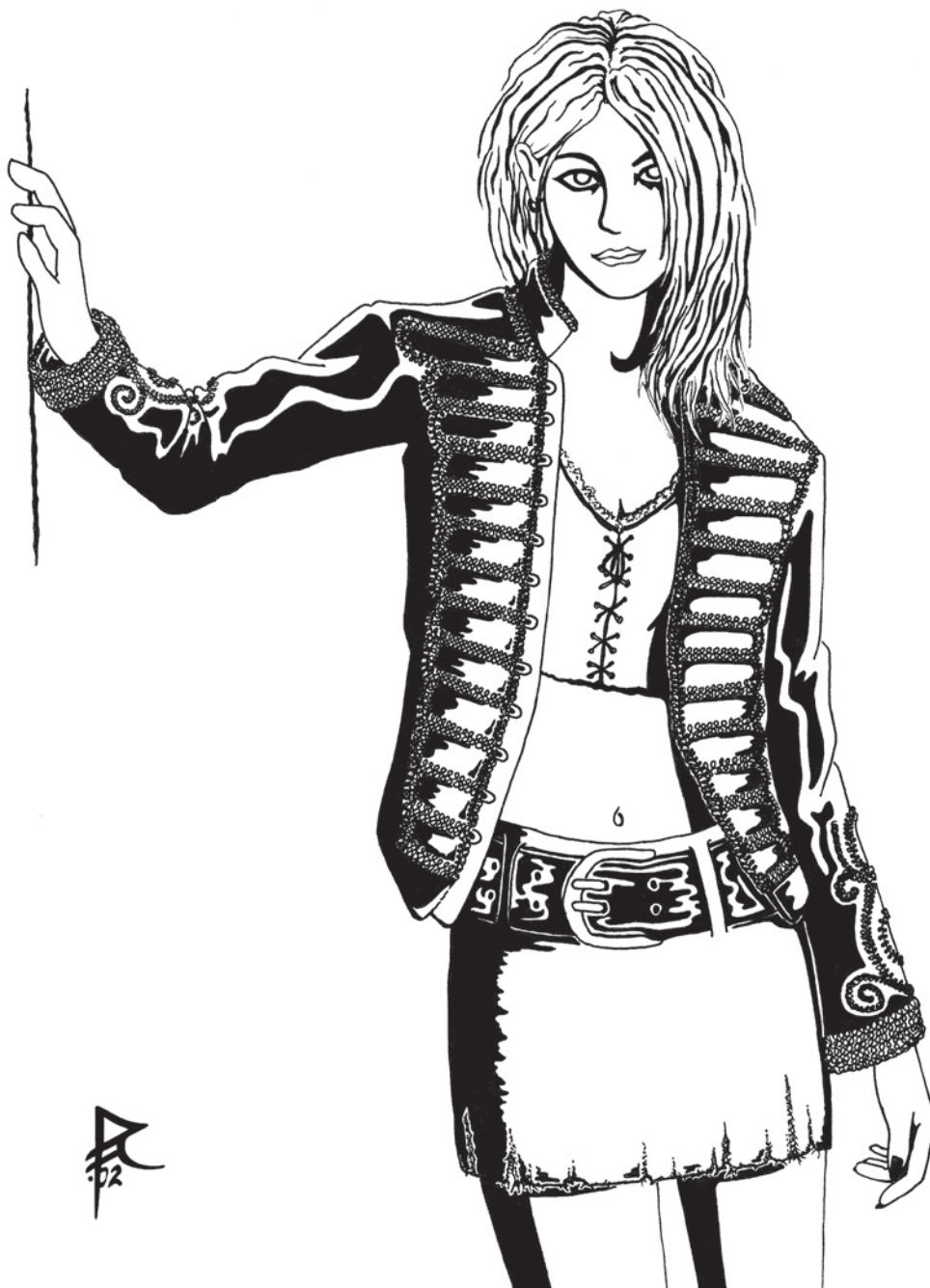
Pinner

The leader of the Velvets Pinner forsakes the namesake of her kind, preferring to dress head to toe in leather.

Her hair is scraped back harshly on her head and held in place with wickedly sharp needles and she has a *savage and very domineering* beauty that some find *seductive* and others *threatening*. *Strong and tough* of body, *graceful* in movement and *iron willed* she rules the Velvets with *complete ruthlessness* brooking no argument or challenge from any up and coming harpy that might try to seize her position. She likes to collect moths, freezing them with a touch and adding them to her collection of pinned specimens. She regards all other life in a similar way, *sociopathic* at best, actively *cruel* at worst. *Legendary in her heat draining ability* and her appetite Pinner is also a *master of torture*, feeding well and indulging her taste for cruelty on the all too willing attendees of BDSM clubs in the above world. Also a *master of intimidation* the only person she’s never managed to sway with a harsh look is the Marquis, which infuriates her.

Pirate Girl, The

Living aboard the Cutty Sark, the Pirate Girl is a *rampant kleptomaniac* and *highly peculiar*; why the Green Witch tolerates her presence is subject to speculation but there are rumours that she carries a 'letter of marque' from that witch and supplies her with the things she steals that she does not want herself. The Pirate Girl knows detailed legends and lore concerning London Below; she also possesses an uncanny knowledge of the Thames, its ways, tides and secrets. She has close ties to both Bethlehem Alice and Raven's Court. A *young and raggedy* girl of perhaps fourteen or fifteen, the Pirate Girl is a confirmed *tomboy* in spite of her blossoming womanhood. *Intense* eyes and *arrogant confidence* allow her to consternate those who make assumptions about her and her *intellect and cunning* are that of those much older than her. Up and down the river she travels on her own boat 'The Ryder' plundering from the other Undersiders who make their living on the river. With *amazing balance* and a *steady hand* she springs around her boat, never missing a step and never taking a dip in the filthy waters, though presumably she can swim. The only place she really steers clear of is Admiral House, staying just out of cannon range to deliberately torment Admiral Mews. She is a *master swordsmistress* with her cutlass and has a *legendary knowledge of the Thames* and a *master level of skill at acrobatics and sailing*.



Ponders End

A bleak and depressing spot with a bench, surrounded by bleak and depressing modernist concrete art from the nineteen seventies. The view of the Thames is dull, bleak and depressing here as well and those sitting at the bench cannot help but be filled with a sense of cosmic dread and ennui, their minds contemplating their own eventual death and that of the universe. Darkling Children abuse this metaphysical conjunction by gathering here with drink and cigarettes to get into the proper, dark, hopeless mood before hitting the clubs in debauched excess.



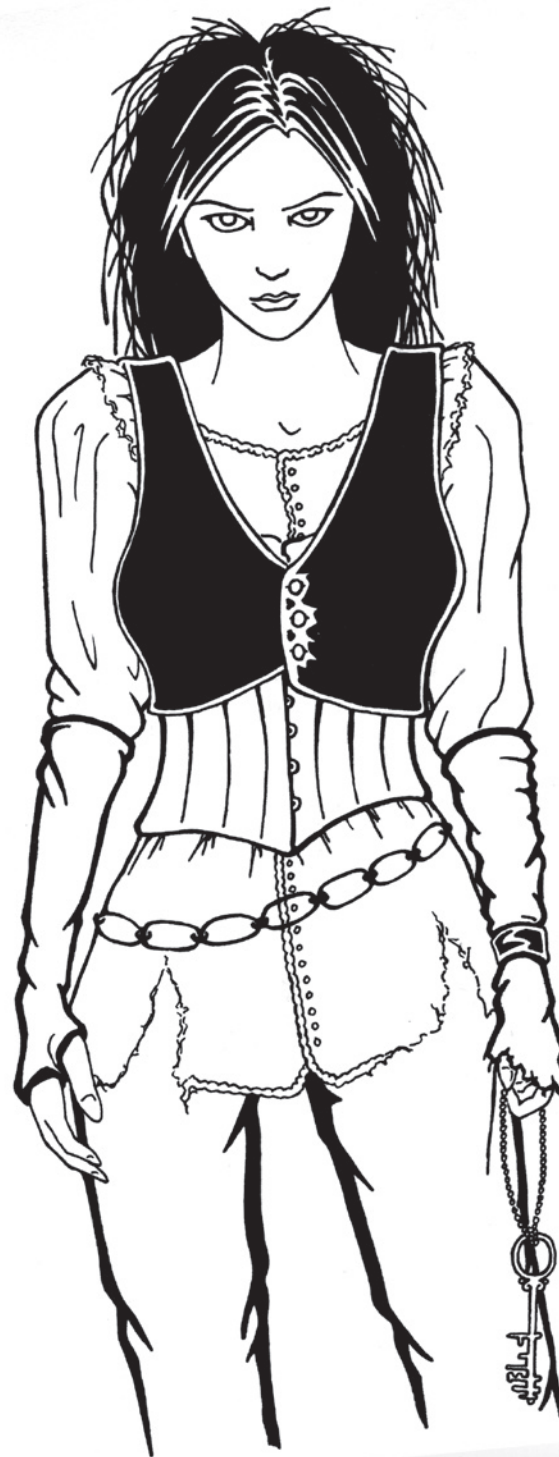
Portico, Door

Door is from an aristocratic family in London Below, the heir to that family's fortunes, gaining her birthright when she discovered her whole family killed by Croup and Vandemar. Door is an Opener, which means she can open locks, doors and other things that cannot usually be opened, such as walls and people's rib cages.

Door is a *small, thin, pale, elfin* looking girl with odd coloured eyes. She is a *born leader* with an *aristocratic* aura when she lets her more *approachable* side fade. *Playful* and slightly *sarcastic* this is largely a cover for her *emotional* nature and *inexperience*. Despite all this she is a *vengeful* creature and doesn't take slights to her or her house lightly. She's *light*, almost *bird-like*, a *lively* girl, *squirmy* from wriggling through tight tunnels and *messy* for the same reason. She is *novice at leadership* and *professional at Underside navigation* due to spending so much time exploring, she's also a *professional in underside lore*, *bird and rat languages* and a *master Opener*, she also *heals quickly*, like all pureblood Porticos.

Portico, Arch

Door's brother. Arch met his grisly end at the hands of Croup and Vandemar, cut at groin and throat and tossed into a pool of water to drown and bleed to death. Arch was something of a swordsman, Door's older brother, but he was no match for Croup and Vandemar and died trying to protect his mother.



Portico, Lady Portia

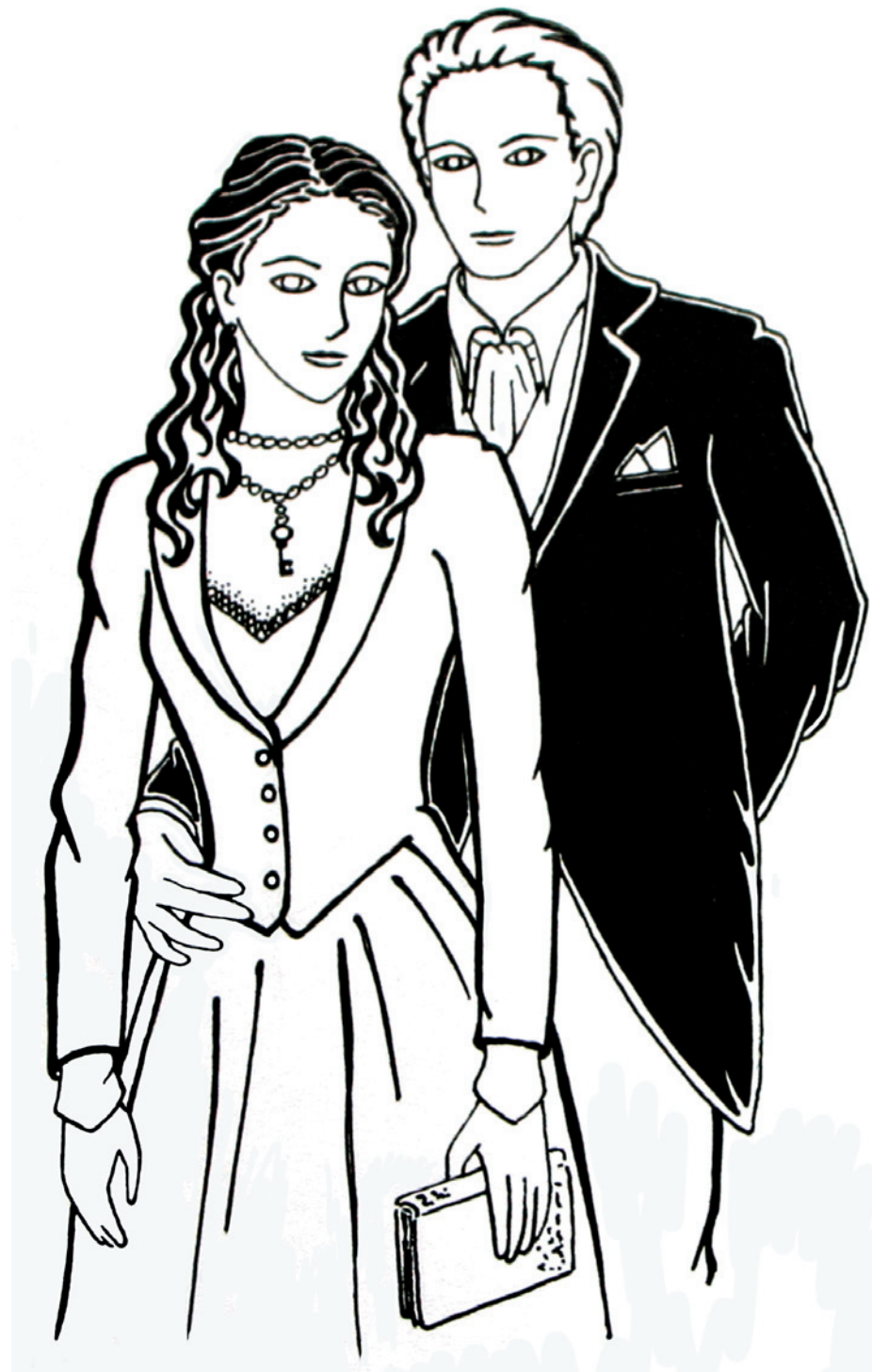
Door's mother and the Lady Portico, she met her end with her throat slit by Croup in the House Without Doors. Portia was a beautiful lady and devoted to her husband, children and helping some of the less fortunate of The Underside, her death is mourned by a great many.

Portico, Lord

Door's father Lord Portico was a gentleman belonging to another, gentler age. A historian and peacemaker he attempted to unite the Underside in the way it once was in history but, betrayed by Islington, he and his family were killed by Croup and Vandemar. Something many people apart from the Porticos saw coming from a long way away. Portico once saved de Carabas' life and invoked his favour from beyond the grave, making de Carabas protect his daughter. As well as being an opener, Portico was a practitioner of Junk Science and his video recorder is but one of the strange devices still to be found in his study.

Portico, Ingress

Door's little sister Ingress was younger than Door and was thought killed in the same massacre as the rest of her family, though her body was missing from the Portico residence. She may have been taken by Croup and Vandemar and hidden away somewhere as insurance for Islington in case anything happened to Door, certainly that's what Islington claimed at the last. Her final fate and location remains unknown and the subject of much debate.



Q

Quick Road

London Below has many shortcuts but most of these are dark places in which one would not wish to wander alone or even in company. Occasionally Quick Road, with its bright lights and bustle, appears at random in front of a traveller and a two minute walk down its brightly lit and bustling way will take them where they need to go in a relative instant.

Quince's Discount Weaponry

Quince's Discount Weaponry sells anything and everything you might need to cut, eviscerate, pierce, crush or simply terrify your enemies from daggers to crossbows and all things in between. Occasionally something more exotic, like a primitive flamethrower might be on sale, but all at Mr Quince's cut down, knock off prices. Just don't expect anything of a higher quality than 'workmanlike'.



'A' to 'Z'

R

Ranger

Ranger is to Guides what Hunter is to Bravos, a legendary figure thought of by most as a myth. Ranger is supposed to have been around since before any other Underdweller and is said to know the byways of London Below better than he knows his own mind.

Cloaked in dark grey Ranger has *piercing green eyes* and a thick beard, with curly dark hair falling to his shoulders. He carries a crossbow and a knife, *always at the ready*, and moves with *supreme confidence* in his own abilities along the paths of London Below. Blackwall won't touch him; Night's Bridge holds *no fear* for him. No door is barred to his passage and no power in London Below will trouble him or his charges as he guides them on their journey. Ranger *moves very quickly*, never staying still for long. His *great strength* is said to be enough to wrestle the Gap. His *great toughness* is what taught Night's Bridge not to devour him. *Ever alert and very observant*, nothing escapes Ranger's notice. He is a *legendary shot with his crossbow* and a *master of the knife*. He has a *legendary knowledge of Underside navigation, London's streets and the Thames* and while his knowledge of Underside lore is of a *similar level* he never gives out information or secrets; saying that to be valued it must be learned.

Rat-Speaker, Lord

The master of the human Rat-speakers Lord Rat-speaker is *ragged and scruffy, suspicious* of everyone, *unfriendly and deeply paranoid*. Imitating a rat in his movements he is *stooped low, always fidgeting*, his actions *quick*, his mind *sharp* and his senses always *alert*. His paranoia makes him *dangerous* and he is *vicious* in the defence of his home, deferring only to rats, to whom he is *disgustingly obsequious*. A *master in the use of his glass shiv* he is also a *master leader* and a *professional fortune teller*, adept at reading information in entrails. *Legendary in his ability to speak with rats* he is held in such high regard by his betters that he almost equals a brown rat in their eyes, almost.

Raven's Court

Raven's Court, ruled over by the Raven herself, is a court of rogues and information barterers; as the Earl has dominion over all that is lost Raven has possession of all that is taken, if only in principle. Raven's close aids (Crowthorne the man at arms, Beak the fool) have the knack of understanding all languages and forms of communication and own much of the rooftops contesting them with the cats. Old Bailey has been given free roam through Raven's domain. The rooks he captures hear much before escaping. Some say that Raven's chosen can skin-shift. This rumour has been unproven and is denied by the court, though it is true nonetheless.

Ravenscar Treasure

The Ravenscar Treasure was given to Lord Melchior Ravenscar when his family undertook their oath. As well as a great weight of silver that established the house in the Underside there were several items that had power.

The Eye of the Magpie is a silver circlet whose location is long since forgotten and lost. The circlet has a pearl of amber set at the centre and the wearer knows the value of all that they see, utterly and to the finest detail.

The Beak of the Jackdaw was a velvet choker, a sparkling silver beak depending from the throat. Those who wore it understood and spoke the language of birds perfectly in every regard and nuance, without the need for a knack.

The Feather of the Crow is the last remaining treasure in the hands of Raven's Court. Set within Raven's pendant is a silver feather. The pendant is used to bless those born into the direct line of Corvid granting them the ability to become crows.

Rook wore The Raven Rings and they were plucked from his fingers by Mr Vandemar who now claims that he crafted them himself, an unlikely story given his bent for destruction. The rings granted the wearer the ability to see the deaths of those around them, something Mr Vandemar abused by seeing the quickest or shortest ways to kill people.

The Claw of the Morrigan was a dagger, black as pitch and made of shadow that always flew true when thrown and always struck a fatal blow. Its loss lessened the strength of the house considerably and led to its decline in fortune.

Ravenscar, Melchior

The founder of House Corvid Melchior struck a deal with the king of the above world and became a guardian of the monarchy, rewarded for his duty and his loyalty with the wealth and wonder of the Ravenscar treasure. To this day Raven's Court seeks to keep the monarchy and its holdings secure, something a little at odds with their reputation. Melchior Ravenscar was a good friend to Christopher Marlowe, a spy poet and magician of Elizabethan times who was rumoured to be a both-worlder and even to be Melchior himself.

Raven, The

The undisputed ruler of Raven's Court she is the eldest daughter of the late Lord Corvid who died, along with her brother Rook, in the siege of Crossharbour. The battle was lost due to the treachery of Rotherhithe, but Raven has long known it was Croup and Vandemar who were ultimately responsible for the deaths of her family.

Young to be holding such power she has allayed her dominion's fears by proving to be a *canny and ruthless* leader. *Pale and striking* in appearance she is *calm and patient* most times, only showing a crack in her façade when her familial loss is mentioned. While *vengeful* she knows how to wait and will wait as long as necessary. Raven dreams of reuniting the lost Ravenscar treasures and goes to great pains to find the resting places of what once made up that hoard. *Slender and graceful* the Raven knows how to be *charming*, how to be *regal* and what buttons to push to get what she wants. *A professional leader she is equally skilled with the knife, at intimidation, at thievery and at seduction.* It is said she and all her line *can transform into corvids - magpies, ravens, crows and rooks.* At her neck she wears a silver pendant, the very last item of the Ravenscar treasure that remains with the family. She has a *legendary ability to talk to the birds*, a reflection of her upbringing and house.



'A' to 'Z'

Rayner, Lord

Despite his title he has always been a minor power in London Below. The fame of his house peaked in the mid eighteenth century when Black Keziah was in his employ and he ordered the crusade against Blackheath.

Austere and puritanical in his outlook, Rayner *despises 'superstitious frivolity* that allows bullies to hide behind a veneer of fearful smoke and mirrors'. It is a singular view to hold given the nature of the Underside. Rayner is *very strict and completely cheerless, intolerant of anything supernatural or strange* and counter to the biblical and scientific knowledge of his century, the things that he chooses to put his faith in. Rayner never welcomes strange visitors and has been known to imprison them on nothing more than a whim or the flimsiest of excuses. *Masterful in his biblical and scientific knowledge* he is a *professional with sword and pistol*, Lord Rayner is a veteran of many crusades and campaigns in the Underside, which is where he learned to *lead men with such mastery*.

Red Lion Street

Owned by the Wild Court this street is prowled by a pair of massive and magnificent red-coated lions. Regal and very powerful the lions are sleek, healthy and fast, able to move quickly on the hunt and ever alert for their next meal. Resilient and intimidating those who do muster the courage to attack them find them resistant to attack and quick to heal. They are masters with their claws and teeth and at tracking, preferring to feed on those who have displeased Herne.

Ragged flags of St George hang from every window on this red-brick Victorian street but it is abandoned to rot and ruin, home only to the lions and the remains of their prey. Those who have not displeased Herne are free to pass through, unmolested and some deliberately seek out the lions in order to simply see such magnificent beasts.

Ripper, Jack the

Everyone wants to claim that The Ripper was something to do with London Below, though nobody is sure who or what he was or if he was an undersider. Periodically there'll be some 'jolly jack' killings but this usually turns out to be a murderer's petty sense of humour and not particularly noticeable amongst the other killings that go on in London Below every single day. Occasionally though, there's something with a smack of authenticity and the culprits of these are never found.

Robinson, Jack

Gentleman Jack Robinson could have stepped straight out of a Jane Austen novel in regards to his attire, though it is a little threadbare and not really up to a gentleman's standard any longer. Despite his gentlemanly ways he was once an executioner for the noble houses until he lost his nerve. These days he carries nothing more offensive than his umbrella and, jangled and on edge, he can barely hold a thought or a decision in his mind for more than ten seconds at a time.

Jack is a *dapper* chap, *finely dressed* and possessed of *perfect politeness*. He is a *nervous and jumpy* person since he lost his backbone, *indecisive* to a fault and *full of energy*. He's *unnaturally fast* and *uncommonly accurate* in his movements, legacies of the knacks that made him such a fine executioner. These days he's *bashful and lonely*, but prefers his own company, taking long walks in the more deserted parts of London Below. He's a *master with most weapons* but that's his past life, now he would make a *professional guide*, if only he could concentrate.

Ross

The unfortunate soul hired as a 'canary' by Croup and Vandemar. Door opened him, rather messily, so he's now a grubby and unpleasant corpse, rather than a grubby and unpleasant bravo. He was a portly chap of extreme ugliness given to the use of punch daggers. Far from an effective Bravo or assassin he was never truly hired for his ability but as a disposable asset.

Rotherhithe, Solomon

Solomon Rotherhithe is extremely and unquestionably dead, beyond any doubt. He betrayed Raven's Court to the creatures on the Isle of Dogs. It was not long after that Raven found him gainful employ within her court... as a hanging ornament within one of the crow cages at her gates, pecked to ragged scraps of flesh and bone, a useful example to others.

Ruislip

Varney's first opponent in the bodyguard auditions Door held at the Floating Market, Ruislip defeated The Fop With No Name before being knocked out of the running by a borderline cheating Varney.

Ruislip is a *massive* Jamaican fellow with the build of a scaled up baby. A mass of *greasy* dreadlocks hangs down his back and his head is topped with a colourful woollen hat. When fighting he strips to his pants for battle, which can be *very off-putting*. *Very fat* but also *very strong* he uses his *powerful* body and *superior weight* to overwhelm his opponents. A *master sumo wrestler* and *professional in Underside navigation and lore* he makes a good choice of Bravo for protection, despite being *unbearably rude*. While he prefers to wrestle *he also carries a big hammer*, though this is more for show, *he's only a novice with it*.

Sable, Brother

One of the Black Friars, Brother Sable officiated over part of the Ordeal as well as guarding the swamp entrance to the abbey.

Fit, strong and fast, able bodied and as *quick of mind* as of body, Brother Sable was chosen from amongst the tougher and hardier monks to administer the part of the Ordeal related to a fair battle. A *master of the quarter-staff and of hand-to-hand combat* Brother Sable is fair to those he fights and away from battle is *very caring*, a *professional at medicine*.

Rook

The slain brother of Raven, Rook is sorely missed by her and met his end at the battle of Crossharbour along with his father. Both dyed at the hands of Croup and Vandemar, hired by their opposition, or simply revelling in the violence that they happened upon, that has never been entirely clear. Rook once wore part of the Ravenscar treasure but this was taken from his body and adopted by Mr Vandemar who took a special fancy to them.



S

Sanctuary, The

Behind a locked door near Parliament Square is the Sanctuary. As its name suggests, it is a haven for those in dire need. The keeper of that place is an enigmatic young man called Hayes Murphy. It should be noted however that the door does not always open, no matter how frenzied the hammering upon it. Whether the criterion for this avenue of salvation is mystical or arbitrary no one has yet been able to ascertain, but Murphy claims that he, personally, has no control over whether people are rejected or admitted.



Scala

Wormwood's aide Scala is unable to speak on his master, being reduced to writhing agony if he even mentions Wormwood's name.

Scala is a *fool* and *easily led*, but a *dangerous* fool. His will completely subsumed to Wormwood's, Scala does whatever his master dictates *without hesitation or reservation*. *Bald and slim, quick on his feet and extremely wiry* Scala throws himself into everything he does in Wormwood's service. Covered in ritual scars and brands Scala strikes an *intimidating* figure and is widely hated. Wormwood has granted him some power to protect himself against people he regards as jealous of him and his position. He has the *knack of igniting his fists*, setting fire to all he touches. Scala is a *master of fist fighting, intimidation and Underside navigation*.

Science Museum

The Science Museum adjoins the Natural History Museum and is filled with displays and devices of all sorts. Another popular location for The Floating Market the vaults of the museum also house many forgotten and wonderful devices belonging to discredited theories or inventors whose inspiration came from the imagination rather than reality. Needless to say many of these theories and devices operate just perfectly in London Below and form much of the basis for Junk Science. Every few years a Grand Exhibition is held in the cellars of the Science Museum by London Below's Junk Scientists to show off their latest theories and devices and to come to fisticuffs over just whose theory is 'ridiculous'.

Seething Wells

On the riverbank by Hampton Court and close to some sewage works, Seething Wells is where the 'high born' Sewer Folk live. Why there appears to be a class divide in this tribe and how the Wells Folk can even attempt to be supercilious and lordly when they're covered in excrement is an unfathomable mystery to the rest of London Below but where there's muck, there's brass and brass, apparently, leads to snobbery.

Seven Kings

As there are Seven Sisters there were according to legend once seven brothers who were the Lords of London Below. How this relates to the Sisters or who they were remains forgotten.

Seven Sisters

Including Olympia, Serpentine, Victoria, Maida, Stepney, Morden and Caledonia. Sorceresses and enchantresses all, they have not been talking to each other for some time. Most of London Below have heard of them, are afraid of them, particularly Serpentine, and dread to think of them ever acting together again.

Shadow Beast

Nightmare creatures formed from the stuff of dream, Shadow Beasts lurk in Night's Bridge and under Blackheath where they are drawn to roost and gather. No two alike, all are formed from someone's fears and terrors and given substance by the dark. There's always work for bravos dealing with these creatures and the suffering that they cause.

Shepherd's Bush

Shepherds of Shepherd's Bush, slavers, are the skin trade of London Below. Their territory is Shepherd's bush, Cheapside and the Leather Market and they have an agent called Skinner who has a very nasty knack indeed.

They are led by a queen, The Shepherd Queen, and are some of the worst degenerates of London Below. They are also almost all big in stature and build, look very alike and have little to no body hair; outside of the Shepherds no-one knows why this is so. They often shave the heads of those they own to make finding them again easier if they escape. This practise is taken from London Above where, in the 18th Century, convicted prostitutes would have their heads shaved after serving any sentence. Shepherd society sees women as more powerful than men but slaves as being at the bottom of the pile.

The ruler of the Shepherd's Bush slavers, their queen is masked on all public occasions and is worshipped as a *living goddess* by her people. *Tall and statuesque* she towers over most of her followers, *resplendent* in dark leather and a long robe to cover her body. Carried everywhere by liveried slaves and defended by a phalanx of bodyguards she nonetheless rarely ever leaves the Shepherds' area of control. The Shepherd Queen rarely speaks but every word that does leave her mouth is *carefully considered* and usually an order or an *insightful* comment. She is sole and only leader of the Shepherds and *her word is law*. Somewhat *haughty and very privileged* she is *pampered and spoiled* by her huge retinue of guards and slaves but seems *fit and capable* herself in spite of all this. When an assassination attempt got past her guards she moved with *sudden speed* and managed to disarm and kill her attacker without any need for aid. The Shepherd Queen is a *master of rule and has the knack of dominating minds at the same level*, she also appears to be a *master of the combat arts*, even if she has little call to use them.

Silvertown

A shanty settlement that sprang up around Raven's Court when it was at the peak of its power, feeding on the wealth of the silver hoard of that family as it as spent, the shanty's fortunes have soured as the fortunes of the family have foundered. Now Silvertown and its settlements are a ghost town, empty shacks, caves and tunnels that provide shelter for vagrants and the insane, little more, though there are persistent rumours that smaller hoards of silver are buried around the site.

Serpentine

The *most feared* of the Seven Sisters Serpentine has the *legendary ability to transform things*. People, objects, fortunes all are mutable to her will. She is also a *master of the arts of cursing and potions*. Serpentine is the most feared because she is the most active and uses her power to punish anyone who does so much as get in her way or slightly inconvenience her. The Underside is littered with toads, bats and other unsavoury creatures all sporting a mournful or surprised expression, all once people who crossed Serpentine's path. Serpentine is also known to take children from Underside families, binding them into her service as servants for their lifespan, keeping them under her control with potions and subtle magics. Serpentine is a *stolid and stocky* woman of the hockey playing and horse-riding tradition of English ladies. She is *very strong* in body and *solid* in stature, *immortal and immutable*. *Curt and short* she is *honourable* in her own *twisted* way, *imperious* in manner and *cruel* in action. Always hungry she has a taste for delicacies not generally enjoyed in Britain any more; calves foot jelly, jellied eels and other fare that would give modern stomachs a queasy turn. Her *eternal* feasting is much of the reason for the existence of her servants and for her stocky build. Serpentine once knew Hunter and had her bound into her service. Serpentine also looks after many artefacts, amongst them the spear Hunter used to attack the Beast. *Extremely intelligent* Serpentine sees through plots and deceptions like most people see through glass.

Serpentine dresses in rubber and wedding dresses and teases her hair into a piled up, back-combed tower that resembles nothing so much as an overloaded icecream cone. She has very few male servants and her stables contain no horses, indeed the bits and bridles seem more suited to fit someone of a more human frame...



Sister Saturday

Wreathed as she is in permanent mystery and cigarette smoke, there are many rumours of Sister Saturday, the woman who holds dominion over the Darkling Children of Camden Town. If anyone knew how many of those tales were true and how far her *insane* influence truly reached they would storm her court in fear and flames, putting her and her subjects to the torch or the sword. If she didn't kill them first, that is. Sister Saturday has dominion over drunkenness and folly. Anything you do while drunk, angry or high is known to her, her life is one constant *hedonistic* whirl that drags others along with it. Everyone loses control at some point and Sister Saturday views it as a liberating and life-changing experience for people to just go with their urges and see what happens. As such she is *very impulsive and changeable* in mood going from *furiously* to *coquettish* in the space of a single sentence. Sister Saturday is a *popular* leader despite her *imperious and selfish* attitude, since she demands so little from her followers – other than that they have a good time. *Quick and sharp, cruel and beautiful, funny and scary*, time with Sister Saturday is spent in a tsunami of activity and she will do nothing for people unless they follow their urges and loosen up while they speak to her. *Always moving*, her shiny fetish heels eat up the streets of Camden, Soho and Chinatown seeking new diversions constantly. Every day is Saturday to her, a free day without a care in the world but her power waxes and wanes with the week. She is *strongest on Saturdays and weakest on Mondays*, giving her and her court a natural rhythm of activity. She has the *knack of knowing when the truth is spoken* for she knows how people act when they are without conscience or fear. She is a *legendary party animal*, never needing to rest or sleep and has a *legendary knowledge of the nightlife of both cities, above and below*. She is only a *novice at leadership* since she so rarely needs to call on her people for anything.

Sister Saturday is so powerful because just about everyone from sixteen to forty indulges themselves on a Saturday night without fear of tomorrow sending her offerings of drink, drugs and one night stands to keep that smile on her face and the party going on.



'A' to 'Z'

Skinner

An agent of the Shepherds of Shepherds Bush, Skinner is used to put the fear of god into runaway slaves. If one is not captured within a week Skinner is unleashed to look for them. He hardly ever fails to get his man, one way or another.

A *loose limbed* and *very fast* man Skinner spends so long away from the Shepherds that his body hair starts to grow back in, giving him a constant *stubby and unkempt* appearance during the pursuit. His suit is made up of the tanned skins of those he has recaptured and all who are recaptured are dealt with in this way so that they might serve as a warning to others. *Deadly and grim faced* Skinner seeks only to kill those he tracks with deadly force, never to enslave them again. *Always alert* for their presence it's said he doesn't sleep while in pursuit. *Extremely intimidating* with his *cold* eyes and thousand-yard stare, the presence of Skinner can be *terrifying*, even to those who aren't being pursued, and he has been known to punish those who harbour runaways. *A master tracker and a master with the spear and knife, Skinner has a masterful knowledge of Underside Navigation* that allows him to catch up to or head off most of his prey.

Snow Hill

Owned by no-one, Snow Hill is a very strange place. It appears to be an old part of London Above that has sunken in to London Below and been built over. Walking through tunnels that get progressively colder, approaching Undersiders will eventually get to a small underground lake, which is totally frozen over. The air is full of ice crystals, much like hot breath in cold weather, and it is difficult to see.

In the middle of this whiteness is a small hill, covered in frost-rimed grass, and home to a few trees from which icicles hang. It is impossible to see any kind of roof above the hill and any noise thrown objects might make against such a thing is muffled by the 'fog'. Snow Hill is a haven for the enigmatic and supposedly fictional Ranger, who doesn't seem to mind the ice.

Springheel Jack

Springheel Jack is another London Legend to which the people of London Below adhere, whom they like to claim as one of their own. Springheel Jack was an urban legend in Victorian times, able to leap above the streets and claimed to breathe fire and wear metallic claws. Part rascal, near rapist and something of a vigilante, depending whose stories you paid attention to – and some even said he was the devil – Springheel Jack certainly made an impression on the populace and his nature and abilities certainly made him seem like one from London Below. Whether he was or not and what the nature of his powers really was, even if he was real at all, remains to be seen.

Stag Place

Owned by the Wild Court, along with Phoenix Place, White Lion Street, Red Lion Street, Herne Hill and Fox Corner, Stag Place is supposedly Herne's home. A stand of thick trees in an open roofed cave, with a tunnel leading down into the dark it certainly seems to be the right sort of place. A white stag is often seen slipping amongst the trees but only ever fleetingly and it has never been caught.

Star Lane

A dark little alley full of blue-painted houses and strung with fairy-lights of all kinds, Star Lane is home to soothsayers and astrologers. They watch the heavens on their complex brass devices of spinning orbs and peer up at the sky through the city glow, working the lights of planes and satellites into their calculations and filling books with their speculations, many of which come to naught – for which they blame the sheer complexity of the task.

Stockton, Mister Arnold

Jessica's boss and a *great fat* caricature of a man, Arnold Stockton made his wealth the hard way, from the ground up, and still has very little respect for those who came by their money by other means. *Extremely bossy, gruff and bullish* he runs a powerful newspaper based Media Empire in his patented *brash, loud and intimidating* way. A *straightforward* man, not fond of evasion, he is – nonetheless – *very canny* in the running of his business and *not to be trifled with*. A *master at business, and finance, a novice at art critique*, he collects images of Angels having been inspired by the Angelus as a child.

Sumner Place

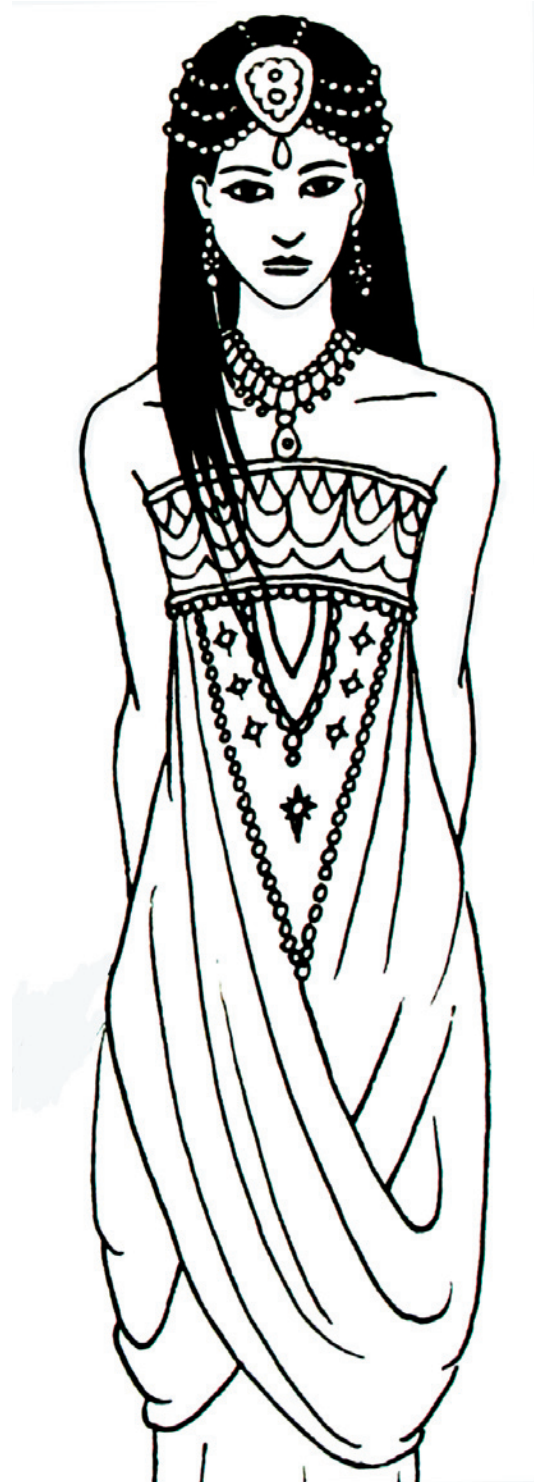
In the Underside, law is usually a personal matter. If one has been wronged, one can always hire a Bravo or seek retribution through similar, violent, personal means. It is rare for anyone to go through 'official' channels, but those channels do exist. In Sumner Place is the office of Melton, Onslow and Cranley, solicitors, lawyers and champions of the statutes of the Underside, such as they are.

Sylvia

A slightly *distant* woman Sylvia is *brisk, crisply efficient and aloof* with a *cold* demeanour while working; only loosening up at the pub after work with a few drinks in her. *Confident, self-assured, bossy, demanding and focused* Sylvia is a *master supervisor, a practised secretary and a novice manager*. A general organiser at Richard's place of work Sylvia has no time to say much more than the barest of professional comments to anyone unless she's nagging them or they're higher up the food chain than her.

Stepney

One of the Seven Sisters Stepney, who is also known as the 'Old Lady of Threadneedle Street', Stepney has a *legendary ability to cast wards and protection magics* and a *masterful ability to lay curses and brew potions*. Festooned with jewellery, Stepney is a *gaudy* bauble of a woman, *short and disarming* in appearance but no less dangerous for all that, she drips with gold, silver and jewels and always craves more wealth, more riches and more goods to fill her abode, a secret set of Greek style chambers beneath the Bank of England. *Endlessly greedy and paranoid* of the safety of her acquisitions she lays spell upon spell over her chambers to protect them from unwary thieves and sends her servants out into the Underside to procure more unique and valuable things for her. Possessed of a *keen eye for value* and a *knowledgeable* mind no fake can get past her *discerning* sight.





Tanners End

Leather is a much-used commodity in London Below being warm, durable and extremely useful in all manner of ways. Made in the traditional way at Tanner's End the stink of the tanning pits permeates the area for hundreds of yards in all direction, a mixture of the piss, dog shit and chemicals the tanners use to cure and preserve the skins. Those Sewer Folk who seek a better life outside the sewers most often end up apprenticing to a Tanner, as handling crap and the heady stench do not worry them, their sense of smell long since burnt out of their nostrils.

Temple

One of the earliest places of worship in London Below, the Temple is built over a holy pool into which offerings were once cast to various gods and goddesses. Build over and over again the Temple is a mish mash of different religions and architectures but no less holy for it. Temple has become one half of a common oath used in London Below, 'Temple and Arch!' Is a minor blasphemy akin to shouting 'Jesus Christ!' when hitting oneself on the thumb with a hammer.

Thamesmead

Thamesmead is a strong drink, brewed with honey and rainwater and spiced with herbs and flowers found growing in the wilder patches around the city, typically scavenged from waste ground. It's sickly sweet and slightly dirty tasting, but it will get you plastered.

Time & Space Distortion

Blamed on the power of the Underground Map, the disorienting effects of the tube and the meaninglessness of time underground out of the sun, time and space subtly warp and shift around London causing all manner of travel problems, benefits and sudden and inexplicable changes between night and day. It takes half-lifers and others who move between the worlds some time to adjust.

Tinkers

The Tinkers, as one Underside saying has it, 'Go where they will.' In many ways these wandering salesmen are the lifeblood of trade in the Underside, carrying great packs of sale-goods both wondrous and mundane. Although the Tinkers, unlike their customers, are free to enter or leave London Below as they wish, they cannot remain in the Underside for more than a few days at a stretch.

It is believed that they can leave London for the Shires, or even visit the Undercities of Europe if they desire, but only so long as they travel along the ancient and meandering trade paths that wind their laborious way through the countryside. It is not known how one joins this loose brotherhood of mercantile wanderers, and their numbers seem to dwindle with each passing year.

Token

To guide you through the Labyrinth you must carry an obsidian representation of the Beast that guards it. Since the death of the Beast you have not needed a token for protection but merely to find the way through the confusing system of tunnels.

Tooley

The jester at Earl's Court, Tooley's jokes leave a lot to be desired being as *old and tired* as he is. He makes some effort though when it comes to being *derisive* to others, which allows his *savage wit* to come to the fore. He does hold himself back if the person at court is noteworthy or dangerous but also delights in reminding the forgetful Earl if someone who comes before him has displeased him in the past. Given the state of the Earl's mind it's quite possible that he makes this up sometimes. *Thin lipped* and of *pinched* expression, Tooley is a *joyless* Jester and one wonders how he keeps his job. *Professional at the telling of jokes* and with a *master's memory for the history and deeds of Earl's Court* Tooley is as much a personal assistant to the doddering Earl as a jester.

Tooting

An old bandstand in a raggedy and unkempt park, Tooting is a musical venue for the musicians and buskers of London Below when they organise something a bit more special for celebrations in The Underside. It's also where the bards and buskers trade their skills with each other and train the next generation of musicians. If it's musical, you can likely find it here.

Tooting Beck

A drooling and thoroughly insane old beggar with a beard like a poorly maintained privet hedge and crawling with even more wildlife, Beck is technically a busker but his musical talents are limited to blowing a single note on an ancient and drool-encrusted plastic trumpet such as might be given out as a party favour. Beck collects the money he inexplicably collects from 'playing' his trumpet in many layers of plastic carrier bag, which he carries after him, never actually seeming to spend any.

Bec is a *filthy, stinking and ragged* old man with an *unkempt* beard. He's *absolutely insane* but as *tough as old boots* and as *strong as an ox*. Despite his madness he was once a very skilful busker and had a *legendary talent with the trumpet*. Very occasionally if he's presented with a proper instrument he'll still give a virtuoso performance.

Totteridge & Whetstone

A pair of fine craftsmen, Totteridge and Whetstone are London Below blade smiths.

Those who can afford their *expensive* rates are blessed with some of the finest and most professionally made weapons in the Underside. Twins, the pair have straw blond hair and are of *attractive* mien and personality, joking with their customers while they work with an *impressive* degree of *diligence and attention*. *Extreme perfectionists* to the finest detail, they *cannot resist a challenge* and may even cut down the price if their *master level ability in weapon smithing* is properly challenged by a difficult task. *Masters in the use of the blade* themselves, they have grown *strong* before the forge and are capable of *amazing accuracy* and detail in their work.

Tower, The

The Tower of London is under the protection of Raven's Court and has been the site of many horrible battles. The Tower has many ghosts and many secrets belonging to the nobility both above and below, all of which are the providence of Raven's Court who station several of their subjects there as supernatural guards.

Treasures of London

There are supposedly seven great treasures of London Below but their identity has never been confirmed. They presumably map to the mythical 'treasures of Britain' such as the Sword of the Moon, The Spear of the Sun and the Cauldron of Plenty. Some of the suspected treasures include The Ravenscar Treasure, Islington's Wings, De Carabas' Coat, Hunter's Spear, The Key and The Angelus.

Trollstone

Home of the Trolls, the caves of Trollstone are giant caverns twice as high as a normal man's head. The Trolls are huge folk, easily seven feet in height at their smallest and nine feet at their tallest. They are generally a good natured and easygoing people who have many amazing smiths and craftsmen and their home displays that skill to full effect. Totteridge and Whetstone, Clipstone and Hammersmith are all friends of the Trolls who are led by Curzon. Other trolls include Craven, Cadogan and Brixton.

Tube Map, The

Attempting to map the tube accurately was an impossible task. The stations were close together in the centre and far apart further away making any kind of accurate map almost impossible to draw and certainly impossible to use. Then a designer stumbled across the lateral thought that the map didn't need to be a true representation of the distance between the stations and simplified the whole of the underground into a neat, graphical diagram, elegant in its simplicity. The first of these maps has power; distance truly doesn't matter in the underground and the Tube Map can be used to chart a course through the underground system that can move one forward or backward in time and space by almost as much as a week, but only by using the original draft of the map which is hidden in the vaults of the London Transport Museum, guarded by strange steam mechanisms that date back to World War One.

Turnham Green

A hollow threat of magical punishment, offered by the mothers of the Underside since time immemorial. 'If they don't behave Serpentine will turn 'em green'.



U

Undercities

London Below is not the only Undercity in the world. Although travel from one Underside to another is obviously possible, the specifics of such travel arrangements remain unclear and difficult. Thankfully there are few that wish to broaden their horizons in this way, reasoning that London Below has wonders and dangers enough without actively searching for more.

Underside Line

The Underside Line is a hidden, secret, dark and foreboding track of the Underground which most avoid like the plague. Semi-mythical it's supposed to be able to take you anywhere, but it's related to the same darkness that spawns The Gap, The Ordeal and Night's Bridge. There's nowhere so important to get to that you should take such a terrible risk.

Underwood, The

When the woods were cleared away to make room for the city above, many of the roots remained and in caverns under the earth – lit by glowing crystals and fungi – the roots still descend from the roof like upside down trees, blossoming and bearing fruit and filling the caverns with the scent of pollen and the sound of pale woodland animals adapted to the dark.



'A' to 'Z'



Vale of Health

Although the place exists, its powers are believed by most to be nothing more than a fairytale. The Vale of Health is a petty Avalon for any thief or rake at death's door. If they can find their way to the Vale and pick the locks on the gates, bluff their way past the guardians and steal a drink from the fountain they will be healed of all ills and returned to the world again.

Varney

A Bravo who failed Croup and Vandemar by being defeated by Hunter, until she arrived he was the greatest Bravo and guard in London Below, 'The best since Hunter's time'.

A *master telekinetic* he used his knack to tip the balance of combat in his favour, unfairly perhaps, in fight after fight. Varney was *very unpleasant, tattooed, rotting of tooth*, but *quite talented* at causing pain. He *made his own weapons and traps with professional skill*, stashing them – and food – in various places about London Below. His *caution and brutality* served him not so well against Croup and Vandemar however, who took care of him in their usual unpleasant way without leaving so much as a stain. Varney was a *vicious and stupid* thug possessed of *unusual strength, pitbull tenacity and toughness, unable to know when to give up*. A *master with all manner of weaponry and professional at Underside navigation and torture*, Varney had worked for almost all the major factions in the Underside and had handled security for the May Fair several years running. His lair was beneath Kentish Town tube station in an old army barracks where he had several pilfered robot arms and a big stash of weaponry, it's probably still there, but so are all his traps.



Victoria

One of the Seven Sisters, Victoria is consumed by *carnal* needs and is quite *lusty*. Dressed in red satin she prowls the Underside when her hunger grows too strong, seeking a consort and using her *legendary powers of mind control* as well as her *masterful curses and potions* to secure her beau. Able to bend any will to her own agenda, Victoria is a *mature* beauty seeming to be in her late thirties. Her body is *firm* and *pleasing to the eye* and her eyes are *captivating*, capturing many a man's soul within them. Those she sleeps with die, their life energy drained to feed her craving for sensation and their souls joining the others trapped within the walls of her bedchamber. *Immortal and inviolate* Victoria is treated as a natural force by the men of the Underside, many of whom don't consider it such an awful way to die given many of the alternatives. The womenfolk don't see things quite the same way and are jealous of Victoria's *seductive and beautiful* appearance, fearing that their men will be the next ones to be stolen away.





Wandsworth

Wandsworth is the butler for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Houses in Down Street and also answers the door and conducts people to the elevator, which he operates.

Wandsworth is *immaculately dressed* in his butler's outfit at all times and while *old and a little gaunt*, not to mention *snooty and condescending* he does his level best to remain *polite and accommodating* to any and all who come knocking at Down Street, no matter the time of night. A *master of butting* and a *professional at maintaining houses and mechanics*, Wandsworth is an invaluable member of the society.

Wapping

Wapping is a *truly enormous* giant, so *mind-bogglingly huge* that he has to hide away in abandoned warehouses and power stations to avoid crushing things and causing trouble. Nordic, having come over in the time of the Vikings, he is an *extremely powerful and incredibly strong* individual, though he is *running to fat* due to his sloth and lack of exercise. He also has the *melancholy and depressive* outlook of many Scandinavians and his current occupation seems to be sighing and feeling sorry for himself. He occasionally earns some barter by wading out into the Thames to help stranded ships and he was once a *master warrior*, but now he's just a big useless lump.

Watford Dragons

The great pit in Watford may be the original breeding ground of The Gap, indeed this is the only place where they're found outside of The Underground, threatening those who wander the area with a horrible death. From Watford, gazing north into the sky one can occasionally see the reptilian forms of dragons cavorting in the sky, which is why on Underside maps, anything north of Watford is marked 'Here be Dragons'.

Whiskers, Miss

A brown rat in the service of the Golden, her name sounds much better in the rat tongue and doesn't translate well.

Wormwood

The very name sets a shiver up the spine of most and the sight of his (its? her?) aide, Scala, is a sure sign that things are about to go to hell. No one has ever seen Wormwood but there has been much speculation about the nature of it, its motivations and its origins. A common thread, until recently, was that Wormwood was the flip side to Islington but now no one is sure, save Scala, who isn't telling.

Wrythe, The

A stinking midden, deep in the nastier parts of The Underside, The Wrythe is a filthy pit, swarming with insects, squirming with maggots and filled with the worst kind of filth and detritus, the stuff even the Sewer Folk have no use for. It's also a very good place to get rid of a body if you can bare the insect bites and the stench. This is also one of the rumoured hiding places of Wormwood.



Watcher, The

Competent and of a *mercenary* sensibility, the Watcher is believed to be Macavity's left-hand man by rumourmongers and gossips. In manner and mien he is *polite*, but he has a *formidable temper* and is not averse to displaying his displeasure in no uncertain terms. No one knows for whom, or what, he watches so in this, as in so many matters, caution is advised. It could be so simple a thing as he reports on the outside world to Macavity to fulfil some age-old obligation. At any rate the Watcher is *professional* in what he does, *extremely observant* and *very alert*, never missing a detail and with a *fantastic memory* that allows him to recall every detail. A *master at observation* he has a *masterful knowledge of Underside lore and navigation* and a *professional ability in almost every language spoken on the Underside*.



'A' to 'Z'

Wool Witch, The

The Wool Witch is the mistress of creation, with her spinning wheel and her loom she can spin any material into any other and even spin the air into substance.

Hunched from her work, the Wool Witch is an *ugly* sight, resembling nothing so much as a female Mr Punch, *misshapen and hideous*. Her voice is also an *ear-grating* cackling and her skin has a greenish tinge, all things that are more classic images of a witch than the others. She swathes her body in thick woollen jumpers gloves and a woven cloak to cover and warm her body, swaddled so thick she'd bounce back onto her feet if she fell over. *Masterful in her knack of spinning something out of nothing* she's also a *master of petty magic*, even as old and decrepit as she is, her special talents ensure that nobody will mess with her too much and she hides her ancient body, very often, beneath a glamour of her younger and more beautiful self.



Y

Young Street

At one time there was a fashion for officially naming newly 'fallen' streets in the Underside. This one was the last named before the fad died out. Of course the Underside continues to change and grow, whether its geography is named or not.



The End

I fell in love with *Neverwhere* the moment I became aware of its existence which, back in the dark days of 1996, was via the pages of *The Radio Times* rather than *The Internet* and as a television series, rather than a book.*

Just something about the whole idea got to me right away. I'm a country boy, not a city child by any stretch of the imagination but London has always held a special fascination for me as the site of school outings, gigs and special events throughout my life as well as the home of a great many very good friends.

There's something about London that's special, around any and every corner you'll find something new and strange, the old piled on top of the new, some new piece of graffiti or some scratching into an ancient wall proclaiming undying love between two people who've been dead some three-hundred years.

The ravages of fire and bombings have left London a mess of different and clashing architectural styles all piled on top of one another, the very old next to the very new and it's full of endless little secrets and special places so that anyone and everyone who comes to the city develops a relationship with it in all its festering and dirty glory.

The Underground though, that's always been something particularly special. You have to admire the thing, even when the drivers are on strike or you're pressed face-first into someone's armpit during rush hour and as with Gaiman the names of the places always used to inspire me.

I remember being disappointed that neither Piccadilly nor Oxford were actual circuses, when I was a child and I remember being delighted that there really were stately ravens at The Tower and that the guards really did dress like Mr Wimpey (that dates me...).

Neverwhere dredged up all that childhood wonder and fascination and has stayed with me ever since as an influence on my work and writing and it has endured as a work for others as well, as shown by its continued success in other forms (though the movie still hasn't materialised) and in the previous edition of this game.

I wish I'd been given the chance to produce a *Neverwhere* game professionally but it wasn't on the cards and, if I had, I would probably have had to produce something far more conventional and staid, doing something for free gave me much more of an opportunity to do something experimental and though this - the third edition - probably doesn't seem that 'edgy' in amongst the darlings of the new Indie RPG movement at the time the narrative, rules-light system was ahead of its time and an outgrowth of *White Wolf* were trying to do and encourage back then.

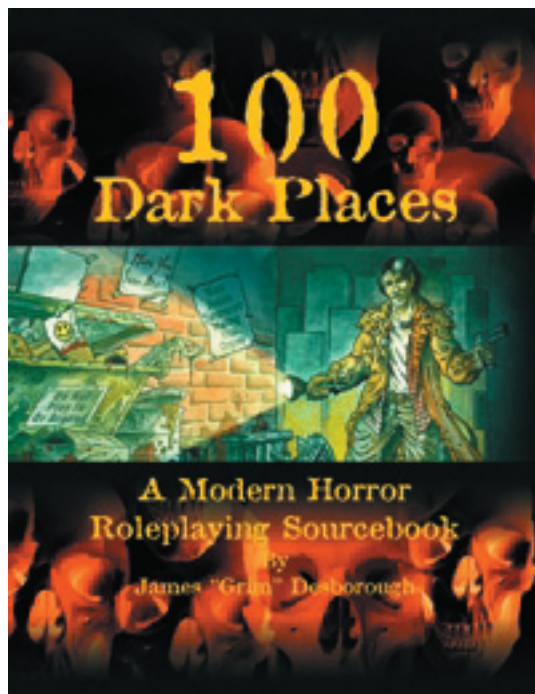
Hopefully with this, the third edition, the rules have been tightened up, the presentation improved and the game is finally at a stage where it can be left alone for people to enjoy in perpetuity and to warm the hearts of aging goths like myself, who hark back to a day when Vampires didn't sparkle and the grungy look of the *Neverwhere* TV series wasn't only forgivable, but wonderful.

Before I take my leave I would heartily recommend that people who loved *Neverwhere* should read *Un Lun Dun* by China Mieville, which is also set in an alternative London and contains many elements and characters that would fit *The Underside* very well indeed and the *Abarat* series by Clive Barker, which - while more alien and strange - contain a similar sense of unbridled imagination and wonder to *Neverwhere*.

Thanks Neil, thanks Lenny and thanks to everyone that's played and enjoyed this game, or is going to in the near future.

Grim

*The television was a lot like a computer monitor upon which one could watch from a selection of up to four shows at any one time. Books were lumps of 'dead tree' upon which words were printed.



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