

## Top of the World

An incursion for Trophy Gold

### Introduction

Some grand adventures take place in humble villages. Some in the lightless depths of cyclopean caverns deep beneath the Earth. Still others on the sun-baked beaches of distant atolls. This adventure, however, commences in a locale at once more mundane and more wondrous than any of those places: it takes place just over our heads, on the sprawling rooftops of the Capital! You may have heard the saying that a clever squirrel can cross from the Western Wall to the Eastern Palace gate without its toes ever touching the ground? Well, whatever a squirrel can manage, surely such hearty and nimble souls such as those who'd risk their necks to aid the Princess despite her omnipotent Father's vigorous protestations could manage no less?

And so it is that we find our heroes, having hastily exited the Royal Apartments through a fifth-story window. Will they find their way across the City without touching the ground and calling the attention of the Royal Bloodhounds that even now scour the city for their scent? Will they avoid the watchful eyes of the criers roaming the downtown alleys seeking the bounty on their heads? Will they skirt the sinister element that might take unkindly to their haunts being used as a highway? It will require all their cunning and skill to find a path to the Western Wall and egress from the City, but this is hardly the first conundrum they have faced! Perhaps along the way they shall even find such geegaws and knick knacks atop the gables and sloping eaves as to make the journey a profitable one!

----

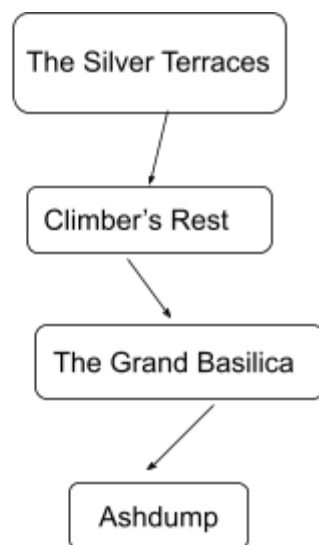
*Top of the World* finds our Treasure Hunters on the rooftops of the Capital, a sprawling metropolis of wondrous architecture with guards and wards both well-maintained and long-forgotten. The Sets represent the different neighborhoods they must traverse to escape the City, with opportunities to gather treasure along the way as well as the chance to learn secrets of the City that can only be discovered from their unique perspective.

The Theme of this incursion is *Rooftops*.

The entire incursion takes place atop the residential, municipal, and monumental buildings of a large fantastic city, and should invoke the baroque and outlandish architecture of a New Crobuzon or an Ankh-Morpork. The characters will face pursuit, enemies in the form of both residents of the City and monsters guarding locations they enter, and of course the ever-present danger of falling to their deaths on the hard cobblestones many feet below. GMs should seek to reinforce the theme by reminding players of the constraints of the tight, crowded streets below compared to the open air and myriad of possibilities above. Characters who have only seen the City from the streets below should be given ample opportunity to describe how the new perspective changes their ideas about the City and its inhabitants, and encounters with inhabitants for whom this rooftop world *is the City* should underline its paradoxical status as an environment that's actually not all that terribly hard to *reach* but difficult and dangerous to *master*. It's always here, but mostly unseen, untraversed, and home to myriad wonders, but only tourists, dreamers, and the occasional artist ever looks *up* to notice them.

Each Set will encompass the rooftops of an area of a few City blocks, and indicate the neighborhood below. The overall goal of the Incursion is to escape from the City (hopefully with Treasure) while avoiding the guards, bloodhounds, and citizens motivated by bounties to apprehend them, and the most expedient way to do that is via the Rooftops. There are two places where a choice of which way to go confronts the players. If they successfully Solve the Set, it opens a way forward to them, but they can always loop back and try another way if they are stuck, but the GM should always remind them that time is of the essence, and that the longer they tarry, the more likely it is they'll be discovered and apprehended. Of course, the Incursion is meant to see them escape the City, but it's up to you if you choose to remain opaque about that fact, or share it with the players while emphasizing that their *characters* have no way of knowing this important detail about their ultimate fate.

SET DIAGRAM:



The momentum of the Incursion should always carry the characters forward, towards their escape from the City. Once they have left a 'Set, they can't return to it later. Make sure they understand this so they can complete any and all exploration they may want to indulge.

---

**Set Name:** The Silver Terraces

**Set Goal:** Lose the Royal Guards pursuing the characters from the Palace.

**Overview:** The neighborhood called The Silver Terraces by its residents is called 'Nob Hill' by anyone who doesn't live there. Comprised of lavish townhouses and urban mansions taking up entire blocks, lavish displays of wealth and vanity can be seen on every corner and in every architectural flourish. Even the *roofs* of these houses are ostentatious; what more lavish display of wealth than gilding a cornice that no one but the birds will ever see? Wide expanses of immaculately finished shingles, elaborate rooftop greenhouses, terraces where lavish, exclusive parties can be held high above the clamoring passersby below.

**Moments:**

- The intricate playing of a chamber orchestra in some ballroom below provides a counterpoint to the desperate flight.

- The late afternoon light dazzles as you flee straight into the sunset; it makes it hard to see your way, but will make it equally hard for any pursuers to see you
- The varied and heady aromas of a multi-course gourmet feast waft from the triplicate chimneys of a richly-curtained townhouse, making your mouths water
- This roof's shingles are *slate*, imported from the river provinces at great expense, shockingly solid underfoot, like running on a stone floor, and treacherously slippery even when bone-dry

#### Props:

- **The Falcon Roost of Sir Peregrine.** Though a middling hunter, Sir Peregrine is a consummate blackmailer and embezzler, and has built a literal gilded cage for his prize hunting falcon Arrowhead. The coop is a metal cage some 5'x5'x20' resting atop a wooden structure with sufficient room for a tree limb the falcon can move around on. The falcon is attached to the limb by a tether.
- **Madame Heathertops' Academy for the Betterment of Young Ladies** This is a 'private school' where girls from broken homes are turned into *young ladies* capable of properly serving the families of Nob Hill. It is in a sprawling old mansion of many gables, turrets, and odd little terraces. Unlike any other structure found in The Silver Terraces, it features *clotheslines*, carefully strung up to be invisible from below or to any neighbors, but sagging now with the garments the girls wash themselves.
- **A rooftop crane.** This is a heavy, intricate device that can be operated to pick up loads (Bricks, plaster, planks) from the street below to deliver them to the half-renovated roof upon which it rests, or perhaps repurposed to *drop* those same heavy loads upon the person or place of the operator's choosing.

#### Traps:

- *Royal Guards* from the Castle they just escaped pursue the characters, and will pursue the characters until they lose them (See *Special Rules*, below)

#### Treasures:

- Arrowhead the Falcon can be tamed by a character with an appropriate Skill, Item or Ritual and a Risk Roll. If successful, treat it as a piece of Found Equipment that can *also* function as Found Combat Equipment. A discerning Hunter will pay 2 Gold for the bird if it survives the Incursion in a character's possession, or it can be kept by adding 1 Burden, after which it may function as either Backpack or Combat Equipment as dictated by the situation.
- A richly-embroidered silk robe hangs on one of the clotheslines at **Madame Heathertop's** among the muslin smocks.
- A platinum engagement ring set with a stunning diamond, resting on the edge of a roof as if thrown there from below. Worth 3 Gold.

#### Additional Traps: None

**Additional Treasures:** A silver wine goblet, left carelessly on the ledge of a penthouse terrace, still half-full.

#### Monsters:

##### *Royal Guards*

What they lack in subtlety or cunning they make up for in stubbornness and depravity. Their colorful woolen coats and brass buttons make them easy to spot, but their crossbows and truncheons make them hard to avoid. Recruited from the ranks of orphan boys too belligerent to be butlers.

Endurance: 8

Habits:

1. Cursing as they hastily reload a crossbow
2. Chuckling as they aim a well-placed truncheon blow at an exposed collarbone
3. Snarling as their shiny shoes slip on a slope
4. Grunting as they haul themselves bodily up by a single beefy hand
5. Whistling as they point at quarry they just spotted
6. Huffing as they pound across open ground

Defenses: Squad Goals - Any attempt to defeat them by means of a standard Combat Roll must somehow affect all of them at once to count against their Endurance.

Weakness: Splitting them up reduces their effectiveness.

### **Special Rules:**

#### **The Pursuit Roll**

During this incursion, the players can attempt at any time to flee a Monster (unless otherwise noted), losing it among the gables and turrets of the neighborhood instead of directly confronting it. The Pursuit Roll functions as a Combat Roll: players describe how they put their characters at risk of injury in their breakneck flight across the rooftops (note that this is an excellent time to elicit descriptions of swashbuckling feats of Parkour from players inclined to that sort of thing). Players should discuss this option openly; they must all flee together to exercise this Special Rule.

Build the Combat Roll as normal, but when the players succeed in overcoming the Monster's Endurance, they have lost it for good; it will not find them again in this Incursion.

If a character drops from the Pursuit as from a Combat, they must describe how they leave the others behind to be caught, either by bolting to a hiding place or simply pulling ahead rather than staying with the group.

---

**Set name:** Climber's Rest

**Set Goal:** Identify a Route to the Basilica

**Overview:** Climber's Rest is the nickname given to the tall but narrow row houses and cramped but tidy shops of this prosperous neighborhood of ambitious merchants, tradespersons, and minor government officials. The buildings are nondescript but well-cared-for, neither baroque nor decrepit. A broad plaza separates the roofs of this enclave of strivers from the towering flying buttresses of the Basilica.

#### **Moments:**

- The sound of a family singing hymns to the Sisters reaches into the heights
- The solid brick chimneys carry the aroma of stews and roasts skyward
- The packed-in peaked roofs form a receding tableau of peaks and valleys like looking at frozen waves
- A carelessly-placed hand pulls back a small splinter from a roofing shingle, easily removed.

#### **Props:**

- **Scaffolding.** A solidly-built framework of wooden slats and sturdy poles covers the facade of one of the row houses, extending to the very top of the roof. Entrance from the street below is via ladder, not present right now.
- **A pigeon coop.** A simple but sturdy birdhouse holding a flight of homing pigeons. There is a door to access the attic of the house it resides upon, and a sealed barrel containing pigeon feed.

- **A tradesman's ladder.** A well-made wooden ladder, currently extended some ten of its full thirty feet, bridging a modest gap between the eaves of adjacent roofs.
- **Small Shrine** A modest altar and competently-painted effigy of Sister Faustyna, Patron Saint of Couriers, nestled under an awning on a cramped attic terrace.

#### Traps:

- *A Cat Burglar* is roaming the rooftops looking for easy marks, and will demand a toll (worth 2 Gold) of the characters to let them pass unmolested. If they pay, he slinks into the night and is not seen again.

#### Treasures:

- The effigy in the shrine is hollow and contains a valuable diplomatic letter, unread, with the King's seal upon it. It can be recovered either by smashing the statue or removing the cork in the bottom and carefully extracting it. An interested diplomat or spy will pay 1 Gold if the Seal remains upon it. If a Character reads it instead, it contains a report on the maintenance of the Stone Guardian atop the Basilica. The characters may add the Stone Guardian to their bestiary, name it, and record its weakness, but the document will no longer fetch a high enough price to count as Treasure.
- The cat burglar has hidden his stash in a lockbox atop the scaffolding. It contains 2 Treasure worth of jewelry and trinkets, an extra length of rope, a spare grappling hook, a small backup pry bar, and 3 chunks of meat laced with a powerful narcotic (for use on watchdogs).

#### Additional Traps:

- Someone has burned their food, and the sudden foul odor and thick black smoke belching from one of the chimneys causes you to blink and cough.

#### Additional Treasures: None

#### Monsters:

##### *Cat Burglar*

This lean and tightly-wound fellow prowls the neighborhood looking for easy pickings. In snug black leather with his face obscured by a simple mask, he moves easily across the peaks and valleys of the row house rooftops.

Endurance: 7

#### Habits:

1. Sliding noiselessly down the slope of a rooftop
2. Squinting as he calculates the distance to hook a grapple on the first try.
3. Three quick thrusts of a slim steel blade to the guts of an attacker
4. Hanging upside down from the eaves of a roof, observing the room below.
5. Carefully picking the lock of an attic terrace door
6. Sitting atop an unused chimney, sipping from a purloined wine bottle, savoring a stolen hunk of cheese.

Defenses: The Cat Burglar must be directly engaged with hand weapons to hurt, he easily dodges anything thrown or shot

Weakness: Disrupting his footing in any way: caltrops, grease, etc

**Special Rules:** When defeated with a Combat Roll, instead of selling his parts, the characters may immediately roll to determine how much Gold worth of purloined goods he was carrying, as if they had harvested him. Characters *may opt to allow him to live* after defeating him if they wish, they may still collect his treasure, and he will not accost them further this Incursion.

Characters may use a **Pursuit Roll** instead of the usual **Combat Roll** if they wish to lose him among the rooftops instead of fighting him.

---

**Set Name:** The Grand Basilica

**Set Goal:** Defeat the Stone Guardian

**Overview:** The Grand Basilica is a sprawling, baroque cathedral with dozens of branches and literally miles of complicated flying buttresses, arches, elaborate crenelations, and depictions of the various Sisters in reliefs and statuary. It's as large as an entire neighborhood, and deceptively easy to get lost in.

**Moments:**

- The constant drone of chanting from the many chapels below, more felt reverberating through the stone than actually *heard*
- A skeleton wearing nun's robes, its bones picked clean by ravens, lying shattered at the bottom of a 60-foot drop from the narrow walkway above
- Graffiti, painted in blood across the visage of Sister Agasga, Patron Saint of the Stillborn, calling her to bless a cousin with her gift.
- The acrid odor of old, burnt incense, permeating every surface even up here in the open air.
- A massive conspiracy of ravens, hundreds of them lining a section of roof they seem to have decided is their home. They do not appear perturbed in any way by your presence

**Props:**

- A vast flat roof with gutters for rainwater where the statues no longer in use in the Basilica proper are stored for future redeployment, renovation, or simply storage. There are dozens of them of various sizes and shapes, each depicting a different Sister.

*Question for the players: You see an icon of your own Patron Saint here among the statues. How has it been marred, defaced, or otherwise damaged so that it needs to be repaired? Does the damage appear deliberate, or from handling or the passage of time?*

- A complicated network of crossing staircases, walkways, ladders, and arches that form a sort of tiered maze that make navigation difficult and time-consuming
- Sconces in the shape of leering imps holding Ritually-glowing crystalline balls of dull blue light that illuminates the twilight. They cannot be removed without defacing the sconce and destroying the lights.
- A stonemason's workstation, laid out under a sturdy canvas tarpaulin. It has all the tools required to work on both the statues and the stone of the structure including block and tackle and a sturdy flatbed cart for moving heavy loads.
- A rooftop chapel, open on the sides to the elements, with 8 short stone pews and a simple altar atop a 3-step dais. The roof is pavilion-style, of wood beams and shingles

**Traps:**

- *The Stone Guardian* stands atop a pedestal in the center of the statue garden. It will grind to life as soon as any *player* says the name of the Saint (Sister Bargitta) depicted in its twisted visage. It will hunt the characters as long as it remains active.

- Various spikes and pointy bits stick out from the tops of fences, the corners of buttresses. It's all too easy to snag a bit of clothing or get stuck on one.

#### **Treasures:**

- The Stone Mason's work station has a sturdy two-handed sledgehammer (Found Combat Item) as well as a set of artisan stone-working tools (chisel, mallet, brushes, etc) worth 1 gold when sold, usable as a Found Backpack Item during the Incursion
- The nun's skeleton wears a reliquary in a silver chain around her neck (absorb the loss of 1 Ruins before the knucklebone inside turns to dust). The chain itself is worth 1 Gold.
- The base of the statue has a hollow space within that can be accessed by breaking it open (a sledgehammer or the stone mason's tools would do the trick). Resting within is the actual skull of Sister Bargitta, patron saint of Icon-Crafters. It is a spiritual relic of astonishing rarity and power. Selling it to a dealer in antiquities who can verify its authenticity will yield 4 Gold, but anyone who carries it gains the condition 'Vessel of Bargitta' while it is in their possession.

**Additional Traps:** If things go very badly, it is possible the characters may encounter another squad of *Royal Guards* searching the Basilica's upper reaches.

**Additional Treasures:** None

#### **Monsters:**

##### *The Stone Guardian*

15 feet from hem to tip of crown crown, this grey marble statue bears the likeness of the Patron Saint of Icon-Crafters, Sister Bargitta. Though made of stone, her garments ripple and her features flow as if they were fabric and flesh, with an unsettling grinding sound that rises and falls as she moves. Her voice is surprisingly light and gentle for such an imposing creature. She wears a crown of golden spikes that evoke the top of a decorative iron fence. Her eyes are empty, scarred and defaced as if they once held gemstones that were clumsily removed. She seems to slide along the rooftop, her motion making an unsettling scuffing sound and leaving tracks behind her.

Endurance: 10

Habits:

1. Gently scold the characters for skulking about where they aren't sufficiently faithful to be welcome
2. Grip a character's limb and slowly transmogrify the bones within to stone
3. Sweep a column-like limb to hurl an enemy aside.
4. Howl in rage and furiously attack an enemy who tampers with the pedestal
5. Flow like water into one statue and emerge a few seconds later from another
6. Knock over a statue to pin an enemy in place to deal with later

**Defenses:** Bladed weapons that normally slash or pierce will just score her surface but not otherwise harm her. Attacks must be able to reasonably shatter or break stone to be effective.

The Guardian's influence can transmogrify flesh and bone into stone. Any character who takes RUIN from its grasp gains the Condition: Ossified, as the bones inside their flesh slowly turn to stone with accompanying heaviness and decrease in range of motion. The Condition can be removed with an appropriate Ritual or treatment by a trained healer. In the event a character accumulates their 6th RUIN from the Stone Guardian's grasp, grant the the opportunity to describe in detail their final transformation into a statue indistinguishable from the others on the rooftop.

**Weakness:** Tools originally intended for working stone, including acid.

**Special Rules:** The Stone Guardian cannot be defeated with a PURSUIT Roll

---

**Set Name:** Ashdump

**Set Goal:** Reach the Western Wall and flee the City

**Overview:** Ashdump is the district where anything unwanted or discarded eventually ends up. A haze of acrid, choking smog hangs over it most of the time, and the prevailing weather means it is downwind from the rest of the City. Buildings are ramshackle, rickety, made of found materials, built too high and packed too tight. It's a port of last resort for City residents, crime- and disease-plagued and generally desperate.

**Moments:**

- A constant cacophony of cursing, wailing infants, disputations in foreign tongues, and general human babble carries through the thin tin roofs and rotting tenements throughout the District.
- The roof you step on bows precipitously before you remove your weight from it and find another route.
- The hubbub of a makeshift militia, hastily thrown together to try for the bounty on your heads, moves house-to-house rousting their neighbors and loudly accusing them of harboring you
- A heavy and constant but not always unpleasant stew of smells is ubiquitous everywhere up here: sweat, blood, simple foodstuffs, the occasional heady whiff of sex or sour odor of urine
- The pitch-dark sky, totally occluded by the haze of wood-smoke, ash, and swarms of insects, is illuminated now by candlelight leaking through gaps in the structures you walk over, torches from the mobs searching for you, and occasional glimpses of the full moon through the haze.
- A large, scarred tomcat with his harem, lounging in the heat given off by a tin stove chimney. He watches you with bored curiosity.

**Props:**

- An abandoned tenement block with boarded up windows and doors. PCs may enter this building and even explore it as low as ground level. It is an ideal place to rest and recuperate, or hide out from any pursuit that finds them on the rooftops.
- A rickety water tower, maybe  $\frac{1}{3}$  full with rainwater. It's quite large, and the legs are sturdy, but made of old wood. It sweats and has sprung a couple of slow leaks. It is covered by a tin roof that can be easily removed.
- A small stack of damp haybales, lugged up at great effort. They will be used for thatch or feed, and are being kept up here to dry and hopefully keep from being stolen
- A burnt-out church steeple, the half-melted lead bell wedged at an awkward angle inside.
- The Western Wall, implacable and solid, but easily reached from this height, assuming you can avoid the patrols.

**Traps:**

- A raging fire, started from a torch carelessly dropped by one of the mob searching for the characters. The buildings they traverse go up quickly, and soon an entire block is ablaze, attracting attention and making progress very dangerous.
- The gap between the edge of the District and the regularly-patrolled walkway of the Western Wall. The gulf is too wide to jump.

**Treasures:**

- In the hearth of the fireplace of the abandoned tenement the local toughs have hidden their stash: 2 Gold worth of various jewelry and coin from burglaries and muggings.



- The bell has an ancient engraving that would be of interest to scholars: a clean rubbing of it will fetch 1 Gold
- The tomcat wears a lace collar with an ivory charm on it; he is clearly an escapee from Nob Hill. His collar will fetch 1 Gold, the cat himself 4 Gold if safely carried along and reunited with his owner after the PCs escape the City.

**Additional Traps:** None

**Additional Treasures:** None

**Monsters:** None

**Special Rules:** None