

RATCATCHER'S GUIDE TO LANHAM

HOME BREW



Explore the dark corners and uncover the sinister secrets of the City that Cannot Sleep in this campaign setting guide for the world's greatest roleplaying game

WELCOME TO LANHAM.

A graverobber trawls the murky shallows of the Driftwood Junction, paddling through the wreckage of ruined homes and fixtures as he searches for valuables among the drowned. He prods a corpse, and it stirs. His boat rocks beneath him as limbs burst from the stagnant water. He recoils from the grasping arms and screams, just as a torrent of radiant fire washes over the hungry dead. He turns to his saviors, two figures with long dark coats over silver armor - and his screams turn more fervent as the flames are turned on him.

A cacophony of shrill whistles rises over the Foundry, the sound entwining with the clamor of voices and machinery. Doors lock and windows slam shut as armed men flood the streets, signifying a Bluecoat raid. Doors are battered down, and people are dragged from their homes. A man is thrown to the street, clutching his chest and moaning. An officer kicks him over, revealing a green-glowing contraption of arcane machinery under his jacket. The man grins, blood oozing through his teeth, and the men around him shout as his thumb presses down on the detonator.

A new-money socialite passes nervously under the wrought-iron gates of the Tawdry Enclave, his invitation gripped delicately in his hands. He turns the corner of Canterbury Lane, and approaches the manor at the end of the street. He is greeted by a slack-faced servant, who eerily gestures into the dining hall. The newcomer opens the doors and blanches - strung above the lavish table are corpses, their blood caught in basins and poured into the chalices of the nonchalant partygoers. Fear and revulsion grip him, but the protests die on his lips as he meets the red-eyed gaze of the man at the head of the table. The man beckons, and he approaches, his will no longer his own.

A CITY OF DARK PROMISE

Lanham is a port city, secluded from the rest of the world by high walls and sheer cliffs. The harbor's many tributaries segregate the city's island-boroughs, joined by a lattice of bridges and network of ferries. Its imposing skyline of gothic towers is marred by the burned-out ruins of abandoned districts, lost to the Ghoul Plague that ravages the city's fringes. The magic discharge of the Hexforges and Rune Foundries bring constant rain and gray skies, and the streets are stalked by the Night Hunters of the Convent, who mount dissidents and monsters on burning pyres in the Heart Ward's many thoroughfares.

Lanham is a city of contradictions - indulgence and poverty, comfort and strife, justice and sin. The poor languish while the rich prosper, as the din of machinery in the day is replaced by screams in the night as citizens are hunted by both monsters and men. A dark cabal runs the city from the shadows, while gangs and police war openly in the streets. Dark experiments with cosmic forces take place in the bowels of the College, while inventors skirt the bleeding edge of technology in the military's workshops.

The city is fraught with danger, but this does not stop its many comers from flocking to its maze-like streets. Conceptions of what is possible change with the hour as great minds grapple with powers they barely understand. Daring adventurers find their fortunes on the high seas, backed by the city's many wealthy patrons. Dark forces whisper from the shadows, tempting the ambitious with promises of power beyond imagining. Lanham may be dark and dangerous, but those of strong will and flexible morality will find power and wealth in equal measure waiting for them in the shadows of the Unsleeping City.



TECHNOLOGY

It is an age of industry, where magic and metal are married to create innovative and dangerous new technologies. The cornerstone of this rapid and sudden development is the discovery and refinement of Aetherium, a mineral capable of storing and conducting arcane energy very much like electricity. This resource has allowed for the advent of great machines, simple firearms and rudimentary vehicles. Cannons adorn the decks of ships, trolleys and skyships cross the streets and skies, and constables patrol the alleys with arbalests and pistols. Technology is a central feature of life in Lanham, especially in the Marrow Ward, where pipes and primitive power lines clog the streets and smokestacks choke the air with smog.

ADVENTURES IN LANHAM

Lanham is diverse in its locales and attractions for up-and-coming adventurers. Those more interested in cerebral and cosmic horror should explore the dark secrets of the College, while the zombie hordes of the Ghoul Plague provide opportunities for more cinematic pulp-horror and slash-em-up experiences. The different factions provide plenty of political intrigue, and rampant crime presents many chances to deal out vigilante justice. Lanham's blend of tones and inspirations allow for a wide variety of adventures.

USING THIS SETTING

Lanham is designed to be setting-agnostic. You are welcome to take this city and place it wherever you like in your world. You are also encouraged to tinker, alter, and expand the city to your heart's content. This setting features firearms and industrial technology, as well as elements of Gothic, Cosmic, and Pulp Horror. If any of these features conflict with the themes or tones of your own Dungeons and Dragons world, you are free to omit or change them however you like. It is my hope that this document provides Dungeon Masters with inspiration and content for their own homebrew campaigns and adventures. Enjoy!

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ARTWORK

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PART TWO: THE FACTIONS

Lanham plays host to many factions, many of which find themselves in natural opposition to one another. Tensions run high in the streets of Lanham, be they political, economic, social, or something else entirely. Some join a cause out of fervent belief; others are merely looking for a respite from the suspicion and hostility that abounds in the city.

A POLITICAL FREE-FOR-ALL

Lanham's official government is toothless and impotent, leaving control of the city divided among various powerful and ambitious factions. The particular details of the government are largely unimportant to life in the city, and will likely only serve as a tie-in to your setting at large. Perhaps Lanham is ruled by a bloated parliament of nobles, or a governor installed by a greater power. Lanham's governing body is meant to be corrupt and ineffectual, unable to serve in the best interests of the people and susceptible to influence from the city's many warring parties.

THE CONSTABULARY

Known colloquially as "Bluecoats," the Constabulary serve as the town guard and martial arm of the political forces in Lanham. Under-funded, staffed and equipped, the Bluecoats struggle to maintain a semblance of peace in the streets. They face constant opposition from the various Foundry Gangs, and construct desperate barricades and quarantine zones in hopes of slowing the spread of the Ghoul Plague that ravages the populace.

Affiliated as they are with the governing powers of Lanham, the Bluecoats face strong resentment among the city's many disenfranchised citizens. Under the guidance of the ruthless and uncompromising Commissioner Cobblepot, the Bluecoats employ force to maintain order, instating martial law in the most unruly districts and conducting clandestine raids to uproot the city's criminal underbelly. Citizens are accosted in the streets, taken from their homes, and arrested without cause or warning.

The Constabulary's presence is strongest in the Marrow Ward, where they war openly with the Foundry Gangs for control of the streets. Raids devolve into firefights in broad daylight, and innocent citizens are too often caught in the crossfire. With a city threatening to come apart at the scenes, discretion is not among the list of priorities of Lanham's 'peace-keeping' authorities.

THE FOUNDRY GANGS

The conditions of living for the working class of Lanham can only be described as utterly miserable. Smog chokes the lungs and dims the eyes, industrial noise sends tremors through the walls and floors, and crime plagues the clogged streets. Eighteen-hour workdays are commonplace in the factories, where workers are forced by slave-driving foremen to operate deadly machines. Worker strikes are met with clubs and bullets, and the injured and unwell are cast onto the streets to languish. But those who suffer in the Foundry suffer together, forming a bond of rage and resentment towards those who abet such cruelty.

The Gangs of Foundry Way are formed from despots, thieves and undesirables, united in their hatred of the bourgeoisie. They target and terrorize those they blame for their way of life, most often the trusts that run the factories and the Bluecoats who enforce their tyrannical laws. The Slapdash Saints run a black market of drugs and guns, The Foundry Nomads bomb factories and torch storehouses, and the Water Street Boys beat and murder Bluecoats and their sympathizers. In the eyes of the Gangs, you're either with them or against them - and opposing a Gang is one of the surest ways to die in Lanham.

THE ECCLESIAL DIOCESE

This religious coalition of devotees to the Kindled King form one of the most prominent political factions in Lanham. Their teachings of wrath and mercy entice both the needy and the vengeful, ensuring a steady stream of newcomers to the flock. The Diocese is ruled by two sects. The Kindled Parish is by far the most populous, striving to embody the sun's merciful warmth. They operate churches, deliver sermons and send missionaries, nursing the ill and giving hope to the downtrodden.

But the Parish represents only one side of their religion. The Parish holds the wealth and territory, but it is their sister sect that all of Lanham knows to fear.

THE CONVENT

The Convent of the First Flame's Light is an order of religious zealots dedicated to purging the wicked with the fury of the sun's own flame. They are brutal and uncompromising, seeing their work as a holy crusade against the bestial and wicked-hearted. The Ghoul Plague has been a boon to the Convent, who stoke the fears of the public to attract new followers and gain influence over the city.

The bulk of the Order consists of Hunters. Clad in silvered armor and adorned with black cloth and holy talismans, these zealot warriors conduct Night Hunts through the city streets, purging the city of infected undead as well as the other unnatural beasts that stalk in the shadows. Their martial training and dogmatic belief make them incredibly dangerous and unpredictable.

But perhaps even more feared than the Hunters are the Inquisitors, a small and secretive cell who prey upon the living rather than the dead. The Convent's most promising and talented are inducted into the Inquisition, tasked with purging those the Church deems to be a threat. Among the monsters that hang and burn in city squares, you will also find the corpses of dissidents who dared to oppose the Church.

THE RED COURT

Perhaps the best-kept amongst a city's worth of secrets, this vampiric cabal runs Lanham from the shadows. Under the guise of a secret society of socialites called the Cainhurst Club, the Vampires of the Red Court have infiltrated the city at every level. They have sunk their teeth into Lanham's high society to seize control of the city's politics and economy. They have enthralled state officials, nobles, and merchants, ensnaring even the Constabulary in their web of influence. They induct the rare individual who is deemed both susceptible and useful, turning the rest into unwitting puppets who act according to the whims of the Court.

The Red Court is ruled by the High Prolocutor, Lord Boram Redwill, a mysterious figure said to be the first and eldest Vampire. The Red Court are the survivors of a holy crusade from ages past, conducted by the Convent's precursors who once spanned entire kingdoms in ages past. But the Vampires of the Court are patient, and watched for ages as the Convent's influence slowly waned.

The eve of the Court's true revival is at hand, and its operatives are eager for an end to their centuries of secrecy and hiding. But before the Red Court can rise again, they must first snuff out the Convent, the last barrier to their supremacy over Lanham. The Court wields their influence against the Church, inciting conflict in the hopes that the Convent will collapse once and for all under its own weight.

My colleagues have uncovered something most unsettling. Brother Hatham was tasked with collecting Param Gladwin, owner and chair of the Gladwin Steel Company. It was a high collar, but no man lives beyond the reach of the Light. We captured him, but a man as old and frail as he was surprisingly resistant to questioning. He did not tire, though we held him for three days without nourishment or sleep. He would not break, his face betraying no sign of pain or fatigue. He managed to escape, beguiling his guards with some sort of vile magic. We charged to kill him, but our blades met with mist as he dissolved into the night wind.

A Vampire in Lanham... another on the list of vermin that skulk in the dark.

I am concerned that Gladwin was able to keep a station so high for so long without our notice. It is possible he did so with the aid of another of his kind, and it is unknown how far his sinful influence has spread.

This will require a more thorough investigation.

- From the reports of Convent Inquisitor McCullam



PART THREE: THE CITY

The city of Lanham is divided into three major boroughs: The Heart, Marrow, and Capillary Wards. These districts differ greatly from one another in terms of aesthetic, purpose, residents and tone. Below you will find each of the Wards described in detail, as well as the prominent features they each contain.

WORSHIP IN LANHAM

Much of the city's worship and architecture revolve around reverence towards the city's patron deity, the Kindled King. This entity is the long-dead God of the Sun and Flame, who has a zealous following among Lanham's population. Efforts have been made to keep the nature of this and other deities vague and generic; their exact natures are up to you.



THE HEART WARD

The Heart Ward is the most affluent of Lanham's districts. It is the city's epicenter of commerce, worship, and entertainment. Its gated residences are home to the city's upper class, including nobles, merchants, and various political figures. The architecture of the Heart Ward is decadent and grandiose, known for its imposing skyline of steepled towers and stained glass. It looms over the outer fringes of the city, its towers casting long shadows over those who languish in poverty.

THE AUREATE EDICT

The Edict is the main thoroughfare of the Heart Ward and centermost portion of the city, where the bulk of Lanham's commerce takes place. It is the epicenter of banking and trading, featuring wide streets, grand buildings and aetherium-powered trolleys that ferry its many visitors along on their errands.

CRESCENT JUNCTION

This is the heart of Lanham's bustling entertainment industry. The Campbell Museum houses the city's most prized reliquaries and curiosities, and audiences flock to the Newark Symposium to attend its many grand performances. The lonely may also seek companionship among its many escorts and courtesans, and enterprising performers give impromptu shows for pennies on street corners.

THE EIDWICK INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER LEARNING

Contained also within the Edict is the gated campus of Lanham's college of science and magic. The looming spires and sparse courtyards have garnered infamy among the city's residents, an aura of suspicion stemming from the rumors of the strange and inexplicable phenomena surrounding the mysterious institution. Locals whisper of strange lights and voices coming from beyond the walls, and passers-by have watched with morbid curiosity as members have been hauled through the gates in various states of mania, bound for the Carnham Asylum.

The Institute advertises many unique fields of study, including Proto-Zoology, Arcane Lore, and studies in the Occult and Paranatural. The admissions process is as strict as it is secretive, and what few trespassers that have managed to escape ramble madly about "things that do not belong".

THE ECCLESIAL DIOCESE

This commune is the territory of the Kindled Parish, and the heart of worship in Lanham. The Parish are the devotees of the Kindled King, and the prominent religious faction in the city. Their home is in the grandiose Emberhearth Citadel, and ancient and lavish structure larger than a city block. There are many more sectarian churches and bethels devoted to the Kindled King arrayed throughout the city.

THE SUNWICK STEEPLE

The tallest spire in Lanham is impossible to miss. Its yellow and orange stained glass fixtures seem to almost catch fire in the sunlight, and can be seen from nearly any point in the city. It is the headquarters of the Convent of the First Flame's Light, a fanatical and vindictive order dedicated to purging darkness with holy flame.

ST. GLADWYN'S HOSPITAL

The Hospital is a premier location of medical study and healing practice. It is the domain of the Canon of the Hearth, a chapter of the Kindled Parish dedicated to healing and mercy. St. Gladwyn's is a place of medical research, though all staff are currently overworked in their efforts to stem the tide of the Ghoul Plague.

THE TAWDRY ENCLAVE

This collection of gated communities quarter the city's most affluent citizens. Manors, mansions, castles and chateaus line the cobbled streets. Wrought-iron fences cast long shadows between the everlight streetlamps, and the pointed rooves and sculptures of stone give the Enclave a decidedly sinister air.

CHAPRON HILL

This clifftop community is a monument of decadence that overlooks all of Lanham, looming even over the Sunwick Steeple. When the sun sets, the shadows cast by its buildings encompass the entire city.

CANTERBURY LANE

A gated community home to the richest of the rich. Many of these families own entire portions of the city, and are benefactors to countless higher-ups in Lanham's upper crust. It is the meeting place of the Cainhurst Club, the rumored society of the city's most elite that is the envy of all of Lanham's upper class. Many wealthy and ambitious entrepreneurs strive to receive an elusive invitation, enticed by the promise of breaking bread with the city's highest echelon.

FORT HEWITT

The proud and stalwart Fort Hewitt is the base of operations of the Lanhamite Navy. It sits atop the Partition Arches, the cliffs that shelter the harbor from the seas beyond, adorned with state-of-the-art mortars, cannons, and other supplies from the Shop.

THE MARROW WARD

This district of mass residence and industry is the driving force behind Lanham's booming economy. It is cramped and sprawling, with little order or reason to the splayed-out streets. Large thoroughfares end abruptly, and small alleyways spiderweb into its maze-like depths. Crime and poverty are rampant, with gangs ruling much of the Ward's territory. There is a rule of violence and chaos, but many prefer anarchic freedom to the cruel and brutal working conditions of life in the factories.

Trusts and conglomerates headquartered in the Aureate Edict own most of the property in the Ward, and run the many factories that dominate the District's landscape.

THE IMPETUS DISTRICT

The Impetus District is the beating heart of industry in Lanham. The air is clogged with smog from the Hexforges, and workers shuffle in hunched droves to work in the dangerous and unregulated Rune Foundries. It is an epicenter of progress, having spawned the first skyship and pioneered Hexpowder firearm technology. Conditions are miserable, and resentment has been building unchecked among the working class for too long. Riots have broken out, strikes have run rampant, and attempts at unionizing have brought the attention of the Bluecoats, who war with gangs and have brought the streets under martial law.

FOUNDRY WAY

This region houses the major Hexforges and Rune Foundries, megastructures that marry volatile magic and dangerous technology to brute-force innovation and progress. The smog is so thick that its residence are forced to wear masks, and vicious hex-lightning runoff from the factories scythes through the air, occasionally missing the grounding poles and striking unfortunate citizens. Accidents are tragically frequent, and the wounded are treated in impromptu triage tents set up in the streets and alleys. Most who are wounded never recover, and are doomed to a short life of poverty and destitution.

THE WINDING WHARF

These sprawling docks welcome all comers from the waters beyond the harbor, and are always bustling with trade and travel. The landscape of the Wharf is ever-changing, as most who come don't stay for long.

THE CHAMBERLAIN DEPOT

This many-storied office of brick and stone is the outpost of the Lanham Constabulary. The officers and detectives of this police force wear pointed helmets and patrol the streets with clubs and pistols. The Depot is almost as well-armed as the Fort, given the civil unrest in the area.

The Constabulary offers fair pay and benefits - an appealing offer to many underprivileged denizens of the Ward. But joining the Bluecoats makes one a pariah to their neighbors and a target to the gangs that roam the Marrow streets.

THE SHOP

A hilltop foundry owned and operated by the Lanhamite military. It has a private harbor, and is dotted with sluiced inlets where ships can be towed inside to be outfitted. It is a place where the studies of magic, engineering and technology are merged, producing weapons and supplies for the Lanhamite military and Constabulary. It is known to work in conjunction with the Eidwick Institute for Higher Learning, and is under the eminence of the Chamberlain Depot.

THE SEGREGATE CONFININE

This walled-in ward is shielded from the view of the rest of the city. It houses those that the city has deemed undesirable, like the patients of the Carnam Asylum and the inmates of the Crow's Perch Prison. It is gated, and patrolled heavily by the Bluecoats. The only civilian population with free access to the Confinine are affiliates of the Eidwick Institute.

CARNAM ASYLUM

These decommissioned barracks now serve as housing for the mentally unwell. It is a poorly kept secret that dissidents, criminals and political prisoners are also kept here as a means to circumvent trial.

CROW'S PERCH PRISON

The Crow's Perch is a squat, windowless tower that holds the criminal prisoners of Lanham. Conditions within are known to be squalid and cruel, where prisoners are left to fend for themselves and suffer under the watch of sadistic guards. Imprisonment here is known by many to be a fate worse than death.

THE FOUNDRY GANGS

The various gangs that run the foundry are infamous for their ruthlessness and cunning. There are many minor gangs, but these are the major players who rule the war-torn streets of the Impetus District.

The Slapdash Saints: A cabal of seafaring smugglers and brokers native to the city's many docks and wharfs. They run guns, drugs, weapons and more through the city's harbor and long-abandoned sewers.

The Foundry Nomads: A gang of wild and despotic performers, recognizable by their outlandish hair and magically enhanced instruments. These punk-rock terrorists' wild concerts incite riots, vandalism and raids on the District's factories and storehouses.

The Water Street Boys: Cunning and mean, the Water Street Boys war openly with the police. They have claimed a cluster of city blocks as their territory, and seek to expand across the District and beyond.

THE CAPILLARY WARD

Ravaged by fires and floods, the city's oldest quarter hosts the dregs of the populace. The infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and illness is commonplace, but many find it preferable to the drudgery of the Foundries. Work is easy to find between the Wetmarket, the Slaughterdocks, and the city's endless construction, maintenance and plumbing projects that are always under-funded and under-staffed.

Lately, though, a new danger has emerged - a plague that rots its hosts from within, mutating them into mindless, feral undead. With the Bluecoats stretched so thin, the Convent have taken it upon themselves to police the streets, engaging in nightly Hunts where they put down the bestial sick who prowl the Ward.

THE RATWAYS

The Ratways are what remain of the city's first plumbing system which was flooded and ruined in a great fire many years ago. Since then, the abandoned tunnels have been reclaimed by the impoverished and turned into a kind of subterranean ghetto. Social rejects, criminals on the run, and the poor or sickly with nowhere else to turn may wander into the Ratways. Vermin-infested and rife with mildew and rot, only the truly desperate dwell here.

ANGLER'S BAILIWICK

A fishing settlement on the low hills of the Partition Arches, situated outside the walls of the city proper. The hamlet has been quickly flooded beyond capacity with displaced tradesmen and workers due to the quarantine of the Slaughterdocks.

THE RIVEN ABBEY

The district for worship of the other unpopular or taboo entities where monasteries, nunneries and temples to various lesser patrons can be found. Though far from prosperous, it is an accepting and communal place, serving as a haven to many who tire of the ever-suspicious and hostile air of Lanham's other wards. Charity, shelter and education occur in philanthropic pockets around the Abbey.

FLOTSAM HILL

This densely populated island is full to the brim with cheap and dilapidated housing. Predatory landlords and insidious loan sharks make living here less than desirable, but with the outbreak of the Ghoul Plague, it has seen a sudden influx of tenets. The sudden immigration is largely due to the Hill's isolated island nature, with well-defended checkpoints along the bridges making it an impromptu bastion against the spread of the Plague.

THE WAIFISH QUARTER

The largest and cheapest place of residence. Flooded in the Great Fire of the last century, much of the Quarter is traversable only by raft or pontoon, and swathes have been reclaimed by nature and grown into swamp-like barrows.

DRIFTWOOD JUNCTION

A portion of the Waifish Quarter that is composed entirely of rafts and stilt-buildings, floating atop the Quarter's stagnant waters. This isolated bayou community is home mostly to vagrant soothsayers, fortune-tellers and gamblers.

THE PATRAL COMMUNE

Serving as the secondary major religious district of Lanham, The Commune houses churches and temples to the other prime deities. Worshippers of The Warden make up the order of the Pallid Sisterhood, harboring the sick and dying and ushering them into the afterlife, and followers of The Beggar King offer cryptic advice and enigmatic blessings. As the god of fortune and misfortune in equal measure, and with pestilence under his wide purview, his temples and followers have been vandalized and assaulted as of late with the advent of the Ghoul Plague.

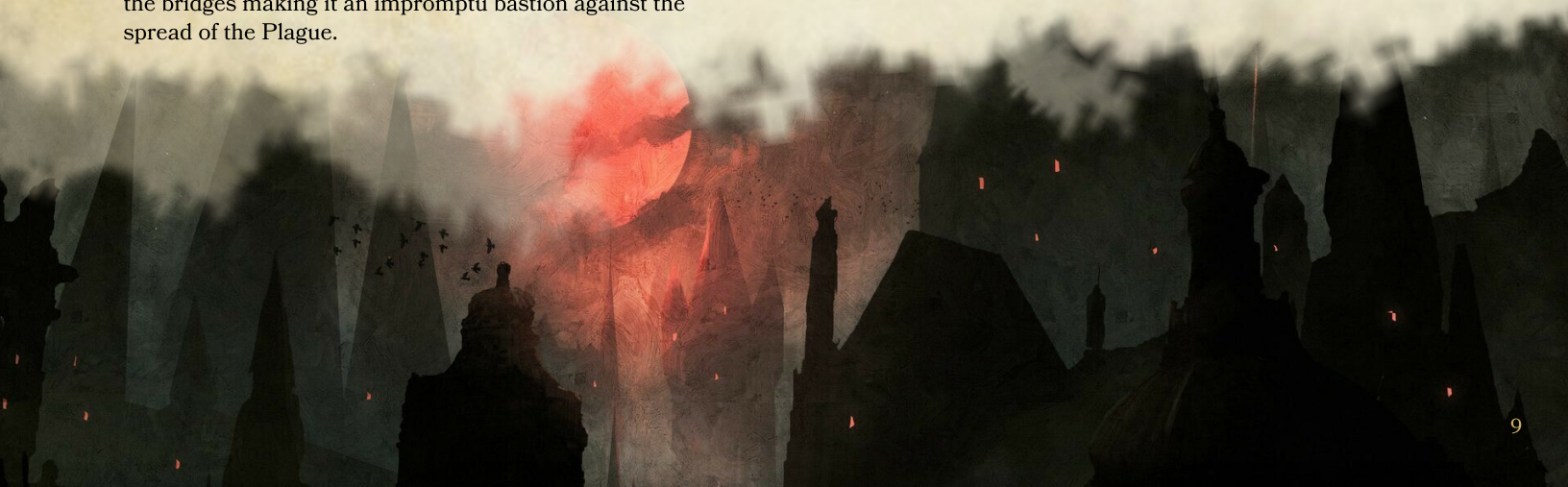
THE WETMARKET

The fish markets that border the Slaughterdocks are notorious for their bountiful riches and unruly denizens. Lining the streets between every market and butchery are dive bars, fighting pits, whore-houses and breweries of brine-sodden ales. The Wetmarket hosts some of the most salt-of-the-earth sailors, and though they are seen by most as uncultured and filthy, you'll be hard-pressed to find more hardened and capable crew anywhere else on the seas.

THE SLAUGHTERDOCKS

An open-air arrangement of butcher-docks, where the ocean's massive beasts are cleaned and sent to market. Blood and viscera are ever-flowing down the sloped docks, staining the surrounding harbor a sickly brown and attracting bottom-feeders and predators to its waters. Whalers and Spearfishers make a mouth-watering haul here, but mortality is high as the prey they hunt are as vicious and dangerous as they are valuable.

The site of the outbreak of the Ghoul Plague, the Slaughterdocks have been completely cordoned off and quarantined. Entire blocks have closed down entirely, and the few looters and smugglers who brave the patrols to loot the abandoned docks have reported roving, bestial madmen tearing into every bit of flesh within sight.



PART FOUR: THE GHOUL PLAGUE

Lanham is in the grips of a deadly pandemic that ravages its populace and destabilizes its institutions. The Plague first spawned in the blood-slick alleys of the Slaughterdocks, borne on the tide of rats that flow from the abandoned sewers of the Capillary Ward. It is a disease that kills the host, using its corpse as a vessel for the sole purpose of propagation. The window for treatment is mere hours; by the time symptoms appear, it is almost surely too late. The infected are mutated into mindless beasts, zombies and ghouls that emerge at night to prey on the unwitting.

THE INFECTED

Likely a frequent enemy or feature of an adventure in Lanham, those infected with the Ghoul Plague will be a large contributing factor in the overall tone of the city's setting. The disease is unstable and mutagenic, leading to unpredictable behaviors and unforeseen transformations. No two Night Hunts are the same, each fraught with its own terrors and perils.

Recent infected appear and behave much like traditional zombies, but the longer an infection festers, the more severe and terrible their mutations become. As the Infection runs its course, creatures will grow larger and mutate new features and abilities that help them feed. There are suggestions for possible mutations listed below, but you are encouraged to be creative with your Lanham's undead. Consider the environmental factors when designing an encounter with the Infected to keep your players on their toes.

MYSTERIOUS ORIGINS

The plague's exact nature is shrouded in mystery. As the Dungeon Master, it is up to you to decide the plague's origin and purpose. Perhaps it was created by an exile of the Red Court, hoping to expose them to the hunters of the Convent. It could also be the result of an experiment of the College or Church gone horribly wrong, with a conspiratorial cover-up to be discovered and exposed by the party. For a party of more classical adventurers, it could be the work of a sinister necromancer who lurks on an island offshore.

MUTATIONS

Listed below are some Actions and Abilities for your consideration. Typically, the longer a creature has been Infected, the more mutated and formidable the infected will become.

Adaptive Mutation. After the creature takes damage of a specific type, it gains resistance to that damage type for the next hour.

Feral Leap. When the creature falls below half its hit point total, it immediately jumps up to 60 feet towards a hostile creature and makes three melee attacks against them.

Devour (Recharge 5-6). The creature makes a devastating bite attack against a target, inflicting massive damage and healing for an amount equal to the damage dealt.

Amorphous Form. The creature has developed a mass of prehensile tentacle-like appendages, using them to interact with objects and pull itself across surfaces. The creature can climb on walls and ceilings as normal, is immune to the *Prone* condition, and is considered to be *Hovering* five feet above the ground when idle or moving of its own volition.

Beckon the Horde. At an initiative count of your choosing, the creature attempts to cause a Zombie to appear within 30 feet. You may choose when this ability succeeds, or you may roll a die.

Contagious Discharge. The creature excretes fluids and gases from its body that are highly toxic and infectious. A creature that ends its turn within 10 feet of the creature or makes a melee weapon attack against it must succeed a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer Necrotic damage and become Diseased, suffering ill effects of your choosing.

Butcher. When this creature makes a successful attack against a creature that deals piercing or slashing damage, it has advantage on attacks made against that target until the start of its next turn.

SAMPLE INFECTED

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 120
Speed 40 feet

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dexterity (+9), Constitution (+6)
Skills Perception (+4)
Damage Resistances Necrotic
Damage Immunities Poison
Condition Immunities Poisoned, Charmed
Senses Darkvision 80 Ft., Passive Perception 14
Languages None
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Abilities

Beckon the Horde. At initiative count twenty, the Infected attempts to cause a Zombie to appear in an unoccupied space within 30 feet. Roll a d6; on a 4 or higher, a zombie appears.

Autosarcophagy. At the end of each of its turns, the Infected may eat a portion of its own body, regaining 20 hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The Infected makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, 5 Ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+5) slashing damage.

PLACES AND PEOPLE

Listed below is a small collection of sample shops, locations and characters to help populate and enrich your setting.

SHOPS AND TAVERNS

THE OPULENT OPAL

An enchantery owned and run by Salhim Vas, a bespectacled silver dragonborn. He is attended by a pair of imp familiars who watch from the building's rafters unblinkingly. It is a quaint shop, adorned with a fair selection of rare goods.

THE SUMPTUOUS CISTERN

An apothecary run by an individual known only as Odd. They are a waifish elf-like figure, with white skin, sunken black eyes and too-long limbs that seem to sway in an invisible wind. The shop is tucked in an alley of the Aureate Edict.

THE SIREN SONG

An inn located near the docks, built from the reclaimed wood of wrecked ships. The staff and clientele are crude and rowdy, but it's a cheap stay and they don't ask questions.

PLACES OF INTEREST

THE QUARTERMARKET

A squat open-air market in the Capillary Ward, where impromptu carts and huts are built for people to peddle their meager wares. The landscape of the market changes by the hour, making it a common locale for shady dealings.

THE ABBEY BATHS

A lavish pavillion of open-air baths in the heart of the Crescent Junction, where the city's influential and wealthy denizens go to unwind, converse and conspire.

THE GANGWAY

A cluster of flooded houses and beached riverboats in the Driftwood Junction that has been converted into a back-alley casino. The city's seediest dwellers come for drinking, gambling and debauchery.

REMARKABLE INDIVIDUALS

DR. AMELIE BOUCHANT

A researcher and doctor at St. Gladwyn's hospital with a vested interest in uncovering the secrets surrounding the Ghoul Plague. This dry but earnest elven woman is secretly affiliated with the Red Court, and can act as a liaison between the party and the Court if they gain her trust.

CONSTABLE EDMUND LIVINGSTON

A gruff and disagreeable human man who works the graveyard shift in a location the party frequents. Is often drunk and always confrontational, but can be a source of information if the party can take advantage of his resentment towards his superiors.

INQUISITOR GARRICK McCULLAM

A secretive individual likely to make contact with the party if they begin probing too deeply into the secrets of the College, the Church, or the Court, or if they prove themselves useful in the Convent's nightly hunts. This agent of the Church will look to employ the party if they prove useful - or eradicate them if they prove dangerous.



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