

DEGENESIS

CLANS OF THE MOLOCH



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"LIFE IS A MYSTERY
EVERYONE MUST STAND ALONE
I HEAR YOU CALL MY NAME
AND IT FEELS LIKE HOME"

[MADONNA]

MARKO DJURDJEVIC & LIAM FOLEY

YEARNING

“How long has he been gone?” Hazel nudged.

Aubrey sipped warm milk, letting her eyes drift across the yellow plain in front of her house. “Coming up on a year now, I think.”

“You miss him much?”

“Sometimes.” Aubrey sighed. “I got lots to do around the farm. All this stuff keeps me busy. But yeah, there are days when I wish he was around. I miss the sting of his beard against my cheeks in the morning,” she reminisced, giggling at her own thoughts.

Hazel sank into the seat on the bench next to her. “You think we’ll see a courier come through with a present from him anytime soon?”

“I doubt it. It’s already Thursday. They don’t come out this far into the Rubble so late in the week. Anyway, Murdoch isn’t the kind of guy to send gifts often.”

“But he sent you that beautiful reindeer horn, didn’t he?”

Aubrey pretended to choke, poking her tongue out and shaking her head. “Don’t mention that Hazel, I hated that ugly thing so much I hid it on the top shelf!”

The young women cackled until their eyes watered. Hazel pulled her coat closer to grab a small bag from her pocket. “Here, try some of these!”

“What are they?” Aubrey asked.

“Sunflower seeds. Got them down in the Jehammedan Quarter the other week. They’re tasty!”

Aubrey dipped her hand into the bag, retrieving a handful of dried seeds. “What’s a sunflower?”

“Well... ah... you know, it’s some kind of big stem, a flowery thing that grows somewhere south, I suppose. They say it looks like the sun. Never seen one myself.”

“They’re kinda salty.”

“Like your husband!”

“Shut up, Hazel, you’re being an idiot!”

“No, girl, I think you’re wasting your time. If you ask me, Murdoch found someone else down in Siege!” she said, staring at Aubrey with worry on her face.

“C’mon, why would you say that?”

“Look, Aubrey, everyone knows the roads down there are littered with whorehouses, who do you think they’re for? Are you that backwards?”

“You’re just saying that to get me all worked up, Hazel! What the heck do you know? Just because Garreth ran off with someone else before you two were married doesn’t mean Murdoch is gonna do anything stupid!”

“I think there’s too much foam in your head. Every time I come over to look after you, you look older! You’re just 22, and you’re already all worried. You don’t take care

of your hair anymore, and you work too much," Hazel explained.

"So? Someone needs to take care of the farm!"

"I know, I know! But that's not what I mean. You should dress up sometimes, make yourself feel like a woman. It'll do you good!"

Aubrey frowned "I ain't gonna dress up to clean the cowshed, are you out of your mind?"

"Not for the cowshed you dummy, but we could go to the city for once. Listen, this Sunday, you and I, we make a trip to Justitia? I'll show you the Jehammedan Quarter!"

"Hazel..." Aubrey had just about had enough of this.

"No, you're not listening properly. These people aren't bad! They're really lovely and caring, and the boys are so incredibly good looking. If two fine women like us dress up and walk their neighborhood, I swear, everyone's gonna turn their heads."

"Are you seriously trying to drag me to the city to flirt with boys? Murdoch wouldn't want me to," Aubrey stammered, following a ray of the evening sun as it crawled across a patch of grass in front of her veranda.

"Murdoch will never know! It's a secret. We keep it between us," Hazel whizzed, tapping Aubrey with her elbow.

"You're a terrible creature."

"Girl, all I do is care for you. You've been out here all by yourself for a whole year now. You need to be seen, so you get a sense of worth. Who knows when they'll send your husband back home? You could be grey and broken by then. Life goes by in a flash."

Aubrey's head sank, looking down at her belly. Perhaps she had gained a few pounds. Slowly she pulled up her skirt to inspect her legs, examining her swollen knees. "Maybe you're right."

Hazel let out a sigh of relief.

"What should I wear?" Aubrey asked.

"Oh, that sky blue dress you had on for the Harvest last year!"


"The one with the open back?"

Hazel nodded with a sparkle in her eyes. "That one! And with your hair tied into a knot, so everyone can see your long neck."

Aubrey curled up her mane to get Hazel's approval. "Got any makeup?" she asked.

"Scarlet earth from Cavernis, and lip wax. Maybe some cobalt for your eyelids, but I have to check first. Anyhow, I'll bring it over tomorrow. You're going to be the prettiest girl in town, I swear!"





CLANS OF THE MOLOCH



HEEL TO SHOVEL

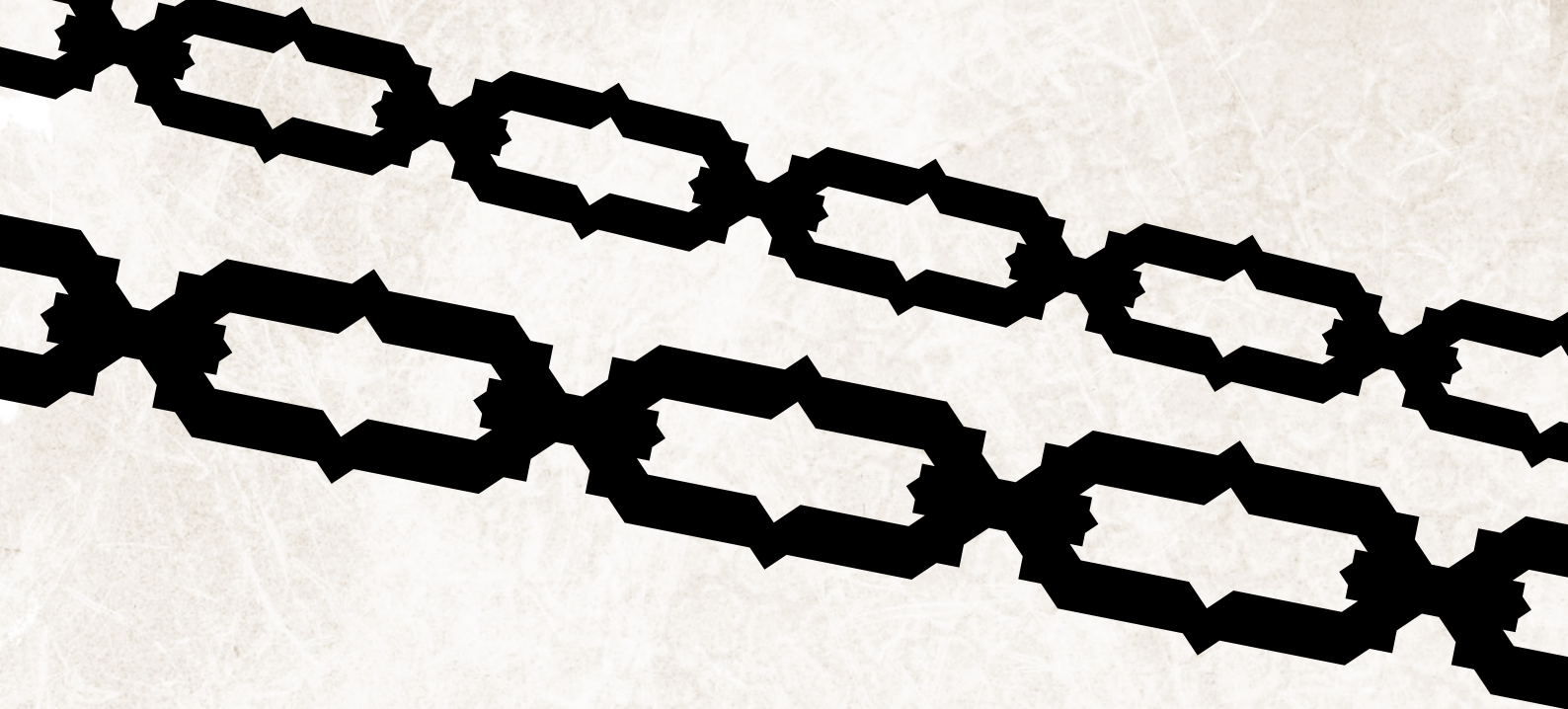
Justitian is ruled by its Cults, a triumvirate of Judges, Chroniclers, and Spitalians lord-ing over the population and dictating their lives down to the smallest detail. However, in truth, this upper layer is barely a speck in the ocean of the city's population. While the Apocalyptics, Scrappers, Jehammedans, and Anabaptists might contribute to the count, even their numbers are dwarfed by the true inhabitants of the city. The Clans of the Moloch.

They can be found in every street, every home, and every bar. Swarms of them, divided up into their own smaller denominations, working, living, and dying within the borders of Justitian. If the Clans saw eye-to-eye for but a single day and rose up against Uptown as a unified force the Judges would drown under the unstoppable tide. Of course, in reality they could never cooperate long enough to do such a thing. The Judges have made sure of that tying the noose around their necks tight, choking the population with overbearing rules and propaganda.

Instead the Clans as a collective form Justitian's economic and cultural foundation, trudging as laborers, craftsmen, farmers, brewers, butchers, bakers, and any other job required for a civilized society to function. They all work together, and ultimately they all depend on each other - and the Cults are locked in this symbiosis, even if they hate to acknowledge it. Without the Clans, the Judges would have no subjects to rule. Similarly, if Uptown vanished in an instant, the remaining populace would be all-but defenceless, easily picked off by the threats beyond the borders of the Protectorate. The fact of the matter is, neither could survive without the other.

HOW TO USE THIS SUPPLEMENT

CLANS OF THE MOLOCH is an expansion to DEGENESIS: JUSTITIAN detailing four of the most significant Clans operating in and around the great metropolis at the heart of Europe, granting insight into their structure and allowing Players to create their characters as members of the foundation of the city. To fully understand the context of the supplement, reading JUSTITIAN is essential.



THE GREAT CLANS

The major Clans of Justitian offer their distinct flavor and add variety to any party crossing the Protectorate. Belonging to one of these groups allows Players to enter the game with a small advantage of their own, anchoring their characters into the fabric of daily life within the city, and establishing the foundation for bonds, family ties, and contacts across the various parts of the population.

STUKOV

The Stukov are divided into countless family trees and are deeply embedded into the structure of Justitian, nurturing solid relationships with its leaders, the Judges. Characters from this Clan are silver tongued and have sharp wits, giving Players strong opportunities for dealing with Uptown and the Judiciary, along with the larger population in general. Stukov characters in Justitian gain +1 to their Network Background while in the city.

BRENNI

Characters from the Brenni Clan ride the line between civil society and the dark underworld of Justitian, and give an inroad for Players and their groups into the murky criminal networks of the city. They have some talent as healers, but their real value comes from their other skills, whether it's their social maneuverability or their aptitude for creating deadly poisons. While in Justitian, Brenni can apply their Allies Background to any of the city's criminal elements - Carrion Birds, Cartel, or anyone else staying under the Judges' radar.

PROVIDERS

Provider characters take their place in a tight-knit family group, toughened from the labor in the fields and able to weather any sort of abuse. As characters they bring the clout of their bloodline with them into every confrontation, along with the strength that comes from heaving around heavy farming tools all day, and a knowledge of the Rubble which can't be matched. They add +1 to their Allies Background while in and around Justitian.

STEEL MASTERS

Steel Master characters are uniquely positioned. No one else is granted so much by the Judges: protection, high quality equipment, and an impenetrable fortress for a home. At the same time, they are placed under strict limitations, and must receive permission from the Judges to move throughout the city. However, they are far from defenseless; a hammer that can bend steel can easily break bone. Steel Master characters can apply their Allies and Resources Backgrounds to the Judges.

MAKE YOUR OWN

While the great Clans form the bulk of the population, there are many more small Clans than can ever be truly identified in Justitian, offering opportunities for Players and Game Masters to define their own niche. Whether they are an offshoot of a larger Clan, a tribe which has been pushed to the sidelines and is on the brink of extinction, or a family line making its own way through the world, it is important to consider how they integrate into the society of Justitian. In the Judges' Utopia, everything has its predetermined place.

When defining their particular specialisation, consider how it contributes to the broader economy of Justitian, and how a profit can be extracted from it. Similarly, be mindful of the broader context and how it meshes with the political structures of the city - the Judges are rarely tolerant of subversive elements.





STUKOV

“So, we’re agreed? Ten percent less on my stall’s fees?”

“You’re a cur, Havel! Why would I agree to such a presumptuous offer?” The Masek Advocate spat into her bowl of soup. Havel glanced to the left and right of him, making sure nobody in the Garamond was listening in. Then he passed a sheaf of Drafts across the table. “Selma, do you want to see your birdbrain of a son get the apprenticeship at the guild, or not?”

Selma cringed, tossing her handkerchief over the money. “That’s what I call being a pain in the ass, Havel. By far the worst Stukov I’ve come across. Your ancestors would be turning in their graves!”

Havel grinned. “Wrong! They’d be proud to know that I got you to fix the Codex for me.”

WHAT ONCE WAS

The rune of a lightning bolt, carved into a door frame, a reindeer w dangling from a medallion, a windrose aiming at true North; these are the symbols of the past, littering the Stukov Quarter and revealing the rich heritage of its inhabitants. These depictions harken back to the days of the Clan’s great founder, at a time when the Stukov conquered the Black Lung and ruled over this territory as the undisputed champions of the Borcan wasteland. Until the Judges came.

Things are different now. The Judges clamped down on the burgeoning civilization, lashing the Stukov to their towering bastion of Uptown and forcing them to obey their new regulations with the threat of the hammer. Over time the Clan settled into its new existence, evolving and developing to adapt to its new position, sacrificing its freedom for security, among other things. But, despite the best efforts of the Judges, memories cannot be extinguished as long as one surrounds themselves with fetters of the past. They are carried into the present through stories and legends, and invoked through artistic endeavors. While many these days can never hope to achieve the mythical feats of their forefathers, they still harbor what little is left of the brave Stukov spirit in their own lives. Being marginalized by their new rulers has only reignited their affection for the old ways, causing the members of Clan to embrace their true origins all the more.

COMMON FOLK

Today, the Stukov are soldered into Justitian’s sturdy frame. They form the backbone of civic society, as craftsmen, merchants, tailors, artisans, and guild leaders, jolting the city forward through the force of their labor. Citizenship is common among their ranks, whether by birthright or through recognition for their talents, and the Judges have loosened their once tight leash, no longer seeing the need to hold the Clan in such rigid constraints.

To the Judiciary, the Stukov represent the purest indication of the success of the Protectorate, and the effectiveness of their methods of cultural reeducation. As such, there is no other Clan allowed to integrate themselves so closely to the hierarchy of Justitian, with many posts in Uptown’s Offices manned by Stukov Deputies. After all, any Utopia requires docile and cooperative members in order to function, and the Stukov have been conditioned to precisely fill that role.

STILTED SPARK

Not all of the Stukov are content to meekly submit to the rule of the Judges, though. The vast majority of the Clan has been pushed down to the point where even a mild protest is unthinkable, but some cling to the spirit of their ancestors, those who once claimed this wasteland to carve out a place to survive.

These splinter groups gather in the shadows of the city, meeting in backyards or unknown niches, staying out of sight of the Judges to plot and scheme their revolution. For now their numbers are still small, but their will is fierce, and they’ll burn the city down in their quest to take back control if they have to.

RECRUITMENT

The Cults are always hunting for new recruits, replenishing those lost to the harsh dangers of the world, and for those operating in Justitian the Stukov are a perfect target. Their weak cultural identity, eradicated by years of Judicial oversight, and abundant nature makes them eager to take the opportunity to join a larger organization, and the Cults snap them up.

POTENTIALS

CULTURAL MEMORY

While the Stukov have suffered under centuries of oppression attempting to smother their ancestral heritage, the roots of their past are still buried deep. They add +1D per Potential Level to INT+Legends rolls concerning the historical and geographical features of the Black Lung, and INS+Orienteering rolls when traveling in the region.

SKILL BONUSES

For Stukov, the following skills are considered preferred at character creation (MAX + 1):
(AGI) Crafting
(CHA) Arts
(CHA) Conduct
(INT) Legends
(INS) Orienteering



1 - CITIZEN

PREREQUISITE: -

EFFECT: The Stukov have been molded over time to become the perfect members of Justitian's society, and as such the vast majority of them are citizens by birthright. They gain access to Uptown, where they can brush shoulders with the Judges and other members of the upper class, and are exempt from the 20% guest tax on purchases.

EQUIPMENT: Citizenship papers; Stukov trinkets (Talisman, +1D PSY+Faith/Willpower)

2 - FACTOTUM

PREREQUISITE: AGI+Crafting 6, CHA+Arts 6, CHA+Conduct 5

EFFECT: A Stukov enters adulthood running odd jobs, serving as a trusted courier between the Advocate Houses of his district, working as a waterbearer, guild apprentice, city guide, or generalist artisan. If he displays talent and punctuality, his customers begin remembering his name and the steep climb through the social hierarchy begins. If he lands an apprenticeship with a local guild at the Old Fortress, he'll be introduced into the intricacies of their draughtsmanship: delicate carvings, intricately designed fabrics, finely wrought metalworks; the Stukov are known for their craft in a vast array of disciplines, and have been for generations.

The Factotum continues this great tradition in his own way, choosing a particular trade to make his own specialty, gaining +1D to all AGI+Crafting or CHA+Arts rolls related to carrying it out. Additionally, he adds +1 to his Network Background, as he develops a web of clients throughout the city.

EQUIPMENT: Permission waiver allowing the Factotum to sell their goods on the Forecourt, following approval from the Office of Certification; Small workshop in the Stukov Quarter loaned from a family member

2 - QUARTERMASTER

PREREQUISITE: CHA+Leadership 5D, INT+Science 6D, PSY+Cunning 5D

EFFECT: A city as large as Justitian requires all kinds of administration, or the colossal distribution network that keeps it alive would collapse within a week's time. That's where specialized Quartermasters take over as public

functionaries, overseeing the dispersal of goods across the districts, measuring the daily consumption of water from the Public Wells, inspecting the food quality on the Civic Markets, or ordering the construction of salt containers across Downtown.

The Quartermasters file their pedantic reports to the Offices in Uptown, and often use the opportunity to snitch on rivals, gaining access to privileges in return: from tax cuts to cheaper asking prices for real estate. If a Quartermaster plays their game right, they can begin to amass square footage after square footage of rental space, extrapolating their income streams. The Judges turn a blind eye. It's to be expected.

EQUIPMENT: Register of food and water stores across the city; Papers permitting them to requisition a team of 1D workers for essential tasks; Ability to acquire real estate from Urbanists, giving them +1 Resources per 1000 Drafts spent, to a maximum of 4

3 - FIRE WATCH

PREREQUISITE: BOD+Force 7, BOD+Toughness 7, CHA+Conduct 6, Passing the Fire Watch entrance tests

EFFECT: The Sprenger family tree is one of the premier bloodlines to offer their sons and daughters to the service, and joining the Fire Watch is somewhat of a tradition among Stukov who are physically capable and protective of their home. Members are on call at all times, working tirelessly across the city, extinguishing flames and rescuing lives, rushing into danger night after night to keep the population safe.

Pass grueling tests, and you're accepted into this elite force - but that's just the beginning. Now it's time to prove yourself to your peers and superiors, learn on the job, and climb the peculiar organization on your own. Lone wolves better fuck off: if a squad doesn't work together perfectly, people die.

EQUIPMENT: Fire Watch uniform and firefighting equipment (Fire ax, water hose, dust bucket); Rank badge (novice, linebacker, Officer); Monthly salary (novice: 5 Drafts/day, linebacker: 20 Drafts/day, Officer: 50 Drafts/day); Daily rations



HIERARCHY AND RANKS - STUKOV



3 - GUILD LEADER

PREREQUISITE: AGI+Crafting 8, CHA+Arts 8, CHA+Leadership 6, Authority 4

EFFECT: Talent, discipline, specialization, and tedious effort turn a Factotum into a master over time. Once the laborers of the Stukov conglomerate in one of the great crafting guilds, their voices begin to influence the political landscape of Uptown, establishing price binding for public goods and pushing competitors out of the civic districts.

Each of these guilds has a Guild Leader at its helm, oftentimes the most skilled or storied member, who is renowned throughout the city as a master of their art. As such they gain +2 Renown, and a growing following of other artisans and craftsmen.

EQUIPMENT: Ornate seal of their guild; Keys to a workshop of their discipline in the Old Fortress; High quality tools of their trade, recipes and blueprints, as well as books compiling theoretical knowledge (+1D to AGI+Crafting rolls)

4 - URBANIST

PREREQUISITE: Network 4, Resources 4, PSY+Cunning 6

EFFECT: With hundreds of thousands calling it home, Justitian has a constant need for new living spaces to place its steadily blossoming population. The task of managing this demand falls to the Urbanists, real-estate brokers who have accumulated several swathes of lucrative rental space, from shops leased along the Stallion Streets, to highly coveted guest rooms on the Forecourt. With lease money flowing in from multiple sources, their appetites grow for owning even more land, thereby enforcing their iron grip on the populace of the city, controlling who is allowed to live where, and gaining permission to grant and deny purchases and evict uncooperative tenants - or just those they dislike. However, they must play it safe. Kicking out a Protector's wife and child from their abode in the Stukov Quarter can backfire quickly.

EQUIPMENT: Deeds to a number properties across Justitian equal to their Resources Background, which may be rented out as they please. They gain +500 CD per month from each, however they also take on the responsibility to keep them at least somewhat maintained: should their Resources ever fall below (2), the Department of Urban Development will expropriate them

5 - DEPUTY

PREREQUISITE: CHA+Negotiation 8, INT+Legends 7, PSY+Cunning 7

EFFECT: A Deputy has ascended to one of the most critical positions in Justitian, the highest level any of their Clan is likely to climb in the bureaucratic labyrinth of Uptown. Deputies work in line with the Offices, dictating the lives of every single person living within the limits of the city, collecting reports from Quartermasters and negotiating with city officials and Advocates alike on the development of civil legislature.

Deputies gain the ability to apply their Authority Background to all citizens of Justitian, and can also influence other members of their Office for favourable outcomes or legal changes by spending the appropriate Background Points.

EQUIPMENT: Signet ring of the Officials; Official uniform (+1D to interactions with citizens)

5 - PARTISAN

PREREQUISITE: Over 60 years old, CHA+Leadership 10, INT+Legends 8, Authority 5

EFFECT: The Council of Partisans is, in theory, the highest authority in the Clan, keeping the memory of the origins of the Stukov alive, dictating its broader movements across political spheres, debating policies, and issuing actions with their decrees. In practice, the Judges have crushed the decorum of the Partisans down until its function is mostly symbolic. Sure, they're still standing in the first row during Archot's speeches on Calendar Square, and they see their faces engraved as stone sculptures on public plazas - but the Partisans lack real political weight. If however they were to lead an uprising, their ancestry would allow them to unify the diverse family trees, providing them with a voice of prestige and tradition.

Despite their lack of real power, the Partisans' voices still carry some weight: they gain +1 Authority and +2D on rolls to command other Stukov.

EQUIPMENT: The Mark of Stukov, a finely crafted disk bearing the symbol of their Clan's founder, passed down for centuries





BRENNI

"I heard you could help?" The man at the entrance of the hidden backyard apothecary coughed, clutching a belly wound, slamming the door behind him shut to keep out the howling dust storm.

"You're Gessoth, right? Carrion Bird?" Mads asked, looking up from his work bench. Gessoth nodded desperately. "I was waiting for you. Here, drink this fast!" Mads passed over a sweet-smelling herbal tincture, inspecting Gessoth's reaction. The Apocalyptic downed the brew in one gulp as commanded and seemed to calm down, his irises slowly expanding. Step one. Gessoth straightened and walked forward in an attempt to thank the healer. The next instant his knees caved in and he dropped onto the floor before Mads' feet, eyes wide in terror, his body convulsing. Mads acted without hesitation, tightly gripping Gessoth's throat to keep him from screaming. Then he pushed the poisoned needle into his neck. "Sorry friend, it's just a quick sting. Nothing personal."

BLACK PAST

Got maladies, rheums, soreness? Talk to a Brenni. Don't trust the Spitalians? Talk to a Brenni. Need a fix for some long overdue Burn craving? Just talk to a Brenni, already! Yes, the Office of Hygienics imposes a new regulation every other week and the egg-heads patrol the streets, hunting for deviants, but that's just how things are these days. Not long ago, they toppled the Brenni and pushed them out of their once esteemed position as Justitian's healers, ushering in the end of the Clan's glory days - but their function as poison distillers, chiropractors, and medicine men lives on, thriving behind closed doors, in hidden basements and backyard laboratories.

Although they cannot afford to operate in public any longer, their unlicensed services are still in high demand, drawing a clientele from the shadows of Justitian: Carrion Birds and Cartel members alike. It's these paying customers who keep the Brenni alive and well-off, despite their black past and loss of public recognition. Nested between the Harbor, the Stukov Quarter, and the Steel Monolith, the Clan is imbued by a spirit of recklessness, distinct and headstrong, defiant and confident, part civilian working class, part underground drug dealers, a secret society sprawling in the core of an oppressive system, devoted to the rituals of yore and their quest for their founder's mythical knowledge.

UNDERGROUND APOTHECARIES

In the years following their downfall, the Brenni were forced to take on a new role. The undesirables of the city, the lowlives, the disenfranchised wretches living across Downtown - in fact, everyone who isn't a citizen - can't use the Public Hospitals, and instead must skulk into Brennen, where the outcast apothecaries wait to cure their ailments. It might not be as scientifically grounded as the Spitalian doctors proclaim their work to be, but when there are no other options it's far better than nothing.

Additionally, some of them have turned their medicinal talents towards darker purposes, becoming renowned in the murky alleys and backrooms of Justitian as deadly poisoners for hire. Whenever an Apocalyptic Owl wants to make his knives even more lethal, Brennen is the place he goes.

SURFACE LEVEL

Not all of the Brenni have remained mired in the trappings of their past, surviving in a realm between antiquated medicine and pseudoscience. Instead, some emerged into civilised society as brewers and distillers, using their Clan's ancestral understanding of herbs and applying it to the task of creating alcohol. Their bars and taprooms litter the city, with Judges favoring their alcoholic delicacies and the Anabaptists reaching out to exchange techniques and recipes.

Just a single bottle of alcohol from a Brenni business is enough to elevate a Provider's Harvest celebration to be the talk of the Rubble. Many a Brenni has even secured themselves citizenship through this trade, with Archot rewarding the most talented of their members with access to Uptown.

CONTACTS

The Brenni have wormed their way into the underworld of Justitian, regularly interacting with the middlemen from the Cartel or the Carrion Birds. If a member of the Clan needs something illegal or illicit done out of sight of the Judges, then they're sure to at least have some relative who can establish first contact, if they don't already have a suitable contact themselves.

POTENTIALS

ESOTERIC CURE

The Brenni are masters of all kinds of esoteric and mystical remedies, some of which are nothing but placebos - not that the patients eagerly reaching for their wallets know that. A roll on CHA+Expression, with +1D per Potential Level, against a target's Mental Defense allows the Brenni to convince them of their "cure" enough to regain a single Ego Point or Flesh Wound. However, this can only be done once per day, and if a patient ever succeeds in their Mental Defense they can no longer be affected by the cure.

SKILL BONUSES

For Brenni, the following skills are considered preferred at character creation (MAX + 1):
(BOD) Force
(AGI) Crafting
(CHA) Arts
(INT) Science
(PSY) Deception



1 - AIDE

PREREQUISITE: -

EFFECT: They scurry about between the legs of the more experienced members of their Clan, rushing to and fro to bring reagents, herbs, chemicals, or medical supplies to their betters. They are apprenticed to a higher ranking Brenni, and they'd better learn quickly in order to make themselves useful.

EQUIPMENT: Small notebook which is to be filled with recipes and notes from their mentor; Basic healing herbs for practice (+1D to INT+Medicine, single use)

2 - GURU

PREREQUISITE: INT+Medicine 6, INT+Science 5, INS+Perception 6

EFFECT: While they are yet to master the art of healing, still unable to mix together herbs and concoctions to create the miracle cures of the Alchemists, they have been able to extensively study and practise the crafts of physiotherapy, acupuncture, and more. Extensive knowledge of human anatomy allows them to fix a patient's inflamed tendons, relieve them from a lumbago, or increase their general mobility. Guru's provide first aid, give medical or nutritional advice, and release organic tissue from pain and stress. Once a Guru begins making their first forays into the underground, they gain +1 Network related to Justitian's underworld.

EQUIPMENT: Texts detailing the pressure points, energy paths, and chakras of the human body, giving them +1D to CHA+Expression or INT+Medicine when using those facts to heal a patient

2 - BREWER

PREREQUISITE: INT+Science 7, CHA+Arts 6, CHA+Conduct 5

EFFECT: The Brewers of Brennen are some of the best in their field, and their spirits are famed among the people of the Protectorate. They have been able to land a job at a distillery or brewery in Justitian, and quickly find the Judges and other members of high society amongst their clientele. The Anabaptists, on the other hand, don't yet know

if they should consider the Brewers of Brennen as rivals or drinking buddies. Whatever the case, as a Brewer the Brenni can acquire some of the rarest spices to upgrade his brandies and liqueurs with goods normally unavailable on the civic markets; a special permit allows him to import uncertified stimulants from places like Liqua and out of the Jehammedan Quarter. His newfound influence catapults him into Uptown and grants citizenship: he gains +1 Network point related to Justitian's upper class.

EQUIPMENT: Citizenship papers; A bottle of the alcohol produced by his workplace

3 - TOXICIAN

PREREQUISITE: INT+Science 8, BOD+Toughness 6, PSY+Cunning 7

EFFECT: Once a Brenni continues on his journey into the shadows of the Clan, his work moves from the open street into the hidden back rooms and underground laboratories, where he hones his craft in creating ever more lethal concoctions and poisons for his more sinister clients. Toxicians require a spotless network of suppliers, often using Brewers as frontmen to gain access to chemical substances otherwise unavailable to them. Additionally, their expanded network allows them to import potent toxins via Justitian's many black markets and have these caches stashed in secret locations across the city. A secret tattoo, featuring a serpent encircling the moon, identifies Toxicians to one another.

EQUIPMENT: Keys to workshops and stores throughout Justitian; High quality herbs and chemicals (+1D to INT+Science when creating toxins)

3 - APOTHECARY

PREREQUISITE: INT+Medicine 8, INT+Legends 6

EFFECT: The Apothecary sets himself apart from the crowd, developing his healing skills further and applying his arcane and mystical knowledge to create herbal remedies and cures that can drag heavily injured patients back from the brink of death. The Brenni is now the go-to doc-



HIERARCHY AND RANKS - BRENNI



tor for the downtrodden and the criminals of Justitian, and he's paid well in return - both for his services, and for his discretion.

Using their laboratories, Apothecaries gain the ability to produce a wide variety of substances with equally diverse effects. With a roll of INT+Medicine (5) they can create one dose of any standard pharmaceutical agent - stimulants, narcotics, antibiotics, and more - and for every (2) Triggers the drug's level rises by 1.

EQUIPMENT: Extensive scriptures passed down from their ancestors on curative agents and herbal mixtures, giving them +2D to INT+Medicine; A laboratory in Brennen where they can conduct their experiments uninterrupted

4 - ALCHEMIST

PREREQUISITE: INT+Medicine or INT+Science 9, INT+Legends 6

EFFECT: The Brenni has been practising and studying his chosen discipline for a lifetime, and there are only a few areas that he hasn't touched. Whether he turns his hand towards miracle cures or fatal poisons, whatever he produces is intensely effective or potentially deadly. Now he has access to the full resources of his Clan, along with the respect amongst the underground drug lords of the Cartel and the Carrion Birds. Furthermore he acts as the relay for commands issued by the secretive Meisters, calling meetings in underground halls and supposedly deserted chambers to inform the other Brenni of the contents of the messages he has received.

EQUIPMENT: Only the Alchemists have access to the reagents and knowledge required to perform the Red Purge, an ancient technique to expunge all toxins and poisons from a body. However, it is taboo for them to accept payment in coin, only a suitable favor is permitted

5 - MEISTER

PREREQUISITE: Secrets 5, INT+Legends 10, PSY+Cunning 10

EFFECT: It is said they can turn lead into gold, that they

were fed by their mothers with blood instead of milk, and that they can perceive the lifeline of a human being by touch alone. The Meisters work in total obscurity, blending in with the common members of the Clan in their daily lives, distributing their orders to their brethren through coded messages and dead drops. What's known: there are seven of them at a time, with each new member chosen by the other six only if one of them steps down or passes away. They direct the Brenni in their movements, and are more essential than ever now as they struggle to maintain their identity under the heel of the Spitalians and Judges. Each Meister is an unparalleled practitioner of their hermetic lore, and whenever they command an action it is backed with ancestral power.

EQUIPMENT: Keys to access the deserted dungeons of Brennen, where Brennus once performed his miracles. Now, they are used for the meetings of the Meisters

5 - INHERITOR

PREREQUISITE: Chosen by the Meisters, Survived at least one Red Purge

EFFECT: There can only ever be a single Inheritor. In times of great need, when the Brenni are on the brink of ruin, the Meisters gather to choose a suitable vessel for the spirit of their great ancestor, Brennus. The Inheritor imbibes an ancient mixture of potent chemicals and herbs which has been passed down through the Clan for generations, allowing him to contact and communicate with the original Founder of the Clan, receiving his instructions on the correct path through an emergency. Only three Inheritors have been chosen throughout the history of the Brenni, and each time they emerged from their spiritual journey with unearthly knowledge, cunningly navigating any obstacles in their path. The Inheritor's Authority, Allies, and Secrets scores can never be less than 6.

EQUIPMENT: A single vial of the ancient mixture, which wracks their body as it expands their mind, causing them to take (2) Trauma Damage; The robes of Brennus (+4D to interactions with Brenni)





PROVIDERS

Sweat pools on the brows of the two contenders. Ingram locks eyes with his rival Jericho, both trying to intimidate the other before the match even begins. "You got this, Ingram!" voices yell. The men grasp each other's hand, as they get into position.

"Three! Two! One! Go!" Veins pop, forearms swell, and knuckles turn pale. The crowd at the pipeline breaks out in cheers, rooting for Ingram, their boy, toughened by years of toiling through Borcan soil. But Jericho holds out on his own, arms tempered from swinging his unwieldy Judgement Hammer in combat. The men grunt, spit, foaming from their mouths, neither willing to give an inch. The midday sun parches the opponents. "Not this time!" Ingram wheezes, and leans his massive frame forward like a bull on the attack, bending Jericho's wrist out of position and slamming the Judge's arm onto the table. A sudden jerk goes through the assembly, everyone screaming "Our kid!" at the top of their lungs. In the background, Jericho mounts his horse, salty and vexed, humiliated by a wretched Provider, out in the Rubble. At least nobody in his squad will know about it...

REFORMED IDENTITY

There's always those at the bottom and those at the top. The problem is, those at the top can only remain there, if those at the bottom keep feeding them. Farmer's logic, but that's how empires grow. Justitian demands a tremendous amount of food, and the Providers in the Rubble are the only ones able to supply enough to keep the city stocked, and its populace fat and healthy.

However, this form of coexistence is not based on altruism, but on force. Some five generations ago the Providers were violently resettled into the Rubble, placed here by the new rising power of the Black Lung, the Judiciary itself. This process uprooted them from their origins, casting these families into a cultural twilight, in which they had to renounce their past, and pledge allegiance to rules and regulations imposed upon them by Uptown. The motivation for this was deliberate: farmers and feeders who can't cling to shared traditions are weak, easily intimidated, and can be suppressed at a moments notice.

But those days are over. Providers now gather in family units, each farm managed by a small collection of workers related by blood, and the parcels themselves have merged into tiny villages ruled over by Patriarchs. Information travels between the villages, and in turn the families draw strength from each other, willing to lend aid to their relatives in times of need. The Rubble is growing together, developing an identity of its own, one that is growing to stand united in the face of adversity and oppression.

COMMON GROUND

The Judges abuse them, the Spitalians harass them, and the regular citizens pay no attention to them. It would appear that everyone is hostile towards the Providers. However, there is one group that is resolutely on their side, working shoulder to shoulder in the fields outside of Justitian - the Ascetics.

Ever since the Anabaptists began settling the Rubble, the two farming communities have shared common ground, joining together to exchange cultivation methods and techniques. Even their religions have begun to blend together; Providers are now getting inked with three-dot tattoos and pierced with nose rings, while Ascetics marry off their daughters to longstanding Patriarch families.

TEENAGE REBELLION

The life of a Provider is a hard one, year after year of backbreaking work just to scrape out a meager existence. It's no wonder, then, that the Provider families have been hemorrhaging their youth to the Cults, the teenagers pulled away with the promise of a new, better existence. The situation is slowly getting worse, as an entire generation is deviating from its Clan's path. The Patriarchs look at their descendants in confusion and worry - what happens if there's no one to inherit what they've erected in years past?

ALTERNATIVE JOBS

Some Providers have allied themselves with the Spitalians and become seed testers, lending out their parcels for the doctors to test new and experimental farming methods, fertilizers, fungicides and more. If the tests are successful and their harvest is good, they get paid for their crops - more than they would for a normal year. If their plants wither and die in an unexpected reaction? They get paid anyway, courtesy of the Spital. Additionally, they are given an automatic certification when the time comes to sell their goods, due to the constant Spitalian supervision they're subjected to.

POTENTIALS

EARTHBOUND

No matter where they are, or how desolate the environment, the Providers will make it work. They have tremendous knowledge of herbalism and geology, and know exactly how to reap the best from the land: they add +1S per Potential level to all INS+Survival rolls to forage for food or find supplies in the natural landscape around them.

SKILL BONUSES

For Providers, the following skills are considered preferred at character creation (MAX + 1):

- (BOD) Force
- (BOD) Stamina
- (BOD) Toughness
- (INT) Science
- (INS) Survival



1 - RUNNER

PREREQUISITE: -

EFFECT: They know how to chop off a chicken's head, milk the cow, and mill the grains. What they lack in strength, age, or responsibility, they make up for with simple tasks, such as handling communication between the different Provider communities, rushing back and forth as messengers for their elders. In this manner, they get to know all of their relatives in the different settlements across the Rubble, and similarly they all get to know the Runner. Eventually they'll meet their teenage sweetheart on one of the open fields this way. They add +1 to their Allies Background score.

EQUIPMENT: A good pair of boots; Messenger bag; Sketched out maps of the Rubble

2 - BRUISER

PREREQUISITE: BOD+Melee 6 or BOD+Brawl 6, Allies 2

EFFECT: By now, news about the Cooperative has spread throughout Downtown. Standing up to the mighty Justitian, a group of farmers finally digging in their heels and refusing to give up another inch of the ground they fought so hard to cultivate. The organization is idolised by the Providers, even if many are still too scared of reprisal to join themselves.

Bruisers are the muscle of the Cooperative, showing face whenever there's a Provider in trouble whether he's part of their organization yet or not. A Hygienist inspecting a farm is confronted with a pair of beefy ranchers to remind him that he's at their mercy out here. A Juryman browbeating a family into paying him a tithe is dragged into a barn and tossed out with a black eye. The Bruisers keep the parcels safe, if only as a deterrent against the abuse of power.

EQUIPMENT: Shortened farm tools (Practical enough for plausible deniability, but more effective as weapons)

2 - HARVESTER

PREREQUISITE: BOD+Force 6D, BOD+Stamina 6D, INS+Survival 6D

EFFECT: The Harvester knows his land better than any high-and-mighty doctor with a shaved head and neoprene suit ever will. He tastes the wind to predict the next dust storm rolling through, how to lay out his crops so the roots

grow best, and he can tell when his donkey is about to fall ill and needs rest. He's spent long, arduous years accumulating experience under his parents' tutelage, and now he's putting it to good use.

The bulk of the Provider population is made up of Harvesters, each of them working for their relatives throughout the seasons. Eventually, during one of the annual Harvest festivals, they and their sweetheart will finally tie the braided rope knot representing two bloodlines becoming one and enter into marriage. Now, it's time to work on starting up a new family line.

EQUIPMENT: Donkey and cart inherited from their parents; Keys to access the communal Provider storehouses; Permission waivers to own property in the Rubble

3 - VANDAL

PREREQUISITE: PSY+Domination 8, CHA+Leadership 8, Authority 4

EFFECT: Every movement needs its goons, but without direction the Bruisers would just aimlessly mill about without any strategy. Ardon himself can't direct the thousands of members throughout the Rubble, and as such, a more local leadership cadre is needed. That's where the Vandals come in.

They are the Cooperative's enforcers, each tasked personally by Ardon with the goal of managing a sector of Provider territory. Within their assigned patch of land, they are the core of the group's presence. They set targets for the Bruisers, cozy up with the local Brigadiers and Patriarchs, and get to know every Protector and Juryman assigned to the region - hunting for blackmail material. They are identified by a tattoo of the Cooperative's crest on their forearm, a crossed cleaver and scythe.

EQUIPMENT: Tattoo of the Cooperative (Talisman, +1D PSY+Faith/Willpower); Encryption key for passing messages to other Vandals

3 - SUPPLIER

PREREQUISITE: CHA+Negotiation 7D, PSY+Cunning 7D, Network 4

EFFECT: While some Providers handle the entire process of planting, harvesting, and selling their goods alone, the



HIERARCHY AND RANKS - PROVIDERS



smart ones let the Suppliers do it. Way back in their family history, one of their ancestors was gifted to or chosen by one of the great Advocate families, or a similarly powerful group in Uptown. It was only a small interaction, but Providers take every opportunity they can get. Using their family connections they were able to sneak their way into Justitian and wrap their heads around its labyrinthine systems.

Now, the Suppliers use their knowledge and contacts to exploit Justitian as much as possible to make good profits for their fellow Providers, along with securing any of the resources their brethren require to keep their farms running. The other farmers simply look on in confusion and shrug - they don't get it, but it makes them money, so who cares.

EQUIPMENT: List of sellers and market stalls that are receptive to their goods; Notebook filled with notes on sales and profits

4 - BRIGADIER

PREREQUISITE: Started a family, INS+Survival 8D, INT+Legends 6D

EFFECT: While the years of turmoil following the Providers relocation into the Rubble left many of their cultural and religious frameworks battered and broken, it was the Brigadiers who were able to carry the Clan through the storm and emerge intact on the other side. They have started a family of their own, putting their offspring to work as Harvester, and using their newfound liberation from the backbreaking labor of the fields they turn their hand towards a different kind of cultivation.

The Brigadier has learned the basic building blocks of the Providers' sacred rituals from his own parents as a Harvester, but only now does he fully immerse himself. He orchestrates the marriages of his children, organizes the preparations of the yearly Harvest festival, and leads the celebration of Providers who pass away. In good years the Brigadier is a symbol of prosperity, in bad years, he is the rock of wisdom.

EQUIPMENT: Permission waivers to own property in the Neighborhood of the Providers

5 - VILLAGE JURYMAN

PREREQUISITE: Sponsored by an existing Judge, Basic understanding of the Codex, Ability to read and write, BOD+Melee 6D, PSY+Domination 6D

EFFECT: A Provider who manages to distinguish himself from his peers in the eyes of a Judge will be elevated to the post of Village Juryman. He receives his very own insignia and the approval of the Judiciary to dish out justice. In the eyes of the law, he's now the penultimate authority in the Rubble, second only to the Judges themselves.

For some, this is the opportunity they've been waiting for. They use their newfound power to give back to their families, and add +1 to their Allies Backgrounds. Others, however, see this as a chance for personal gain beyond their wildest dreams. They instead add +3 to their Network Background with the Judges, but can no longer use their Resources with their own Clan.

EQUIPMENT: Juryman insignia, allowing them to pass judgement on minor crimes and carry weapons in Justitian; Citizenship papers

5 - PATRIARCH

PREREQUISITE: Several successful farms operated by their offspring, Authority 5, CHA+Leadership 10D

EFFECT: The Patriarch reigns among the Providers, ruling over a host of families related by blood. He presides over his small kingdom from a home passed down from generation to generation, filled with iconography of the harvest gods and symbolism depicting the Providers and their heritage.

Patriarchs are also responsible for administering justice within the Clan. When a Harvester brings an accusation against another Provider for adultery, or a Supplier is caught skimming an unjust profit, they are brought before the Patriarchs of the bloodlines involved. The two elders will listen to the stories of each, pray for guidance, and deliver a verdict. In severe cases, the guilty party is exiled from the Clan completely, marked with an ancient symbol of a tree split down the middle to brand him as a pariah.

EQUIPMENT: Permission waivers to own property in Fielding; A cohort of farms and communities owned by their offspring who all call them their Patriarch





STEEL MASTERS

The Artificer's workshop was brightly lit, electric lamps shining down on the carefully maintained tools and various equipment in use, but even in his own domain Yama felt out of place. The Executioner was waiting. "I want you to make me something," the Judge said, handing the Steel Master a sheet of paper. Specifications. A glance over it left the Artificer's brow furrowed.

"This... a musket of this caliber would pulverize a horse, let alone a man. What do you need something like that for?"

"Kings," came the gruff reply. "Can you make it or not?"

"I can, but special-purpose weapons must be verified and approved by the-"

The Executioner interrupted, tossing a document on the table. Yama recognised it at once. A special permit for access to Downtown. "Skip the approval. I need it, fast. I'll sign that when you give me my gun, and you'll be able to walk in the city as much as you want. You have one week."

CLOUD PEOPLE

The Steel Masters see the city like nobody else. Confined to their elevated prison cell for generations, ever since they were expropriated from Ferropol, they've been granted a unique perspective on the growing urban sprawl beneath them. A commoner passing by below would kill to take their place if they knew of the conditions within the towering structure, where this obscure Clan is given Judicial protection and freely provided every necessity in exchange for steady work. But things look very different from the Crown of the Steel Monolith.

Up there, confinement has become a fact of existence, and isolation weaves itself into the lives of the Steel Masters both spiritually and culturally. At least in appearance, they have embraced the change. Once, they lived amongst the Earth dwellers, meddling in worldly affairs and mixing with the common folk, but the gods saw fit to send the Judges to bring them closer to the heavens. Today they see themselves as Cloud People, accepting their separation from the world below as the way things are meant to be: chosen to dedicate themselves to their craft, manipulating the elements to create masterworks of smithing. They take pride in their position, and wear it as a badge of honor - it's everything they have left. Only when silence befalls the Monolith at night, and the ringing of the forges fades into the background, do they stop to wonder about what life might be like beyond these walls, and acknowledge their quiet yearning to set foot in the dust of the world below.

SCHISM

In the Monolith, quarreling was not an option. If you didn't get along with those you were forced to share a gilded cage with you'd wither away, no matter how ornate or comfortable your confinement was. That was true, until the great schism erupted between the families of Ogota and Gotokai. The two sides have become so intensely opposed that their figureheads, Danislai and Heza, can each now barely stand the other's presence. The effects ripple down through the Clan's twin bloodlines; former friends now pass each other in uncomfortable silence, sleeping quarters are divided into sections, and work assignments have become increasingly segregated.

CABIN FEVER

The Judges failed to fully consider the mental effects the nature of their imprisonment would inflict on the Steel Masters when they herded them onto the Steel Monolith and locked the doors, especially once the Assam line withered out. The burden weighs heavily on the mind and soul, but some members of the Clan aren't even sure that escape would solve it. Even if they were able to flee their prison, would they be able to make it in the wide and open realms beyond their enclosure after so long in captivity?

PAROLE

The Judges are loathe to let their personal blacksmiths have even the slightest hint of freedom. The Steel Masters are only permitted to leave the confines of the Monolith and venture into Downtown with special permits stating the reason for their excursion and the Judge who approved it. Unless given a specified exception, they are restricted to the civic districts, and must report back to a Roper at the Steel Monolith every evening before curfew. If any of them are caught without one, they will be captured and returned to their towering prison, and if they try to escape the city completely they'll be relentlessly hunted down.

POTENTIALS

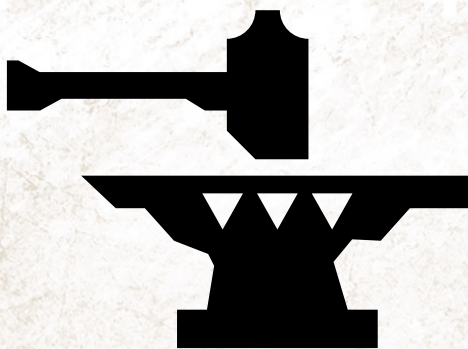
SPIRITSHAPER

The Steel Master has gained an understanding of the spirits, able to work with diligence and patience to tame and influence them to achieve perfection. He gains +1S per Potential level to all AGI+Crafting rolls related to weapon smithing.

SKILL BONUSES

For Steel Masters, the following skills are considered preferred at character creation (MAX + 1):

- (BOD) Force
- (AGI) Crafting
- (INT) Engineering
- (INT) Legends
- (INT) Science



1 - FLEDGELING

PREREQUISITE: -

EFFECT: The colossal forges of the Steel Masters are never empty, but the spirits abhor wastefulness. The task of the Fledgelings in the workshop is to recover the slag from the top of the melted metal before it is cast, so it can be recycled and reused. A life of humility lies ahead of them, as they begin their training as craftsmen in line with the family's traditions, shadowing a Shaper or Metallurgist while they work.

EQUIPMENT: Skimming rod and bucket; Rudimentary safety gear (heavy gloves, leather apron)

2 - SHAPER

PREREQUISITE: Ogota, AGI+Crafting 7, BOD+Force 6

EFFECT: The sound of their hammers rings out across the city as they shape and temper the steel into its final form. Shapers are the sum of the Clan's workforce, toiling ceaselessly to craft the Judiciary's war machine.

When not on shift in the Steel Monolith's workshops, they retreat to the Ogota chambers where they spend their time studying the works of the Steel Masters of old, attempting to gain insight into their expertise at manipulating the elements that make up the world and soothing the spirits through meditation and prayer. They blend spirituality with forging techniques and turn worship into work.

EQUIPMENT: Smithing hammer; Blacksmithing gear; Steel Master Clan insignia

2 - METALLURGIST

PREREQUISITE: Gotokai, INS+Perception 6, INT+Science 7

EFFECT: While the Steel Masters are kept well supplied by the Judges, the quality of their raw material leaves much to be desired. It is the responsibility of the Metallurgists to ensure that only the highest quality scrap is melted down for final use, and to control the additives in the steel to maintain its strength. They are permitted to access the lowest levels of the Steel Monolith, inspecting and rejecting anything they deem unsuitable.

While they still maintain the core tenets of the Steel Masters' beliefs, Metallurgists are far more grounded than their Ogota brethren - they have to be, otherwise they'd

never get along with the Ropers in the Powder Mill, or the Scrappers who haul in the piles of recovered metal from the Ironworks.

EQUIPMENT: Restricted Downtown pass; Logbook for materials

3 - FOREMAN

PREREQUISITE: Ogota, CHA+Negotiation 6, Network 3

EFFECT: The Foreman is given the task of venturing out into Downtown to seek out the discarded detritus that will be used by the Steel Masters to create the useful tools the Judiciary needs. He cooperates with the Judges as he trawls through the scrapyards of Tech-Central, and is given permission to hire up to 10 Scavengers to haul material back to the Steel Monolith.

Downtown is an unfamiliar and strange place for the Foremen, and every one of them will react differently to the experience of mingling with the unwashed masses of Justitian. Some watch the passersby with mouths agape, baffled by the strange habits of these people. Others are disgusted by the lack of cleanliness and respect on display. Only one thing is universally recognised: things make much more sense in the Monolith.

EQUIPMENT: Procurement Permit, giving the Foreman access to Downtown to make purchases for the Steel Masters

3 - OVERSEER

PREREQUISITE: Gotokai, CHA+Leadership 8, INS+Perception 8, Authority 3

EFFECT: The Judges always need more firepower, and the flow of work orders is neverending. Despite that, they refuse to accept even the slightest lapse in quality, and as such the responsibility of the Overseers never ends. The Overseer supervises their brethren, performing final checks before they are sent out to the Judges. He has full authority over other Steel Masters on the workshop floor, and can reject any work that doesn't meet his standards.

Lately, more and more parts have been discarded due to poor material quality. The Overseers have been scrambling to track down the cause for months, now, but their progress has been blocked. The Ogota Foremen refuse to speak to the Gotokai Overseers in everything but the most



HIERARCHY AND RANKS - STEEL MASTERS



cursory fashion, and any attempt to seek out an explanation for the poor steel being sent to the Crown is met with a curt dismissal. As the schism deepens the division between the families, a solution seems impossible.

EQUIPMENT: Overseer badge; Proofing tools (Measurement instruments, special symbol to be hammered into parts when complete and marked for approval)

4 - ARTIFICER

PREREQUISITE: AGI+Crafting 8, CHA+Arts 7, Network 4

EFFECT: He has been working for years, learning how to mold and lull the spirits to create the most effective and prized weapons in the Judicial arsenal. His work is so renowned and effective that he has been personally named by an Executioner or Arbiter to create a masterpiece of blacksmithing for their personal collection.

The Artificers blend the two families of the Steel Monolith, combining the expertise of both bloodlines in a single caste of expert craftsmen. Traditionally, they are supposed to abandon any of the prejudices of their background. In practice, though, the schism rippling through the Steel Masters has affected the Artificers just as much, and despite working to keep up appearances the cracks are beginning to show. How can they pretend to work together when not even their family leaders can see eye-to-eye?

EQUIPMENT: A personal workshop where they are given the best materials and equipment, along with a Judicial patron who sponsors their work

5 - STEEL MASTER: OGOTA

PREREQUISITE: Danislai Ogota choosing a suitable successor from his offspring, AGI+Crafting 11

EFFECT: It can't go on like this. The Steel Masters are slowly withering away, and the reason couldn't be more clear to the current Ogota Steel Master, Danislai. Distraction.

The Gotokai branch of the family have become obsessed with leaving the safety and sanctity of their home in the clouds, proclaiming their reasons to be "bringing new talent into the fold", but that isn't the real truth. They've grown too weak to handle the responsibility of their bloodline, the knowledge of their unique heritage which must not be sullied.

There can only be one solution; for the Steel Masters to survive the Gotokai must be made to understand that the Steel Monolith is where they belong. If only Heza saw it too. Until then, Danislai focuses on his own position as the unparalleled master craftsman of the Steel Masters, able to do on his own in a day what a team of Shapers would struggle to match in a week.

EQUIPMENT: Key to the Judges' arsenal; The Flag (passed down from his ancestors, regenerates 1D Ego every time he meditates over the symbol); Access to the crown of the Steel Monolith, the sacred grounds where only the leaders of each family may go

5 - STEEL MASTER: GOTOKAI

PREREQUISITE: Heza Gotokai choosing a suitable successor from his offspring, AGI+Crafting 11

EFFECT: It can't go on like this. The Steel Masters are slowly withering away, and the reason couldn't be more clear to the current Gotokai Steel Master, Heza. Isolation.

The Clan has been trapped in the Steel Monolith for generations, prohibited from bringing in new blood, learning new techniques, or even indulging in any luxury. The Ogota say that this is for the best, that the ruffians in Downtown would ruin the purity of their line, but that isn't the real truth. They've just grown too comfortable with captivity, like a bird too terrified to leave its cage even when the door is open.

There can only be one solution; for the Steel Masters to survive the Ogota must be made to understand that staying confined in this prison cell is an impossibility. If only Danislai saw it too. Until then, Heza does his best to maintain the standard of his Clan's work as their most skilled inspector, capable of spotting at a glance defects the current crop of Overseers would need hours of measuring to detect.

EQUIPMENT: Key to the Judges' arsenal; Ancient nautical map of the route taken by the ancient barges (passed down from his ancestors); Access to the crown of the Steel Monolith, the sacred grounds where only the leaders of each family may go

JUSTICE

“Ok, listen, I got another one,” she said. “Three Tech-Toads are sitting by a lake.”

Khaleb wiped the tears from his cheeks, struggling to breathe. He couldn't remember laughing so hard in years. Bent over, with his belly cramping, he was barely able to hold on to the table. Cinnamon downed another shot of liquor, and leaned towards him. Khaleb tried to get a grip.

“Tech-Toad One says ‘Quack’, Tech-Toad Two continues with ‘Quack, Quack’, and Tech-Toad Three follows up with ‘Quack, Quick, Quack’. Suddenly Tech-Toad One pulls a gun and shoots Three in the face.” She took a dramatic pause, giving Khaleb a chance to catch the punchline. “Two is in shock, screaming ‘Why'd you do that?’, to which One replies ‘He knew too much!’”

“Stop!” Khaleb roared “You're killing me!”

Cinnamon wheezed. Her view veered to her right, glancing at the people passing the open brandy tap. “Shit, Observer!” she hissed between her teeth. Both straightened immediately and fastened their palms firmly across their mouths to keep themselves from cracking up further. With billowing cheeks, holding their breath, they watched as the Chronicler made his way through the passing crowd, slowly disappearing in the stream of people on the Forecourt.

Cinnamon exhaled, “Damn close...” she said, and let out a final chuckle.

Khaleb's shoulders dropped in relaxation. “You gotta stop making me laugh like that, or I'll die!” he snorted.

Cinnamon answered with a shrug of her shoulders, and waved at the barman. “Alpert, make us two more brandys! But give us the good Brennen stuff, alright? Got any cumin? Some five-year old at least?”

The man at the stall nodded with a smirk, grabbed a large ceramic bottle from underneath the counter, poured two shot glasses, and passed them over to Cinnamon. She handed Khaleb his drink and they toasted before swallowing the golden-brown liquid in one gulp.

“Ugh, it's good... but it burns like molten steel!” he gasped with an open mouth, trying to cool off his throat by sucking in fresh air.

“Sure, but it's miles better than the Anabaptist piss they serve you everywhere else!” she mumbled, wiping her mouth with her sleeve. “Isn't it funny? We eat food brought in by the Providers, and live in houses erected by the Stukov. We drink the liquor of the Brenni, and your people, the Steel Masters, produce the arms that keep us all safe. We're like a big family, made up of dust, spirit, soil, and cloud.” Khaleb acknowledged her line of thought with a blink of his eyelids, fighting a burp that was stuck midway in his chest. Cinnamon slapped him on the back to release him from the pressure. “But, what do the Judges and Chroniclers produce?”

Khaleb was caught off guard, rummaging through his head to come up with a witty reply. He had none. Cinnamon's question lingered in his mind. She always asked things nobody else dared to talk about.

“Even the dirty Scrappers are more useful than the Up-towners. You’re lucky Khaleb, you get to see it all with your own eyes from down here. Most of your people never will, right?” she summarized, as her eyes travelled up to the Crown of the Steel Monolith.

“If I can convince Decker, one of these days you could board the rail with him. I’d love for you to see how beautiful everything is from up there” he said, trying to impress her with his offer.

“You know I’d love to, if only to speak to your chieftains. They have to understand that their argument is leading nowhere. They should oppose the demands of Judgement Hall together, instead of letting their quarrel get the best of them.”

“That’s what I’ve been telling you. Both of them are thick as bricks. But if you talked to them I’m sure they’d melt.”

Cinnamon brushed over Khaleb’s clumsy compliment with a soft sigh, and placed her hand on his. The Steel Master felt a rush of goosebumps crawling down his spine, and the hair on his neck tingled. All of a sudden he was so desperately in love that the entire Forecourt blurred into a featureless smear. His perception was solely focused on her.

Cinnamon lowered her voice. “You know, sometimes I wish something would happen,” she whispered, barely audible. Khaleb pricked his ears to listen in closely. “Like things would just go BOOM, BOOM, BOOM.”

He agreed. He was too lovestruck to even grasp what

she had just said, just staring at her before he was snapped back to reality by the loud buzz of the Cluster’s loudspeaker systems announcing curfew. “I have to catch the elevator platform,” he muttered, in a desperate attempt to rearrange his senses.

“I know. Same time next week?” Cinnamon asked. Khaleb confirmed with bright eyes, shouldering his heavy backpack. “I’ll take you to the Old Fortress. I found a great shop there that sells bird statues carved out of quartz. You absolutely have to buy one for your sister.”

“Oh, she’d love that!” Khaleb stammered, trying to piece together which part of the city Cinnamon was referring to. He stuffed his hands into his pockets, searching for the Drafts to pay their tab.

Cinnamon shook her head. “I got you covered, Khaleb, don’t worry.”

“Next week is on me! Promise!” He cringed, and turned on the spot to catch his lift.

“Wait!” Cinnamon yelled after him. “I have a last one for you.”

Khaleb turned toward her, eyebrows raised. In that moment, he felt like he could just run away with her, right there, right then. Cinnamon smiled from ear to ear. “Two convicts meet on the road to Sinder. The first one asks ‘What’s your sentence, brother?’. The other guy points north toward the Ice Barrier and says ‘Justice.’”

DUST, SPIRIT, SOIL & CLOUD

