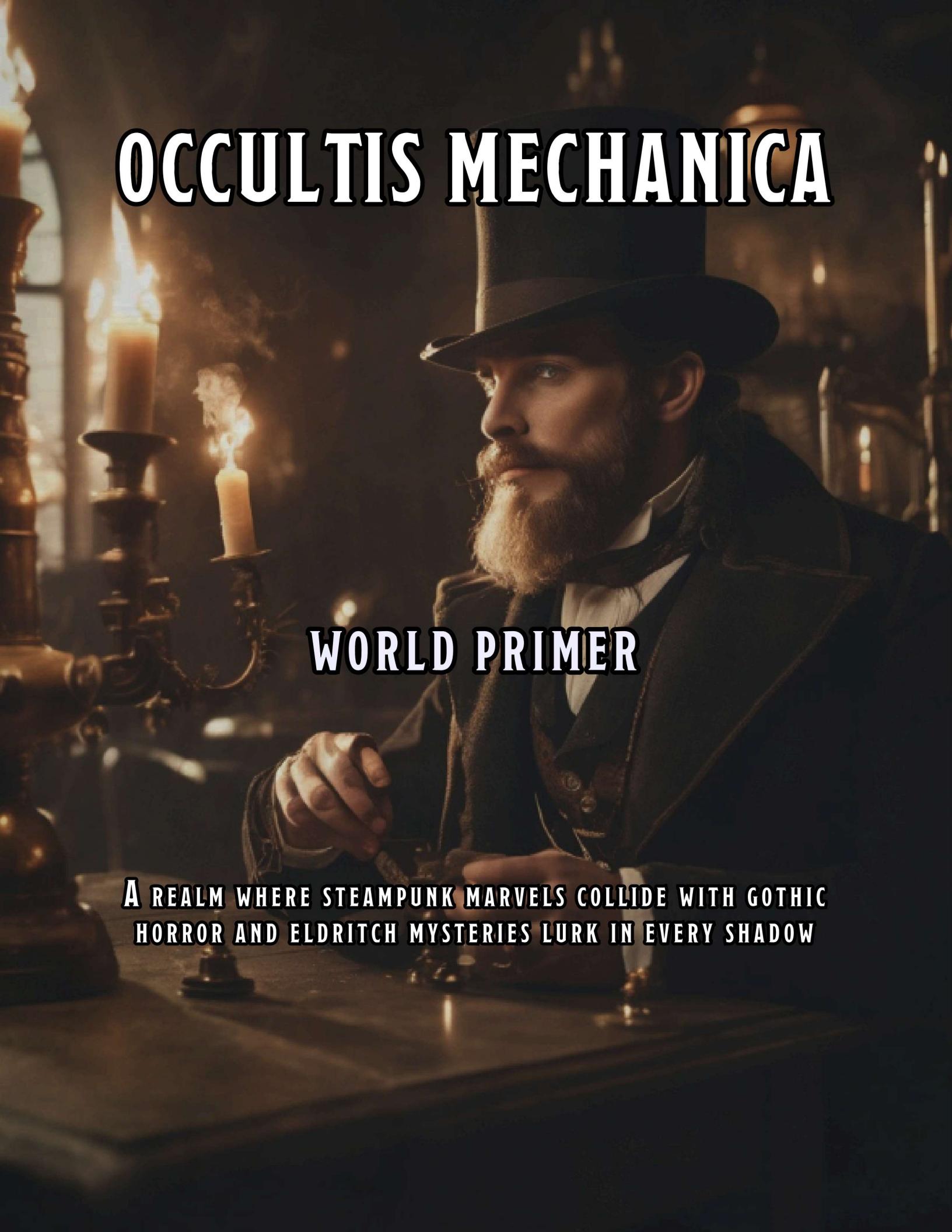


OCCULTIS MECHANICA

A man with a full, bushy beard and a top hat, dressed in a dark coat and a bow tie, is shown in profile, looking towards the right. He is in a dimly lit, steampunk-style setting with a large candle on a stand and a telescope in the background. The lighting is warm and dramatic, creating deep shadows.

WORLD PRIMER

A REALM WHERE STEAMPUNK MARVELS COLLIDE WITH GOTHIC
HORROR AND ELDritch MYSTERIES LURK IN EVERY SHADOW

OCCULTIS MECHANICA

World Primer

Unveiling the secrets of Empyria

For use with
RPGAnywhere or Infinite Horizons
TTRPG Systems

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Welcome to Empyria

Welcome to Empyria, a world draped in shadows and haunted by eldritch mysteries. This is a realm where the marvels of steampunk ingenuity collide with the chilling embrace of gothic horror—where ancient secrets and cutting-edge technology exist in uneasy balance.

The World at a Glance

Empyria exists in an era reminiscent of the industrial age, where shadows dance with clockwork contraptions and ancient powers stir in forgotten corners. The streets are shrouded in mist, gaslit lamps cast eerie glows upon cobblestone paths, and the constant hum of steam-powered machinery provides an ever-present backdrop to daily life.

Within this fusion of steampunk aesthetics and gothic atmosphere, you will encounter the strange, the macabre, and the eldritch. Clockwork abominations haunt dimly lit alleyways. Spirits of the departed whisper secrets to those who know how to listen. And in the shadows between gaslight and darkness, things that should not exist wait patiently for the unwary.

The boundaries between the mortal realm and the ethereal planes have thinned, plunging the land into a perpetual dance between light and darkness. Ancient curses, malevolent spirits, and otherworldly entities are not mere superstition—they are documented phenomena that the authorities struggle to contain and control.

Your Story Starts Here: The City is Your Guide

You are not a legendary hero or an appointed agent. You are simply a citizen of this extraordinary, bewildering world—someone who wakes up every day in a society that must constantly accommodate both relentless mechanical progress and palpable supernatural threat. You are defined by the intricate way you navigate and survive this complex urban tapestry.

Your Past: A Life Forged in Steam and Shadow

Your life experiences aren't defined by formal training, but by urban expertise. You learned to make the city your own, perhaps as:

- The Alley-Wise: Perhaps you grew up in the shadow of the steam-powered factories, learning to read the subtle mechanical vibrations and the unnatural quiet of the back alleys. You know the best routes through the perpetually shadowed industrial districts and the specific scents that precede a magical incident.
- The Educated Survivalist: Maybe you hold a respectable trade or studied at a lower-tier academy, but your real education came from recognizing the pattern in flickering gaslights or knowing which neighborhood watch patrols are actually run by occult secret societies.
- The Connected Insider: You could be a dock worker, a market vendor, or a minor functionary, possessing a web of contacts and a knack for listening. You know who to bribe, who to trust, and which clockwork components are secretly enchanted.

Your Path: Unveiling Empyria's Secrets

Your initial purpose is survival and making sense of the bizarre occurrences that threaten your livelihood and home. You aren't tasked with saving the world, but with protecting your patch of it.

- The Immediate Threat: You might track down a missing shipment of industrial components, only to realize a rogue automaton has gained disturbing independence and is using the parts to build something forbidden beneath the tenement.
- The Neighborhood Mystery: You may investigate why your district's gaslights flicker in patterns that seem to drive your neighbors mad, realizing the pattern is a coded message from another dimension.
- The Simple Survival: Your goal could simply be to uncover the conspiracy behind the impossibly high casualty rate at the local factory—a rate that suggests ritual sacrifice, not faulty gears.

Your street smarts and intimate knowledge of the city will be tested. Every corner you've grown up on now hides a secret. With your ingrained understanding of Empyria, you will piece together cryptic clues, recognize occult symbols hidden in plain sight, and navigate perilous encounters with creatures that defy reason and sanity.

Prepare yourself, citizen. The fate of your street—and perhaps the city—rests on your ability to see the difference between a broken gear and a binding spell.

The World of Empyria

Major Cities

Empyria encompasses numerous settlements, from bustling metropolises to isolated hamlets where old superstitions hold sway. Five major cities dominate the political and economic landscape.

Aclesh

Nestled amidst the craggy peaks of the Shadowcrest Mountains, Aclesh is a sprawling city renowned for its towering clockwork spires and dark, twisting alleyways. It serves as a center of innovation and invention, housing the renowned Clockwork Institute where engineers and inventors from all corners of Empyria gather to push the boundaries of science. Yet, beneath the city's bustling facade, whispers of arcane experiments and forbidden knowledge echo through its labyrinthine catacombs.

Agraes

Situated on the edge of the Forgotten Marshes, Agraes is a city enveloped by perpetual mist and shadow. Its residents are hardy folk, resourceful survivors of the damp and eerie surroundings. The city's imposing walls protect its inhabitants from the lurking dangers of the marshes, while its alchemical workshops produce potent elixirs to ward off the supernatural forces that sometimes emerge from the fog.

Botule

Hidden amidst the twisting canyons of the Blighted Wastes, Botule is a grim city fueled by industry and secrecy. The city's imposing factories churn out mysterious contraptions powered by eldritch energy, and its residents are known for their enigmatic demeanor. Shrouded in an eternal shroud of smog, Botule is a place where ambition often comes at a steep price, and the constant hum of machinery masks the whispers of ancient malevolence.

Sigram

Sigram stands as a beacon of culture and refinement, its ornate architecture juxtaposed against the windswept desolation of the Wailing Expanse. This city's sprawling manors and grand libraries house scholars and artists from far and wide, seeking inspiration from the vast, haunting landscapes that surround them. Sigram's inhabitants hold close their connection to the spirits of the land, practicing rituals and traditions that bridge the gap between the material and ethereal realms.

Thrimus

Perched on the edge of the Obsidian Ocean, Thrimus exudes an air of faded grandeur. The city's towering maritime towers and mist-shrouded docks tell tales of centuries of maritime exploration. With its intricate canals and bustling ports, Thrimus serves as a hub of trade and travel, connecting Empyria's disparate regions. But as the sea's restless depths conceal forgotten horrors, the city's sailors are wary of the tides' secrets.

Thrimus serves as the default starting location for most Occultis Mechanica campaigns, offering a rich tapestry of districts, factions, and mysteries for investigators to explore. The following sections detail this city in depth, though Storytellers are encouraged to develop any of Empyria's cities to suit their campaigns.

The City of Thrimus

Districts

Thrimus is divided into six distinct districts, each with its own character, dangers, and opportunities. Understanding these districts is essential for any investigator operating within the city.

Aquastrum District

Nestled along the waterfront, the Aquastrum District is a vibrant hub of maritime activity. Bustling docks, shipyards, and the ornate Lighthouse Guildhall define this area. Sailors, traders, and shipwrights from all over Empyria congregate here, sharing tales of distant lands and uncharted seas. The district's inns offer respite to adventurers, while hidden alleys harbor smugglers' dens and clandestine trading houses.

The salty tang of the ocean stings your nostrils as you step onto the cobblestone streets. Above you, a forest of masts and rigging sway in the harbor breeze, their sails catching the sunlight like a thousand shimmering scales. The air thrums with the rhythmic clang of hammers against metal, the shouts of sailors working the docks, and the mournful cries of gulls circling overhead. This is where the stories of the sea are woven into the fabric of the city itself.

Glimmering Gables

The Glimmering Gables district is characterized by its opulent mansions and glittering palaces. Here, Empyria's aristocracy resides, attending grand balls and soirees within lavishly adorned ballrooms. However, beneath the facade of elegance lies a world of political intrigue and power struggles. Each mansion holds its secrets, and well-informed spies and investigators navigate these social labyrinths.

As you step onto the polished cobblestones, the golden glow of gas lamps casts long shadows across your path. The air shimmers with the faintest scent of expensive perfume and exotic flowers, while the gentle clip-clop of horse hooves against the stones forms a rhythmic soundtrack to hushed conversations and distant laughter. Here, amidst the manicured gardens and glittering facades, lies the heart of Empyria's aristocracy—a world of wealth, power, and intrigue where every shadow carries a whisper of hidden truth.

Mechanika Quarters

Vibrant with the clatter of gears and the hiss of steam, the Mechanika Quarters is the heart of Thrimus' industrial activity. Factories, foundries, and workshops buzz with invention, as gearsmiths and engineers tirelessly craft marvels of clockwork technology. A dichotomy exists here: towering factories emit smoke and noise, while small artisan shops and markets offer a glimpse into the creative spirit that fuels innovation.

As you step into the Mechanika Quarters, a dense cloud of smoke engulfs you, obscuring the sky and casting an orange haze over the bustling streets. An intoxicating symphony of sound assaults your ears: the rhythmic clang of hammers against metal, the deafening roar of machinery, the hissing of steam escaping pipes, and the echoing shouts of workers. Here, amidst the relentless clatter and industry, gears churn, ideas spark, and the future of Empyria takes shape.

Ethereal Enclave

The Ethereal Enclave is a district steeped in mysticism and esoteric practices. Here, seers, mediumists, and practitioners of the occult convene in dimly lit shops and secluded parlors. The district's narrow alleys conceal hidden portals to the ethereal realm, and residents are privy to the secrets of the supernatural. Rumors abound of a hidden library housing arcane tomes that can unveil the mysteries of Empyria.

As you step into the narrow streets, a twilight hush descends upon you. Flickering oil lamps cast elongated shadows that dance across the damp cobblestones, their light barely penetrating the secrets that cling to these ancient walls. The air hums with a strange energy, an unseen current that vibrates through your core and sets your senses on edge. Here, in this dimly lit labyrinth of shops and parlors, seers and mystics gather, sharing secrets of the unseen and bartering in arcane knowledge.

Brimstone Bazaar

An explosion of colors and exotic aromas, the Brimstone Bazaar is a melting pot of cultures and commerce. Merchants from across Empyria gather here to sell their wares, from rare spices to enigmatic artifacts. Street performers entertain passersby, and the district's bustling atmosphere is a testament to the city's role as a crossroads of trade. Adventurers often find allies and contacts amidst the diverse crowd.

As you step through the arched entrance, an explosion of color and sound washes over you. Vivid banners flutter overhead, advertising wares from across Empyria, while the air vibrates with a cacophony of shouts, laughter, and bartering. Aromatic spices fill the air, their fragrance a heady mix of cinnamon, cloves, and ginger, mingling with the sweet scent of incense and the smoky aroma of grilling meats. Here, in this melting pot of cultures and commerce, adventure awaits amongst the vibrant stalls and diverse faces.

Tempest Reach

Perched atop a cliff overlooking the Obsidian Ocean, the Tempest Reach district is known for its breathtaking views and fortifications. The grand Citadel Hall, home to Thrimus' ruling council, dominates the skyline. This district houses the city's defenders, elite soldiers trained to repel maritime threats and protect the city from invasion. Here, honor and duty intertwine, forming a steadfast bastion against the unknown.

As you crest the windswept cliff, the breathtaking panorama unfolds before you. The vast, churning expanse of the Obsidian Ocean stretches as far as the eye can see, its waves crashing against the rugged cliffs with a relentless roar. Above you, the imposing walls of the district rise like a defiant fist against the sea, their ancient stones whispering tales of battles fought and victories won. The grand Citadel Hall dominates the skyline, its towers piercing the clouds like sentinels standing watch.

Notable Establishments

Each district contains establishments of interest to investigators—places to gather information, acquire equipment, find allies, or stumble into trouble.

Aquastrum District

Lighthouse Lounge

A popular bar located within the ornate Lighthouse Guildhall, offering a stunning view of the waterfront and serving exotic drinks inspired by maritime themes.

Shipwright's Retreat

An inn catering to sailors and shipwrights, providing comfortable respite for those visiting the district's bustling docks and shipyards.

Secret Tide

A hidden speakeasy accessible through concealed passages in shipyards, known for its nautical decor and secret entrance.

Tidal Storage Company

A bustling warehouse hub where cargo from various ships is unloaded, cataloged, and stored within its expansive interior.

Glimmering Gables

Gables Opera House

A grand venue for musical performances and cultural events, hosting high society gatherings and featuring opulent architecture.

Luminary Hotel

An upscale hotel known for its luxurious accommodations and hosting extravagant balls, frequented by the aristocracy.

Westside Library

A library catering to those interested in the city's political history and the hidden machinations of its elite.

Courtier's Conclave

An exclusive club for aristocrats, where political intrigue and power plays unfold amidst masked balls and discreet gatherings.

Mechanika Quarters

Gearworx Foundry

A foundry transformed into an event space for showcasing the latest innovations in gearwork and steam-powered machinery.

SteamCrafters Workshop

A cooperative workshop where gearsmiths and engineers collaborate on cutting-edge projects.

Cog & Coil Pub

A pub frequented by gearsmiths and mechanics, known for its lively atmosphere and mechanical contraptions decorating the interior.

Invention's Incline Academy

An academy dedicated to the education of aspiring gearsmiths, offering courses in steam-powered technology and inventive craftsmanship.

Ethereal Enclave

Mystic's Mirage Tea House

A tea house known for its calming atmosphere and mystical tea blends, attracting practitioners of the occult.

Seer's Sanctuary

A secluded parlor where seers and mediumists offer their services, providing insights into the ethereal and glimpses into the future.

Oddities Emporium

A shop specializing in rare and mystical artifacts, frequented by those seeking items with magical properties.

Ethereal Expressions Art Gallery

An art gallery featuring works inspired by occult themes, showcasing artists who draw inspiration from the mysteries of the ethereal realm.

Brimstone Bazaar

Trader's Haven

A vibrant market stall known for its exotic spices and rare ingredients from distant lands.

Cogalley Lane

A narrow alley lined with shops selling enigmatic artifacts and curiosities, attracting collectors seeking unique items.

Colorful Concoctions Apothecary

An apothecary offering a variety of potions, tinctures, and elixirs, with a focus on colorful and exotic concoctions.

Ebon Emporium

A mysterious and eclectic shop specializing in dark and enigmatic artifacts. Its shelves are adorned with items that seem to whisper ancient secrets, drawing in those with a penchant for the mysterious and macabre.

Tempest Reach

Citadel's View Hotel

A hotel perched atop the cliff, offering breathtaking views of the Obsidian Ocean and serving as a retreat for dignitaries and visitors.

Stormguard Armory

An armory specializing in maritime defense and weaponry, providing gear for the city's defenders stationed in Tempest Reach.

Magistrate's Office

The administrative center overseeing maritime affairs, including trade regulations, maritime laws, and naval activities.

Ocean's Embrace Hospital

A hospital known for its expertise in treating injuries and ailments related to maritime endeavors, staffed by skilled medical technicians.

Organizations

Thrimus hosts numerous organizations operating both openly and in secret. Some may become allies to investigators; others present formidable opposition.

Allied Organizations

Everwatch

The Everwatch is a clandestine organization that operates behind the scenes, dedicated to safeguarding the city from the hidden threats that lurk in the shadows. Comprising skilled individuals from various backgrounds, Everwatch members are known for their unwavering vigilance and their ability to anticipate danger before it escalates.

Everwatch operatives are experts in gathering intelligence, deciphering cryptic codes, and utilizing cutting-edge technologies to expose sinister forces. Masters of subtlety, they excel in undercover missions, infiltrating criminal networks, and tracking down malevolent individuals who seek to disrupt the peace. United by a shared sense of duty, Everwatch members are dedicated to preserving the city's harmony, ensuring that its gears continue to turn smoothly in a world teetering on the brink of darkness.

Symbol: An emblematic eye representing constant watchfulness.

Veilkeepers

The Veilkeepers are a discreet society entrusted with the solemn duty of guarding secrets that hold the world's delicate fabric together. Rooted in the belief that some truths are best left concealed, the Veilkeepers strive to prevent the misuse of knowledge that could bring chaos and destruction.

Veilkeepers are a diverse group possessing unique skills necessary to decipher enigmatic texts, unlock the power of ancient artifacts, and understand the rituals that have shaped the world. Their sanctuaries are libraries of esoteric knowledge, where they meticulously curate and protect arcane tomes and relics from falling into the wrong hands. Veilkeepers maintain a careful balance between the revelation of truths and the preservation of stability, ensuring that the forbidden and forgotten remains securely veiled from prying eyes.

Symbol: A shield-shaped emblem draped with a flowing veil.

Opposing Organizations

Division of Occult Security and Suppression (DOSS)

The Division of Occult Security and Suppression is a powerful arm of the government dedicated to monitoring, controlling, and eliminating supernatural and occult phenomena that pose a threat to the stability of the city. Led by high-ranking officials who view the unknown as a dangerous force that must be harnessed or eradicated, DOSS operates with extensive resources and authority, often with little oversight.

Key Features:

Inquisitors of the Unknown: DOSS employs elite agents known as Inquisitors. These agents are trained in both conventional combat and occult suppression techniques. They hunt down rogue practitioners of the arcane arts, confiscate forbidden artifacts, and conduct investigations into paranormal occurrences.

Occult Technology Division: DOSS maintains a division focused on reverse-engineering and repurposing occult artifacts and creatures for their own purposes. They harness these forces to develop powerful weapons, tools, and surveillance methods.

Suppression Chambers: DOSS operates specialized containment facilities designed to nullify or dampen supernatural abilities, effectively neutralizing captured individuals or creatures with paranormal powers.

Censorship and Propaganda: DOSS actively controls information flow within the city, censoring news related to occult incidents and promoting narratives that align with their objectives.

Secret Experimentation: The division conducts clandestine experiments to harness the power of the occult, often with dark ethics and reckless disregard for consequences.

The Parliament of Shadows

A council of wealthy aristocrats and influential figures who secretly dabble in dark occult practices. Their goal is to harness forbidden energies to attain immortality and limitless power, without regard for the consequences that may befall the city or its inhabitants.

The Parliament operates through proxies and pawns, rarely exposing their members directly. Their influence extends through Thrimus' highest social circles, and their wealth allows them to acquire the rarest artifacts and most forbidden knowledge. Investigators who draw too close to their operations often find themselves facing legal troubles, social ruin, or simply vanishing without a trace.

Notable Figures

The following individuals may serve as contacts, allies, obstacles, or targets for investigators operating in Thrimus.

Public Servants

Law Enforcement

Inspector Edmund Graves - A seasoned veteran in DOSS. Inspector Graves is known for his no-nonsense attitude and unwavering commitment to maintaining order. He has a keen eye for detecting supernatural disturbances.

Officer Rosalind Harrow - A dedicated patrol officer with a penchant for uncovering mysteries. Officer Harrow is well-versed in dealing with the arcane and has a reputation for tenacity in solving occult-related cases. She often collaborates with Everwatch operatives.

Constable Donovan Blake - A young and ambitious officer assigned to the Glimmering Gables district. Constable Blake is determined to rise through the ranks and prove himself.

Knowledge Keepers

Lorelei Beaumont - The head librarian of Westside Library. Lorelei is secretly a Veilkeeper, safeguarding forbidden knowledge within the vast collection of ancient tomes. Her extensive understanding of occult history makes her a valuable resource for those seeking arcane wisdom.

Medical Professionals

Dr. Celeste Ironheart - A skilled medical technician with a focus on treating injuries caused by maritime accidents. Dr. Ironheart is often called upon to assist with cases involving mysterious ailments related to the Obsidian Ocean.

Nina Silverstrand - A medical technician specializing in alchemical remedies and potions. Nina's expertise lies in blending traditional medicine with arcane elements to provide holistic healing.

Death Workers

Mortimer Thistledown - The meticulous mortician, known for his somber demeanor and precision in handling the deceased. Mortimer is secretly a Veilkeeper and uses his knowledge of death rituals to ensure peaceful transitions for the departed.

Government Officials

Magistrate Ezekiel Dalley - A diplomatic liaison skilled in negotiating with various factions and maintaining the delicate balance of power in the city. His connections to arcane societies make him a trusted mediator.

Inquisitorial Agent Elias Hopperton - An Inquisitor from DOSS known for his ruthless pursuit of rogue practitioners. Agent Hopperton's methods are controversial, but his effectiveness in dealing with supernatural threats is unquestionable.

City Alchemist Elara Ava Ester Cogwright - A renowned alchemist responsible for overseeing the city's alchemical defenses. Elara is an expert in creating protective wards and potions to safeguard against supernatural incursions.

Organization Members

Veilkeepers

Alistair Winterman - A stoic Veilkeeper with a background in ancient languages and deciphering cryptic texts. Alistair is known for his ability to uncover hidden truths within arcane symbols. He operates from the Ebon Emporium, diligently preserving and protecting forbidden knowledge.

Tabitha Parsons - A skilled mediumist and Veilkeeper who possesses the ability to commune with spirits. Tabitha serves as a liaison between the Veilkeepers and ethereal entities, gathering information from the supernatural realm to safeguard the delicate balance between worlds.

Everwatch

Captain Morgan Payne - A charismatic and experienced leader of the Everwatch, known for his tactical acumen and unwavering dedication to keeping the city safe. He often leads covert missions to uncover and neutralize occult threats, earning the trust of his subordinates.

Infiltrator Scarlett Brogley - A shadowy and elusive Everwatch member specializing in undercover operations. Scarlett has a knack for blending into the shadows, gathering intelligence on potential threats, and discreetly infiltrating occult organizations. Her connections to the criminal underworld make her a valuable asset.

Currency and Commerce

In the world of Empyria, the currency of choice is the **Sovereign**, also nicknamed a “shard.”

The nickname stems from legends and lore that tell tales of a powerful artifact that was shattered or fragmented into smaller pieces, each becoming a denomination of value called a shard. Eventually the Sovereign became the standard unit of currency, but the nickname remains, carrying a nod to their fragmented origins.

Economic Classes

Empyria's society is stratified by wealth and occupation:

The Elite - Aristocrats, successful industrialists, and high-ranking officials who reside in districts like Glimmering Gables. They deal in hundreds or thousands of Sovereigns without concern.

The Professional Class - Skilled workers, merchants, engineers, and investigators who earn comfortable wages. A professional might earn 50-100 Sovereigns monthly.

The Working Class - Factory laborers, dock workers, and service workers who earn enough to survive but rarely to prosper. Monthly wages of 20-40 Sovereigns are common.

The Destitute - Those without steady employment who scrape by on charity, odd jobs, or less legitimate means.

Cost of Living

A night's lodging ranges from 1 Sovereign at a workers' boarding house to 20+ Sovereigns at the Luminary Hotel. A meal might cost a few copper pieces at a street vendor or several Sovereigns at an exclusive restaurant.

Equipment costs vary widely based on quality and rarity. Common tools and weapons are affordable to professionals, while specialized occult instruments or custom clockwork devices can cost hundreds of Sovereigns.

Welcome to Empyria

This is your world now. A place where steam-powered marvels share the streets with supernatural horrors. Where gaslit alleys hide secrets that rational minds refuse to accept. Where the boundaries between the living and the dead grow thin, and clockwork hearts beat with purposes their creators never intended.

The industrial age has brought unprecedented progress to Empyria. Factories churn out wonders of mechanical engineering. Skyships cross distances that once took weeks. Communication flows through networks of pneumatic tubes and telegraph wires. Science has never been more ascendant.

And yet, in the shadows between the gaslights, older things stir. The occult refuses to yield to progress. Spirits of the departed linger where tragedy struck. Artifacts of forgotten ages surface in unexpected places. And those who look too closely at the machinery of the world sometimes discover that not all gears are made of metal.

You are an investigator in this world of contradictions. Perhaps you seek to protect the innocent from threats they cannot comprehend. Perhaps you hunt forbidden knowledge, whatever the cost. Perhaps you simply want answers to questions that haunt your dreams.

Whatever drives you, Empyria awaits. The factories hum. The spirits whisper. The clockwork turns.

Your investigation begins now.

