

The Last City

Inspired by: goblin_serf pictures (specifically these three:

https://twitter.com/goblin_serf/status/1596565767188729856

https://twitter.com/goblin_serf/status/1563213487500713984

https://twitter.com/goblin_serf/status/1546210196032143360), PMD, Loop Hero, continued adventures with Skai

Mood music: [Widek - Outside The Universe](#)

You Are Here

You are very lost. Whether you collapsed a dimensional breach, suffered a near death experience or dreamed so hard you never found your way back, you find yourself in a strange new place, operating by new rules, in an unfamiliar body.

Folks call it The Last City, because there's nothing else clinging to its existence as strongly. Judging by the fact that you're in a pokemon body now, and so is everyone else, the collective guess is that this is the last remnant of a Pokemon Mystery Dungeon world that suffered some catastrophe of nonexistence far in the past. No one has records or memories going back that far, because everyone you meet is from someplace else, just like you.

Like a transdimensional dumping ground, things that get lost seem to end up here. Through the buildup of discarded technology and modern civilization, a recurring event that seems to extend the city's boundaries, a surprisingly nice recycled lifestyle has been made for the pokemon who call this place their home and live new lives here. A sprawling city kept running by the tireless work and diligence of those who work for it - with apartments, construction yards, public transit, corporations, nightlife, endless catacombs underground, repurposed and reused, taking on new life just like you.

Your memories...? You still remember where you come from. If you had a distinctive skillset, vivid understanding of a magical system, supernatural talent, then instead of starting from scratch as a brand new Pokemon with only your new body's abilities, you can cling onto them and make your own mark on this place.

But, it's unclear how you could ever find your way back home. In fact, it's actively discouraged. One of the taboos. Come, stay - enjoy your new life here. It's not so bad! But perhaps it's learned helplessness? All efforts have proven futile - all that time and effort spent chasing a lost cause could be better spent settling into your new home.

The Void

It is inaccurate to describe everything outside of city limits as nothing. It's more than that. Reality has been erased so thoroughly from the remaining infinity of existence that it rushes in to any sign of volition and vitality that touches it. It weaves itself into a mockery of the Pokemon's life and dreams and thoughts, like an intrusive fever dream that turns all your aspirations and desires into unending loops, impossibility spaces, unreachable truths. You'll finally be alone at nothingness when your awareness is consumed and you stop thinking.

At least, that's the experience of Pokemon with no experience voidwalking. It's one of the reasons why MIRAI CORP offers as one of its many services the equivalent of a lifeguard watch system to ensure those who pass out in the Void are retrieved. The other reason being that even those experienced can dream too big and endanger themselves.

All those who build aspirations of more than just lingering in the city will eventually want to master voidwalking, though, for it is the only source of new things besides the hope that they will fall out of the sky one day. It's strongly recommended that you voidwalk with an experienced partners, for two minds can learn to build a coherent narrative together, and a veteran can support a newbie.

To successfully voidwalk is to hold a place stably, like a visualized thought, but outside of your mind, in a vaster one stretching into the infinite cosmos, unendingly curious about your desires and wanting to subvert and toy with them. Through doing this, Pokemon can imagine places they're familiar with - worlds they've long since departed from, scenes from recurring dreams, strongly held beliefs about hypothetical locations. And, with enough practice, imagine even places they're not, constructing them from first principles.

And to voidwalk is never without dangers, as the dreaming mind of the Void far beyond takes after the PMD world that must have preceded it. To aspire to brave nonexistent places is to come face to face with the dangers that could oppose you in it. To come face to face with all that could come wrong, with an equal and opposite force that challenges you.

And then, why even do it? Because through weaving this narrative, engaging in this challenge, you pour a bit of yourself out into the world beyond. And the things that are unreal, that would dissolve like cotton candy when re-introduced to the waters of reality, can now hold their form and remain permanent a little longer, because so much meaning has been imported into them through your determination.

And with a LOT of persistence, the permanence can be built more and more. Making bubbles of otherworld out in the void that you can access by remembering them. Real resources, that can be used to improve life in the City. Perhaps the only sources of magical and supernatural phenomena that you need to practice your craft, if you haven't just given in to convenience and

learned to point and shoot a gun. Perhaps a valuable resource to others like you, that only you know how to make.

Perhaps you'll do it just to make a piece of existence that you can come to and feel sane in again.

(Additional notes: Real things lost in the Void can be retrieved if you 'know how to find them again', so it's hard to lose matter for good, but possible to make it quite inconvenient to retrieve. Folks who have similar supernatural pasts band together in Guilds when possible, and help each other with reifying magical resources they need.)

Heroism and Progress

The Last City is a place of swords and sorcery and adventure and conflict, because the rules here are not as you remember them.

When you first come to the City, your capabilities have been 'reset'. You are as though a level 1 adventurer. You still *remember* all of your skills and talents from the before times, all that is unique about you, but it's like your ability to influence the world has been limited. Asserting spellcraft upon reality is like swimming in mud. Martial combat against a veteran feels sluggish, like time and luck are on your opponents' side. Making things with your paws is slow and tough, and reifying things through voidwalking is the toughest of all.

But it comes with a unique tradeoff - the world can do little to influence you, either. Lose a fight horribly, and the worst you'll suffer is some bedrest at the hospital. Get kidnapped and imprisoned, and as you dream that night you'll be able to slip free like a ghost and regain your freedom.

But, as you grow stronger, more capable of creating things, better at influencing the void, these benefits begin to relax. No longer will the void merely lead you in circles, but actively throw adversaries against you. You still aren't at danger from dying - the City's population is remarkably static - but as fights become more climactic, the stakes become higher, too. Resting off injuries takes longer, and scars start to become a possibility.

And through it all, it seems reality is offering off of a rule of narrative significance. Getting into a meaningless scuffle against pokemon you don't know continues to not have much lasting significance. But as pokemon form rivalries with each other, as their goals oppose each other, as their aspirations become grander and more overarching, the ability for pokemon involved in such dramatic relationships gain heightened power to influence, hurt, stop and perhaps even kill each other if it reaches the height of a character arc.

And above it all, the city is going to decay without an overarching effort to stop it from doing so. The dreams of Pokemon in it leak out into the Void even when they're asleep in the city, and those dreams spawn creatures of the Void who'll incurse into the city and try to take things back

with them. (In essence; random monster encounters, like waking nightmares, influenced by the collective culture of all present, and thus can come in any familiar form.) That the city has public services and livable urban design at all rather than being a pile of junk is the efforts of those who plan and construct, most notably MIRAI CORP, which has formed a monopoly over many of the public services, as well as manufacturing military equipment, ostensibly to ensure everyone can defend the city, but presumably really so it has the last say in deciding things by force, with secretive mechanized superweapons (could they just be for void defense?).

This forms a kind of social fabric where casual fighting and skirmishing are common-place, because it's in everyone's best interests to grow stronger so they can build and defend the city together. A kind of economy springs up around not just providing city living amenities, not just ways to become a more capable adventurer or builder or innovator or dreamer, but excuses to fight and take things from one another to make them more significant and substantial. Gang wars and corporate espionage, excursions into the Void to go on adventures, sparring and brawling and tournaments - these are all the backbone of a levelling economy.

But yet at the same time, those who want to have REAL influence over the city, to have dreams not just of thriving in it but transforming it, will put themselves in real danger as they make enemies in their attempts to reshape reality. Be careful of what becoming too important can bring upon yourself - and think twice before deciding to use your newfound invulnerability to bully and pick on those weaker than you and take things that don't belong to you, because you may make an enemy too powerful one day, and will it all have been worth it then?

But when it comes down to it - while becoming powerful is your duty for maintaining The Last City, at the end of the day, the average Pokemon just wants good food, drink, a place to sleep, friends to socialize with - and getting the best indulgence comes at a premium. There are no real farms or bodies of water in The Last City. Well, no REAL ones. At the same time, you won't ever die of starvation or thirst, because it's not Heroic, you'll just feel a longing that wants to be filled. The best food and drink is the most real, the most well thought out - and it can only truly come from experienced Voidwalkers cultivating unreal places where it can be produced. Lesser meals feel more dreamlike, like the faint idea of sustenance, and will have to keep you going when you can't afford more. In a place where the ability to reshape reality seems like the most paramount skill to strive after, a staggering amount of the economy remains focused on luxuries you arguably don't need after all. Cling to your sanity, because without it you may REALLY be lost.

Enjoy your Stay