

The Old Parishes

By Ben Wray

The **Arcadian Parish** is dominated by the Orb of Night and Day, a magical sphere which floats above the highest tower, rotating slowly with one half casting brilliant light and the other unnatural shadow over the surrounding districts, drowning out the natural sunlight with its own 25-hour cycle. While the orb is the major tourist attraction, the parish is also well-known for its many gardens and walled orchards, as well as an excess of laws: the Parish Council is well-meaning, but mildly obsessed with rules for rules' sake.

- A sentient and very mossy stone golem wants to hire somebody to find who has been stealing the apples from its orchard, and put a stop to it. It can pay you in either coin or the second-best applejack in the city.
- A newly passed law has an unintended side-effect of requiring every government official, down to the meekest of clerks, to have a full-time bodyguard, until they manage to process a patch for that loophole. Low-paying work in most cases, but a total cake-walk, as long as you're up to date on the latest rules and regulations regarding official employ by council functionaries.
- The god of thieves (a giant jellyfish) is willing to offer divine rewards unimaginable to anyone who steals the Orb of Night and Day. Mind you, it's bigger than you are, and its defenses are completely unknown to the general public... but you know that the god of thieves has to have some pretty nice swag.

The Fluting Barrio was once a nearly abandoned district full of grates, vents, and holes in the ground from which an maddening howling wind constantly issued. A few years ago, an enterprising musician-engineer rigged devices which channeled this gale through musical instruments, creating a much more harmonious, if still ubiquitous, effect. The parish is still in the process of being reoccupied, and many buildings are still officially abandoned, while unofficially home to Dis's castoffs, strays, and vagrants, all of varying degrees of sanity depending on how long they've stayed there before the installation.

- An air elemental assassin has gone to ground in the Fluting Barrio. The bounty on her head is high, but it'll entail quite a bit of putting up with mad squatters to find her. And then you've got an assassin made out of wind to deal with.
- The urchinfolk family have been living in this house for years. So it's not *really* wrong if they hire some freebooters to sneak into the Hall of Records and steal the deed for them, is it?
- A cult wants to replace the instruments with wind-turned prayer wheels to their obscure deity. The artists are against the idea, naturally. Both sides are getting heated, and openly making inquiries into hired muscle for "protection" if and when things escalate.

The Parish of Sunlit Steeples is set on an impressive hill, just a shadow of the mountain-plane it used to be, of course. Countless temples to various gods of light, justice, and virtue inhabit its cobbled stair-streets, currently inaccessible by wheel vehicles and the short of breath, although construction of a gradually sloped boulevard that spirals up the hill is underway.

- Construction of the boulevard has hit a snag when it unearthed a nest of half-angel maggot-squids. Best not to think on THAT one too deeply. Anyway, the parish council would like them cleared out one way or another.
- There's always a call for neutral mediators and judges on debates of an ethical or moral nature. Freebooters are even sometimes preferred for such things, given how often... *complicated* choices crop up in their work. There's not much (if any) pay in it, but one can gain a valuable ally by choosing the right "winner". Be prepared to draw from personal experience in justifying your choice, though.
- A fallen paladin is on a quest to earn redemption in the eyes of his deity, and his church would like some to see him succeed. He can't know you're assisting him, though. Pride issues and whatnot.

The Bottomless Parish is a seemingly bottomless pit the size of an entire city district. A demonspider-silk web is strung across the top, more than strong enough to support the hanging platforms and rope-bridges that make up the Parish's "surface". And the demonspiders themselves are perfectly cordial as long as you don't foolishly give them any opportunities to eat you or anything. The pit itself has countless ledges and balconies, with stairs and ladders and via ferrata connecting them, housing an endless variety of structures and inhabitants. A general tendency has been noted, however, that as one goes deeper both resident and residences become stranger and more dangerous, curtailing detailed explorations so far.

- An unlucky census-taker has been charged with collecting records of the pit "as far as possible". He's willing to dip into personal funds to pay for protection, and isn't really interested in any "treasure" you happen to "find" while escorting him as he performs his duties.
- A plague is killing off the demonspiders, and if there aren't enough of them to maintain the web, well... awkward. There's a fairly decent reward in it for anyone who discovers a cure for this disease, which has resisted ordinary magical treatments so far.
- A paladin has snapped, and is going on a massacre through the demonweb market, killing innocent demons left and right. Well... "innocent"... but anyway. The Parish Council will pay handsomely for someone who ISN'T evil to talk him down or subdue them. (They don't need the headache that would result if they had him killed.)

The Twin Parishes are technically two distinct parishes, but almost nobody outside of the residents could even tell you what their separate names were, let alone the differences between them. They ARE known to be fairly cozy and domestic, unmatched in the hospitality industry... especially if you're under 4 feet tall. Most of the gnomes and halflings of the city live here, and the predominance of scaled-down architecture has made it the residence of choice for almost ALL undersized sapients in Dis.

- A halfling vampire is being framed (he claims) for a series of murders by exsanguination around the Twin Parishes, and needs to hire some enterprising heroes to clear his name

before some zealous hunter puts a stake in his heart.

- Some weird flying fish-monsters with gravity-distorting powers has been preying on rooftop pipeweed farmers. A gnomish illusionist wants it captured alive, for the awesomest mount ever. Better double check your payment afterwards, though.
- A courier delivering something kind of important to one of the Twin Parishes never arrived, and was last seen two days ago in the wrong Twin Parish. Whoops. Find out what happened to him and retrieve (and deliver) the package to the RIGHT address. But for the love of the Sultana, whatever you do don't open it.

Darkpearl Parish was originally a prison-plane, and when it got eaten by Dis, a lot of nasty things got released into the city, and the surrounding districts, which haven't quite recovered. The tall, smooth, inward-curving walls still make a fine prison for ordinary folk who can't fly or that sort of nonsense, however, so anarchists, traitors, blasphemers, and anyone whose well-connected enemies tends to end up thrown there. In theory, the guards will let anyone with visitor papers leave. In practice, between pickpockets and documimics, it's a good idea to have an escape plan if you have to go in for some reason.

- A most straightforward of jobs: someone on the outside wants someone on the inside sprung. Pay varies by the notoriety and conspicuousness of the target: the biggest target right now is for a blind cyclops-mage.
- A titan who never left when the rest of that crew just walked over the walls has been causing trouble for the parish's Thieves' Guild. They've got a magical sword that will kill him if you stick it in the right chakras in the right order. You're good at climbing, right?
- Last night something blew a hole in one of the walls. They need freebooters to guard the breach until it's repaired. Be prepared for force, stealth, AND trickery in the prisoners trying to escape.

The Elysian Parish is almost sickeningly good. Its citizens are almost universally kind-hearted, compassionate, and generous. Almost.

- A retired blackguard hiding from her enemies in the last place they'd ever look has almost gone insane from "the twee-ness of it all." She's looking to hire some freebooters, discreetly through a few oblivious intermediaries, to stir shit up just so she can have an excuse to knock some heads.
- A weresnake struggling against his monstrous nature needs some people, who aren't his neighbors (he doesn't want to lose their respect by letting them know his 'condition') to watch over him during the new moon when he transforms, to stop him from escaping and killing innocent civilians.
- Longest Night is a yearly gift-giving celebration in the Elysian Parish. Thieves, scoundrels, and fiends are ALWAYS trying to ruin it by stealing, destroying, or befouling

the gift-wagon, so they usually hire some hard-as-nails freebooters (ideally with hearts of gold) to handle the gift distribution. How do you feel about being the Saints of Longest Night this year?

The Grey Parish is a bleak place that leeches the color from things within it, literally and metaphorically. After a few days, colors will be muted. After a few months, they will be entirely gone, as will the capacity of intelligent beings to for joy, hope, love, or other positive emotions. The Grey Parish isn't just known for extremely low-income housing, however. A number of disaffected artists and philosophers actually choose to live here, finding the ambience pleasing, and no few businesses cater to these nihilistic types.

A last note of interest is that the plane the Grey Parish came from used to be a great battlefield between the endless armies of the devils and demons. The battlefields themselves have been paved over and urbanized, but many ghosts remain, and no few necromancers are attracted to the area seeking to bind the ghosts of the mercenaries and conscripts that still linger.

- A glassblower's son has run away from home, and she fears he may have gone to the Grey Parish. Track him down before it's too late?
- A wizard wants a cursed painting destroyed, and thinks leaving it in the Grey Parish might do the trick. Your job is to guard it against thieves: any personal protection against the parish's draining effect is your business if you want it.
- A necromancer wants a rival's ghost-binding circle sabotaged. Mind the undead guardians. And all the ghosts you'll be unleashing, too.

Hunter's Parish came from a plane that many thought would never be consumed by Dis, because as a place of wilderness and nature it lacked any cities or ruins for Dis to grant a foothold. Ironically, it was people travelling there to escape Dis, banding together in small settlements for survival against the plane's wild predators, that gave Dis what it needed to invade. Hunter's Parish is now quite urbanized, but is still a wild district full of strays and overgrown buildings, home to many of the city's beastmen, intelligent animals, and druids.

- A fairly wealthy merchant wants to take his family out hunting, and has heard of wild boars, tigers, and other impressive game in the parish. Exciting, but dangerous enough to be worth hiring some protection for.
- A rogue moon priestess has been breeding wild chimerical monsters and unleashing them in the surrounding parishes for her own amusement. The parish council will pay good coin to anyone who can talk her down, or if that doesn't work, otherwise stop her. Mind the pets like her dire wolfgator, though.
- A hive of giant bees that developed communal intelligence broke a bargain it made with a strange alien god. Said god is looking for debt collectors willing to be paid with

blasphemous transformations, unnatural magics, or a respectable sum of meteoric ore. Just another job in Dis, really.

The District of Fourfold Furnaces started off unnaturally hot and smoggy, so most of the residents of Dis saw little reason not to move their smithys, foundries, and other industries to the place, where the pollution would make little difference. Faceclothes and goggles are ubiquitous, at least among those citizens who don't have demonic or fire-elemental-based ancestry.

- A blacksmith's forge has become infested with gremlins, and she'll pay in future services (weapons or armor repaired, etc) to anyone who can oust the little buggers.
- A local dragon-blooded family's hoard was stolen. They suspect the neighbors: there's the gaggle of smoke mephits, the tiefling "acting" school, or perhaps the undead wizard across the street?
- Goggles are all the rage! An enterprising wizard looking to capitalize on the new fashion trend sweeping Dis is trying out some magical designs to appeal to the occasionally ludicrously wealthy freebooter market. If you can take good notes, he'll let you try some untested experimental designs, and keep the prototypes as payment.

The Parish of Olympian Glades's gleaming white marble architecture hides countless dens of high-class vice, depravity, and sin. Almost any pleasure imaginable (and more than a few pains) can be found for sale to the discreet individual who knows the right people, and the parish's many festivals and holidays are known throughout the entire city. One location that is (mostly) an exception to this indulgent nature is Temple Hill, whose many shrines and churches to a forgotten (or possibly dead) pantheon have been appropriated by Dis's many diverse faiths.

- A dreamstone merchant with aspirations of expanding his business has discovered his newly-purchased property is haunted by a grove of dryad ghosts. Should have known something was amiss when he bought it at that price, really.
- An unknown party just stole most of a Black Lotus Extract dealer's stash. He's offering an almost indecent amount of money for the persons responsible, and his supplies, returned to him.
- A priest who claims to be the follower of one of the unknown gods who were originally worshipped on Temple Hill wants the temple "rightfully his" back. The hyena cult currently utilizing the premises just laughed at him. He doesn't have too much money but can offer magical healings and blessings to anyone who helps him teach them a little respect.

Hellgate Parish, once a hell-plane of legendary evil, is a valuable lesson in the nature of

corruption, although perhaps not the direction outsiders would expect. The glowing redhot walls of the iron city now power the engines and dynamos of the Artificers' Guild. The glaciers in which tormented sinners are chipped away, thawed, and sold as surprisingly clean drinking water to the rest of the city. And the devils themselves have found gainful employment as the parish's (and to a lesser extent entire city's) bureaucrats, functionaries, and other miscellaneous minor government positions where they can torture mortals endlessly with loopholes and legislative minutia.

- The Great Hall of Guilds, located in cosmopolitan Hellgate District, is one of the most secure buildings in Dis. Surely a job posting to rob the place has to either be a trap or the offer of a madman, right?
- Devils, growing tired of intolerable working conditions, have established a union and are going on strike. The parish council is *pretty* sure it can find some freebooters willing to apply some "pressure" to get their paper-pushers back to work.
- Devils, growing tired of intolerable working conditions, have established a union and are going on strike. Made soft by decades of paper-pushing, the fiends are looking for some hired muscle to protect themselves from the council's inevitable strike-breakers.

Jotunheim Parish was once a plane home to both the giants and the gods of which they were the ancient rivals of. The gods resisted Dis's consumption of the plane, whereas the giants took that opportunity to strike down their enemies, which is why this parish is now predominantly home to ogres, trolls, and other large races, and not axe-wielding vikings and epic-singing skalds. Architecture is sprawling, but space still limited, and most "normal"-sized races have wisely chosen not to live here underfoot in a place overcrowded with titans.

- The owner of a tavern called the Ship of Nails has a rat problem. They're too small for her to deal with, but some freebooters from other parishes should be able to fit right in those holes in the walls and exterminate the lot.
- The master weresnake's favored lieutenant wants to arrange the kidnapping of the ogre-magi chieftain's daughter, and deliver her to him unharmed. No questions asked. But he's serious about the "unharmed" bit.
- A clan of dwarves have discovered what they believe to be the remnants of their clan's ancestral hall in the "afterlife". They need to hire some freebooters to sneak in and get some relics to prove their claim of ownership to the Sultana. Don't deal permanent damage to the current inhabitants, but they're a pack of halfdragon trolls, so that shouldn't be TOO hard. (Don't worry, the mother doesn't live there.)

When Dis consumed a plane of massive metal cubes, it retaliated by launching one of them directly at the city, creating the **Hammerfall District**. The devastation was vast, but no less than a dozen mining companies have set up shop on the miles-wide cube, bringing valuable business to the parish, and more than a few enterprising settlers have made homes on the

sides and top of the cube. Reconstruction of the surrounding parishes remains an ongoing project, however.

- One of the mining companies wants a clutch of rust monster eggs. They don't have any leads on where to find some, however: that's half of what they're paying you to figure out.
- Somebody needs a message delivered to a bladeling living on the top of the cube. He'll supply some climbing equipment for you if you need it, but mind the rumors of geckofolk bandits that have been active on the sides recently.
- Goblins like to do periodic reenactments of the massive battles that once raged across these cubes in the original plane. In one of said battles, a band of "adventurers" played a fairly important role, and the goblins need some freebooters to play the part. Easy money, right? I mean, it's just play fighting. What could go wrong?

The Parish of Heart's Desire stemmed from a plane of everchanging chaos, a roiling elemental flux that shaped itself to the whims of anyone with a strong enough will to control it. Needless to say, real estate that could become anything your mind can imagine was a very hot commodity in Dis, claimed swiftly by the rich and powerful when the parish first arrived. The district is baroque in the extreme, mansions whose architecture defy physics (and in more than a few cases any sense of good taste), most minded by professional "artists" hired by the rich to concentrate on the estate so it doesn't dissolve back into chaos at a moment's notice.

- A wealthy interplanar merchant is tired of being offended by his neighbor's garish home. Get rid of the building's minder, by kidnapping, intimidation, murder, *whatever*. Mind that once you do so the entire place will collapse back into flux. (The patron might genuinely forget to mention that part.)
- The slaad, colorful but aggressive frogfolk, keep trying to "reclaim" the parish. Lately they've been especially vicious, and the parish council will pay very well for someone to find out what's causing this and solve the problem.
- A cartographer mapping parish boundaries discovered that the parish's effects are spreading: very slowly, but at a gradually accelerating rate. Who knows what might happen if it took over all of Dis? What might the living *plane-eating* city do if it becomes an insane titanic chaos-spawn? Surely he doesn't need to *pay* you to prevent such a- Hey! Where are you going?

The Cogwreck Parish was once a plane of perfect order, represented by a great system of gears perpetually rotating in perfect harmony. It turns out, sadly, that being eaten and digested isn't exactly conducive to the proper functioning of a mechanism: the gears are now broken, toppled, and motionless. Still large enough to build houses (and in a few cases, city blocks) on,

however.

The surface of the Parish is fairly typical of cosmopolitan Dis, but the gears piled haphazardly on top of gears have created an extensive undercity in which countless criminals, scoundrels, and lawbreakers hide: something that would appall the lawful and orderly original inhabitants of the plane if they were still around in numbers to do anything about it.

- There's still at least one Formian Hive doing well for itself, and a pair of halfling chefs are offering a reward to anyone who can bring them a handful of its royal honey.
- A very talented thief has gone rogue with about half of the Thieves' Guild's treasury. She knows all their tricks, and they're hoping the crude and unsubtle (no offense) tactics of some freebooters might surprise her if she's expecting a stealthy approach.
- A mad mechanomancer has a ritual he believes can restore the great gears to working order. He's got a long list of supplies needed and surprisingly deep pockets to pay freebooters to retrieve them for him. And it's not like there's any chance that this ritual might actually WORK, is there?

The Concordia Parish is, quite frankly, boring. It's people pride themselves on independence and self-sufficiency, making a freebooter unlikely to find any work there. It's really just a place you pass through to get from one of the Old Parishes to another, really. And the rumors of an evil godbrain lurking in the sewers planning on taking over the entire city almost certainly just that, rumors.

- Look, I just *said* there were no jobs available for freebooters here.
- I mean, seriously.
- And even if there WERE an evil godbrain, which there isn't, it's not like anybody is paying you to look into the matter, is there? Right, that's what I thought.