

MAIN DOCUMENT

8-BIT DYSTOPIA: DELUXE

A Grimdark Sci-Fi Vidya Role-Playing Game

Imagine, if you will, a City stretching into infinity. The night is dark and without end. Stark skyscrapers dominate the bleak skyline as chemical plants spew noxious sludge into the rivers. Dominated by criminal conglomerates, sinister syndicates, and crazed cults devoted to apocalyptic abominations beyond human comprehension. From the tops of buildings countless stories high, the heroes and villains gaze down at the ant-like masses below them.

This is the world of **8-Bit Dystopia**, a homebrew setting that started as a simple idea on /tg/ and snowballed into an impressive symphony of weird fluff. Alas, the setting faded into obscurity after interest died out and the homebrew crunch for playing the game was never finished.

8-Bit Dystopia: DELUXE is a homebrew aimed at compiling all of the original 8-Bit Dystopia's concepts and presenting them in a new format. The material from the threads and 1d4chan was revised to best fit into this remastered setting, though several changes were made to improve the whole. As an example, the Shredder and Foot Clan were replaced with ZEED from *Shinobi*.

In addition to new fluff, **DX** also comes with a homebrew system designed to be fast and violent: Three strikes and you lose your life.¹ Players and GMs can use it to create new characters or reimagine classic game characters in the grimdark world of 8-Bit Dystopia. This is the year 200X: It's a future without heroes, clean-cut morality, or the guarantee that anything you do is ever truly "right", but player characters are all that stands between the City and the darkness encroaching it. Whether there's still hope in the City is on them.

¹ This system isn't done yet. Nor is this book, for that matter. You can help by expanding it, or even just leaving ideas as comments on the doc.

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FLUFF STORY FOR SETTING UP 8BD GOES HERE

TIMELINE

From Then to Now

1972-1977: Warning Signs

- Across the world, rumors abound of strange, unidentified flying objects accompanied by sights of lights in the sky, crop patterns, and abductions. No government is forthcoming to confirm or deny the truth of their existence, but people are fearful all the same.
- SETI telescopes discover a distant exoplanet potentially capable of sustaining life. The name of this new world becomes "Hyria", after the mother of Cygnus in Greek mythology.
- With the aid of his assistant Albert Wily, Dr. Thomas Light creates a functional prototype of the positronic brain. With the unprecedented computational power his brains can generate, Light desires to create a world where no man will work himself to death again.

1978-1982: The Invader Wars

- Without warning, a fleet of alien spacecraft enter Earth's atmosphere and attack several population centers worldwide. Countless die in the opening salvo of the Invader Wars.
- An emergency United Nations meeting brings the world together to fight back against the Space Invaders. For the first and last time, mankind unites against a common enemy. Funding is poured into reverse-engineering Invader tech to utilize against the menace. Weapon platforms the size of city blocks are constructed to shoot the Invaders out of the sky.
- The study of crashed Invader ships results in the invention of the *Galaxip* starfighter and the frame shift drive, opening mankind to exploring the stars. Or fleeing to them.

1983-1984: The Crash

- In spite of Earth's efforts, the Invaders possess insurmountable numbers and manpower. Steadily losing ground, and with no victory in sight, many look towards the future in despair. Shortages run rampant, and governments unravel under the pressure.
- Humanity bands together in a last-ditch effort to leave the Earth behind grav-lifting everything they can into enormous colony fleets holding as many survivors as they could.
- As the planetside forces stay behind to distract the Invaders, the fleet sets off for the last beacon of hope for humanity. For reasons unknown, the Invaders do not follow.
- Groundbreaking advances in genetic engineering allows lab animals to be painstakingly uplifted to human ability, to serve as early settlers for Hyria and an emergency corps of soldiers in these desperate times. A warp drive glitch causes the first missions of "uplifts" to be lost in transit, leaving early colonizing efforts to the remaining test subjects and human criminals who want a fresh start ahead of the fleets.

- With a loud, resounding **Crash**, the planet Earth is destroyed forever. The destruction is so violent, shockwaves of the Crash reach the *Arkanoid*-class colony ships on solar winds.

1985-1990: Constructing the City of Light

- The long voyage through space is not a peaceful one. The colony fleet is frequently hounded by crustaceous "Space Pirates", who sadistically raid straggling ships for plunder and slaves. *Arkanoid* ships lured away from the fleet to the idyllic world of K-2L are decimated, with the survivors claiming the aliens were led by a monstrous dragon.
- Wily and Light provide for the colony fleets through the Wily-Light Corporation. Complex androids with positronic brains (later known as bioroids) supplement early labor shortages as Wily gains influence in the company and Light spends his free time in the lab.
- The colony ships arrive at a windswept and desolate world, much less amicable to human life than anticipated. Refugees drop down hab blocks, landmarks, factories, and agricultural centers wherever they can. This chaotic, urban hodge-podge would later be known as the City of Light, named after the humble man who helped make it possible.
- Dr. Light develops new tools for terraforming: Multiple Use Labor Element (M.U.L.E.) walkers to harvest resources, and the L-series Manufacturing robots to build with them. In the rush to counter overpopulation, squat "Lemming" robots are produced en-masse and automated to construct as much as they can. However, when left to their own devices, a lack of oversight causes these Lemmings to construct thoughtless urban sprawl.

1991-1999: Rise of the Megacorporations

- Once the City is established, Albert Wily turns his mining, construction, and bioroid facilities into WilyCorp. Light is distraught, but Wily convinces his old friend to act as WilyCorp's moral compass while it becomes increasingly authoritarian behind his back. An explosion destroys Dr. Light's lab and his research, taking the hero of the City with it.
- In time, new businesses rise to challenge WilyCorp. RoboDyne is their primary rival, an industrial giant that makes up for its lack of bioroids or positronic brains with cheaper "badniks" and other services. MetPharm arrives next, a medical think tank that provides doctors, medicine, and gene augmentation to anyone that can afford them. Smaller groups like ZEED prosper in niches that the Big Three are unable or unwilling to fill themselves.
- Not all of the early settlers to the planet would rejoin with the City. Refusing to bend the knee to corporate rule, these independent polities regressed to feudal tribes as threats in the Outlands prey upon them. A few unfortunates are drawn into the labyrinthine pipes beneath the City, lured by honeyed words or visions from beyond the waking world. The Pipesworks are host to mutants and mysteries that predate the City itself.

- The uplifts who were thought “lost” in space make contact with the City. The hyperspace glitch dropped them into a star system they named Lylat, but internal strife led to it being devastated in the Lylat Wars. Refugees are begrudgingly accepted in the City due to their spacefaring skills, though they suffer tense relations with the human majority.

200X-20XX: The City, Now

- Megacorporations become increasingly aggressive, staging hostile takeovers of neighboring zones through proxy groups. Merc squads, subsidiaries, and freelance gangs are paid to seize control of contested zones so that their backing corp can roll in. Disenfranchised veterans of these conflicts band together and establish a new state called Outer Heaven.
- WilyCorp reveals its first line of Robot Masters, unique bioroids with state-of-the-art weapon systems and complex positronic brains that act as Wily's personal enforcers. Bioroids with older or defective brains become erratic and unstable, developing fatal errors that make them dangerous. To control the issue, WilyCorp dispenses Maverick Hunters to disable rogue bioroids that cannot or will not fulfill their intended function.
- A series of RoboDyne facilities are destroyed by an unidentified terrorist. The flashes and sonic booms rumored to herald his appearance have led to the moniker of “Sonic”. Dr. Ivo Robotnik, CEO of RoboDyne, takes a personal interest in the apprehension of Sonic and scrambles SWATbots to find him. In spite of this, Sonic achieves an underground following.
- Emboldened by R&D breakthroughs made behind closed doors, MetPharm becomes increasingly liberal with the use of exotic retroviral chains in their products. The company's anonymous director, MB, has their brain trust establish a research outpost on the City's moon of Zebes. Their harshest critics accuse Metpharm of dealing with aliens or being aliens themselves, a ridiculous attack the company refuses to acknowledge.
- The natives of the Pipeworks become organized. Men and animals that have been mutated by toxic runoff unite under the banner of a reptilian king. Freaks and outcasts who were run out of the City find asylum with a ragged, hammer-wielding cyborg and his vagrant caravan. Strange cults make the ancient ruins and temples of the Pipeworks their home, rising with the moon to abduct people from the surface and sacrifice them in profane rituals.
- Savage wars are waged between techno-barbarian states in the Outlands. Petty tyrants trade raw materials with the City for any edge against their rivals. The most fertile land is said to have been seized by mutant apes that threw off the shackles of their masters. Ungodly monsters plague the swamps and fields. From atop the tallest mountain, a gothic castle and its dark master spread terror over the countryside.
- For the settlers of Gradius and Darius, the alien attacks remain a constant threat. The Bydo Empire is endemic to the Perseus Arm. Remnants of Venom's armada who refused to surrender have occupied the Lylat System, waiting for their Emperor Andross to return.
- The largest turning point is the rumor that Thomas Light is alive. Pirate frequencies broadcast that hope isn't dead, and that there are heroes left in man, but no one is

willing to step forward and bring light back to the darkened City. Dr. Wily tries to block these transmissions, calling them a disgrace to the man that built this City.

- From his secluded bunker, Dr. Light builds his last chance to make things right.

"Frak, frak, frak!"

A staccato of light footsteps and swears filled the dilapidated streets of Aires. Two feet, then four, as the runner became increasingly desperate to escape pursuit. It's not like he could trust the cops to have his back; he was a talking bobcat. A bobcat that owed someone in Hill Top a lot of money. Money that he couldn't pay back because he bought a bad batch of ring off Bentley Bear and blew the rest on a Metpharm DIY stomach pump. All he had left was the shirt on his back.

So that's why Bussy was running from the man in a red hood and shredded jacket slowly walking towards him. His instincts told him that meant danger. If you were smart, you'd be running too.

Bussy wasn't a smart guy. That was obvious from how he got here. The one thing he was, though, was fast. Bussy hopped over derelict trash cans, dodged the sparking remains of a neon sign, and rounded a corner when the City tricked him. At least, it sometimes felt like the City was designed to deliver cruel jokes. Rather than providing an exit, the streets ended in a canyon of an open sewer. The only thing left between him and freedom was a straight plunge into the Pipes.

"Ah, shazbot!"

A dead end. He couldn't exactly take his chances with the mutants, even if he did survive the fall. Bussy started climbing a crumbling apartment block to make more distance between him and the hatchetman when a hand yanked him off the steel railing and began pulling him backwards.

"Hey, leggo!" he shouted.

The hand had a solid grip on him. He turned around to tear the arm off his shirt when he saw that it was just the arm. No body attached to it. The arm's stump ended in chrome and a hover drive. The disembodied limb kept dragging Bussy against his will until he was hanging over the abyss.

It was times like this that Bussy wished he didn't sell his gliding flaps for drugs.

"Yo, what the fuck?"

"Hey, Bussy!"

The bobcat's blood turned to ice. He knew that voice all too well. A bit raspier from when he last heard it, but last he knew, the owner was shoved into Mute City traffic during rush hour. Looking down, he saw the red-hooded man who had been following him for the past mile step into the dim light. One arm in the sky with Bussy, and the other rested on the zapper in his holster.

"Is that any way to talk to an old friend?"

Shit. The cyber docs managed to put Plok back together after all. Give or take.

"H-Hey, Plok! I didn't know you got out of the hospital! Did you get my card? You got my card, right?" Plok didn't respond. "I'm asking because I sent you a--"

The floating arm descended rapidly until Bubsy was level with Plok's head, and the arm that was still on his body could shove the zapper into Bubsy's face.

"Stop talking."

To his credit, Bubsy stopped talking. He held onto that floating arm for dear life.

"I'm gonna level with you, Bubs. You made some mistakes." Bubsy didn't respond. "You can talk now. Just pick your next words wisely. Use your brain. Think you can still do that?"

Bubsy slowly nodded. He used what was left of his brain to come up with something that would let him walk away from this situation alive. A state that Plok wasn't exactly known for leaving his victims in after one of his "freelance collections" jobs. As far as Bubsy knew, the guy only cared about three things. Money, women, and...

"I know who took your flag!"

Plok's eyes opened wide. His eyes were still real. The eggheads at WilyCorp haven't figured out how to make bioroids look that pissed yet. The man would raise hell on whoever he thought stole his most prized possession, even if he was dumb enough to leave it flapping above his house.

"My flag? Who's the flea-bitten son of a bitch that stole my flag?!"

Bubsy kept his face as straight as he could as he told Plok exactly what he wanted to hear. By the time Plok could check it out for himself, Bubsy would be long gone.

Thinking over his options again, the Pipes were looking pretty good this time of year. Or decade.

"Bentley. It was uh, Bentley Bear."

THE CITY [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

This City... She's Been Dead... For Years Now...

The City of Light is the largest post-Earth settlement for mankind, following the devastation of the Invader Wars. Founded by the best and brightest of their time, the City was raised from the ground with only the best intentions for the future. The state-of-the-art Systems Integrated Monitor (S.I.M.) was installed into the heart of the City, allowing every district connected to it to access clean water, gas heating, and electricity while it oversaw the construction of new buildings for people to live in. Everyone was idealistic, and who remembers it sees that past with rose-tinted glasses. Back then, people dreamed that their shining megalopolis would expand until the skyscrapers reached the heavens themselves. A dream befitting a City of Light.

With everything going so right at the start, one can't help but ask how it all went wrong. By 20XX, the City is composed of over one hundred "zones" housing roughly one billion people. (Approx. 75% "baseline" human, 20% uplifts, and 5% mutants or other heavily-modified individuals.) The S.I.M., once lauded as infallible, was taken offline by the AI-killing TETRIS virus and had its critical components hacked apart by forming power blocs to leverage at their leisure. No longer benefiting from an overarching intelligence to guide them, the Lemmings created a dark, destitute landscape of urban decay that dominates roughly 10% of the planet's surface.

(Remove/tweak this section below?)

The decrepit ruins of blasted-out zones are a death trap for those without a guide to ward them away from crumbling roads, biomonster nests, and mutant territory. A foreign zone can never be called a "safe" one, as the makeup of the streets can change in an instant. Pay the guide well so they don't lead you into an ambush.

Your average Joe or Jane works for one of the many corporations active in the City. Massive financial cliques have replaced the nation states of old, though a few of them maintain government subsidiaries to enforce laws and keep the lights on. Only a handful of these ascend to the lofty title of "megacorp", the largest of which are known as the Big Three: WilyCorp, RoboDyne, and Metpharm. While selling out to a faceless entity that wants to suck you dry is distasteful, your average person only wants to get through the day and put food on the table. Those with the right skills and a taste for blood will find a position closer to the top of the corporate ladder. People living outside of the megacorp zones have to hedge their bets with smaller, less reliable corps, or criminal organizations that were too late to the party to become legitimized. In some ways, it's a distinction without a difference. The least fortunate ones are those trapped under the thumb of a one-zone dictator. The corps maintain small armies to guard their borders or their property, and they aren't going to stick their neck out for you. Electronic communication between

zones owned by different factions is scarce, and pricey when you can get a carrier willing to send the message along. Each zone with the digital infrastructure to host a network will be its own island, with narrow wires to friendly zones that can be accessed via modem.

As a consequence of technologies developed during the Invader Wars, humans aren't the only ones to call the City home. Biroids are the intelligent robots of WilyCorp fame, built to perform a variety of tasks that keep the City functioning. These robots have varying awareness, but are invariably treated as property. The Three laws restrict them from causing harm to a human being, but these limitations are voided when one "goes maverick" and no longer recognizes anyone or anything as their master. There's also uplifts, which began as animals from Earth. Through the miracle of science, the uplifts were given bodies, minds, and lifespans comparable to their makers. Further genetic modifications have allowed uplifts to take on jobs that humans couldn't with ease, though a non-insignificant amount of humans perceive them as being inferior beasts. Their informal status as second-class citizens has encouraged uplifts to stick to their own communities. Doubly so for the refugees of Lylat that had developed a culture of their own.

The energy demands of the City are such that the corps are always researching new means of producing more. Oil is a scarcity on this new planet (save for the pockets of black gold that Robotnik hoards), and as such people have been going to Metpharm's biofuel stations to keep their hovercars running. Solar energy is the go-to for WilyCorp; their bioroids soak up sunlight during the day and store it for later use. The same solar batteries have also been integrated into "zappers", cheap blaster pistols that are used by anyone from the greasiest gutter ganger to the tamest poindexter who doesn't want to be shot by the former. All-natural, "real" food can be a bit trickier to come by than a gun, unless you have money and the right connections. Instead, the staple of your average City slicker's diet is composed of soy or seaweed-based chow, with cloned meat, fruit, and vegetables mixed in to make it palatable. More flavorful dishes can be sought out in the occasional night markets that crop up throughout the City. All of these wonderful products and more can be purchased with corporate scrip: Zenny (Z) for WilyCorp, Baum (B) for RoboDyne, and Meseta (M) for MetPharm. Nothing's stopping the bit players from producing their own currencies, but they don't have much purchasing power outside of their home zones. When in doubt, everyone on the street accepts gold coins, even if they don't know who mints them.

As awful as things can get in the City, few people in it feel the call to change anything about the current state of affairs for the better. Too many people are too scared to rock the boat, and the ones that do stand up to oppression are kicked back in line or wind up six feet under. Bread and circuses do the rest, as there are whole zones devoted to distracting the populace from the vicious cycles that have the City in a death grip. The odds are so heavily stacked in favor of the megacorps, your life expectancy will be significantly higher if you join them, or simply step aside. To the people of the City, struggling to survive *here* is better than the constant struggle

to survive that they'd experience in the Pipeworks or the Outlands. This last bastion of the human race is cruel, vile, and unfair, but it's a corrupt system that they've come to rely upon.

This status quo is not sustainable. Conflicts between rival gangs have escalated in force. Without the S.I.M. and the Lemmings to initiate repairs, habitable zones that have not yet fallen to ruin are all the more priceless. Skirmishes over turf are no longer restricted to rival cartels, as even the mid-tier corporations are being dragged into zone wars in order to protect their assets. The most worrying trends are those of the Big Three, who have been aggressively expanding their territories in preparation for what may truly be the breakout of war. A clash between these juggernauts of industry and death may be one that the City won't survive to see the aftermath of.

The world needs heroes now, more than ever, to save the City of Light from itself.



NOTES / INFO TO MERGE SOMEWHERE

Describe average living conditions in the City & harshly stratified tiers of lifestyles.

More on mutants in the City? 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-gen mutants.

Telecommunications infrastructure remains mostly wired, but satellites exist for global TV and radio broadcasts. Zones maintain their own walled gardens of internet, accessible from terminals built by the old S.I.M. nodes. Phones and computer lines are intermeshed, communicating via modem. Most people only use these terminals to make local vidcalls or ask for information; think of them like phone booths. Home computers are uncommon. Hackers can also use terminals to deploy ICEbreakers into their target's data fortresses. Very Neuromancer-esque. Cyberdecks and designated neural interfaces are a common means of jacking into networks.

The TETRIS virus is a computer virus of unknown origins that overwrites positronic functions and software with an abstract program of uncertain purpose. Typically, it will begin with signs of distraction, the AI becoming less and less responsive. In a matter of hours, the program's higher

thought functions are steadily cannibalised as the hardware is repurposed. By the time the music starts playing, the program is unsalvageable. The more processing power a computer has, the more vulnerable it is to the program. Records of infected SIM instances have shown the AI succumbing in hours, minutes. Mental regression into the equivalent of an adolescent state is a common early warning sign.

The exact mechanisms of the virus's propagation is unclear. Researchers who have studied the virus for extended periods of time have reported audiovisual hallucinations.

Official WILYcorp policy is that SIM is a technological dead end. All attempts to research it are officially classified as a waste of company resources.

FOR THE CITY SECTION -- NOTE THE STATE OF CONFLICTS IN THE CITY.

- All-out war is uncommon but violence in general is high.
- VIPs are liable to get whacked or kidnapped outside of their own turf.
- Some border zones have security.
- Airports are a thing to maintain semblance of order and capacity to travel.

FLUFF STORY FOR [MEGA MAN] GOES HERE

WILYCORP [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"We Have Control. We Keep You Safe. We Are Your Hope."

Though not solely responsible for what would come later, WilyCorp set the standard for every megacorp that came afterward. The City would not be where it was without Uncle Wily, something his omnipresent televisual broadcasts are quick to remind people. Lest they forget his countless contributions to society. The company focuses on the industries of engineering, robotics, mining, and the purification of natural resources drilled from the planet. WilyCorp has exclusive control over bioroid production, allowing them to replace human workers with Multiple Extreme Terrain (M.E.T.) robots at the drop of a hard hat.

In spite of that implicit threat to their jobs, Wily doesn't completely lie when he says he takes care of his workers. Conditions vary by zone, but WilyCorp employees have the highest average living standards out of anyone in the City. The cost they pay is their privacy, agency, and freedom, as Wily zones are heavily-scrutinized police states. Ubiquitous "Joe" bioroids in green armor and riot gear patrol the streets, ready to scope out unruly citizens through their glowing red optics and pull them out of sight for readjustment. The Joes are kept busy by the countless youth gangs and violent countercultural movements that have sprung up over the years, affronts to Uncle Wily's authority that he has zero tolerance for.

As long as their strict maintenance schedule is obeyed and the robots' positronic brains are decommissioned when they reach their expiration date, the bioroids Wily stakes his reputation on will perform without tire or complaint. Failure to comply with the guidelines, however, can result in them becoming deviant. These "mavericks" lose their capacity to recognize their hardwired programming, which can cause serious harm to human life. Or worse, start asking questions that no bioroid should be asking their owners. WilyCorp prefers dealing with mavericks in-house, but they allow mercenaries to register as Maverick Hunters and take down these rogue robots in exchange for their outstanding bounties.

Wily Towers is one of the oldest zones in the City, a collection of bone-white skyscrapers constructed by Light and his Lemmings in the early years. Its force shields are hardened to hold out against a siege from the Space Invaders, and from his central tower, Wily can dictate WilyCorp affairs with the flick of a switch and a word from his microphone. Radiating outwards from Wily Towers is Monsteropolis, a gigantic urban zone whose size and population outweigh multiple smaller zones in sheer scale. Most of WilyCorp's population lives in Monsteropolis or the adjacent zones in their sphere of influence. Those closest to Wily Towers are always trying to get close enough to move in, while those on the furthest fringes scrape by however they can.

The media is Wily's preferred method of control. As part of rebuilding whenever they occupy a new zone, WilyCorp handymen and M.E.T.s install screens and speakers to permanent fixtures so that the people have instant access to breaking news, product details, and propaganda. They're quick to disseminate information about mavericks or persons of interest wanted by the company, the large bounties on their heads providing ideal incentive for concerned citizens to turn them in. The screens work both ways, giving WilyCorp a thousand eyes and ears at ground level to track the movement of special targets and punish gangers for vandalizing his property. Only in the darkest shadows of Monsteropolis and the underground tunnels beneath it can one escape his prying eyes.

Dr. Wily is a busy man, and couldn't trust just anyone to micromanage all of the bioroids at WilyCorp's disposal. He couldn't trust Light to do what needed to be done, either, so he stole his designs for overseer bioroids and made six Robot Masters: Cut Man, Guts Man, Elec Man, Ice Man, Fire Man, and Bomb Man. The Robot Masters are advanced bioroid commanders with special authorization to order any human or bioroid in WilyCorp territory. As each Robot Master has enough firepower to take on a small army, the word of one has weight regardless of who owns the zone they're deployed in. Those Robot Masters have regular postings in Monsteropolis, but they can be redeployed anywhere Wily needs them thanks to the company's matter teleportation grid. The expensive overhead scales with weight, and the fact the teleporters can only move inorganic material is limiting, but the technology allows WilyCorp to maintain a small network of all-bioroid asteroid mines in nearby space. While the first six are his most notable, additional Robot Masters have been manufactured by WilyCorp to expand the company's grip over the City.

With Light out of the picture, Wily was confident that all of his liabilities were accounted for. Then, in 20XX, rumors started reaching his ears that Doctor Light was *alive*. Albert was apprehensive, but he didn't start sending out Robot Masters on search and destroy missions until after the AM transmissions started. RoboDyne, Metpharm, and the others always want a cut of WilyCorp's profits, but none of them can undermine Wily like a returned Light can. WilyCorp has been expanding outward and claiming zones from their rivals, filling in all of the gaps Light could be hiding in. He hasn't been found yet, but when the time comes, Wily's red-helmed bioroid assassin will be ready to tie that loose end permanently.



FLUFF STORY FOR [SONIC] GOES HERE

ROBODYNE [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"Beyond Natural."

Competition is the natural state of man. WilyCorp had a head start, and attempted to maintain a monopoly on robotics, but it was only a matter of time until a new face threw their wrench into the ring. That face belonged to a portly, mustachioed man in pince-nez glasses named Dr. Ivo Robotnik. His origins are hard to place, but Ivo was a brilliant inventor who started "Robotnik Dynamics" out of a spheroid workshop on South Island. Having turned what was once a derisive nickname around into the name of his company, the portly machinist repaired broken bioroids and sold robots of his own ramshackle design. They caught on as cheap alternatives to WilyCorp's machines. Glitchy, if functional, leading to their future epithet of *badnik*.

What made his early badniks unreliable was their lack of positronic brains. At the time, Robotnik lacked the knowledge to replicate Light's work from scratch, and he refused to beg Wily for scraps. Leaning on his connections in the underworld, Ivo unveiled a new line of badniks with "brain chips" to regulate their programming and "bio batteries" to power them. These bionic components are harvested from cloned or "donated" tissue, artificially tweaked to suit each model's functions. Similar to the protection methods used to prevent theft of positronic brains, significant damage to badniks will cause their organic components to short-circuit.

After the runaway success of the badniks, RoboDyne expanded out of South Island and into the nearby West Side Island, securing their rich natural resources before WilyCorp could. Not even the Lemmings could keep up with Robotnik's unfiltered genius, motivating him to shove the old terraformers out of the way and strip-mine the islands himself. This rapid development of new zones was accomplished at the cost of the City's biosphere, of which RoboDyne is its most virulent polluter. Native fauna not already driven out by the Lemmings met their ends in clouds of smog and oceans of oil. Rather than slow down production, Robotnik installed artificial trees to filter toxins from the air and redesigned his badniks to resemble his manic interpretations of animals from Earth. Superior to the originals in every way, if only to Robotnik himself.

Compared to Uncle Wily and his intrusive inquiries, Robotnik gives much less of a damn about the denizens of his zones. As long as they don't cause trouble, the security badniks will usually leave them be. This hands-off approach has made RoboDyne attractive to uplifts and mutants, who are liable to suffer from harsher discrimination in other parts of the City. By the same measure, there are few safety standards to protect them from hazardous construction projects or faulty products, and fewer safety nets when people fall between the cracks. In RoboDyne's zones, everyone is equally a second priority to progress. However, should there be a spike in demand for badniks, then the machines will find ways to make people disappear as necessary to meet it.

Though the Lemmings were chased out of Robotnik's islands, they didn't leave without irrevocably altering the terrain first. The less-maintained areas of Robotnik's zones are irregular and treacherous. Stretches of landscape that erratically transition between rolling hills, steep cliffs, or winding tunnels that begin and end without rhyme or reason. These "Hill Zones" are also, unfortunately, where the remaining majority of RoboDyne's citizens live. The tent cities and shanty towns of the Hill Zones are the most immediate victims of Robotnik's pollution, and are therefore the most reliant on his products to scrounge up protections from it.

RoboDyne's capital lies in Metropolis Zone, a rusted cityscape on West Side Island where executives reign from the top while the underclass maintains the subterranean stations at the bottom. Those who accumulate enough criminal infractions to warrant a prison sentence can instead be transferred to RoboDyne's top-secret "Zone of Tomorrow" at the heart of Metropolis. No one has returned from the massive, elliptical dome obscuring Robotnik's magnum opus from the world, but the CEO of RoboDyne assures the City that its grand unveiling will be well worth the wait.

Away from the green patina of Metropolis is the crimson, cerulean, and gold of Casino Night. A glitzy zone where a man can make or lose a fortune overnight, the decadent and desperate are drawn to this place like moths to a bug zapper. Receiving tourists from all across the City, the bright lights and noise scarcely conceal Casino Night's status as a bed of sin and violence. The X-Syndicate has a strong grip on the zone's drug trafficking and slave rings, working out an arrangement with RoboDyne to keep their business in the shadows. Robotnik's PR has carefully cultivated a Walt Disney-esque reputation for him as a whimsical visionary, a lie that conceals the ruthless psychopath lurking beneath the surface. So long as you're careful not to confuse Robotnik with the sanitized "Eggman" mascot in his presence, everyone wins, and *everyone lives*.

Even with RoboDyne's influence over the spread of information in their territory, they couldn't hope to cover up the hit-and-run attacks terrorizing their South Island facilities. These strikes are performed with ruthless speed, precluded by sonic booms that are over before anyone can stop them. Rumors of a mutant uplift called "Sonic" being responsible have spread like wildfire, in spite of efforts to suppress them. As denial would be useless to convince the public, RoboDyne is cracking down on any public support of the blue rat while Robotnik doubles down on securing the exotic power sources he needs to take his masterpiece off the ground and into orbit.



NOTES/TO CHANGE

- Emphasize Post-Soviet elements of Robotnik's origins and his regime.
- Hypercapitalist negligence in maintaining his state.
- Capsule kiosks.
- Brutalist stylings in some zones. Massive structures of crumbling concrete. Brass gears and hissing steam. Covered up by neon in others.
- Have this be where ring is first mentioned as a performance booster for RoboDyne workers?
- MOVE MOST OF THE CASINO NIGHT ZONE STUFF TO IT'S OWN SECTION IN THE HOT ZONES.
- Keep the "animal batteries" from the game by making most brain chips come from animals being caught/grown on factory farms. A smaller, but non-insufficient percentage of brain chips and other organic components are harvested from sapients.
- Restore the "Mobius Archipelago" name for his islands?

FLUFF STORY FOR [METROID] GOES HERE

METPHARM [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"Melius Attingimus Singulorum." - Improving Every Life We Touch.

Despite what the other two members of the Big Three might claim, there are some things that still require an organic touch. Where WilyCorp and RoboDyne massively expanded the fields of mechanical engineering and robotics, Metpharm deals more directly with the flesh-and-blood inhabitants of the City. Originally spawning from a coalition of medical, biological, and ecological research groups aboard the Colony Fleets, they would restructure itself to meet the shape of things to come.

Rebranding themselves as Metpharm, the company firmly planted themselves as the go-to place to receive quality pharmaceuticals and urgent care. Feeling sick? Got shot? Got cancer? You're going to a Metpharm clinic or one with doctors trained by them. Even the back-alley surgeons and drug dealers prefer to work with Metpharm products when they can get their hands on them. Their Monomate and Dimate are over-the-counter drugs that can be bought in any general store or vending machine. Metpharm's success was so massive that they were able to pull off the biggest land grab in the galaxy, purchasing the moon that lay in orbit above The City for their exclusive use.

What Metpharm wanted with the moon, Zebes, was a mystery, save for those who had been part of Metpharm's board of directors. Clandestine lunar surveys identified Zebes as not being native to the system, being placed in orbit by alien architects dubbed the "Chozo". Though valuable on their own, studying the biological samples and relics the Chozo left behind could kick start breakthroughs that made Metpharm's early work look like the contents of a first aid kit.

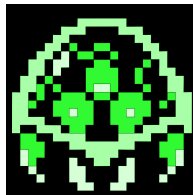
The decision to expand aggressively began after a silent coup. Shortly after the use of Chozo artifacts began, the stockholders were contacted by a mysterious figure known simply as "MB". This being knew dark secrets about them, and the inscrutable biosphere they were attempting to crack open for profit. Leveraged by fear of blackmail, threat of violence, and their own greed, MB was voted into full control of the company by unanimous vote. She retains the board to keep appearances, allowing them to serve as fingers and hands that can be manipulated to move Metpharm. Fingers and hands that can be cut off when they get out of line and replaced with new ones.

With MB's new policies came a more accepting stance towards alien life. In general, an overwhelming fear of another attack by the Invaders and generally poor interactions with groups such as the Space Pirates have hampered the City's extrasolar relations. A pact signed by the Big Three outright bans aliens access to The City, but Metpharm's space stations on the edge of the Hylian System skirt around this restriction. Smear campaigns have been undertaken to heavily insinuate Metpharm uses these offworld ports to sell critical technologies like M.U.L.E.s and hire alien criminals to attack their rivals, but none of the scandalous accusations have ever stuck.

Though Metpharm exudes a large amount of soft power over The City, the zones they directly control are relatively few in number. Their terrestrial base of operations is a bustling spaceport called Palm. If Wily and Robotnik control their capitals through iron fists, then MB prefers the velvet glove. Palm is a beautiful, white oasis in a sea of metal, decorated with real plants that produce clean oxygen. Their utilities are capable of predicting your every need. Citizens often find themselves dependent on their home's AI "Mother", who will recommend any number of products to improve the quality of life for its "children". Those who opt-in to act as trial subjects for experimental drugs and gene treatments can access the city's premium services at a discount. The benefits of these tests, however, are rarely worth the risks in the fine print.

When they aren't tightening their stranglehold on medicine, dabbling in exotic chemicals, hiring alien mercenaries, and producing new drugs to keep the working class in line, Metpharm performs biological commissions for anyone who can afford them. They can change a person on the cellular level, altering their genetics so that they can become anyone they want to be. This includes the creation of a new, proprietary human subspecies known as "Newmen". Newman can be produced as designer babies for those who want their children to have advanced mental faculties (if worse physical ones) and vat-grown slaves whose rights can be taken away with the stroke of a pen.

Not all of Metpharm's creations bear fruit, or were intended to be born in the first place. Waste products tend to be disposed of in ways that are less than safe or humane. The sum of their failed products and mutagenic runoff give birth to Biomonsters, hideous and dangerous mutant creatures that pose a threat to Metpharm's public image with their rampages. To address these problems discreetly, Metpharm has its Hunters, licensed exterminators tasked with eliminating Biomonsters and rogue aliens to protect the Metpharm brand. They are assigned nowhere else more frequently than Zebes, which is no stranger to the occasional Metroid outbreak.



Expand Metpharm section.

- How do their zones look compared to others? What is it like to live in Palm/Moto/Dezo?
- Increase their aerospace presence.
- Go into more detail on biomonsters and hunters.

- Give them the genetically-modified psychic cats from their games and more with the newmans.
- Cloning food, aquaponics/aquaculture
- Drugs
- Terraforming
- Clinical trials for people who opt-in in exchange for benefits
- Paranoia of living in a Metpharm zone
- Plus talk about biofuel if we hadn't already.

FLUFF STORY FOR [SHINOBI] GOES HERE

ZEED LIMITED

“雨降って地固まる。” - After Rain, Earth Hardens.

When it comes to brand recognition, everyone can list the Big Three by name. WilyCorp, RoboDyne, and Metpharm are the movers and shakers on which lives are made or destroyed. Everyone beneath them is tarred with the same brush of “small time”. All except ZEED Limited, a retail chain that can be found in nearly every zone, making them a household name. Some would call ZEED Limited “Number Four”, because this “small” chain can be just as dangerous as the Big Three without making it obvious that their underdog appearance is a mask for something far more sinister.

The main appeal of ZEED Limited, for those who can pay the franchise fees, is that they allow smaller, privately-owned businesses to carry the ZEED name. ZEED is a Japanese firm based in Neo Tokyo, a zone in RoboDyne’s sphere of influence, but any gas station, general store, or truck stop can apply to become a ZEED subsidiary. This lets anyone sell any of ZEED’s products, as well as items from other bit players that want their goods distributed through the ZEED ecosystem. Your average zone has a ZEED convenience store of some stripe. They’re practically everywhere, the ZEED network having wormed its way into nearly every zone connected to the City.

ZEED shops are places where you can buy fresh produce in zones that might otherwise be food deserts, send physical or electronic mail to other zones that had been severed from each other with the collapse of the S.I.M. network, purchase tickets to concerts or interzone transportation, and even exchange megacorp scrip at the stores’ varied banking kiosks. Frequent shoppers are incentivised to sign up for a ZEED Shadow Card, which streamlines the transaction process at all stores and “follows” you between zones, serving as a surrogate ID for the purposes of buying property or providing a good credit score for a loan.

With all of the benefits they offer to the regular guy on the street, without asking for that much in return, ZEED Limited are somewhat well-regarded for a megacorp. Or at least, ZEED is *appreciated* as a quick stop to buy sake, smokes, or disposable kunai. Their interconnected nature means these corner stores are rarely targeted by groups that might otherwise push them around; a dozen ZEED Limited chains will link up and strangle the life out of anyone foolish enough to warrant their sponsors’ unlimited wrath. When not pretending to be a union of mom-and-pop stores looking out for each other, ZEED leverages their influence to serve as mediators on behalf of hostile factions seeking a friendly face to settle disputes. The fact that ZEED storefronts are used as a cover for drug trade, gambling rackets, and gun running is an open secret amongst the more tuned-in gangs and corps. To them, it’s no big surprise ZEED is as dirty as the rest.

What's less common knowledge is that when they aren't wearing the guise of peacekeepers, ZEED's Ninja Corps are performing kidnappings, assassinations, and wanton acts of terrorism to initiate the feuds they benefit from. That is the true purpose of ZEED: To perpetuate the strife that plagues the City and reap the benefits. ZEED are "Number Four" among the Big Three, a number that guarantees death to their enemies. Their dreaded *shinobi* are shadow warriors with stealth techniques that border on the supernatural, further enhanced with the bleeding-edge tech that ZEED's corporate arm exists primarily to foot the bill for. While every megacorp has spies on payroll, the shinobi leave their rivals running in circles. Children seized by them are put through a battery of tortuous trials so that they can be remolded into future shinobi themselves.

Those unable to meet the intense requirements to join the Ninja Corps, or entered ZEED's web too late to do so, have other avenues for advancement. The fastest route to a promotion is to volunteer for cybernetic augmentation, or be "volunteered" for it. ZEED has an in-house team of specialists to transform human beings into living weapons, consenting or otherwise. The Lobsters are the most visible of these enforcers, steel giants in faux samurai armor that are the first to enter combat when the subtle approach falls short. Test subjects with high exam scores or psionic talents will have their brains separated from their bodies, where they can be installed as living supercomputers or full-time pilots integrated into advanced military hardware.

Unlike the Big Three, whose leaders are simply "known" or "unknown", the Shadow Master behind ZEED is shrouded in layers of deception. Is he ZEED Limited's CEO, Mr. Nakahara, or is Nakahara a puppet the Shadow Master controls? Could it be the other way around, and the masked ninja the shinobi train under is a body double dancing to the pull of the Shadow Master's strings? Not even the other Five Rings binding the conspiracy together can be certain, the conflicting rumors swirling around the Shadow Master serving as a smokescreen to disguise the man's storied history.

The Shadow Master came from the Oboro, a once-storied ninja clan from the Iga province, now forgotten by a world and planet that had passed them by. Rather than repeat the follies of Oboro leaders past, the Shadow Master engineered a means of protecting his clan's future in perpetuity. He sees 20XX as a new age of warring states. Having borne witness to the consequences of peace and complacency on the shinobi of the past, the Shadow Master will do whatever it takes to guarantee that the more clandestine services of ZEED are always in demand.

7L

FLUFF STORY FOR [X-SYNDICATE] GOES HERE

I could perhaps refurbish that story from the old fluff, in which Mr. X and Shiva meet Joe Mushashi? It'd take place in the Devil's Tower from Kung-Fu Master, which is where Mr. X reigns in this iteration of the setting.

Instead of Joe, use Alex Kidd.

Allude to how Mr. X had bought out the police.

"What's your name, son?"

"It's not Son. It's Kidd. Alex Kidd."

X-SYNDICATE [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"A Family Business."

You have to give the wise guys of Earth one thing: When the chips were down, organized criminals across the globe stepped out of the shadows to grease the wheels and made sure little stood in the way of the war effort. It earned many men of honor and their families limited seats on the colony ships. After the Crash, old world luxuries were the first things to sell in the new black market that formed, followed by food during shortages or ration periods, and guns when one guy needed another guy dead. Conflicts between gangs flared up. The gangs were forced to pick between peace or a crackdown, and the seeds of the X-Syndicate were planted when they resorted to settling disputes via "janken"; a good old game of rock paper scissors.

Years later, after Light was officially dead and buried, the facades of restraint held by what became the Big Three were steadily discarded. They started making offers to the gang bosses that they weren't used to being on the receiving end of. Anyone who tried to fight the corps' private armies were purged, and their employees couldn't be bought because they were too scared to take a bribe. Corpsec pinned these outmoded criminal enterprises against the wall, and ZEED was all too content to fill the vacuum. The new generation of street gangs borne from the City's failing social services weren't going places, either, being picked off by WilyCorp's Narcotics Opposition unit like fish in a barrel. Having been excised from the "polite" face of society, the founding members of what would become the X-Syndicate had no choice but to band together to survive.

The X-Syndicate is an unprecedented criminal alliance, composed of five major gangs from across the City and their affiliate sub-gangs. As with ZEED, one doesn't have to look far to find gambling houses, synth-krak labs, and other front businesses marked with an "X" to signify their allegiance. They thrive in border zones that exist on the periphery of a megacorp's rule, where the laws are less enforced, and the law enforcement is more flexible. For places that were left to rot by the powers-that-be, X-Syndicate steps in to provide food, medicine, and protection... for a price. Their presence is the strongest in cultural enclaves, whom various members of the X-Syndicate present themselves to as kindred spirits against the corporate monoculture.

In a City of liars and backstabbers, the X-Syndicate stake their reputation on their ability to keep their internal dealings relatively clean. Members of the X-Syndicate are obligated to share resources, information, and manpower with each other, without overcharging for the service. Disputes between gangs that can't be settled by a janken match or fist fight will instead be arbitrated by a mediator. Violence between Xs from different gangs, while at times impossible to avoid, is punished severely when it results in permanent injury or death. Lastly, when one member of the X-Syndicate is attacked without provocation, the rest are expected to help them retaliate.

Those basic ground rules gluing the X-Syndicate together and their newfound strength in numbers are what made it the most widespread criminal organization in the City. Whether putting the screws in someone means weaving a net of blackmail around influential figures before reeling them in, or leveraging threats of violence to make sure demands are met, the X-Syndicate wants to make it clear that few people in the City are beyond their capacity to hurt.

In 20XX, firefights between the X-Syndicate and Wily's NARC squads remain a regular occurrence in the streets of Monsteropolis. Metpharm ignores them, beyond using the X-Syndicate as a convenient outlet for their more "trial" medicines. RoboDyne was the only one willing to play ball, the Eggman being quick to cede his gambling zones to X-Syndicate handlers. They ensure the house always wins, and that the gang's human trafficking network is always feeding fresh organic material for his badnik production plants. While ZEED is their biggest rival on paper, they too are another beneficiary of the X-Syndicate's slave rings.

Every grunt in the overgang knows that the boss of bosses that brought the X-Syndicate together goes by "Mr. X", an alias that leaves assassins jumping at shadows and lieutenants too paranoid to eye the top of the ladder. Those more aware of the internal workings know that Mr. X was never a single person, but a title carried by whoever is elected by a council of X-Syndicate leaders to represent the interests of the gangs. When not burdened with the inevitable task of keeping the squabbling bosses off each other's throats, Mr. X is the most powerful gangster in the City.

The current Mr. X is a Sicilian-born godfather, replacing the kung-fu master who constructed the "Devil's Tower" pagoda that X-Syndicate uses as their HQ. He spearheaded a new arms race in black market tech, investing significant capital into scientists who were chased out of legitimate work for the corps. This resulted in the X-Syndicate diversifying their portfolio with impersonator androids, brainwashing martial artists to be their agents, trying to produce dirty bombs, reprogramming Robot Masters for heavy security, hosting the World Fighting Tournament to train their cyborg super soldiers, and funding Dr. Curien's research into reanimating the dead. The X-Syndicate has prospered under this Mr. X, who has no intentions of stepping down any time soon.

WOOD OAK SYNDICATE

This violent distillation of western crime networks were the first to tell the Big Three to step off. Often called the "Syndicate" themselves, one can trace a line of succession from the Godfather of New York to the one in Wood Oak. They're stable and tested, serving as a foundational pillar for the X-Syndicate to flourish from. For this reason, they think it's only "fair" to take the lion's share of revenue from Casino Night Zone. Accusations of Mr. X showing his gang favoritism stirs tensions, though external pressure keeps the knives out of his back.

CHI YOU MEN

A Chinese cartel with cryptic, cult-like aspects, the Chi You Men recovered from the Crash with the aid of a treasure dating back to the Qing Dynasty. Led by the reclusive Heavenly Emperor, the rest of their success can be attributed to the martial arts prowess of the four sub-leaders who act in his stead. Often serving as diplomats on the behalf of the X-Syndicate, the Chi You Men have made great strides in recruiting lesser gangs such as the Mad Angels and Yellow Heads. Out of the five major gangs, it is the Chi You Men who manage to maintain the most secrecy.

ROKKAKU GROUP

Former Yakuza that restructured into a financial clique and allied with the X-Syndicate for protection from ZEED. After transferring their violent elements to the Golden Rhinos, they transformed their zone of Tokyo-to into an idealized version of metro Japan under their guiding hand. The Rokkaku are the most "legit" member of the X-Syndicate, acting as a legal pipeline for laundered goods, though Gouiji Rokkaku's tolerance for crime in his own zone runs thin. He's taken steps to enact his *21st Century Project*, removing all meddlesome rudies from his streets.

E.V.I.L. INC

While the other gangs hem and haw over the markets they scrounged up, E.V.I.L. INC is out there making sure bodies hit the pavement. A new cartel of violent offenders from Virtua City, E.V.I.L. INC was brought into the fold after a close attempt on Mr. X's life. Led by the domineering Joe Fang, E.V.I.L. INC fields most of the X-Syndicate's hit jobs. Their tendency to use disproportionate firepower rubs the other Xs the wrong way, but it's hard to argue with results. Especially when few are so bold as to risk taking contracts on other X-Syndicate members.

DECAPZ

This carnival of gene freaks used to be another mutant gang in the Pipeworks until they were hijacked by a diabolical super mutant named Max D. Cap. He elevated the Decapz, and made them the X-Syndicate's street soldiers for the deepest pits of the City. They're augment junkies who champion the bizarre and grotesque, with operations rumored to be performed by a mad cyberdoc named Dr. Frank N. Stein. Allegations of occult rituals and cannibalism behind closed doors have undermined the Decapz' relations with their "normal" peers, something that grates the ego of Max.



X-SYNDICATE REVISIONS

Rewrite section to be less about the X-Syndicate as a gaggle of independent subfactions. That's still the case, but presently it eats up too much word and page space. The different subfactions can be mentioned as example member gangs, but not the only ones. This ambiguity can spread to the text itself, as their murky web of alliances means one faction trying to pin them to the wall can be jumped by 3-5 smaller factions as retribution.

The Janken the Great from Alex Kidd and his minions can be patched in as a mutant gang that joined the Syndicate to "replace" the Decapz. (The Janken/Janbarik Mob?) The Decapz are being moved to the Chaos Cults, but they can get a name drop as X-Syndicate affiliates that operate from the Pipes.

Rewrite some things to be more explicit? Judgement 6 of Virtua Fighter is an X-Syndicate front. Curien and his organization from House of the Dead are being funded by Mr. X. They might be funding Rakushin research. The Robot Masters from MM6 are their creations. They're running guns to Yuria and making deals with Outland pirates. Etc etc.

The present Mr. X could benefit from having some more ambiguity to them. Is it the same Mr. X from SOR? The Heavenly Emperor of Shenmue? Did the X-Syndicate get a shadow coup from ZEED? Is it Dr. Wily doing some 4D chess gambit against Robotnik? Who knows!

FLUFF STORY FOR [ZELDA] GOES HERE

GD TECH [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"Power."

For many, Hyria as it was before it was called the City is little more than an afterthought. It was a barren wasteland, the older ones said, and any past it had was buried under the relentless march of progress. It wasn't until humans began exploring the Outlands and Pipeworks that any evidence of the planet's deeper history could be unveiled. There was now reason to believe that the world had intelligent life before man, civilizations whose ruins were torn down to make room for urbanization from the Lemmings. As their programming further decayed, it became easier to integrate these structures into what was to be constructed, leaving them more or less intact. More than enough to fan the flames of human curiosity.

First contact with the natives of the planet, such as the Gorons, Dekus, and Zora, began when these aliens attacked human colonists whose City was encroaching on their lands. These incidents made settling on the fringes a dangerous prospect, until a group of enterprising bandits and arms dealers called the Gravediggers took on the task of clearing these areas of "monsters" for a tidy fee. This was only after the ruins were ransacked of any valuables that could be sold back to the City's academia and wealthy elite, who found themselves fascinated with the pre-City species. This romanticized alien race and culture would be dubbed *Hyria Sapiens*, or the Hylians, after the City's scarcely-used official name. By 20XX, "Hyria" has shifted to "Hyrule" in common speech.

At first, the money was only slightly more than they made selling guns to the gangs of the City. It was during one of these excursions into the desert that the Gravediggers hit the jackpot. No one is sure what they found. A vault of treasures? A cache of advanced weapons? Perhaps an entire castle that was lost to the sands. The discovery, known internally as the "Golden Power", was grand enough that the Gravediggers nearly collapsed in on themselves trying to figure out what to do with it. When the infighting died down, it was their wisest member who advised the gang to spend their fortunes on something that was seemingly impossible to buy: Legitimacy. While they attempt to market themselves away from the messy details, this is where GD Tech was born.

GD Tech has come a long way from their previous standing. Now a "respectable" corp based in the fortified zone of Termina, they sell a variety of security solutions with a reputation for consistency and efficiency. Their product line is able to turn your average warehouse into a veritable dungeon. Affordable weapons, armor, and *Armos*-class guard robots are available to anyone who's willing to buy them, but like any sensible corp, GD Tech keeps the best toys to themselves. The presence of a private army able to activate on a moment's notice makes life in Termina safe and stable, if somewhat restrictive. As consistent as the analogue clock at town hall.

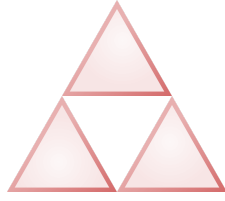
While the company tries to distance itself from its past as an Outlands cartel, this is hampered by the perceived need of their CEO, Agahnim, to continue funding expeditions. These missions inspire the company's output and provide a "link to the past", in his words, though some wonder if there's more to his hunger for "inspiration" from Hylian tech. GD Tech pays handsomely for fresh relics or news of any sites they've yet to plunder, though the scandal-worthy practice of clearing out settlements has been replaced with a new system of studying and integrating them into the City. In practice, this takes the form of GD arming the aliens for an off-the-books security detail that protects their Outlands assets from other corps and settlers. They've made great strides with courting the Moblin clans, and hope to draw more alien groups to their side.

The Hylians are presumed extinct, in spite of Agahnim's efforts to root out any surviving members of the Sheikah Tribe that may be hiding among the human race. Agahnim is rationalized inside the company as being an elder member of the Gravediggers, but behind that puppet of flesh lies a malevolent spirit who was unleashed by the bandits rediscovering a fragment of the Golden Power he was trapped inside. The Hylians sealed the fate of their world by casting the pieces of that great treasure away, knowing the power it possessed when they were together was without limit. Agathnim's body casts a long shadow over what remains of the Sacred Realm as a mindless beast, and his soul has slipped far beyond his reach. With his scheming mind all that remains of the King of Evil, the ancient sorcerer lays the seeds for the eventual reunification.

The cycle will begin anew. As it always has. Agahnim knows his confrontation with the reincarnations of his fated foes is predetermined, and draws ever near. The pieces of the Triforce that GD Tech already possesses are sealed in a great vault, accessible only by three key cards held by the head researcher, the chief of security, and himself. No cost is too great for him to reclaim ultimate power and spite the goddesses who cursed him in this wicked fate.

NOTES FOR REWRITES

- GD Tech's HQ is an ominous pyramid like the Link to the Past Ganon Fortress in Dark World
- Make it more clear that Termina is "in" the City but very close/on the border of the Outlands. Explorers stop there before going on their journeys. Name came from it being the exit for such expeditions, or the end point of Lemming developments?
- More heavily allude to Agahnim plotting to hunt the reincarnations of Zelda, Link, and the Seven Sages in addition to the scattered shards of the Triforce.
- Allude to Ganon's "Courage" reincarnation in the desert?
- Double-down on GD Tech being arms dealers for the City and the Outlands alike. The XG-1 is a Saturday Night Special that can be found in every pawn shop where you can get weapons legally, and easily in a lot of zones where you shouldn't have them at all.



FLUFF STORY FOR [POKEMON] GOES HERE

ROCKET GROUP

"Prepare for Trouble."

In the dark streets of the City, there's only so much that separates a smaller megacorp from a gang. The higher-ups at Silph Co could've never guessed how far that truth spread. Starting as a conspiracy within their ranks, the Rocket Group siphoned off vast sums from Silph to fund a burgeoning criminal empire in loan sharking, protection rackets, and trafficking. Rocket could've been destined to remain another bit player if it wasn't for Silph Co's creation.

Silph Co was formed by fringe scientists, alleged espers, and many "true believers" that set up in Neo-Kanto. Professor Oak, a man at the forefront of documenting Hyrule's biosphere, discovered his Silph Scope could detect more than genetic disease. The lens caught images of strange, immaterial beings invisible to the naked eye. Things that Silph Co should've best left alone. Instead, they explored what was on the other side of the looking glass. Oak and Dr. Fuji were among the first to identify a psionic entity native to the strange dimension they found, dubbed μ (Mu), and sought a means to study it further. Or even initiate first contact.

Unfortunately, they succeeded. Studies of Mu resulted in the "Ditto", a primordial slurry of artificial genes, which would absorb and replicate nearly any matter it touched. From Ditto's ability to create semi-stable lineages that bred true, the first designer "pocket monsters" were born. Silph Co's special projects division, Rocket, sought to push what they could obtain from Mu's DNA even further. The original Mu was an enigma, and the pocket monsters had unreliable loyalty to its creators. Project $\mu 2$ sought to solve both problems, creating a sequel to Silph Co's magnum opus that would make them above reproach.

A black site on Cinnabar Island went down in flames, taking millions in hardware with it. Silph Co's board was swift to punish Rocket for their failure, performing a purge of staff or projects suspected as affiliated with the disaster. When Rocket's admins dug into the black budget and secret weapons projects to strike back, the corporation was torn apart from the inside out. Anyone unwilling to keep their heads down during the Rocket Group's violent coup of Silph Co lost them. When the dust cleared, Rocket became the new masters of Neo-Kanto, and no less than six specimens ran away into the tall grass surrounding a research facility in Viridian City.

Sightings of wild Rattata and Pidgey were reported within the week.

News of Mu-spawned creatures getting loose into Neo-Kanto's ecosystem was potentially catastrophic. The biomonsters overwhelmed the local food chain, replacing local creatures wherever the contagion spread. Plants, animals, fungi, discarded machinery, or even chemical

runoff, without a care for whether these new species were ever alive to begin with. Only by exploiting Galaxy Computers' digitization technology could they contain any creatures tainted with Mu in electronic storage balls, preventing a global outbreak.

Quickly, the admins realized what the street punks using them in cockfights already knew: These beasts could be *trained*. Hundreds of "pokemon" were rounded up by Rocket trainers, becoming superpowered attack dogs that rivaled bioroids. Covert fighting rings where these pokemon were set against each other took form. While Rocket had a monopoly on the "pokeball" technology that converted pokemon into data, they aren't the only ones that have learned to use them. A burgeoning Pokemon League has cropped up in Neo-Kanto, and a few admins have already infiltrated the circuit, seeking to entice aspiring hopefuls to their side. Less-skilled trainers can still find work as cannon fodder, nevermind if they get poisoned by their Arbok.

Pokemon are limited to Neo-Kanto on paper, with penalties levied against anyone caught smuggling them beyond its borders. However, nature abhors a vacuum, and the Rocket Group benefits from pokemon invading new zones. They've already been sighted in neighboring Neo-Johto, among other places. An unlucky family may wake to find a ravenous Golbat in their eaves, capable of stealing gallons of blood in a single night. Rumors of Hypnos stealing away children haven't been confirmed, nor have they been denied. Wild pokemon are seen as pests in most zones they infest, making them frequent targets of Metpharm's biomonitor hunters. Even the notoriously-dangerous fauna of Hyrule beyond the City's limits are said to be facing new challengers. Over a hundred and fifty unique species have been confirmed, and the number is steadily rising.

The Rocket Group skirts the lines between legal corporate operations and mafia tactics, running gambling corners above board and furthering their research of pokemon as living weapons in the backrooms. Rocket serves the will of one man: Giovanni. A mobster through and through, Giovanni understands power in all its forms. If his rivals have wealth, he'll have wealth. If they have armies, he'll have an army. If they have superweapons, he *will* have his superweapon. No waste, no frills, just cold-hearted power grabs. His machinations have led Rocket towards breeding new and more dangerous pokemon, even reaching back into the Dreamlands once more to give entirely new entities flesh at his command. Elemental monstrosities of which modern legends will be made.

Mu Two was only the beginning.



FLUFF STORY FOR [MISSILE COMMAND] GOES HERE

MISSILE COMMAND [WIP]

"You Can't Save Them All."

Presumed to be the only Invader Wars-era task force that has survived to the modern day, developed as a precaution in the event of a total loss. (During the conflict, it was also known as Majestic 12.) In the present, Missile Command exists to protect the City from alien threats at all costs. Costs which Missile Command can barely cover on their own, which leads them to doing various unsavory things to pay the bills.

They'd be the command structure for the City's defense force, formed from what was left of the global army assembled during the Invader Wars. Led by William J. Blazkowitz II, Missile Command is used to protect the planet from alien threats. However, it's otherwise gutted from resisting the corps in any meaningful way because they hold the purse strings.

Missile Command's mobile HQ is the *Afterburner* (or *Enterprise*), an airborne aircraft carrier of *RoboDyne* make.

The sections are as follows:

- STRIKE FORCE: Space navy. Headed by General Pepper. They combat the Space Pirates and the like.
 - Merge Arspace under here?
- CONTRAS: Missile Command's mass combat forces -- Land, sea, and air. They see direct combat whenever an alien threat to the planet is found, such as when they bust someone smuggling alien tech into the City.
- STRIDERS: Ninja mercenaries on permanent retainer. They gather information and perform other clandestine operations.
- FOXHOUND: "Internal affairs" - FOXHOUND investigates "internal" threats to the City, as a global anti-terrorism unit. They deal with ATARI and the Dark Anarchy Society, among other threats. Under Roy Campbell.
 - Remove the old idea for FOXHOUND from the Outer Heaven writeup.
- X-COM: The splinter cell within the splinter cell that didn't die when it was supposed to. Top secret.

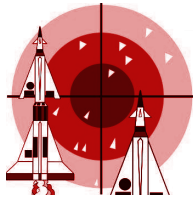
(Also known as M-COM?)

Give them the manned satellite weapon from SEGA's SDI Strategic Defense Initiative game?

FROM THE CITY SECTION - MOVE TO STRIKE FORCE

While you can count the amount of times the Big Three cooperate with each other on one hand, they all believe in self-preservation enough to pool their resources into a starfleet that keeps the Space Pirates and any other opportunistic alien invaders at bay. This defense fleet, dubbed the "Strike Force", is staffed with a colony fleet aces with direct combat experience and uplift veterans from both sides of the Lylat Wars. The Big Three elected General Pepper of the defunct Cornerian Army to lead the Strike Force, as he was the only person both competent enough for the role and not biased to any particular side of their corporate power plays. In matters of planetary defense, General Pepper is the only person in the City that can supersede them. This has never been tested, but there have been close calls, as the survivors of Earth have only received more extraterrestrial enemies following the end of the Invader Wars.

SECTION WILL END ON A SETUP FOR THE EAGLE QUARTER



FLUFF STORY FOR [EARTHBOUND] GOES HERE

EAGLE QUARTER [WIP]

BUT NOBODY CAME.

- Earthbound/Mother area.
- Founded by early settlers of the City, who landed in a not too bad area of the Outlands and turned it into a (somewhat scatterbrained) approximation of the good old USA.
- The City formed around the Eagle Quarter, which maintained its autonomy thanks to a coalition of smaller companies in the EQ banding together.
- Early exposure to the Outlands led to a number of PSI-active children being born.
- Brief summary on what PSI is and how generally understood the phenomena is goes here
- The EQ is generally friendly and stable, but several strange incidents have plagued the zone. Animals and people going mad. Cults forming. The dead rising. Even scattered UFO and alien sightings, but these have been discounted by the Strike Force. Nothing of the sort should get past their early warning system. It's local strangeness and nothing more.
- They are searching for something, or someone, and Giygass will not stop until they have it.



FLUFF STORY FOR [STREET FIGHTER] GOES HERE

SHADALOO [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"The New Law of the New World Order!"

When WilyCorp was on the rise, the S.I.M. was shut down, and private armies annexed zones by rite of conquest, most people bent the knee. Accepted this change as beyond their control. Took the offer of a cushy job and some pills to make the pain go away in exchange for their freedom. It wasn't a unanimous surrender. Where a few objectors fled into the Outlands or climbed into the pipes one day, others stood their ground. They'd fight back, rally the people, and win!

That was the plan, anyway. Early objectors were rounded up and left to rot in WilyCorp prisons, forced into close quarters with hardened criminals. This would prove to be a mistake, as the hatred of Wily these groups shared would bridge an insurmountable divide. The thinkers gave the convicts a better reason to stand against the corps than greed, and the convicts taught the thinkers to embrace the violence that would keep them alive. The guards could hardly keep up with the constant riots, as with superior numbers and a solid strategy, even bioroids could be beaten.

A leader would quickly emerge to prove it could be done: M. Bison. It's unknown which camp the man initially hailed from first, but Bison coordinated the great escape that overwhelmed WilyCorp's security forces and led them all to freedom. By the group's own propaganda, he defeated a squad of police bioroids with his bare hands. From that day onward, the prisoners devoted themselves to a new body of laws that were codified in the shadows of WilyCorp's rule.

Enter Shadaloo, a militant drug cartel that stands out from the other gangs populating the City by refusing to be used as pawns in corporate power plays or be strong-armed into alliances out of necessity. Any faction that wishes to deal with Shadaloo has to earn the gang's respect, something that is easier said than done. Without the grace of their master or his Heavenly Kings, Shadaloo will sink their teeth into weaker gangs and swallow them whole. The Mad Gear Gang is the rare outlier, following an arrangement that rendered the Mad Gears subordinate to Shadaloo without losing their identity or grip over their home turf of Metro City in the process.

"The Four Heavenly Kings" is the deific title given to M. Bison and his three premier lieutenants, handpicked for their personal strength and ruthlessness. Having an insatiable hunger for talent, Bison hosts an annual "World Warrior" tournament, an underworld event open to anyone who wishes to test their might in unarmed combat. Once admitted into Shadaloo, the gang's underlings are encouraged to use cybernetics and performance-enhancing drugs to keep up with their superiors. They won't shy away from the honor of being a human guinea pig if it increases the chance that they'll be recognized by their leader. Conversely, these surgeries need the kinks worked out of them before they can be used to safely enhance their more important members.

Should there ever be a shortage in volunteers, as there often is on the path towards new discoveries, Shadaloo isn't shy about taking them. Victims of Shadaloo kidnapping are mentally broken, remodeled so that their bodies can act as hosts for Bison's indomitable vision. Few, if any, of the Heavenly Kings are rumored to have any such enhancements in their bodies, instead pushing the boundaries of human limits with sheer determination and strength of spirit.

Rather than try to seize and hold territory by conventional means, Shadaloo has grown steadily by entering zones that have collapsed into anarchy. These zones are written off by the megacorps, calculated as not being worth the repair. Shadaloo comes to these people at their lowest, hailed as saviors rather than invaders. Fanatical soldiers for Shadaloo, each one ready and willing to die for Bison. The cult of personality surrounding him has made what would otherwise be a drug lord into a living legend spoken of only in hushed whispers.

To overturn the current ways of the City, overthrow the corporate chains, and make Bison the overlord of the new world order is Shadaloo's ultimate goal. Any noble aspirations the organization may have once started with are now long-abandoned, replaced by the ambitions of their megalomaniac dictator. Not even the fact that his powers are tearing his body apart will slow him down, as Bison has backups waiting in the wings. Shadaloo will build new institutions to replace the old, printing new money that will replace zenny once they rule the City!



FLUFF STORY FOR [OTHER FIGHTING GAMES] GOES HERE

THE CIRCUIT [WIP]

QUOTE GOES HERE

NOTES

- All the fighting games, combat sports, and their tournaments (besides Shadaloo and Street Fighter) go here
- Mention how sports like Cyberball and Formula Zero exist, but that the blood sports are king in the City.
- Allude to Akuma as the ultimate tournament crasher?

SHADALOO / WORLD WARRIOR TOURNAMENT

JUDGEMENT 6 / WORLD FIGHTING TOURNAMENT [WIP]

- Judgement 6 is a X-Syndicate front organization
- Made to capitalize on the World Warrior Tournament but does attract talent
- Fighter combat data is used to train their cyborg super soldier Dural

HOWARD CONNECTION / KING OF FIGHTERS TOURNAMENT

A corp that exists to provide essential services for the zone of South Town. Under the guiding hand of South Town's well-beloved CEO and mayor, Geese Howard, tourism has become a big draw. The annual King of Fighters martial arts tournament hooks in crowds and fighters that might otherwise go to the World Warrior event. Howard is aware that Shadaloo may take this as a challenge, and the part-time underworld kingpin is more than willing to fight if Bison throws down the gauntlet. On the other hand, the King of Fighters does not conflict with similar events hosted by the Mishima Zaibatsu or Ultratech, lending credence to the theory that the trio are colluding to slowly unseat Shadaloo from their majority control over no-holds-barred combat sports market.

MISHIMA ZAIBATSU / KING OF THE IRON FIST TOURNAMENT

This robust conglomerate has a pedigree few corps can match, predating the City by decades. Not even the Crash could kill Heihachi Mishima who restructured the old Mishima Financial Group into a weapons-manufacturing firm based out of their autonomous zone. Their top product is the GunCon brand of premium zappers, but they also sell custom-made robots and other "security solutions". Heihachi serves as a stabilizing influence to the adjacent zones brought under his firm (if cruel) hand, but his ambitious son Kazuya has made no secret of his intentions to take his father's

place. Both father and son are prideful masters of their clan's karate style, so what better time for a changing of the guard than at the climax of the next King of Iron Fist Tournament?

MORTAL KOMBAT [WIP]

- Alluded to in vague terms as an exclusive, top-secret tournament.
- The winner's prize is said to be your greatest desire, but losing means your opponent can take your life. FATALITY.

SATURDAY NIGHT SLAM MASTERS

- All the wrestling games go here
- Biggest wrestling channel/stable(?) in the City
- Pro Wrestling for the NES, Saturday Night Slam Masters/Muscle Bomber, Tecmo World Wrestling, and Fire Pro Wrestling
- Possible wrestlers to name drop: Raiden/Big Bear, King, Andore, Mike Haggar, Abadede, Zangief, R. Mika, Mahler, Big Mahler, Wolf Hawksfield, and Bass & Tina Armstrong
- Wrestling was used as a precursor to a political career for Big Mahler and Mike Haggar

SMASH ENTERTAINMENT [WIP]

SMASH is a media giant specializing in pay-per-view bloodsports. Their name is derived from their most popular show, SMASH TV, in which convicts arrested by the Big Three can apply for the chance to win their freedom... and a new hover car! Whichever celebrity is Master of Ceremonies for that season can make SMASH TV as fair or as sadistically impossible as they choose. Most of their programming are shows that they produce in-house, though they also air footage from the World Video Boxing Association and the World Warrior Tournament. Their ties to Shadaloo aren't well-disguised, as both groups benefit from the scandalous publicity.

NOTES

- Edit section to make SMASH TV the title again?
- Make it so SMASH runs other combat sports too?
- Allude to an occult hand pulling strings behind the scenes (Master Hand)

ULTRATECH / KILLER INSTINCT TOURNAMENT [WIP]

Ultratech: Bunch of Rare stuff goes here.

Saber Wulf, Battletoads, Banjo-Kazooie, Killer Instinct, Donkey Kong Country, Perfect Dark
Mixed bag of talents, but also total powder keg

WORLD VIDEO BOXING ASSOCIATION [WIP]

- Punch Out and other boxing games go here
- Describe insane rules and regulations
- Balrog and TJ Combo used to be boxers with the WVBA

IMAGES AT THE BOTTOM

FLUFF STORY FOR [DOUBLE DRAGON OR RIVER CITY RANSOM] GOES HERE

RIVER CITY [WIP]

"BARF!"

(Section below ported from the Bit Players)

River City isn't all that bad a zone to live in, for a total free-for-all where the gangs run wild. They compete with each other for protection rackets, and if you disrespect the wrong crew, you'll be beaten until you BARF your guts out. WilyCorp lets them get away with it because it's self-contained, gun deaths are low, and none of them are smart enough to disconnect River City from Wily's power grid. The Black Warriors and Sanwakai maintain a presence here to recruit new blood or to bloody new recruits. They're both interested in "Slick", a charismatic young tough who has the ears of the gangs, and might be the one to bring them all together. On the other hand, if Slick falls, then River City will need a new top dog to replace him.

NOTES

- Expand on the above section/delete it and work from scratch.
- Page is themed on and derived from multiple beat 'em up games in the same family: The Kunio-Kun/River City series, the Double Dragon games, and Combatribes.
- River City is a free-for-all zone that was taken over by the gangs as the major corporations backed out. The zone is a shadow of its former self. Water & power are kept on by WilyCorp, expenses being paid for by the Sanwakai?
- The Double Dragons, Billy and Jimmy, used to be the top street brawlers in town. However, they made themselves scarce after their dojo was targeted by the Black Warriors. They're believed to be dead or in hiding.
- Zone is cut up into subdistricts, if not fought over on a street-by-street basis.
- Firearms are rare in this zone. Hard to smuggle them past the concrete walls surrounding the zone, and the locals don't take kindly to them. Melee weapons are preferred.
- Each gang has their own reason for staying in this decaying urban zone.

SLICK'S GANG

- Taking heavy cues from The Warriors.
- Kaleidoscope of sub-gangs. Disaffected young toughs held together by Slick's charisma.
- Not very bright or organized, but they outnumber the other gangs by sheer volume.
- Slick may or may not have PSI powers.
- His most powerful enforcers are the Dragon Twins, two would-be successors to the legacy of the Double Dragons.

BLACK WARRIORS

The Black Warriors started when a two-bit biker named Willy Mackey was lucky enough to squeeze on the colony ships before they took off. As the only member of his group to make the cut, Willy Mackey took his fortune as a second chance to become the somebody he never was on Earth. After years of training, "Machine Gun Willy" honed his fighting skills and united a horde of raiders who travel from zone to zone like a pack of wolves. Willy convinced himself that he had it all, until he heard rumors of the "Sou-Setsu-Ken" that could give him the strength of two dragons. Now Willy's gang are hellbent on finding the last masters of the "Double Dragon" style for him.

- Clean up the above section?

SANWAKAI

- Yakuza successor, fusion of gang and corporate clique. Ruled by Sabu.
- Their goal is to stabilize the zone so that corporate investors will return to it.
- Allegedly deal weapons into River City, including firearms from Shadaloo and Kazakh.

GROUND ZEROES

- Heavily augmented gang of cyborgs and augment junkies.
- Leader is Martha Splatterhead.



The man stopped eating.

That hasn't happened yet. He'd downed at least eight cans of Tapper's Vilest but compared to the greasy mountain he was putting away you'd hardly think he came here for a drink. Food had flowed into his gullet like gutter grime in a hurricane, but for the first time the fork hit the plate without coming back up again.

"Yeah I was a PAC Man. What about it?" The man was gruff, clipped, offering no purchase with a word he said. It was a voice that promised few happy endings to this conversation, and that all of them involved him getting back to his food.

The young tough showed no signs of taking the hint. "Heh, just surprised is all." The greaser said, in the voice of every damn fool looking to score street cred. "Merc gets a name like yours, I'd think they'd have a background more impressive than a street cleaner."

There was silence in the bar now. Every patron became very interested in their beer, or their neighbor, or the smoke-stained wallpaper. Even the jukebox seemed quieter than usual, a halfhearted synthetic jingle sputtering out.

"Is that what you think, eh?" The PAC Man said, gently pushing himself back from the bar.

The punch caught the youth square in the jaw, but it was nothing compared to the rifle butt that hit him a second later. He would have hit the ground, hard, if the man hadn't grabbed him by the collar. The man lifted him with no apparent effort, carrying him to the door and throwing him out without so much as a second glance.

A reverential silence fell over the bar. After a few seconds, the man pulled up his stool, and downed a beer in a single swig.

"Let me tell you a story about my friends." This hadn't happened before either.

"Bill was a pokey little guy. Allergies like you wouldn't believe. Never did find out to what. Maybe whatever his supplier was giving him that week. He was a good guy, knew how to hold his liquor, but we always knew he was off in his own place. Always sneezin, always coughin, always blinkin. That's what we called him."

"Jim would never meet your eyes. Or maybe that was just me, I dunno. But he was always scribblin. Writin, drawin. Never knew what he'd come up with next. He knew how shit this world was I guess, wanted ta hide in a better one."

"Sue... ahhh Sue. She was a girl. A minx! Not like the girls you find now. She had class in er. Somewhere. Still, that's not to say she didn't end up with every guy she knew. Called er Pinky. Guess why. Thought she was sweet on me a couple times, but she always went back to Clyde."

"Clyde was the boss. We all knew it. Always roped the rest into whatever scheme he had going. Got me too sometimes, if I didn't have the money to do anything better."

The man stopped then, reaching into one of the pockets in his flak jacket. A little bottle, a big pill, and both were gone as fast as you noticed they were there. He sighed.

"They weren't the best friends. But they still talked to me. That's better than you get, as a PAC Man. Still gave a damn. Took me drinking. Till one night I had ta work an extra shift. Got a beer for the road. Two. Four. Left em at the bar, started my route. Hopped in my big round beast, caution yellow like some kinda sick joke."

"Ya try not to think too much. About what you're doin. It's just a job, ya get it done. So I don't know why I noticed. After it was too late. Musta been headed back, after drinkin. Saw em clear as day, saw em goin in, saw em sprawled out one second and gone the next. Saw their faces. Saw the... looks on their faces."

The man, bigger than anything else in the room, seemed to hunch in on himself.

"I still see em. Still see em sometimes. Outta the corner a my eye. At night. Sometimes. They're chasin me, I think. Won't stop."

A gentle tinkle was heard as a mug fell onto the ground and cracked.

"Ah crap."

"Put it on my tab Taps, I'm good for it."

The barman nodded.

It was at that point that one of the bravest men in the bar, maybe bravest men in The City, spoke up. He'd killed someone that evening, might be killing someone else later, but for the moment he was talking soft like a newborn lamb.

"What... what happens to them?" He asked.

"Heh heh heh heh heh." The man half laughed, half coughed. He hacked and spat onto his empty plate.

"You know what happens to em. We all know what happens to em, even if you can tell yourself different. I know the factories I took em to. I know what Eggman makes in there. I even opened one of em' up once, just ta make sure. It was right inside the metal, jiggling, twitching."

"Sometimes I wonder if it mighta been Clyde."

A few minutes later the man walked out of the bar, and saw the kid still lying on the ground where he'd left him. Probably a broken jaw. The PAC Man looked down at him for a minute. Then, he hailed a cab. Night was coming, and nobody deserved to be on the streets.

They'd be out soon.

BIT PLAYERS [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

These are a selection of noteworthy groups not big enough to be household names, but certainly worth keeping track of. You never know when they'll become your problem.

ARSPACE DYNAMICS

An aerospace company hailing from the Lylat System. They were a Cornerian military contractor that relocated to the City following the end of the Lylat Wars. Arspace specializes in the construction of spacecraft, armaments, and cargo transport for those needing to move goods between planets. Many of their pilots are former Cornerian Army staff, paid well to protect their goods against the ex-Venomian pirates that plague the commercial space lanes. Years later, they remain one of the biggest employers of uplifts. Arspace's biggest orders come from WilyCorp, who prefers them as an alternative to buying rockets and satellites from Metpharm.

A.T.A.R.I.

The Allied Terrestrials Against Reckless Industry (A.T.A.R.I) are an anti-corp group that have resurfaced and gone to ground over the years, becoming more extreme with each failed attempt by the Big Three to stamp them out. Most of the members are "old guard", those who remember Earth and wish to return to a world where the corps aren't in charge. Their preferred kits are salvaged stocks of pre-Crash guns and gear that can't be traced to any corp suppliers. The explosives they use are also too old to dent modern heavy armor, but they work just fine on unarmored targets.

BERZERKERS

More a horror story that hardened gangsters tell each other to keep them up at night than anything based in fact, the Automated Berzerkers were a line of discount security robots that saw use during the colony fleet years. Something went wrong with their cheap robo brains and the bots went maverick before the word really took off, killing anything alive until they were taken down. They say one escaped into the City, a twisted Auto who carved a smile on his yellow face plate with a thermal knife. So if you're alone after dark, watch out for Evil Otto...

BURGERTIME

BurgerTime is a ubiquitous chain restaurant in the City. It was founded by a savvy and ruthless chef named Peter Pepper, who ate up the competition during the megacorp scramble. BurgerTime provides fast food that's dirt cheap and mostly edible, catering to customers who figure they won't live to see the long-term consequences of eating it. The sanitation standards at BurgerTime, like the stability of their clientele, hovers below the bare minimum to call the cops. As much as people joke that their food will walk away if you let it cool, the workers at BurgerTime have witnessed so much violence on the clock that they wouldn't react if it did. Or they'd beat the food down with a table leg until it crawled back between the buns.

F-ZERO RACING LEAGUE

F-Zero is the most popular racing event in the City, acting as a step up from the slower-paced sport of F-1. Racers drive in finely-tuned cars equipped with g-diffusers over magnetized track, allowing them to move at speeds exceeding the sound barrier. F-ZERO draws in countless fans to watch these turbocharged death traps ram through each other. Racers who survive a few cups are sure to develop a following, though eternal fame and fortune await only the grand champ. As maintaining a car for F-ZERO is a very costly endeavor, most racers rely on corporate sponsorships or partake in side hustles such as bounty hunting to pay the bills.

GALAXY COMPUTERS

In addition to producing their own mainframe supercomputers, personal electronics, and proprietary "C-Life" intelligences, Galaxy Computers maintains what remains of the S.I.M.'s telecommunication terminals scattered across the City, providing a semblance of network access on the behalf of corporate zones with interconnected service. Their research into substantiating electronic data into physical matter was applied to great effect by Silph Co, who contained the Pokemon outbreak in Neo Kanto as raw information on PCs. This groundbreaking success emboldened Galaxy's visionary owner, Dr. Suzuhei Yoshiyama, to develop EUREKA, a prototype materialization device he insists will one day blur the line between the real and digital.

KAZAKH FEDERATION

To the east of WilyCorp territory lies the Kazakh Federation, a fortified zone that identifies itself as a successor to the late USSR. While wearing the trappings and iconography of their predecessor, Kazakh is a theocratic state devoted to an elusive being known as Grandmaster Meio. Seeing that WilyCorp has embargoed the zone for pirating his bioroid schematics, the largest trade partner of Kazakh is none other than Shadaloo. Seeing them as a threat to be monitored, but too heavily-defended to invade, Dr. Wily has commissioned the mercenary group known as the Striders to infiltrate the Kazakh Federation and sabotage them on his behalf.

LIN KUEI

While they do not call themselves ninja, this Chinese assassin order is one of the few that have resisted integration by ZEED or the Striders, managing to retain a unique identity for themselves within the cutthroat ecosystem of the City. The Lin Kuei are known as remorseless mercenaries by trade, for those aware of the reclusive clan's reputation. While the clan's supernatural bloodlines dating back centuries have granted the Lin Kuei an edge over their competition, there is a growing concern their tired and tested methods are showing their age. Already, steps are being taken to improve the efficiency of their assassins with state-of-the-art cyberware.

METRO CITY

A bustling Americatown bordering WilyCorp's east coast. If you can make it here, then you can make it anywhere. Metro City is connected to the WilyCorp power grid, but bioroids don't patrol the streets like they do in Monsteropolis. They even run local elections, a quaint tradition that the American immigrants hold on to with pride. The mayor is former pro wrestler Mike "Macho" Haggar, who was voted in on promises to protect human workers from bioroid automation and defend citizens from rampant street crime. Unlike the heel in charge of Armstone City, Big Mahler, Haggar delivered on his word, making an enemy of WilyCorp rep Belger and the Mad Gear Gang that have ruled Metro City for years. Unless the mayor changes course, retaliation is inevitable.

NOOK HOMES

Nook Homes is a real estate business specializing in low income housing for the city's uplift population. They're known for two things: Being one of the few exclusively family-run operations to make it big in The City, and their predatory lending practices. Tom Nook has been at the head of the business since he founded it. He runs a hard bargain, but he can be bargained with. For those who try to muscle into his territory, he'll fight back. Nook's uplift enforcers aren't very well equipped due to his skinflint tendencies, though they make up for it in brutal intimidation tactics and their ability to hide any number of lethal weapons on their person.

ORANGE STAR AND BLUE MOON

A pair of mercenary outfits with a reputation of mutual hatred. They used to have different names, but the armies-for-hire were more known by the colors and symbols worn by their grunts than the old titles were dropped. Their bad blood stems from Old Earth enmities -- Orange Star uses NATO gear and Blue Moon's Eastern Bloc -- but both groups now use cut-down, "mini" vehicles a fraction of the size of their pre-Crash counterparts. If you hire one to fight on your behalf, there's a chance your enemy will hire their other half to balance the scales. It's either a remnant of a bitter rivalry that refuses to fade away, or the greatest marketing ploy the City has ever seen.

P.A.C. MEN

One of the most profitable and least desirable jobs in the City is that of the P.A.C. Man. These people are hired to drive Personal Asset Collectors, or P.A.C.s, massive vehicles that sweep the streets at night. As the urban counterpart of the M.U.L.E., the P.A.C.s process any matter in their way so it can be recycled. That includes garbage, rubble, and any unfortunate biomatter that gets lost between the indiscriminate jaws of the ravenous P.A.C. machine. Many zones have a P.A.C. driver, and it doesn't take intensive training to operate the trucks, but one does not truly "become" a P.A.C. Man until a bad shift results in them taking a life behind the wheel. The P.A.C. Men are haunted, to a man, chased by ghosts that the pills can only keep away for so long.

REGULAR ARMY

For those who want a professional force not sullied by unprofessional grudges, Regular Army is your best bet. They prefer to gather intelligence before going in for the kill with special forces. When the corps are too busy to deal with dangerous gangs and terrorist groups cutting into their bottom line, Regular Army is available to pick up the slack. However, the company has recently suffered a major setback with the controversial dismissal of their premier general, Donald Morden. Citing a personal bone to pick with upper management, General Morden has taken his most loyal soldiers with him in a mass exodus of Regular Army. The PMC's feud-free status may be challenged, should the rebellious Morden resurface heading an army of his own.

SHINRA ELECTRIC

The Shinra Electric Power Company is a megacorp that filled the hole in energy production that came with the collapse of S.I.M. network. Seeking to alleviate the rolling blackouts that plagued their home zone of Midgar, Shinra built several geothermal reactors that produce large quantities of electricity at incredibly low prices. With an output comparable to the power plants of the Big Three, Shinra exports the surplus power to other zones for cheap and constructs additional reactors in adjacent territory. This does not sit well with Avalanche, an eco-terrorist group who decry Shinra's borderline-charitable actions as a threat to the planet's ability to sustain life.

SPACE CHANNEL 5

Space Broadcasting Station Co. No. 05 is the largest interstellar broadcasting company to have cropped up around the City. The Space Channels use their satellites spread across Hyrule's orbit and other worlds with human colonies, to gather information on the newest crises as they unfold. These highly-competitive stations are ruthless in their acquisition of the latest breaking news, and will readily launch shuttles into disaster zones so their reporters can be the first to break it. Space Channel 5 are obligated to skew things towards their corporate sponsors to avoid being pulled, but their unlicensed counterpart, a rogue broadcaster known as the "Space Pirate Channel", has no such restraints.

TAPPER'S

Not the first of its kind, nor the last, Tapper's is a seedy hole-in-the-wall whose patrons come from all walks of life. Legbreakers, hitmen, mercenaries. Thieves, fencers. A covert executive, a celebrity in disguise. Newcomers aren't attracted to Tapper's because of the cheap beer. Thanks to its relative anonymity, the bar serves as a neutral ground for those searching for work to network with people looking to get a job done. It's also a fair place to disappear for a few hours and forget the woes of the City, at least until closing time. Fighting on the property frowned upon, lest the drinking hole attract the wrong kind of attention. If you're gonna kill a guy for looking at you funny, please make them into a chalk outline *outside* of the building.

UMBRELLA CORPORATION

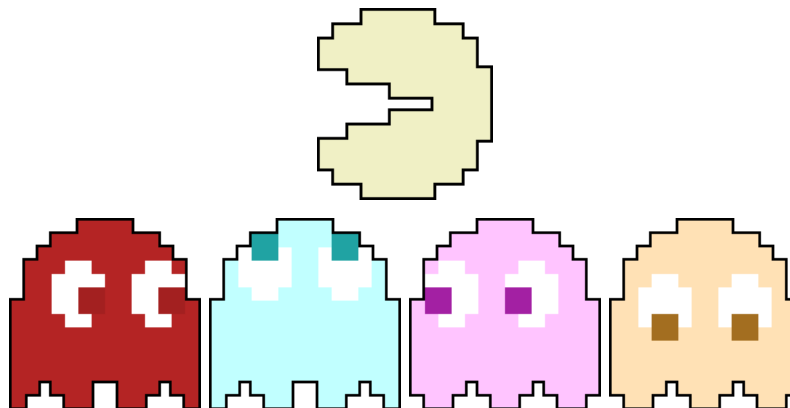
For those living in WilyCorp territory, the Umbrella Corporation serves as a more accessible alternative to the monolith of chemicals and pharmaceuticals that is Metpharm. They began their success with producing novel medicines mixed from the curative herbs native to the planet, and Umbrella expanded outwards from that humble niche in the new and dramatic direction of bio-organic research. Umbrella is a patron of Dr. Wily's S.T.A.R.S. program and Raccoon City Zone, from which the company sources the unique plants of the Arklay Mountains region.

VORTEX FARMS

Vortex Farms is an aquaculture firm that cultivates large arthropods in tanks off the coast of Lunar Bay. Unlike most of the fauna, these creatures are docile, edible, nutritious, and simply taste *good*. Each generation has grown larger than the last, giving Vortex ample cause to brush off the fact they don't know why. Large Vortex bugs that escape their tanks become feral ambush predators, and the ones that remain in captivity have taken to staring at their handlers as a collective. The only predators that keep the "wild Vortex" in check are mutant dolphins that got loose, a feral dead-end of uplift research that pulverizes its prey with sonar blasts.

WARIO BROS PLUMBING

An exceptionally shameless impostor of the famous Mario Bros, Wario Bros' claim to fame is that they reliably overcharge and underdeliver with every service rendered. The owner, who legally had his name changed to Wario, is a talented plumber when he's incensed or incentivised enough to get out of his chair and do the job himself. Most of the time, Wario is content to send a legion of plumber apprentices down to do his dirty work. They'll work until they all perish or perform decently enough to call it a day. In either case, it's the Wario Bros ethos that all transactions are final, whether you're happy or not. Wario also funds expeditions into Pipeworks and Outlands ruins on the side. You take the risks, and he takes the reward.



FLUFF STORY FOR [PIPEWORKS] GOES HERE

THE PIPEWORKS [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"There's something down in the pipes..."

In the same way that The City started small and became bigger than anyone could imagine, the Pipeworks began with a simple idea: The crap has to go *somewhere*. As such, the maintenance infrastructure laid down by S.I.M. and the Lemmings became the foundation for the Pipeworks. When S.I.M. was taken offline, the Lemmings were left to their own devices with the simple remaining directive to keep building downward. The further the Lemmings descended into the underground, the more alien and byzantine their designs became. Initial schematics for the layouts of gas and water pipes were corrupted by ambient radiation until the Lemmings dug into veins of lava. Workmen coming down expected tunnels that would be easily accessible by foot or hovercraft. Instead, they were met with gargantuan pipe mazes that meant certain death for the unprepared.

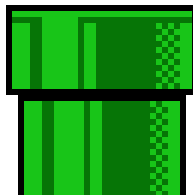
The size and scale of the Pipeworks mirrors the City, flipped upside-down. Rather than reaching up to the sky, the Pipeworks carve a path down to the molten depths of Hyrule. There isn't a straight path one can take from top to bottom, as the pipes intersect and zig-zag in ways that boggle the mind. Pipes sticking out of the street can be entered to reach the underground, but there's no telling how deep they'll take you. Those stranded in the Pipes have tried to climb tubes facing towards the surface to escape, only for those pipes to take a sharp turn the other way. The only way to reliably get out of the Pipeworks is to know exactly which exit you're looking for, or go back the way you came. With the tendency for some pipes to seemingly rise and fall out of the ground of their own volition, the stable ones shouldn't be taken for granted.

Considering how easy it is to become lost, it shouldn't be any wonder that people use it to get off the grid. Those trying to escape the corps, the gangs, or themselves find that the pipes are perfect for performing a disappearing act. There are many people on the "Upper Pipes" who were evicted from their homes on the surface and had nowhere else to go. In this sense, the Pipeworks act as solace from the City for folks who are too deep into the urban zones to make a break for the Outlands. Or, being more realistic, people who wouldn't know how to survive if they were forced to survive in genuine wilderness. The Pipeworks still performs its intended task in its current state, collecting mass quantities of trash that gets reused by the pipe inhabitants.

The waste that sees the most vibrant second life is the toxic kind. Chemical runoff and biohazardous dreck always make their way into the overburdened sewage systems, percolating into mutagenic concoctions in the Pipeworks. Mutants are plentiful in the Pipeworks, having been victims of corporate negligence and outcasts run out of the City for what they had become. The flora and fauna native to the planet weren't spared mutation; the monsters adapt to it, or die trying. Many a fool has died chasing after mutant shrooms for the biggest high in the City.

In the City, being a plumber is a dangerous job, but someone's gotta pull on their overalls and do it. Lying somewhere between a repair man, an urban explorer, and a military-grade pest exterminator, a plumber in the year 20XX is expected to do it all and more. When your top-budget troubleshooters are beaten to death by pock-marked frog men during a failed attempt to unclog your drain, it's time to step aside and let a plumber do what they do best. Your average plumbing business is small, maybe even family-owned. The operators have been doing this for decades, using hard-earned experience and secret shortcuts they've collected over the years to make the most dangerous jobs seem mundane. Copycats have come and gone, each trying to cut corners to make themselves seem appealing to the Big Three. What they don't understand is that these megacorps look at these quaint family businesses and are content to leave them be. After all, agitating these pipe savants is a quick way to end up with atomic sewage backing up into your penthouse.

Going by the name "Marino Bros Plumbing" until the "n" fell off the sign, the Mario Bros are the most infamous plumbing operation in the City. Consisting of only two brothers, they've outlasted several larger and corporate-backed plumbers, carving out a name for themselves as the best of the best. Having mapped out an impressive portion of the pipes on their own, the Mario Bros survive on a keen eye, a steady hand, and enough firepower to level a hab block. Despite their outlandish effectiveness at what they do, the pair still charge the same humble prices they did when they first set up shop, although the queue for their services would be long enough to circle a Zone twice over if it were physical. Getting their help is a pipe dream for most, but very occasionally they'll take time out of their day to lend a hand where the sewers don't flow.



NOTES / Stuff to merge in

Write more on plumbers in the Pipeworks section. How they work, why they work in pairs (or with mechanized assistance like Sophia III or Lady Bug mini tanks), "toad houses" being shelters maintained in the Pipes for plumbers to use while they're on missions, and why "plumbers don't wear ties" (work directly for corps). List not only the Mario Bros as famous plumbers, but other famous pairs like the Giana Sisters or Bub & Bob. Then there's oddballs like Mr. Do.

Put the Mario Bros in the Liberty City Zone OR Metro City?

Move/Merge Wario Bros writeup here?

Elaborate on friction between plumbers & mutants

Survival in the Pipes. Tinning kits, lamps and other light sources to keep the grues away, hunting Wumpuses for sustenance, etc etc.

Line to insert:

Many an amateur spelunker has met their untimely end via hordes of swarming keese, large rocks landing on their heads, fatally slipping on keese guano, or misjudging a jump and falling to their deaths.

FLUFF STORY FOR [KOOA KINGDOM] GOES HERE

KOOPA KINGDOMS [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"Your princess is in another castle."

When the colony ships first dropped from the sky and made way for the first skyscrapers of what would become the City, their arrival pushed out native fauna that were present. The creatures of Hyrule are nothing if not hardy. Rather than go extinct, the most stubborn of them were driven underground. It would take decades of radioactive runoff from the Pipeworks to trigger a massive die-off of subterranean flora, fauna, and fungi, but what didn't perish quickly adapted to their mutated environment in new and terrifying ways.

One of the most notorious species to flourish in this exotic biosphere are the koopas. The koopas are bipedal, humanoid reptiles spawned from toxic waste triggering rapid mutation in the slow, but persistent bottomfeeders known as "shellcreepers". The koopas are larger and more intelligent than their primitive counterparts that still haunt the upper Pipes, most of which are capable of using tools and speaking broken English. As the years passed, the koopas created a semblance of civilization under the streets, with the people above the Pipes remaining none the wiser to it.

Atop the koopa hierarchy stands the pinnacle of their kind. A massive, mutant behemoth, the uncontested King Koopa who has taken on the name of "Bowser" for himself. He is one of the strongest mutants in the whole of the Pipeworks, with powers that can only barely be explained as a result of burgeoning psionic abilities. Primarily above them is an indomitable aura that bends the rest of the koopas and most other mutated wildlife of the Pipeworks to his will. Bowser knows the koopas owe their existence to the people of the surface and that, if discovered, said surface-dwellers would wipe them out without a second thought. For this reason, the Koopa King has united the underworld of mutants under his black and red banner.

The Koopa Kingdom is a feudal state nestled deep into the planet. Stone castles and walls are built atop the lava flows swelteringly close to the City's molten core. Slaves toil in hellishly hot mines to dig up caches of gold and press them into coins for the draconic king's hoard. Bowser's dominion is divided into eight fiefdoms ruled by seven "Koopalings" generals and himself.

Life within the Koopa Kingdom is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Their society places koopas on top and all other creatures at the bottom, but koopas and non-koopas alike are worked to the bone by Koopalings competing for their lord's favor. They lead warbands against the surface, collecting trophies and war spoils as Bowser's tribute. The Koopa Troops are supported by mutant beasts they have tamed or enslaved. Ramshackle missile drones and walking bombs have also trickled down from the surface, further supplementing the numbers of the raiding horde.

At these depths, the Pipes are more pervasive and eccentric than anywhere else, jutting out at strange angles and full of surprises. The natives have adapted to these conditions incredibly well, developing an innate knack for which pipes are safe and when something might already be passing through. Mushrooms of all sorts thrive in the dark, humid depths of the Koopa Kingdom, flourishing and taking on properties more akin to animals than fungi. These toadstools and other creatures not in the Koopa King's sway are more benign than hostile, though they too will broker little disrespect from outsiders not accustomed to their ways.

For all of the danger lurking beneath their feet, the City above is all too ignorant of the threat they pose to surface life. The squabbling megacorps are too fractious to form a united front against the underground menace, and the raiding Koopas cover their tracks too well to be considered a major threat. They restrict their attacks to the humans who have made the upper Pipes and zones that have fallen to neglect their homes, with any remaining evidence of their attacks being misattributed to mutant gang activity. Only the hardest of plumbers have journeyed deep enough to see the Koopa Kingdom and made it back to the surface alive, no doubt greatly shaken by the experience and sorely tempted into an early retirement.

The magikoopas of Bowser's court predict the time for them to claim the surface world draws near. They read the geometric runes and watch the mushrooms. The toadstools know when their Princess from the surface world shall come, and the two realms will become one under Bowser's rule.



STUFF TO ADD

- Diversify the landscapes of the Koopa Kingdoms.
- Add our ideas for stars/power stars: Magical subterranean suns that illuminate the underground kingdoms and give them life. Like in hollow Earth fiction.
- Bowser is collecting these stars to increase his power, depriving these kingdoms of their capacity to sustain life in turn.

KOOPA KINGDOMS TO MAYBE NAMEDROP IN THE WRITEUP: MUSHROOM KINGDOM (GRASSLANDS), SUBCON, SARASALAND (DESERT), DINOSAUR LAND/YOSHI'S ISLAND, SKY WORLD/SKYLAND (KID ICARUS), BIG ISLAND, PIPE MAZE, DARK LANDS/DARKLANDS

FLUFF STORY FOR [CHAOS CULTS] GOES HERE

CHAOS CULTS [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

"WHEN A BLACK MOON SHINES, LIGHT AND DARK BREAK APART, THE KING OF DARKNESS HOWLS."

The megacorps, as a general rule, are secular. They have a hands-off approach in regards to most of the faiths and belief systems that survived the Crash or metastasized after it. It typically isn't any of their concern, and cracking down too harshly on religious freedoms can result in backlash that the corps would rather not bother with. On the other end, a few of them have collaborated with local religious institutions for mutual benefit. As long as the power of their backers remains unquestioned, there is no friction between church and corpo state.

This is where the Chaos Cults distinguish themselves from less dangerous systems of worship. Though many of them claim that they can trace their histories back centuries (or even millennia) before the Invader Wars, these groups only arose in prominence after the City of Light was founded. These cabals grew in the shadows of the corps, numbers flourishing in the dark. While the finer details vary, they all sold their followers three simple truths: The material world is powerless against the whirling maelstrom of Chaos, the City is doomed to fall to sin, and salvation must be earned by sacrifice. Several waves of sabotage, arson, and insurrection against the corps followed. Once the cults were outed as the source, they were swiftly banned.

A mere ban against the Chaos Cults was not enough to break the sway they held over the faithful. When the cults went underground, their acolytes followed. The Pipeworks became the new home of these fel compacts, where they could perform their rituals away from the prying eyes of the unenlightened layman on the surface. The Chaos Cults only return to the City on occasion, searching for new aspirants or potential offerings to their dark masters when they are certain that no trace was left of their illicit actions. WilyCorp is the most persistent in investigating cult activity, having commissioned the Special Tactics and Rescue Service (S.T.A.R.S.) for the purposes of keeping the cults and other seditious organizations under control.

The prevalence of mutants within the Chaos Cults had been levied as an explanation for the otherwise inexplicable phenomena said to follow these groups. The Chaos Cults claim that their faith allows them to call upon powers beyond mortal ken. Spells and invocations bequeathed to those who give their pound of flesh, offer their blood, or sell their immortal souls to the lower powers they're devoted to. These patently ridiculous claims are refuted by the Big Three and other corps, who point to any number of alternative explanations to write off the Chaos Cults as savage mobs of extremists led along by shysters and lunatics.

Make no mistake. The power behind the Chaos Cults is all too real. As real as the threat their prophecies represent to the fate of the City, should they succeed in bringing them to fruition.

BLACK MOON TRIBE

The Black Moon Tribe were the first of this new wave of cults, a horde of fringe lunatics led by a demagogue with the dual aliases of "Jaquio" and "Guardia de Mieux". Jaquio's explanation for the woes plaguing the City were that the world is host to a legion of demons that urge men to vice. Those who die without placating these fiends have only eternal torment to look forward to in the afterlife, but to join the Black Moon Tribe and give offerings to their King of Darkness is to place oneself on the path to transcendence. Only by fully embracing the ways of Chaos and becoming a demon yourself can one avoid such a terrible fate, and with his proclamation, the first Chaos Cult was born. Jaquio foresees the time of His return, now more than ever, but the tribe must "unite the light and shadow" before the Black Moon can rise above the planet. The City is going to Hell, if not now, then soon, so why not join the winning team while the getting is good?

BROTHERHOOD OF NOD

A guerilla army that downplays the mystical aspects of their faith in favor of machine guns, missile launchers, and as many mototanks as it takes to get the point across. The Brotherhood of Nod present themselves as the voice for the voiceless and the power for the powerless, being the most militant cult in their struggle against the corporate overlords. They see the mutagenic elements deep in the Pipeworks and Outlands as key to the next stage of human evolution; mutants and other fringe populations who would be ostracized by "normal" society are welcomed into the Brotherhood of Nod as cannon fodder. Another cornerstone of the Nod faith is its charismatic leader, Kane, who they see as an immortal prophet who will lead them to a new era. By their own boasts, the united Brotherhood forces will bring the City to its knees, but infighting between Nod generals has thus far prevented that lofty goal from being accomplished.

RING OF GAEA

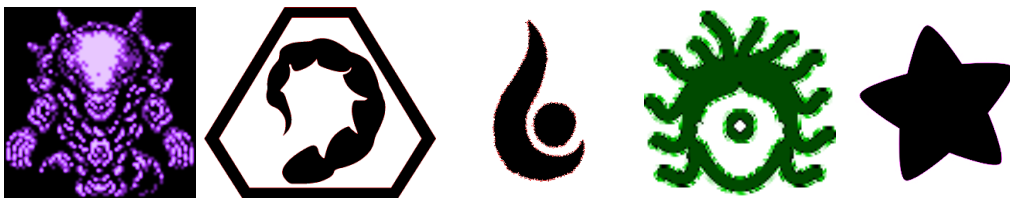
The Ring of Gaea wholeheartedly advocates for a "return to nature": A society of constant struggle, in which only the strong leave their mark upon the world. Besides their primary worship of the fallen angel Lucifer, the Gaians acknowledge a diverse pantheon of mythological beings that "survived" Earth's apocalypse. Demons, fairies, and pagan gods alike, brought together into a syncretized army united against the established Order. These soldiers of Chaos will rekindle mankind's collective spirit of defiance that had been beaten and reshaped into blind obedience to the Man. Unsurprisingly, the Gaeans' anti-authority protests and violent actions led to the Ring of Gaea receiving a ban that their ideological rivals, the Order of Messiah, did not. The Messians provide food and shelter to the poor in exchange for their prayer and obedience to the powers-that-be. This open-handed charity has made the Order of Messiah far more palatable and easier for the megacorps to accept than the Ring's middle finger.

MEDUSANS

For the Medusans, Neo-Hellenists who identify with the mythological gorgon of the same name, their consignment to the Underworld wasn't just a blessing in disguise: It was a sign of providence. This chthonic cult is composed of outcasts who had been wronged or abandoned by the surface. They worship Medusa as a victim-turned-monster that climbed atop a mountain of dead Olympians and declared herself a new, vengeful goddess. To that end, the cult is extremely territorial over the ancient temples they have claimed as Hers. Their levels of the Pipeworks are guarded not only by human followers, but the strange beasts that the Medusa cult has developed an affinity for. The less hostile communes of Medusans, while wary of outsiders, are willing to trade the exclusive eggplants from their hydroponic gardens. The most extreme Medusians would relish nothing less than a retaking of the "Skyworld" that had forsaken them, which they believe would allow Medusa to spread her benevolent darkness over the entire planet.

CULT OF THE GREAT DEVOURER

The most sinister Black Moon Tribesman would not dare cross their path. Champions of the Ring of Gaia wouldn't dare test their might against their twisted spirits. Those who entrust their fate in Medusa's serpentine tresses know to steer clear of those who follow He Who is Shaped Like a Friend. They're the cultists of the Great Devourer, a disparate horde whose minds were broken by a vast being they refer to as the Keeper of the Gate. By encountering the Great Devourer in their dreams, their prior notions of sanity were shattered by impacting against his endless edifice. They became obsessed with becoming "closer" to his infinite roundness, surgically removing extraneous ears and noses, replacing their faces with smooth plates. Followers of the Great Devourers are utterly unpredictable in all ways but their voracious appetites, the hedonistic bedlamites gluttonously consuming anything they can get their hands on. Not only as another means to more firmly commit themselves to the Great Devourer, but to temporarily forget the oppressive despair that overwhelms them with each restless return to the Dreamlands...



FLUFF STORY FOR [CARAVAN OF DREAMS] GOES HERE

CARAVAN OF DREAMS [WIP]

"One Man's Trash..."

Notes

- The Caravan of Dreams is a vagrant group of humans, mutants, and mavericks that traverses the upper pipes for food that is safe to forage and reusable materials. They don't have a lot, but they have each other. Peaceful, but will defend against aggressors.
- They are very rarely attacked because the Caravan is guarded by a powerful cyborg known as "King" Dedede. The name came from the stutter that comes out when he tries to say whatever his old name was. Dedede has been with the group since its inception. No one knows where he came from, though they assume he's an senile veteran from the Invader Wars whose brain was left to rot. While that's half the truth, the rest of Dedede exists in the Dreamlands.
- The Dreamlands are a dimension of limitless thought and energy that has existed at least as long as human beings have, if not longer. Most people only interface with this realm through their dreams, forgetting most of what they see there. An exceptionally powerful will and an "open mind" can express Dreamland energy in the waking world. The Dreamlands is the missing link between the otherwise distinct phenomena of magic, chi, and PSI.
- Dedede has a very powerful connection to the Dreamlands, where most of his lucidity is tied up in his alternate, dreaming persona. This makes him especially insightful in the affairs of the Dreamlands but limited in his capacity to express it.
- The Caravan is followed by the king's mysterious "knight", a living shadow distinguished only by a mask, sword, and bat-like wings. Dedede calls it Me-ta. If this being's nature is understood by anyone, then it's Dedede and he keeps it close to the chest. Me-ta only appears to come out after the Caravan's skirmishes with the Cult of the Great Devourer.

FLUFF STORY FOR [DIG DUG] GOES HERE

DRILLERS [WIP]

Notes

- Dig-Dug / Mr. Driller reference
- Society of former tunnel maintenance workers and their families who were forced to live underground to maintain the massive machinery beneath the City. Without S.I.M. directing Lemmings to do all of the building and fixing, the work of controlling the flow of gas, water, and electricity went to the Drillers.
- Without S.I.M. to micromanage the flow of water and gas throughout the City, the colossal duty of regulating these functions and creating new tunnels went to a corps of drillers. As an elevator shaft many miles down into the Pipeworks would be very difficult to pull off, the Drillers had to move underground with their families for 24-hour access to their jobs.
- While the pay was high at first, it went down over the years with safety standards. The Drillers went on strike due to dirt wages and intolerable working conditions. When their demands weren't met and the corps responded with force, the Drillers outright revolted.
- The Drillers had a short term conflict with the corps that pushed them into the underground in the first place. After a few tunnel skirmishes it became clear that the Drillers were going to hold their ground and make continued fighting very unprofitable in the long term. As more fighting meant further difficulties for the topsiders, an agreement was met.
- The Driller Commune was able to negotiate for their freedom and constant access to their essentials in exchange for performing their services for the City. If the corps don't keep their end of the bargain, then the City suffers for it.
- Largest/major Driller settlement is called Downtown.
- Explain the difference between Drillers and plumbers, and why they get annoyed when people confuse them.



FLUFF STORY FOR [OUTLANDS] GOES HERE

THE OUTLANDS [WIP, PENDING REVISIONS]

The City was not built in a day. With the first wave of would-be uplift settlers never reaching their intended destination, mankind's survival hinged on finding anyone willing to take their place. The colony fleet needed boots on the ground to operate the M.U.L.E.s, and oversee the Lemmings as they built what would become the future home of humanity. In the end, this critical task fell to a ragtag assemblage of convicted criminals and volunteer trailblazers. Anyone who wanted a clean break from their past (or simply tired of the claustrophobic accommodations aboard the cramped *Arkanoid* ships) merely had to ask to receive a ticket with the second settler fleet.

Once the colonists arrived, the planet they landed on was not what they were told to expect. Hyrule was round, and the air was breathable, but that was where the similarities to Earth tapered off. This new world was covered in rough wildlands, craggy mountains, and sweeping deserts that were harsh in the extreme. It was as though a great disaster had already swept over the land before humanity stepped foot on it. As another unwanted surprise to the settlers, the planet was already inhabited by intelligent, alien natives who saw the Earthlings as unwanted competition. That wasn't including the wild beasts that would prey on with what they saw as an easy meal. The Herculean task of taming the frontier and laying the foundations for the City fell to those who could brave the hostile ecosystem, and only a fraction of them would survive the first year.

For a few lucky settlers, the main fleet reaching the colony world was a welcome relief. They toughed out the hard times and could live comfortably for the rest of their lives. That was only the case for the settlers close to where the City took form. The rest had to wait until roads were built to where they'd bunkered down. They had to wait for weeks, months, or even longer. To the shock of many early pioneers, they had pitched their tents in remote places continents away from the utopia they were promised a place in. With the remnant governments from Earth having fallen to the wayside, the only choices these colonists were given by these new-arisen megacorps were to negotiate for goods, abandon their far-flung settlements, or continue to eke out what meager existences they could on their own terms. With the individualist mentality instilled by hard years spent without any help from this new City, it shouldn't be surprising how many of them chose to go it alone. At the very least, these frontier towns had each other to rely on.

This collaborative spirit would be short-lived, as the horrid conditions of what were now known as the Outlands caused diplomatic relations between neighboring homesteads to wither. When critical machinery broke, the Outlanders tamed the monsters to pull their carts as beasts of burden. A gun with no bullets was no more useful than a metal stick, so hunters took up the sword to conserve ammo. Well-learned men and women who remembered how to fix these venerable technologies were venerated in turn, guaranteeing them high positions in local politics. The

crafty colonists who stockpiled technology or were strong enough to take what they needed by force rose to the top of their settlements, which backslid until they more closely resembled historic fiefdoms than the "modern" societies they came from. The weather outside of the City's limits is irregular at best, and much like the locals, the Outlanders had learned that there was only so much good land to go around. If you wanted to keep what you had, protect your families, and gain more for yourself, you had to be willing to go to war for it.

In hindsight, it should come as no surprise that the Outlands' descent into neo feudalism and techno barbarity coincided with a spike in mutant births. This high-pressure area hosts exotic stressors that aren't present in the City, and the Outlands being a frequent dumping ground for toxic waste like the Pipeworks doesn't help. This new generation of Outlanders could stand much taller or shorter than their parents, possessing dense muscles with staggering strength. They could also have other, equally-striking looks, or be completely normal in all ways except for their minds. Mutants with psionic powers could be the most dangerous, as their unique abilities would cause these wayward espers to be misconstrued by the less-educated peoples of the Outlands as witches and warlocks. They may even assume that themselves, using their powers to rule over the unwashed masses as sorcerous god-kings. In the most remote villages that had forgotten of Earth or the City, a sufficiently-advanced shotgun can be mistaken for arcane might. Though that does little to explain away the rare, miraculous feats that defy explanation.

The relationship between the City and the Outlands is strained, to say the least. Besides being a convenient waste dump, the corps see the Outlands as an area ripe for exploitation. The denizens of the City are skeptical of Outlanders, who are often characterized as out-of-touch yokels at best. The petty regents of the Outlands hold varying amounts of awe and contempt towards the City's great wealth and ceaseless expansion. Farmers who till the fields often wonder about the strange structures on the horizon, knowing the City only as the land where their surplus crops are sold. There are the rare individuals that flee from one part of the planet to the other, but unless they were a particularly nasty gangster exchanging their old life for one of a beast-riding raider (or vice versa), these people should expect to experience a lot of culture shock. The executives and warlords that can establish lines of communication can find common ground, discovering that, at the end of the day, they are more similar than different.

-
- Describe indigenous Hylian species of Zora, Gorons, Deku and Moblins
 - Deku Kingdom, Death Mountain, Zora Kingdom?
 - Oregon Trail joke goes here

- Harvest Moon homesteaders?

- - - DRAFT MATERIAL FROM NEW KINGDOMS BELOW - - -

the desire for more is ever present, and the journey to uninhabited lands becomes more perilous by the day, rivers needing to be forded and diseases running rampant through caravans.

Coinciding with this is the hostile wildlife, many multicolor slimes and fire breathing giant cats hunting those who wander off, many towns deserting from a particularly strong monster.

Old Hylian Ruins also dot the Area, speaking of cursed weapons and horrific abominations that had to be battled and sealed away, horrific demons that delighted in carnage and misery. They would lie in wait, immortal and ever patient, to seize their freedom; while commanding great armies of monsters. In addition, they speak of a species of great mystical lizards that roamed these lands. They were called Manaketes, though most scholars use the old Earthen term Dragon due to familiarity and it being easier for the locals to understand. These legends state that the Dragons were descended from the gods, but later suffered a terrible plague and were forced to take mortal forms or eventually devolve into savage beasts. Many dragons found it was not enough, however, and sealed themselves away and entered deep sleep to avoid the worst of the infectious madness. Most people of the New Kingdoms who bother studying the ruins often consider the idea of Demons and Dragons to be nothing more than an old wives tale. At least until someone digs a little deeper.

FLUFF STORY FOR [??] GOES HERE

Fluff story of AVALANCHE unit fighting Shinra and Federation forces in the Outlands, encountering Garland? Ends on him about to speak, flowing into the faction quote.

FINAL FEDERATION [WIP]

"I, Garland, Will Knock You All Down!"

Add intro on how the Final Federation was Formed

Cornelia got the region to semi-unify via a lot of good politicking and the occasional big stick. Stopped Federation from atrophying at nearly the same rate as the rest of the New Kingdom.

The Final Federation is an alliance of several dozen city-states and kingdoms near the Neifle Mountains that have banded together to try and create an actual, stable, society away from the city. While to say they have a singular nation is wrong, a powerful alliance centered around the nation of Cornelia has allowed far greater cooperation between them than their rivals.

The Final Federation's peace is founded on three things. The first is the Crystals of Light, a set of powerful Hylian Artifacts that can control the elements, granting for greater regional control over the area to help mitigate things such as crop failure and poor winds. The threat of flooding shorelines or raging wildfires if one of the nations actually hosting a Crystal should go to battle against you serves as a strong deterrent as well. Those kingdoms that host the crystals are genuinely seen as only second to the alliance's leader Cornelia in terms of influence.

The second is a tight military and trade alliance between member states. While the Federation has not been able to avoid the technological atrophy of much of the Outlands, they have been far better at finding alternatives. Organizing their higher than average population of ESPers into various 'Chromatic Orders' to share their knowledge, collecting all knowledge of airship repair and maintenance in the College of Cid to keep a decently sized air fleet, alongside making large numbers of Jet-Pack Shock Troopers in Dragoons.

Finally, in an exclusivity between them and the rest of the Outlands, the Final Federation is allowed to trade with the city. To claim it's an even relationship would be a lie, the Corps frequently only acknowledge it as 'Zone R' instead of it's stated name, and a full blown conflict would see the Federation annihilated, but shipments to and from the city actually do arrive and return. SHINRA in particular has expressed interest in trading with the Federation, often purchasing things as well as considering constructing some of their trademark Power plants in the region.

Several notable member states include the Federation Capital of Cornelia, who's clever diplomatic maneuvers secured the alliance shortly after settlement. Palemcia make up much of the militaries army, while the Air Fleet is mostly composed of the Kingdom of Baron's Red Wings. The Kingdom of

Tycoon manages a set of important canals in the area, being one of the premier shipping magnates, and the Kingdom of Saronia has been adamant in keeping the knowledge of the nation's many innovations secure. The dwarven mutants of the region have formed the underground city of Tomra under Mount Dueger, granting their people a homeland, while Gestahl's actual technological innovations with their new Magitek devices have impressed SHINRA enough for them to share notes. The Moogles, a species race of mystically gifted balls of fur also have several hidden villages throughout the Federation, though they are far more content to leave the humans to their own devices as they stay in their caves and forest.

For much of these members, tidings are unwell in the Federation. The nations' housing the crystals have been demanding greater levels of both financial and military aid, reporting monster attacks on the buildings housing the crystals to slowly begin growing, and rumors of Fiends who crave the crystals powers are ever present. In response to these claims, many kingdoms who lack crystals of their own have begun to eye those holding them jealousy, the allure of power great. Palmeia, Baron, and Gestahl all have their own imperialistic ambitions, currently going after non-member states but slowly becoming a point of concern in the Federation, especially since Gestahl had tried to conquer the region shortly before Cornelia forced them into the Federation. The fact there's been a notable increase in piracy hasn't helped matters. While rumors of creatures from beyond the void have begun to cause an epidemic of paranoia in the various learning institutions. Finally, the repeated trade with SHINRA has caused the eyes of Eco-Terrorist organization Avalanche to slowly start shifting towards the prosperous nations of the Outlands.

Despite this, they still rally behind the famed war hero Sir Jack Garland, Defender of Cornelia who stands behind his nation's banner with pride, making sure as long as he stands tall, the Federation will as well. A mountain of a man, Garland was a veteran of many campaigns who has been by the King of Cornelia's side since the nation's founding. Those who talk to Garland often see a bloodthirsty, prideful warrior who can be strangely pensive about fate at times. His constant aid in Cornelia's affairs have made it so chaos is a relative unknown in the Capital especially.

Notes, to be removed later

- Final Fantasy HRE
- Legally recognized as the City as one entity, referred to as Zone R
- Kept in check by virtue of all benefiting from City trade, mostly with SHINRA
- Also the 4 Crystals of Light, which are tied to elements
- One thing but very divided polities of smaller principalities/empires
- Niffler Mountain

- Military is a Mix of Magitek Weapons, Chromatic Mage Orders, Summoners, and Dragoon Paratroopers?
- Gestahl makes Magitek Innovations and Super Soldiers, closest tied to SHINRA
- Palemcia & Baron also have ambitions
- Get full list of Kingdoms
- Has a lot of Dwarfs?
- Palemcia, Baron, and Gestahl are all interested in taking over, Imperium Finalis' military
- So long things are stable in Cornelia the leaders of the Imperium, as long as Garland is there



FLUFF STORY FOR [NEW KINGDOMS] GOES HERE

NEW KINGDOMS [WIP]

"A Monster Draws Near!"

The most common polities one will encounter as they traverse the Outlands are the so-called "New Kingdoms" that have dotted its surface. The first wave of these atavistic city-states were borne from the initial Earth-based settler missions, in the last days of the Invader Wars. Those who wouldn't fight against the aliens, or had other criminal charges held over their heads, were given the choice of being sent ahead to what would become the City. Anyone who survived the harsh years of isolation, the gradual degradation of their resources and advanced technology against the scourges of the alien landscape, came out the other side not a petty convict working on a minor colony, but a feudal lord in the service to a king. If not a king themselves. Others came later, typically with an ideological slant for seeking a fresh start away from the City.

While the New Kingdoms are proud of the storms they have weathered and their rugged independence, the many technologies they have lost in such a short span of time cannot be understated. Bullets are in short supply, and zappers are rarer. The fields are tilled with two-headed cattle, and the fastest rate a message can travel is the speed of a messenger chocobo. Scattered trade with City-based entities and the odd storage cache uncovered from the early colonial period means that exceptions crop up on occasion, making those who possess them the envy of their neighbors. One city might have maintained a M.U.L.E. to work a nearby ore deposit, at least until the adjacent town uses their Di-Cokka Main Battle Tank to steal it. The distance the New Kingdoms have to the City and their lack of legitimization in the eyes of many corps means that they're unlikely to see rapid reindustrialization any time soon.

Any settlement larger than a remote hamlet or village is sequestered behind high walls to ward off opportunistic raiders and monsters. In spite of the hostility on all sides, these "castle towns" have flourished where other outposts fell to the wayside. Several have styled themselves off Old Earth nations (historical, literary, or imagined wholecloth), trying to forge bonds in an otherwise disparate population by invoking a glorious, unified legacy. Others have embraced the late Hylians' culture, taking inspiration not only from what the indigenous Deku, Zora, and Gorons have whispered of the humanoid race that came before, but faded murals decorating the ruins where their future castle towns would shelter them from danger. Though they represent the majority, the inhabitants of the New Kingdoms aren't *strictly* human; the more inclusive castle towns house uplifts and mutants alike, though strife has driven others into their own enclaves to avoid human prejudice. Many of the larger castle towns retained records of where they came from, or at least older members with no good reason to withhold the knowledge. However, the rare, secluded tribe has forgotten their origins entirely.

"Kingdom" is an apt descriptor for many of these city-states, which are ruled by varying degrees of autocratic fiat. These absolute regents and dictators are no more resistant to the allure of pride or greed than the executives in the City. There is a great deal of territory in the Outlands yet to be developed -- a whole *planet* of untamed frontier, depending on who you ask -- but only a small percentage of that land is viable for human settlement. The struggle for more territory and resources to avoid ruin is ever-present, making the Outlands the ideal pressure cooker for conflicts to break out between rival nations. Skirmishing units are led into battle by landowning nobles, their peasant levies supplemented by fantastical mutants akin to giants, harpies, and centaurs. More advanced weapons are reserved for the elite forces that can afford them or earn their lord's favor, including powerful espers and prestigious beast riders. Border towns risk being razed by kingdoms at war, and when those wars eventually come to an end, the excess soldiers often become brigands in search of new targets to line their coffers.

It is not known how long these New Kingdoms will last, but it is clear that their ambitions are for their empires to expand and persist for many generations to come.

- - - UNEDITED MATERIAL BELOW - - -

SOSARIA

- Ultima
- An alliance of multiple Kingdoms united under the Eight Virtues by Invader Wars Veteran Lord British (Survived so many absurd assassination plots it's unreal)
- Has the largest amount of Invader Wars tech in the New Kingdoms, which serve as a deterrent for others from attacking.
- Invader Wars tech is maintained by two ESPers, Mondain and his apprentice Minax
- Maybe include a reference to the Demonic Supercomputer Exodus they make? (Technically Ultima 3, but he should in theory be active)
- Lord British doesn't trust them, but even if he had the evidence they were planning a coup, they made their main vault stupidly hard to find.
- The Avatar might be going around the City trying to spread virtue, or the Outlands.

A group of allied nations unified under Richard Goddard, also known as Lord British after a Star Fighter he piloted back in the day, Sosaria is one of the more stable regions of the Outlands. Lord British's efforts to spread his '8 Virtues' had made it so most of the monarchs are fully cooperative with one another (Even if dissenters tend to be exiled to an Island off the coast), and a massive cash of Invader Wars era tech an ESPer name Mondain and his apprentice Minax have been able to gather and maintain keeps them on at least some level of technological superiority, keeping those nearby kingdoms who refuse to follow the virtues in line. Lord British has expressed some concern of the ESPers having so much Invader Wars weaponry at their disposal, but hasn't pressed on it.

YURIA

- Golden Axe
- Most Primitive of the New Kingdoms
- Makes massive use of Beast Riders, which helps avoid invasion
- Viewed as a bunch of superstitious barbarians
- Mutant Giant Warlord Named Death Adder plans to unite Warbands and Kingdoms
- Claims a Golden Axe gives him Right of Kings
- Kingdom of Firewood turned into Firewood?

Yuria is a heavily wooded highland which most of the other New Kingdoms tend to view as horrifically primitive, falling to a level of techno-barbarism none of the others have. Despite this, many conquerors have discovered it is painfully difficult to invade. This is because of the fact it is populated by many warbands and smaller kingdoms constantly at war with one another, with the barbaric beast riders that many employ gaining particular notoriety. Yuria's inability to unify has gotten many a would be tyrant kill, but the giant mutant Death Adder, armed with an axe he claims is a divine instrument and grants him the right to rule, has taken it upon himself to ravage the lands and raze the other warbands settlements until they fall in line.

VANDOLE EMPIRE

- Secret of Mana
- New Regime Changes has made Vandole start a rapid campaign of expansion
- Many viewed it as a major shock, nation known for being pretty peaceful beforehand
- Emperor Vandole has enacted martial law and massive tax policies to fuel his Campaign
- Generals are Thanatos, Fanha, Sheez, and Geshtar
- The wars are done in an attempt to find and unseal an Ancient Hylian Fortress housing an artifact known as the Mana Tree

The Vandole Empire was once a prosperous and peaceful nation, but recent changes in the regime has caused it to fall upon very hard times. Emperor Vandole has begun a massive invasion of his neighboring Kingdoms, tearing his own nation apart with Martial Law and ludicrously high tax rates to fuel this expansionist war effort. Revolutionaries have emerged, though he seemingly cares little of them, continuing his blitzkrieg as he seeks out a set of relics in neighboring lands. His goal is as blatant as it is simple: To unseal an Ancient Hylian Fortress, and seize control of the device known simply as the Mana Tree.

ARCHANEA

- Fire Emblem (Technically the first one, but made in a way most games could be adapted)
- A region built over Hylian Ruins wracked by constant conflict from various 'Dragon Cults' made over ancient text

- Manaketes were a Hylian Species of Giant Magical Lizards that suffered an infectious insanity. Took Hylian forms and later sealed themselves away to avoid the worst of it.
- Naga was the leader of the Divine Dragon Tribe and wiped out the Earth Dragons to try to stop the spread. Medeus was an Earth Dragon who sided with Naga.
- Medeus might have reawoken and decided 'Fuck this I'm making my own Empire of Dohr'
- Other Manaketes are active again, with most falling into 'Fuck Humanity' and 'Secretly trying to live amongst them without the Dragon-Thingie getting discovered' (Probs imply rather than outright state)
 - Not here, but other Manaketes likely include the Dragonlord (DragonQuest), The Monodragon (Trials on Mana), Dark Dragon (Shining Force), and the Dragon Tribe (Breath of Fire), so important they are explained somewhere.

Archanea is the name of a subcontinent housing the Akanea Ruins. Shortly after the initial settlers arrived, some discovered an ancient Hylian text of a 'Goddess of Light', a powerful Manakete warlord named Naga, who worked to wipe out a group of Manaketes who were suffering from the Contagion to save her people. The story resonated with a great many of the colonists, and very swiftly new stories of Naga emerged, some made whole cloth by the young nation. Coinciding with this, another group came to view Naga as a monstrous tyrant, genociding the 'Dragons of the Earth' outside of a single one, Medeus. And then more ancient dragons were discovered. Soon a plethora of Dragon Cults emerged, almost all mutually hostile to one another; and the Archanean Kingdoms have managed to develop intense grudges from multiple holy wars waged against one another in the scant few years since the settlers founded it. A man claiming to be Medeus arriving is simply expected to be the start in the latest of a long line of religious conflicts.

TORLAND

- Dragon Quest
- A series of smaller Kingdoms that are the most heavily affected by the Dreamlands.
- Problems started when a Manakete Warlock called the Dragonlord showed up and began summoning hordes of multicolor monsters under his command.
- Many powerful Demons are trying to take advantage of the area being so close to the Dreamlands to either break from their ancient Hylian Prisons, or summon themselves into the world.
- Use humans and other monsters as intermediaries. Mutually hostile to one another and the Dragonlord over control of the Monster Hordes.
- Like FE, in theory this setup can include all Dragon Quest games, even if 1 gets the most explicit focus.
- Slimes are kinda cute though
- Namewise Alefgard is the first game Kingdom, while Tourland is the continent Alefgard is on.

There is no place as plagued by monster attacks as poor Torland. Populated by around a dozen or so kingdoms, the area experienced a massive increase of monster attacks of strange abilities and bodies after the arrival of a powerful warlock calling himself the Dragonlord, who seemed to be able to command them with ease. Razing villages and looting ruins, the Dragonlord's forces are a constant threat in his 'war on humanity'. Several leaders of these nations have also reported strange dreams of demonic beings offering them similar power as the Dragonlord, for a price...

RUNEFAUST

- Shining Force
- Located on the Continent of Rune, large amount of various mutants and mavericks alongside it's human population.
- Pretty low tech outside of a few robots
- Formally the Kingdom of Protectia, seeking to make a similar alliance to the Federation
- King Ramladu has recently flipped after a strange man with glowing red eyes named Darksol arrived as an advisor
- Kane is main general leading the Army of Sol across
- Runefaust has launched a massive campaign across the Outlands
- Seeking to Resurrect the Dark Dragon, Manakete that had been experimented on in ancient Hyrule and whose 'Brain' is Darksol.

The dramatic swerve of the nation of Runefaust has shocked many member states of the New Kingdoms. Formally the head of the Protectia League, an alliance of New Kingdoms via mutual protection pacts across the Rune Mountains and nearby archipelago, Runefaust was famous for helping many mutant and uplift populations get their footing in establishing their own nations, with a more accepting attitude for even old Hylian Species and the occasional Maverick. The dramatic swerve King Ramaldu has done, engaging in total war against his former allies, came out of seemingly nowhere, and the rampant assaults of General Kane's Army of Sol has decapitated many of his closest neighbors.

Neo-Eurasia [PENDING DELETION]

Not every one of the New Kingdoms make their culture from the ground up. Several Dozen have, in fact, decided they would like to base themselves off old cultures of Earth. Known almost derisively as Neo-Eurasia, these Kingdoms base their new nations from cultures from Ancient Egypt to Colonial New England, though Three Kingdoms China and Europe during the Age of Exploration are particularly popular pastiches. Many of them base these cultures off intense romanticization of the old empires, putting great emphasis on personal honor and aptitude. As such, duelist and

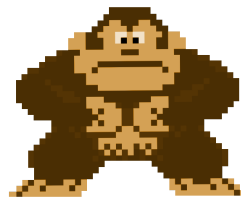
swordsmanship in particular hold a level of celebrity prestige. Many people pursue the legendary Hylian artifact The Sword of Salvation, after it was rumored to have been stolen by an old Pirate from an auction house.

FLUFF STORY FOR [DONKEY KONG] GOES HERE

KONG COUNTRY [WIP]

"No chains will hold us."

- Planet of the Apes-style civilization of ape and monkey uplifts who split with the Earth colony fleet at the lowest point of human/uplift relations and reached the planet first.
- They eschew advanced tech in favor of trying to live in harmony with their new homeworld. Frequent attempts to remove them from the paradise zone they claimed for themselves have made them very good at dismantling/sabotaging enemy tech.
- Corp interests have funded K. Rool's pirates and their raids into Kong Country.



The man stood at the gate. Wrought of crude, rusted iron, it would be a simple task to kick the gate open or smash its hinges with a stone. The crumbling walls and rusted fences surrounding the mountain estate discouraged intruders from entry, but they were not what kept the bravest of men miles away from the entrance.

No man could fear an iron gate. Not when they could fear what lies beyond it.

He felt his heart stop in his chest when he saw the castle illuminated by the baleful glow of the crescent moon. A pitch cloud traveling on the western wind curtailed the towers in darkness, but the image of black devils flying in the night sky would be burned into his mind forever. He knew what he saw, and could no longer doubt that he was walking into the jaws of Hell itself.

He stiffened, frozen at the gate. More a statue than a man, in conflict with himself as every sense in his body screamed at him to run while he still had the chance. It had taken him all of his nerve to march this far, and he did not know how much of that nerve he had left to spare.

This wasn't the job of a man. What he was asking of himself was the feat of a hero. Perhaps the feat of a god, even, but not something he could do himself.

He sighed. Here he was, a sniveling coward, when everyone he knew had called him brave. He was strong, but anyone who wrangled M.U.L.E.s for a living would be. Being brave was much harder than being strong, especially when he knew no amount of strength could prepare him for what came next.

The man swallowed his fear and felt it transform into righteous anger. The beat of his heart became a steady blaze, fanned into a towering inferno by overwhelming rage. Coward or not, he was the only one to survive the massacre. A whole village of men, women, and children, slaughtered like animals by the unholy monsters that lurked within the haunted castle before him.

He grasped his whip tightly and cracked it, flecks of dry blood flying off the sanctified leather and glimmering spikes of steel. Grandfather Trevor had protected their heirloom from the monsters with his dying breath, and it was all he had to remember his people by.

With a shout and a thrust of his arm, the scion of his bloodline smashed the iron gate to pieces. He stepped forward, pausing only to stare at the remains of the rusted gate. They writhed and twisted before consuming themselves in bright flame upon contact with the holy weapon in his hand.

His name is Simon Belmont, and he will slay the master of Castlevania or die trying.

CASTLEVANIA [WIP]

"WHAT A HORRIBLE NIGHT TO HAVE A CURSE."

- Dracula has been a plague upon mankind for centuries, returning to haunt the world every century or so. The Invaders seemingly annihilated him along with the rest of the Earth.
- Castlevania resurfaced in the Outlands and began sending out monsters while Dracula gradually restored his powers.
-



FLUFF STORY FOR [METAL GEAR] GOES HERE

OUTER HEAVEN [WIP]

"Pax Per Bellum." - Peace Through War.

Outline

- The dissolution of the Earth and old nation states left soldiers adrift. East or West, everyone lost the Invader Wars. This was worse for soldiers who were put in stasis and awoken to a new, terrifying world. Many became gangsters, corp security, or mercenaries. The mercenary life is fraught with danger and subject to the whims of corporate overlords.
- Enter Big Boss. The "Legendary Soldier" who drew many to his FOXHOUND group with his great feats and desire for a "Soldier's Heaven" where they would be independent of megacorp rule. He recruited anyone from anywhere, regardless of their former affiliations.
- Over time, FOXHOUND accumulated soldiers and stockpiled arms comparable to pre-Crash state armies. This was to the great alarm to the Big Three, who pooled their resources into a massive force that would eliminate FOXHOUND and capture Big Boss. They accomplished half their objective; FOXHOUND was gone, but Big Boss escaped to fight another day.
- Big Boss would resurface during a conflict between a minor corp terraforming the Outlands, Zanzibar, and their oppressed labor force. Orange Star and Regular Army were among the mercenaries hired to fight, but the "Mercenary War" was won by Big Boss and his new group, Outer Heaven. For his efforts, Big Boss was elected the first president of Zanzibar Land.
- Outer Heaven is the standing army and national corporation of Zanzibar Land. They hire themselves out to anyone willing to pay. Outer Heaven not only does direct combat missions, but is capable of providing support in logistics, training, equipment procurement, and research. Most of their equipment is from before the Crash; solid ammunition guns and Cold War vehicles their veterans would be most familiar with.
- Their tanks, jets, and helicopters are supplemented by bipedal walkers called Metal Gears. Metal Gears can traverse the rough terrain of the Outlands, support infantry, and take out armored targets with their mounted weaponry. The Metal Gears are not for sale.
- For reasons the Big Three won't talk about, they have made zero efforts to deal with Zanzibar Land like they did FOXHOUND outside of trade embargos. This may have to do with the rumors that Zanzibar Land possesses a massive Metal Gear armed with nuclear weapons.

NOTE: ABOVE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, PER MISSILE COMMAND WRITEUP



FLUFF STORY FOR [PIRATES] GOES HERE

PIRATES! [WIP]

QUOTE REQUIRED

OUTLINE

- Inspired by the Republic of Pirates and Flying Gang.
- Explain how the lawless conditions in the Outlands led to piracy on both sea and sky. These raiders attack shipments going to and from the City.
- King K. Rool took advantage of the lawlessness and assembled his former rivals into a loose alliance centered around Crocodile Isle.
- Crocodile Isle is the Nassau/Tortuga of the Outlands. Safe harbor for pirates and other lawless types seeking safe harbor from the law or a place to fence stolen goods.
- Cervantes and LeChuck are mentioned as former members of the confederacy? One of them went missing at sea, while the other was confirmed KIA.
- Pirates can be divided into Black Pirates or Blue Rogues, per Skies of Arcadia. Most of the members of the confederacy fall into the Black Pirates category.

Pirate Confederacy

- Kremlings: Biggest fleet that ties the rest together. Soviet uplifts created in response to the hostile conditions of the Outlands that went rogue and became freelancers. King K. Rool keeps them in line, managing contracts from the megacorps to conduct raids on their rivals and the ever-elusive Kong Island.
- Bonne Family: Family of three air pirates and their robot minions constantly struggling to keep ahead of their debts. They use giant robots to plunder towns, rob banks, and ransack ancient ruins for loot, but minimize harm to bystanders.
- Higemaru Corps
- Jellyfish Air Pirates: Blue Rogues
- Robo Pirates: Maverick air pirates led by Razorbeard.
- Black Sugar Gang: Captain Sugar's gang specializes in thievery of artifacts.

TO CLEAN UP

Higemaru Corps (Pirate Ship Higemaru): Entry would likely tie into the Striders, Kazakh Federation, and the Kuniang Martial Arts Team.

Bonne Family (Mega Man Legends): This entry would include a mention of the Glyde Gang, the Black Cats Gang, and Devilotte de DeathSatan IX.

Blue Rogues & Black Pirates (Skies of Arcadia): Not factions, but terms for pirates who skew towards one flavor of ethics or the other.

Jellyfish Air Pirates (Guilty Gear)

Robo Pirates (Rayman 2): Maverick pirates led by Razorbeard.

Black Sugar Gang (Wario Land)

Under Consideration

Bernardo Pirates (High Seas Havoc)

Ghost Pirates (We need to mention them somewhere but I'm not sure how to handle the subject.)

Cervantes de León (Soul Edge/Soulcalibur)

King Octopus Pirates (Power Stone): Led by Captain Kraken.

LeChuck (Monkey Island)

Bikke (Final Fantasy)

"It is currently 12:00 AM, XX/XX/20XX, Hyrule Standard Time, and you're listening to the Missile Command Hazard Advisory Network. Spacefarers traveling in the vicinity of Razak are advised to reroute immediately. We've confirmed reports of open warfare breaking out between the Yars and the Bydo, the latter of which have been encroaching into Yars space for months. The Yars have been ambivalent to human shuttles passing through their territory, but the Bydo are known to attack non-Bydo vessels on sight. We heavily encourage ships to avoid the Razak System for the foreseeable future. Updates will be broadcast as the Yars-Bydo conflict develops.

Pigma Dengar's radio was merely one of the many noises in the dingy, interspatial roadhouse where his squadron was celebrating their successful grounding of a Kilrathi cruiser. This slime-encrusted refueling station, the Shufflepuck, was built out of a hollowed-out asteroid whose vast remoteness made it a popular attraction for patrons from all manners of illegal persuasions. There were smugglers, hustlers, leg breakers, and desperados with itchy trigger fingers, plus the occasional assassin for good measure. If you tallied the bounties of everyone in the building, the sum of zenny would be enough to get you a moderately-sized apartment in Wily Towers.

Or one contract from Star Wolf.

The job was executed without a hitch. Metpharm needed Irata cleared of competitors before they could construct a Coriolis station in the system, and now the corp was free to use the planet as a new pipeline for selling human tech to alien buyers. Star Wolf was one of the priciest mercenary outfits you could buy, but you got what you paid for. The three pilots lured the enemy cruiser out into the open, where the felines were wiped out by smart bombs.

"Spacers entering the Irata System are to remain mindful of the Kilrathi activity in the area. While the Kilrathi are able to communicate in pidgin English, caution is advised when dealing with them. Do not retreat right away when encountering their fighters; the Kilrathi's predator instincts and byzantine warrior code will cause them to give chase. In systems beyond the Strike Force's jurisdiction, your best recourse is to issue a warning over the radio and fire a few shots across the bow before setting your Frame Shift Drive for an emergency jump towards home."

When you purchased the services of Star Wolf, you got what you paid for. The destruction of the Kilrathi in the area was so sudden that the Strike Force's tip line had yet to catch up to the news that they were gone. Between stuffing his face with cheap food and cheaper booze, the porcine uplift was wondering if he should be the one to call in and let them know they've been declawed.

"Remember to travel in numbers where possible to decrease the risk of attack from opportunistic raiders such as the Space Pirates and Star Wolf."

One could hear a pin drop when the Strike Force uttered that slight. Practically everyone there heard the insult except Pigma, who was too distracted by the opportunity to get paid four times for the same job to notice. One from MB for the first job of fighting the aliens, one from Uncle Wily for the Kilrathi ship salvage, one from the Eggman for letting slip where Metpharm was gonna be building their new station, and then another load of easy money from the Strike Force when they announced a price on the names of who smothered those cats in the cradle.

"Pigma?" Wolf O'Donnel said in a deceptively calm tone. "Could you turn that radio off?"

The captain of the Star Wolf squadron was a gray wolf that spoke with an aristocratic inflection. While it was impossible for an uplift to be an Old Earth blueblood, few had the nerve to question where Wolf O'Donnel got the impression he could act like royalty. Wolf survived innumerable dogfights as a mercenary pilot for Venom during the Lylat Wars, and came out the other end a seasoned ace with many kills to his name. The only blemish on his record was a black patch over his left eye. Lost in combat, but not replaced with cyberware out of respect to the one enemy that got the better of him. Wolf was decked in a blood red flight suit that marked him and his pack as a step above the rest; a dress code he took as seriously as his squad's professionalism.

"Bah, what's the big deal?" Pigma said, brushing off the order that was phrased as a request. "So they think we're like the Space Pirates. They called us all pirates back in the day. Hell, your rank was Pirate 1st Class! Now it's the humans sayin' the same damn thing! Big whoop, right?"

Pigma expects a round of laughter from his crack at the Strike Force's expense. After all, everyone there was scum. Why else would they be at the Shufflepuck? He knew he was disliked by most of the people there, because they were envious of him being the smartest guy in the room, but he expected at least a chuckle. Instead, Pigma was met with the silent treatment.

Was it suddenly Pigma's fault that Andross was paying more than the other side? A just cause didn't pay the bills, or afford you the finer things in life. He took the amnesty, and he'd been especially careful not to break it by staying far away from Lylat or Hyrule. Pigma was a free man, free to do as many crimes as he wanted where no one was looking.

Wolf stood up from his stool, where he'd been enjoying a premium bottle of Captain LeChuck spiced rum, made with sugarcane from plantations on the new human capital world. It wasn't cheap or easy to smuggle good alcohol this far past the corporate outposts, so Wolf did not appreciate Pigma's inadvertent attempts to spoil his mood.

"Pigma, Pigma, Pigma," Captain O'Donnell chided, in that chillingly peaceable tone Pigma learned to fear. In one hand, Wolf toyed with a serrated Kilrathi knife he'd been testing the weight of. "After all these years, you still don't know the difference between a pirate and a privateer?"

All of the crooks and reprobates sitting in the stools between them found an excuse to sit elsewhere. Only now did Pigma realize that he'd overstepped his boundaries. Dengar knew his glib tongue had some room to trade barbs with the boss due to being a damn good pilot, but being damn good only got so far when you wounded Wolf's pride in his craft.

"How about we forget I said anything? We're privateers, Wolf, like you said, and--"

"A pirate is indiscriminate in who they target," the captain explained, before tossing the heavy knife at Pigma's head.

The swine let out a hoggish squeal of terror, fully expecting this was the day he pushed O'Donnell's patience too far. He screwed his eyes shut and expected not to open them again, when he heard a thump. Once Pigma opened his eyes again, he saw that the alien blade punctured his jacket, pinning him to the wall as it clung uncomfortably close to his jugular.

"A privateer is precise. We have our contracts, and we carry them out to the letter. A pirate is a scoundrel who takes, and a privateer is a mercenary that delivers."

Wolf walked up to Pigma and pulled the dagger out of his coat. Were O'Donnell inclined to do so, the blade would've been in the ideal position to slide horizontally across Pigma's neck.

"That is why Ridley's gaggle of freaks are pirates, and why Star Wolf are not. Understand?"

The captain of Star Wolf stared into Pigma's eyes. The pig flinched, but Wolf glaring daggers at him was preferable to the alternative.

"Y-Yes sir."

Wolf backed away, and Pigma remembered how to breathe again.

"Good man."

"Rumors of UFO activity in close proximity to Hyrule have thus far remained unsubstantiated--"

Leon Powalsky, the third member of Star Wolf, was an understated presence in the bar. It suited the coldblooded killer not to make himself known until it was too late, though these days, the only thing this chameleon killed outside of his fighter was time on the shufflepuck table.

"--being treated as mass-hysteria for the time--"

As much as Leon detested Pigma's obnoxious behavior, there was a shortage of pilots that met Wolf's draconian standards. Algy was long dead, letting Oinkinny onto the team for a period of time was almost uncharacteristically political, and Wolf would rather scoop his other eye out with a spoon than ask Pico to come back after he left. Last they knew, the snapping turtle had taken the amnesty in earnest, trading out his Wolfen for an F-ZERO racing machine.

Right now, there were no better options. Leon pushed the static-ridden radio off the counter.

"--repeat, there is no alien ~activity in or around the City--"

The hardened electronic device shattered on the harder floor, resolving the issue. After that, the frigid atmosphere around the bar steadily thawed to normal. Later, Star Wolf received the rest of their payment from Metpharm, stepped into their fighters, and departed for their next destination.

"Hey, uh, thanks fer pullin' my fat out of the fryer," Pigma reluctantly said to Leon, once he'd had the chance to message his ship. "I thought he was gonna get me for real that time."

"Your squeals make you preferable bait for enemies to target," Leon said coldly.

"W-Whut?" Pigma sputtered.

"That is the reason I tolerate your presence. No more, no less."

Before Pigma could respond, Leon cut off the call.

"Right," Pigma grouched. He switched channels to Wolf's comm. "What's the next job?"

Wolf hailed both of his copilots and gave his team a sharp grin over the video display screen. The kind of smile that told Pigma this gig was going to be a lot harder than he'd hope for.

"The Yars might be aliens, but gold is universal. With the Bydo threatening to turn them into free proteins, I've lined up an interpreter to determine how much they value their lives."

BEYOND THE CITY [WIP]

"WARNING! A huge battleship -King Fossil- is approaching fast."

Not all of the action relevant to the City happens in, around, or below it. While the City is the most populous and (technically) thriving post-Earth civilization, Hyrule is merely one planet in the universe. Years after settling down and founding the City of Light, efforts to expand from the boundaries of Hyrule and continue reaching out towards the stars began anew. Most of these colonization efforts have been sponsored by the Big Three for a variety of reasons. Prestige, resources, political capital, or simply an extra space rock on which to hide their dirty secrets. The causes are nearly as varied as the dangers beyond the City's atmosphere.

The Strike Force serves as a strong deterrent against alien attacks on the City. Its earliest incarnation was slapdash, composed of old *Cosmic*, *Gyaraga*, and *Defender* ships from the Invader Wars that could barely stay in orbit. The Big Three would drag their feet, donating *Silver Hawk* fighters, *Opa-Opa* probes, and *R-9 Arrowhead* interceptors near the end of their lifespans so that they can nominally keep to the alliance. General Pepper phased out the old ships for Faulcon de Lacy's *Viper* fighters and refitted vessels from the Lylat Wars. They patrol the space around the City and provide escorts to cargo haulers entering the Hylian System. None of these methods are foolproof, and isolated ships are at risk of being targeted by opportunistic Space Pirates. Once a vessel activates their hyperdrive and takes off to a new system, they're on their own.

Engaging in space commerce, while a risky prospect when acting outside the Strike Force's jurisdiction, can be incredibly lucrative. The City is always hungry for raw materials from the "frontier" worlds, and these colonies regularly send money back to the City to purchase fresh starships they can throw against the ever-present alien threats at their borders. WilyCorp's teleporters can't move tons of matter or anything organic without vaporizing the goods, so even he relies on contracted pilots to provide freighting services to and from his asteroid mines. Individuals willing to make these long trips are a rare breed, and as such are paid well for their services. More valuable cargo is guarded by mercenary ships willing to engage enemy fighters. Popular trade goods are food, unrefined minerals, complex machinery, and narcotics.

The processes behind FTL travel are simple, though not completely understood. Any ship with a Frame Shift Drive can open a vortex to hyperspace, allowing instantaneous travel from one system to another. A hyperspace jump can be unpleasant for first-time travelers, who may experience temporary visual and auditory hallucinations until they exit the wormhole. Seasoned spacers accustomed to frequent voyages in and out of hyperspace have taken to calling that liminal realm "witchspace" instead. The legend that alien vessels can lurk in witchspace and ambush ships during a misaimed jump, while unsubstantiated, are enough to keep a veteran pilot on edge.

Planets capable of human habitation are rare, and events such as the K-2L Massacre have discouraged all but the most stubborn colonists from expanding to new worlds. In spite of that, there are several places besides the City that mankind (or uplifts) have a noteworthy presence.

DARIUS

Discovered by one of the *Arkanoid* ships traveling en-route to the Hyrule System, Darius was scanned by the ship's *Vaus* shuttles and deemed as being suitable for colonization. However, it wasn't long until the new colonists of Darius were attacked by bloody-minded aliens known as the Belsar. These entirely space-based barbarians stalk the stars in decentralized "warband" fleets in search of enemies to destroy. Once an opponent has been identified, the Belsars' huge, marine life-esque command craft enter enemy space and deploy hordes of ships to claim their glory. The people of Darius continue to survive only by the skin of their teeth, relying on trade with the City to stay afloat while they fend off the Belsar. Their motherships are occasionally destroyed in battle, but when one falls, a signal is sent for the next nearest Belsar to avenge it.

DIN, NAYRU, AND FARORE

Within close proximity to the City are a trio of inhospitable planetoids that can sometimes be seen on a clear night. Din is a boiling desert, Nayru is a frozen waste, and Farore is a noxious gas giant. Though they all possess strategic value due to their nearness to the City, none of them are expected to be inhabitable without at least a century of terraforming. While Nayru has little commercial value and Farore hosts an orbital TriOptimum research station, Din has been utilized by the Union Aerospace Corporation to store waste materials. Rumors have been floated that the UAC are performing top-secret research on teleporters that would render the WilyCorp grid obsolete at the behest of an undisclosed third party, though the recent radio silence from their research station on Din bodes ominously of what has come from it.

GRADIUS AND NEMESIS

Like Darius, the twin planets of Gradius and Nemesis were initially seen as viable to settle. This proved to be a grave mistake, as the Metalion System was already claimed by biomechanical Bacterians. They made their displeasure known in a matter of months, infecting Nemesis with organic fortresses that spawned a fresh Bacterian fleet to ambush Gradius. The enemy ships left the same day, their horrific goal of infecting Gradius accomplished. Years later, the surface of Gradius remains pocked with tumorous, Bacterian growths. These function as factories that release hostile ships at a pace matching, if not exceeding, the rate at which they can be destroyed. In spite of being the largest producers and importers of premium *Vic Viper* fighters, the general consensus is that it's only a matter of time until the colony on Gradius is overwhelmed.

THE LYLAT SYSTEM

Lylat was, in the not-so-distant past, a star system ripe for colonization. Corneria was to be the capital world for this all-uplift union, but an insurrection orchestrated by a mad scientist in exile named Andross resulted in Venom attempting to take over the rest of the system. Thus began the Lylat Wars, a destructive conflict that ended only after much of the star system had been ravaged by the release of terrible bioweapons and nuclear exchanges. With the tyrant who doomed the Lylat System declared dead following the final siege of Venom, the war was over. In a controversial, but ultimately necessary act, Corneria provided pardons for any Venomians who would lay down their arms and assist in transporting the remaining populations of Lylat to the City. The radicals who refused to cooperate are a rogue armada squatting on the ruins of Venom, who claim that the war is not over until the promised day that their Emperor Andross returns.

(namedrop a few alien threats here and how they always seem to be fighting each other when not attacking humanity)

(Space Pirates, Bydo, Bacterians, Kilrathi, Ur-Quan, Masters of Orion aliens, Ascendancy aliens?)

(Put Sinistar in the ruins of Lylat)

(describe Metpharm activities in space?)



8BD DX GM TAB

8-BIT DYSTOPIA: DX GM GUIDE

(In which we explain all of the jokes)

VORTEX FARMS

Ecco the Dolphin (1992) is a game about aliens, time travel, and dolphins. The main antagonists of the game are the Vortex, a hive of Giger-esque aliens that harvest Earth's oceans for biomass every 500 years to sustain their own dead planet. Ecco's family is unfortunate enough to have got caught up in the latest harvest, kicking off the plot of the game. Ecco crosses the globe searching for answers and eventually finds the lost city of Atlantis, revealing that the city was sunk in a war with the Vortex ages ago. He uses an Atlantean time machine to travel back to prehistoric times, gaining the knowledge and power necessary to defeat the Vortex in the present. At the end of the sequel, the Vortex could not rule over prehistoric life, so they had no choice but to integrate themselves into the ecosystem. Millions of years of genetic memory are the reason that all arthropods in the game hate Ecco with a burning passion and attack on sight.

Vortex Farms is a prelude to a different sort of alien invasion. The Vortex are infiltrating the City by turning themselves into food. They know that if they tried a direct invasion they'd get blown out of the sky, so they're opting for a much more subtle approach this time. A pack of drones and a queen have infiltrated the biosphere, genetically attuning themselves to become the perfect food source and ensure that their rampant breeding will be not only protected, but encouraged. Vortex meat is cheap, nutritious, and delicious, and there's actually no immediate catch. It's not addictive, it's not poisonous, and it's not slowly killing you... although human biometric data is being sent back to the hive to better optimize Vortex as a food source.

- Vortex are terrifying xenomorphs and they all stare at you from the tanks
- They're docile in captivity (unless you fall in a tank) but go 'feral' in the wild
- Masters of biomechanical engineering, they're building something massive in the deep sea- either a hyperspace beacon or FTL-ready ship so they can steal a solid third of the planet's biomass in one fell swoop.
- MetPharm is releasing bioengineered dolphins to keep them in check, they're sensitive to extreme changes in pressure and pulses of sound
- Bubble Man is fighting a thankless one-man crusade against the Vortex and might be one of the few who actually knows what's going on
- The Vortex managing to pull off their plan would be catastrophic- the already fragile biosphere of the planet would be devastated, and mass starvation would ensue. It's not an extinction-level event, but it might as well be.

- The Vortex are a hive mind, and have specialized drones for combat and construction.
- The Vortex Queen is intelligent and capable of (telepathic) speech. She prioritizes survival above all else, and is not above just running for it should the tides turn.

SCRATCH PAD

NEW WRITEUP ORDER

THE CITY (2 PAGES)

- BIG THREE (2 PAGES)
 - WILYCORP (MEGA MAN)
 - ROBODYNE (SONIC)
 - METPHARM (METROID & PHANTASY STAR)
 - ZEED (SHINOBI)
- SECONDARY FACTIONS (2 PAGES)
 - ROCKET GROUP (POKEMON)
 - X-SYNDICATE (MISC CRIME)
 - MISSILE COMMAND (X-COM, MISC MILITARY)
 - (EXTRA FACTION IF ZEED STAYS IN BIG 3)
- BIT PLAYERS (1 PARAGRAPH, 8 TOTAL)
 - A.T.A.R.I. (MISC FIRST AND SECOND GEN GAMES)
 - BURGERTIME (BURGERTIME)
 - NOOK HOMES (ANIMAL CROSSING)
 - ORANGE STAR & BLUE MOON (NINTENDO WARS)
 - SMASH TV (SMASH TV, SMASH BROS FOR THE JOKE)
 - VORTEX FARMS (ECCO THE DOLPHIN)
 - MEDABOT FIGHTING CIRCUIT (MEDABOTS)
- CITY HOT ZONES (1 PAGE)
 - MONSTEROPOLIS (WILYCORP)
 - CASINO NIGHT (ROBODYNE, X-SYNDICATE)
 - ALGOL CLUSTER (METPHARM)
 - NEO TOKYO (ZEED, PULSEMAN, SMT)
 - METRO CITY (FINAL FIGHT, MISC NEW YORK STUFF)
 - EAGLE QUARTER (EARTHBOUND)
 - RIVER CITY (KUNIO-KUN, DOUBLE DRAGON, COMBATTRIBES)
 - POLY-ESTA (PLOK, BUBSY)
 - MUTE CITY (F-ZERO, POSSIBLY OTHER RACING GAMES)

TERMINA REGION (2 PAGES)

- MAJOR FACTIONS (2 PAGES)
 - GD TECH (ZELDA)
 - CASTLEVANIA (CASTLEVANIA)
 - OUTER HEAVEN (METAL GEAR)
 - SHADOLOO (STREET FIGHTER, OTHER FIGHTING GAMES)

- BIT PLAYERS (1 PARAGRAPH, 8 TOTAL)
 - NOSGOTH (LEGACY OF KANE)
 - MASHIMA ZAIBATSU (TEKKEN)
 - KAZAKH FEDERATION (STRIDER) (BIT PLAYER)
 - SOUTH TOWN (FATAL FURY, KOF)
 - REGULAR ARMY (METAL SLUG)
 - LIN KUEI (MORTAL KOMBAT)
- TERMINA REGION HOT ZONES (1 PAGE)
 - DEKU FOREST (ZELDA)
 - SILENT HILL (LOTS OF SPOOKY STUFF)
 - RACCOON CITY (RESIDENT EVIL)

PIPEWORKS (2 PAGES)

- MAJOR FACTIONS (2 PAGES)
 - KOOPA KINGDOMS (MARIO)
 - CARAVAN OF DREAMS (KIRBY)
 - CHAOS CULTS (VARIOUS)
 - BROTHERHOOD OF NOD (COMMAND AND CONQUER)
- PIPEWORKS BIT PLAYERS (1 PARAGRAPH, 8 TOTAL)
 - S.I.M.'S CITY (SIMCITY, ROBOTRON)
 - MARIO BROS PLUMBING (MARIO)
 - WARIO BROS PLUMBING (MARIO)
 - CULT OF POWER (ZELDA)
- PIPEWORKS HOT ZONES (1 PAGE)
 - SARASALAND (MARIO)
 - DOWNTOWN (DIG DUG, MR. DRILLER)
 - MLF STADIUM (MUTANT LEAGUE FOOTBALL)

OUTLANDS (2 PAGES)

- MAJOR FACTIONS (2 PAGES)
 - PIRATES (VARIOUS PIRATES)
 - FINAL FEDERATION (FINAL FANTASY)
 - DRAGONLANDS (DRAGON QUEST)
 - THE MALFESTATION (SOUL CALIBUR)
- OUTLANDS BIT PLAYERS (1 PARAGRAPH, 8 TOTAL)
 - SOSORIA (ULTIMA) (BIT PLAYER)
 - FLOWERBUD VILLAGE / MINERAL TOWN (HARVEST MOON)
 - GERUDO (ZELDA)

- METAL DEMONS (WILD ARMS)
- KID FAMILY (WILD GUNS)
- NATIVE HYLIAN SPECIES (ZELDA)
- MOOGLES (FF)
- MECHA/GEARS FACTION
- HOT ZONES (1 PAGE)
 - YURIA (GOLDEN AXE)
 - THE ORGAN TRAIL (THE OREGON TRAIL)
 - KONG ISLAND (DONKEY KONG COUNTRY)

BEYOND THE CITY (2 PAGES)

- OTHER PLANETS & SYSTEMS (1 PARAGRAPH)
 - DIN, NARYU, FARORE (MISC)
 - LYLAT SYSTEM (STAR FOX, SINISTAR)
 - DARIUS (DARIUS)
 - GRADIUS AND NEMESIS (GRADIUS SERIES)
- DREAMLANDS (MIGHT BE EXPLAINED IN PIPES BECAUSE OF CARAVAN, BUT THIS CAN SERVE AS A CAPSTONE FOR ANY UNRESOLVED PLOT THREADS RELATING TO IT)

(NOTE: Might have Bit Players go before Hot Zones? It'd be something to discuss.)

OLD NOTEPAD MOVED TO NEW TAB

What's going on with Mortal Kombat is still overtly supernatural. Outworld is a semi-stable part of the Dreamlands, with Shao Khan being a quasi-demonic warlord

Mention the Dark Anarchy Society somewhere under terrorist groups

Where in the City is Carmen Sandiego?

Mavis Beacon

Vectorman's WarHead as a maverick

Robotrons as a defective SIM node that kidnaps people to produce insane, monstrous cyborgs? -> To be addressed in the SIM City

Where do COMPs and the demon summoning program fit in -> Allude to under Neo Tokyo

What is the difference between Magicite, Materia, and Chaos Emeralds? -> They're all Tiberium?

Add in Medabot Corp. and Rubberrobogang as Bit Players? -> Probably not

Jot down Pilotwings as a Bit Player?

Clarify more on the Lylat Wars, Star Fox, and Andross

FACTION WRITEUPS

Factions (2 PAGES EACH)

☐ BIG THREE

- ☐ WILYCORP (MEGA MAN)
- ☐ ROBODYNE (SONIC)
- ☐ METPHARM (METROID, PHANTASY STAR)
- ☒ ZEEB ~~(SHINOBI)~~

☐ CITY

- ☐ X-SYNDICATE (MISC CRIME, SEGA REFERENCES)
- ☒ ~~ROCKET GROUP (POKEMON)~~
- ☐ MISSILE COMMAND (X-COM, MISC MILITARY)
- ☐ PLACEHOLDER???

☐ TERMINA

- ☐ GD TECH (THE LEGEND OF ZELDA)
- ☐ SHADOLLO (STREET FIGHTER, MISC FIGHTING)
- ☐ OUTER HEAVEN (METAL GEAR)
- ☐ CASTLEVANIA (...)

☐ PIPES

- ☐ KOOPA KINGDOM (SUPER MARIO BROS)
- ☐ CARAVAN OF DREAMS (KIRBY)
- ☐ CHAOS CULTS (NINJA GAIDEN, SMT, KID ICARUS. DECAP-ATTACK, KIRBY)
- ☐ BROTHERHOOD OF NOD (COMMAND & CONQUER)

☐ OUTLANDS (Include New Kingdoms Here)

- ☐ FINAL FEDERATION (FINAL FANTASY I-IX)
- ☐ THE DRAGONLANDS (DRAGON QUEST)
- ☐ PIRATES! (MISC PIRATES, DONKEY KONG COUNTRY)
- ☐ MALFESTED (SOUL CALIBER)

The City

Inset that covers things like

- pokemon are physical demons
 - shift form based on how they're treated, demonic or clinical, bestial or even human
 - terrifying supernatural powers
 - pokemon as yokai for a new age, biological legends
-

(Legacy Copy)

In the dark streets of the city, there isn't much difference between a corporation and a crime ring. The higher ups of Silph Co could never have guessed how far that truth would spread. The Rocket Group was originally a conspiracy within their ranks, one that siphoned off vast sums from Silph to fund a burgeoning criminal empire in loan sharking, protection 'services', and trafficking. Still, it could have been destined as nothing more than another protection racket and vice den if not for just what Silph was working on.

Silph was formed by believers in the mysterious. Fringe scientists, ZEED defectors, and supposed psychics to name only a few. Professor Samuel Oak discovered his prototype "Silph Scope" could be attuned to detect more than just the early signs of genetic diseases. The devices caught images of strange, immaterial beings out of normal perception. Things Silph Co, perhaps, should have left alone. Instead, they began studying what was on the other side. Setting up shop in the relatively uncontested zone of Neo-Kanto, Silph was left alone long enough to begin getting ideas. Ideas about the true nature of the supernatural, the place beyond places called the Dreamlands, and the creatures that lived there. Their researchers identified a unique psychic entity, codenamed ' μ ' (Mu), and sought to find a way that its power could be harnessed by a biological life form.

Unfortunately, they succeeded.

Silph Co's early studies of Mu resulted in a gold mine of medical research, securing their status as the top corp in Neo-Kanto. The 'Ditto' unit was a biological slurry of artificial genes intended to embody the μ entity. While their attempt was imperfect, the Ditto's unstable and unnatural genetic sequence is capable of absorbing and replicating almost any physical matter it comes in contact with. Given enough time, Silph discovered that Ditto could stabilize into semi-stable lineages that could breed true. The first designer 'pocket monsters' were born.

It was then that the Rocket Group looked back to Specimen μ . It was unstable and had unreliable loyalty to its creators. The project heads determined a sequel to Silph Co's magnum opus would be needed to make the company above reproach. Project μ 2, an organism that would take the best from all the extant Pokemon species, was tacitly approved.

All that's known about what happened next is that an off-the-books research center on Cinnabar Island went down in flames, taking millions of pokedollars in hardware with it. Silph Co's board of directors acted hastily to punish Rocket, performing an extensive purge of any staff or miscellaneous projects they suspected was affiliated with them. And it was then that Rocket struck.

The corporation was torn apart from the inside out as countless scientists and admins launched a violent coup, securing laboratories and specimens as anyone unwilling to keep their heads down lost them. When the dust had cleared, Rocket stood uncontested as all but masters of Neo-Kanto, and a dozen specimens were lost into the grass surrounding a research facility.

Rattata and Pidgey were reported within the week.

News of Mu-spawned creatures getting loose into Neo-Kanto's ecosystem was potentially catastrophic. The monsters quickly overwhelmed the local food chain, spreading more Mu biomass wherever they went. Mu made new life out of plants, animals, discarded machinery, or even chemical runoff, without a care for if what it was changing was ever alive to begin with. Only by discovering they could exploit the conversion effect and turn the creatures into energy with digital storage balls could the remains of Silph Co prevent a zone-wide outbreak.

Quickly, Rocket discovered the same thing that street punks who weren't afraid of the creatures already knew: These monsters could be *trained*. Hundreds of them were rounded up and forced into submission using built-in obedience protocols, becoming superpowered attack dogs capable of matching a WilyCorp response team without trouble. Underground fighting rings in which Pokemon can be set against each other began to form. As a phenomenon, Pokemon are hypothetically limited to Neo-Kanto, with penalties for anyone attempting to smuggle them to other zones. Unfortunately, nature abhors a vacuum. Pokemon have already infested neighboring Neo-Johto, and other zones are beginning to follow suit. An unlucky family may wake to find a Golbat nesting in their eaves, fully capable of draining their blood in a single night. Even the notoriously dangerous fauna of Hyrule beyond the City limits are said to be facing new challengers. Over a hundred and fifty unique strains have been confirmed, and the number is continually rising.

Rocket Group skirts the lines of legal corporate operations, running gambling corners above board and furthering their research of Pokemon as living weapons in the backrooms. While Rocket may maintain control over the 'Poke-ball' design that can transmute these psychoactive creatures to pure energy, they are far from the only ones who have learned how to make use of them. Like Silph Co, Rocket Group has quietly thrown money at the burgeoning "Pokemon League" that has cropped up. A few of their own agents have already infiltrated the circuit to poach aspiring hopefuls from under their rivals' noses. The less-skilled ones can still find work as grunt fodder, and nevermind if they get themselves killed by their own Arbok. There's always another tough who thinks he can handle the big snake, and they will do their job in the meanwhile.

All of Rocket serves the will of one man, Giovanni. A mobster through and through, Giovanni understands power in all its forms. How to make it, how to take it, and how to use it. He has no intention of bowing to any corporate overlords. If they have wealth, he'll have wealth. If they have armies, he'll have an army. If they have superweapons, he *will* have his superweapon. No waste, no frills, just cold-hearted powergrabs in any form he can come by. His machinations have led Rocket scientists towards breeding new and more dangerous Pokemon, even reaching back into the Dreamlands once more to give entirely new entities flesh at his command. Elemental monstrosities of which modern legends will be made.

Mu Two was only the beginning.

Bit Players

[WIP] ROBOPON DISPATCHING COMPANY

Robopon, (a portmanteau of Robot and Ponkottsu, the latter being a Japanese word roughly translating to junk), are a series of robots built to sate the public's hunger of Pokemon related activities without breaking the Neo Kanto and Joeto quarantine. Using software based on the code of C-Life and the Porygon Pokemon, a Silph Co. sponsored research team based in Porombo Island were able to create a framework of code that can be used to animate robots specifically designed to house them. This team became the Robopon Dispatching Company, a major producer and lessor of these robots. Series 1 hit the shelves and, while not as outrageously successful as RDC had hoped, the ease of access and their relative safety in comparison to their Mu based counterparts has helped to diminish the threat of Pokemon smuggling. Unknown to the Company however, the code also taps into the noospheric power of dreamlands, and while not as virulent at spreading, it still presents the same psionic danger as real Pokemon.

THE PIPEWORKS [WIP]

"There's something down in the pipes..."

-
- Plumbers
- Brotherhood of Nod
- Caravan of Dreams
- Chaos Cults
- Koopa Kingdom

Brotherhood of Nod

"Kane Lives!"

Description of faction.

Caravan of Dreams

"Quote."

Description of faction.

Chaos Cults

"WHEN A BLACK MOON SHINES, LIGHT AND DARK BREAK APART, THE KING OF DARKNESS HOWLS."

Description of faction.

Koopa Kingdoms

"Your princess is in another castle."

Description of faction.

Bit Players

Plumbers

Driller Communes

SIM

TERMINA ZONE

GD TECH

"Power."

For many, Hyria as it was before it was called the City is little more than an afterthought. It was a barren wasteland, the older ones said, and any past it had was buried under the relentless march of progress. It wasn't until humans began exploring the Outlands and Pipeworks that any evidence of the planet's deeper history could be unveiled. There was no reason to believe that the world had intelligent life before man, civilizations whose ruins were torn down to make room for urbanization from the Lemmings. As their programming further decayed, it became easier to integrate these structures into what was to be constructed, leaving them more or less intact. More than enough to fan the flames of human curiosity.

Bit Players

Nosgoth

"Vae Victis" - Woe to the Conquered

- Verdant land close to Castle Dracula, secluded by natural mountain range
- Pillars of Nosgoth grants its nine guardians immortality and powers related to their pillar (Mind, Dimension, Conflict, Nature, Balance, Energy, Time, States, Death)
- Multiple separate villages, only Willendorf and Avernus could be considered major settlements.
- Overflowing with monsters and murderers, regular vampire stomping grounds, travel is very dangerous
- Sarafan conflict against Dracula?

[WIP] MEDAROT COMPANY

Founded by geologist Tamezo Nimousaku and sponsored by GD Tech, the Medarot Company specializes in producing robots known as "Medarots" for commercial, security, and sporting purposes. Medarots utilize pre-city artifacts known as "Medals" (which were discovered by Nimousaku), coin sized CPUs which contain a sapient artificial intelligence. Medarots are composed of a "Tinpet", an endoskeleton which houses the Medel, and any parts added on top. Other companies have acquired the rights to produce parts, only Medarot (and their sponsor GD Tech) have the right to make Tinpets. Illegally produced frames are often derisively called "Medabots" after one bootlegger tried to market them under that name and was subsequently sued into oblivion. While most Medals produce compliant metarot, some are known to house personalities that would be considered "maverick".

THE OUTLANDS

[Review] THE DRAGONLANDS

A Monster is Approaching!

Dragons are a common sight throughout the Outlands. Large, fire breathing lizards who fly around the skies; these apex predators are a very common sight on various new Kingdoms coats of arms and flags. But only the Dragonlands have the greed and power to truly call themselves one with the monsters. In ways that are more literal then most travellers of the outlands are truly aware of.

Long ago, back before the fall of Hyrule; Dragons were natural shapeshifters and sorcerers connected to the Dreamlands. Able to take humanoid forms, a clan of these people used dark magics to try and steal a child of the celestial realm; planning to turn him into a superweapon to annihilate their foes. Whether from divine retribution or their own attempts to weaponize the ephemeral; a terrible plague was unleashed upon their kind. Most transformed into mindless beasts, and the few that did not had to access as little of their powerful magics and monstrous form as possible.

While the dragon population never truly recovered; they still fared better than the Kingdom of Hyrule, which wiped the dominant Hylians off the map and unleashed monsters upon the world. The remaining sane dragons spent centuries in isolated communities; watching the world shatter and never recover, and even the intelligent monsters inhabiting it unable to build a true society. Until the arrival of humanity.

Seeing the New Kingdoms struggle, the leader of the Dark Dragon tribe, known simply as the Dragonlord, had his dreams of conquest rekindled. He could unite the outlands; restore his fractured people, and bring these newcomers under his benevolent shadow. Monsters and Humans live as one people for a mutually beneficial goal. He could remake the lost Kingdom of Hyrule in his image, a sorcerer king who's able to command the land with but a word.

The Dragonlord himself does not care much on where a person is actually from. Human, Dragon or Monster, If you pledge yourself to him and his cause he will grant you power and riches, even if you were originally a hated foe. He respects power and courage, and if you betray him to take his head he won't be too upset by it. He *will* kill you brutally and slowly, making your folly an example to all others without a second chance, but the truth is that the man knows that if he wants the Outlands to unify under himself

His empire, the Dragonlands, focuses a lot on destabilizing the already unstable regions around it. The Dragonlord's political acumen means he often knows the best ways to get people to be content in his empire is to force them into having no other choice without marching an army to

their doorstep. Manipulating a monarch at the center of an alliance of nations to declare war on his allies removes a potential rival's ability to properly stand against him. A princess kidnapped from her palace is not a sacrifice or toy, but a valued political prisoner to force negotiations to open up, while a Kingdom may find their marketplace and caravans mysteriously robbed and razed as their economy slowly collapses; forced to beg the Dragonlands for loans and gifts from their treasure hoard.

When politics fail, the Dragonlands turn to might that reminds people why Dragons are feared. They send legions of monsters and soldiers to bear down on their enemies; using mystical might and turning remnants of Hylian and City tech that could be scavenged into artillery pieces and makeshift tanks. The Dragonlord tries to stop cities from being completely razed; but his generals can frequently be a bit uppity and sometimes an example must be made to make sure no one gets any ideas. After all, he seeks *unity* and *stability*, both of which are worth any cost.

Despite the Dragonlord's apparent acceptance of anyone willing to join his flag and promises of unity and stability; the Dark Dragon Tribe maintains most of the control of the Empire as a whole. Those on the local levels are normally humans or occasionally a charmed monster in a human skin; and frequently the Dragonlord's desire to get people to pledge themselves to him means that many governors seek to simply further their own wealth and power in spite of the people.

The tributes the Dragonlands demand from it's vassal states can vary, but they all serve the simple goal of subsuming more of surrounding nations into itself. Soldiers, minerals, technology and food are all common demands; with some towns even trying to rebuild forges to reverse engineer Hylian technologies. In return the Dragonlord stops most of the fighting between neighbors (Under threat of razing the perpetrator to the ground) and monster attacks, while not gone entirely; are still limited enough roads can be maintained.

The Dragonlands are not quite prosperous, but they are secure. And this security the Dragonlord shall spread across the Outlands; until he has unified them to the point he can build a megastate able to crush any dissenters and force the people together. And once the Outlands are unified; he shall move to the siege of his lifetime... the conquest of the City proper.



Breakdown

- Dragons are an Old Hylian Species who got hit with a Mind Plague when they tried to steal a child from the Celestial Realm to be their leader/a superweapon. Very few sapient dragons remain.
- Remaining Dragons lead by the Dragonlord; leave full explicit history ambiguous. Abandon 3 Dragonlords for now; maybe included in the GM Section. Too important to sell people on the character to be that kind of ambiguous.
- Dragons saw the fall of Hyrule, their population never recovered enough to take their place.
- Dragonlord wants Empire; explicitly sees himself as the inheritor of Hyrule
- Mixture of degraded Hylian Tech, Degraded City Tech he looted, and Monsters make up his forces.
- Dragonlord is a *Politician* as his biggest boon. He knows how to place his strikes to get a nation to willingly join up with him/
- Goals are expressly political, hostages are royal family members to strongarm them into following him, assaults on towns seek to cripple to economy
- Conquering Humanity for their own good, using a lot of underhanded tactics like causing alliances to fight, finding quislings to sell out their nations, and just using large armies.
- He must be a despot for stability; because otherwise bandits and monsters will roam the land killing everything, and castle towns will fight one another.
- Conquered places are expected to pay a tribute to help his war machine conquer more and more of the outlands. Corruption very rampant in the time
- End goal is conquering the City and claiming Hyrule Castle; allowing him to rule over the entire land.
- *HE WANTS ROME*

[REVIEW] The Final Federation

"I Garland Will Knock You All Down!"

If one was to judge the entirety of the Outlands solely by the Final Federation, one would expect the land to be far more hospitable than it is. An alliance of smaller kingdoms; the Federation has avoided the worst of the degradation of the Outland, becoming one of the major powers and even engaging in (limited) trade with the City itself.

The Federation was formed around and relies on 4 advanced bits of ancient technology on the planet, The Crystals of Light. Controlling the four elements of Earth, Fire, Water and Air the four crystals were able to let the local nations terraform the lands to maintain mostly prosperous conditions. Crops receive just enough rain, winds are always blowing in a favorable direction, and any attempts to invade meet a fiery end.

In order to stop each other from annihilating one another with these relics; the nation of Corneria managed to successfully get the others in the region to agree to a military alliance. In exchange for free trade and sharing the powers of the crystals, all member states would make sure to lend military aid in conflict, including having a standing army for quick responses to bandits and monster attacks.

Then people began to study the crystals. Breakthroughs in the study of the Occult soon followed, as the Federation proceeded to found the Chromatic Mages. These psychics would be taught to control their powers, with them eventually spreading from the Federation into the neighboring Outlands and even the Termina region.

It wasn't just psychics that benefitted from the research of the crystal. Plans to replace no-longer sustainable City technology were made using schematics from the ancient devices. A man named Cid latter discovered how to make weaker replicants of the crystals, calling his invention Magicite this mystical material caused an industrial revolution in the federation. This discovery lead to the closely guarded secrets of Magitech, which makes up much of the Federation's power.

While some gangs in the city and the pipes do smuggle in parts of the Federations Magitech it's not common for those in power to want or envy it. The Federation's advancement in technology, while impressive compared to it's peers; is still not at the level the corps of the city reserve for their upper echelons. While DRAGOON Jet Armor is incredibly strong, but is also intensely bulky and struggles with maintained flight compared to large burst of movement. The Walkers employed by the military might have the ability to fire PSI-Weaponry that can pierce through most expected armor, but a significantly armored up Biodroid could resist the blast.

Coinciding with these massive technological discoveries was the rise of the SHINRA Electrical Power Company. Their Geothermal plants dot all of the Federations landscape; allowing those nations that do not tap directly into the crystals to maintain a higher level of energy then those in Kingdoms outside of the Federation. In addition to supplying power SHINRA also produced their own brand of Magicite called Materia. (Include what makes Materia different here)

Despite all these massive strides towards progress and unity, the Federation still has its problems. Monster and bandit attacks still occur despite the comparative prosperity to their peers. While the decay of technology hasn't fully been stopped despite them trying to make Magitech replacements as soon as possible. Foreign nations eye the wealth and power of the federation with greedy eyes, as their army is pulled into conflicts from member-states trying to use their help to forge empires.

The standing army is often deployed to fend off such threats. Primarily stationed in a large air fleet, with armored walkers and mage support for the ground troops. The core leadership is decentralized, being split amongst several generals who can normally do as they wish. Most famous of these generals is Corneria's Sir Jack Garland; an Invader wars veteran who wears his power armor with pride as he crushes the resistance of those who seek harm to the federation.

Internally, things are almost as messy. Political divides on what the Federation should focus it's resources on are always in occurrence, as is dissatisfaction over the way the crystals and borders are divided up. Fears around the reliance on Magicite are similarly common. Critics often point out that the amount of tampering with Crystals and unknown creation process of Magicite potentially leading to massive issues down the line; though such claims remain unpopular even with opposition factions.

Still, words of unethical supersoldier programs from multiple kingdoms withing the federation have begun to rise alongside the accusations of SHINRA's geothermal generators risking intense environmental damage. A terrorist organization simply known as AVALANCHE has emerged, attacking research facilities and power plants while not caring of the long term damage it may do to the federation.



- All FF Games
- 1, 6, and 7 most conceptually relevant
- Alliance based around powerful crystals

- Has places for psychics to learn
- Also has Magitech
- Magitech is advanced but not as good as city
- Garland big military guy keeping order
- SHINRA is SHINRA
- Avalanche main insurgent group.

(In Progress) Pirates!

Yohoho

The threat of raiders is ever present in the outlands. Lost mercenary companies, destroyed nations militaries, and desperate colonist roam the monster infested wilderness. Attacks against cities and caravans regularly end with tons of corpses and stolen good making it to various hide outs. The monarchs of the New Kingdoms often thank that they seem incapable of organizing themselves into a great threat across the land.

Pity that does not apply to the waters.

Piracy differs from run of the mill banditry in two major ways. The first is their ability to travel vast distances is significantly greater than most bandits; ships often having the firepower and speed to escape the aquatic monsters that roam the seas of Hyrule. The second is that they share neutral ground with one another, the pirate republican of Crocodile Isle.

Created from the mad vision of K. Rool, a Soviet Crocodile Uplift who leads the massive Kremlin Krew of pirates; Crocodile Isle grants a unified front for all piratekind. It doesn't matter if one is made of a dozen or so little orphan girls adopted by one man, a small family in constant debt with 100 biodroid servants, or a group of naval tomb raiders sailing the seas, all ne'er do-wells and swashbucklers are allowed to dock in his harbor.

Pirates can typically be divided in two major philosophies. The Blue Rogues are the pirates and raiders that take the outcast of society and tries to give them a place they belong. They frequently keep a level of moral decision making in their targets, careful to not crippling their victims and keep casualties at minimum. The second one, the Black Pirates, focus on profit at any cost. These pirates will attack hard and fast, burning settlements as they take everything off value not nailed down, or forcing them under their direct 'governance' with high tributes.

While cities not located on the coast often assume they're safe, such delusions often are shattered when the shadow of an airship arrives overhead. Hard to acquire and harder to maintain in the underdeveloped outlands; airships are powerful force multipliers and status symbols for any upcoming pirate lord. These machines typically need to be stolen from a Federation or City hanger

- General Raiders Problem How They Emerged
- K Rool Arrival

- Types of Pirates in General
- Air Piracy is Expensive, but Prestigious
- Blue Rogues and Black Pirates
- How they work with City
- Most Loosely Affiliated
- Pirate Council
- LeChuck/Cervantes Seats Open
- King K Rool leads to more ambitious raids

FOURTH FACTIONS (ONE HOT ZONE, ONE BIT PLAYER, ONE FACTION)

THE METAL DEMONS IF FACTION/FILGAEA IF HOT ZONE

- WILD WEST THEME, STILL DOES FEUDALISM
- REGION BUILT OVER CHOZO AND HYLIAN RUINS WHICH HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO A LOT OF ARMOR AND WEAPONS BY THE LOCALS
- TECH LEVEL NOT ACTUALLY MUCH HIGHER THEN REST OF OUTLANDS, MELEE WEAPONS OUT OF OLD TECH MOST COMMONLY USED SINCE EASIER TO MAINTAIN
- PRETTY LAWLESS DESPITE HAVING A FEW 'KINGDOMS', MOSTLY VILLAGES UNDER GANG RULE
- BIGGEST GANG ARE THE METAL DEMONS
- THE METAL DEMONS ARE OUTWARDLY A GROUP OF MAVERICK SUPREMECIST WHO HATE HUMANITY. SOME CYBORGS ARE WITH EM AS WELL.
- WHILE MOST OPERATE ON A KILL ON SIGHT RULE, THE LEADERS OF THE GANG, THE QUARTER KNIGHTS, TRY TO KEEP SOME PEOPLE AROUND AS USEFUL STOOGES
- QUARTER KNIGHTS ARE ACTUALLY AN ANCIENT EXPERIMENT TO MAKE MYSTIC BIOMECHANICAL MONSTERS SEALED AWAY CENTURIES AGO
- THEY SEEK TO CONQUER HYRULE AND WIPE ALL LIFE OUT TO TERRAFORM INTO WHAT THEY THINK IS A HOMEWORLD FOR THEIR PEOPLE
- WORSHIP THEIR CREATOR SIMPLY REFERRED TO AS MOTHER, WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE MOTHER BRAIN AND HAS LONG SINCE ABANDONED THEM AFTER THE CHOZO DIED
- METAL DEMON'S LEADER, ZEIGFRIED, HATES MOTHER A LOT AND WANTS TO KILL HER
- MIGHT SWAP NAMES SO FACTION IS THE QUARTER KNIGHTS AND LEADERS THE METAL DEMONS
- POSSIBLE HAVE THE GEAR PROGRAM STARTING UP TO CREATE ANOTHER ROBOTIC MONSTER TO FIGHT EM.

BEAST RIDERS IF FACTION YURIA IF HOTZONE

- NEEDS NEW NAME
- DEATH ADDER LEADS THE SINGLE LARGEST CONGLOMERATION OF BANDITS AND RAIDERS KNOWN
- MUTANT GIANT WHO HAS A MASSIVE AXE THAT MIGHT BE A HYLIAN WEAPON
- FULL ON TECHNO-BARBARIANS
- MAD MAX STYLE RAMPAGES
- CULT OF PERSONALITY?
- GO AROUND RAZING SHIT
- HEAVY FOCUS ON BEAST RIDERS
- JUST BURNT DOWN THE NATION OF FIREWOOD

MECH FACTION

- FEUDALISM WITH MECHA-KNIGHTS
- LOT OF MECH GAMES, NO REAL STAND OUTS TO HEAD IT

- ARCH WILL NEED TO FILL MORE OF THIS OUT
- NEEDS A NAME

THE MALFESTED-THE EVIL SEED (Soul Caliber)

- CORRUPTIVE FORCE OF A FACTION
- MAKES MUTANTS AND MONSTERS OUT OF PEOPLE
- MADNESS AND TURNED INTO POWERFUL OBJECTS
- GOING AROUND WITH IT'S MURDER CANCER THAT MAKES YOU MURDER
- EVIL CHAOS GOD OF LITERAL HELL ON EARTH

Bit Players

SOSORIA

METAL DEMONS

IMPERIAL KNIGHTS MECHA FACTION/GEARS?

FLOWERBUD VILLAGE / MINERAL TOWN

GERUDO

GORONS & ZORA (NATIVE HYLIA SPECIES IN GENERAL?)

MOOGLES

KID FAMILY

KID FAMILY

The subject of early colonization and mining efforts, the area of Desolation Canyon soon devolved into gang warfare and local power struggles due to how hard it was to supply logistically. Eventually however, one syndicate emerged on top as the masters of the zone: The Kid Family. Through bribery, coercion, and negotiation, the Family was able to secure control over all mining operations in the area, receiving a heavy cut of their income when they traded back with The City, as well as establish ammunition manufacturing facilities. Under them, Desolation Canyon rebuilt and became a major economic power, one with enough bargaining power to rival smaller corps and to keep the area under the family's thumb. The current leader of the organization is the rarely seen family patriarch, King Kid, who reigns from a secret hideout somewhere in the zone. The Family employs various mechanized units alongside its gang members to maintain control and guard the armored trains that convey precious goods to and from The City. Notably, the family possesses a handful of large mecha and autonomous mavericks, such as the goliath Big Bertha.

(okay we could use at least ONE Trigun-themed faction)

HOT ZONES

HOT ZONES

- ☐ BIG THREE
 - ☐ MONSTEROPOLIS (WILYCORP, MEGA MAN)
 - ☐ CASINO NIGHT (ROBODYNE, SONIC THE HEDGEHOG)
 - ☐ ALGOL CLUSTER (METPHARM. PHANTASY STAR)
 - ☐ NEO TOKYO (ZEED, SHINOBI, PULSEMAN, SMT)
- ☐ CITY
 - ☐ METRO CITY (FINAL FIGHT, MISC NEW YORK STUFF)
 - ☐ EAGLE QUARTER (EARTHBOUND)
 - ☐ RIVER CITY (KUNIO-KUN, DOUBLE DRAGON, COMBATTRIBES)
 - ☐ POLY-ESTA (PLOK, BUBSY)
 - ☐ MUTE CITY (F-ZERO, POSSIBLY OTHER RACING GAMES)
- ☐ TERMINA REGION
 - ☐ DEKU FOREST (ZELDA)
 - ☐ SILENT HILL (SPOOKY STUFF)
 - ☐ RACCOON CITY (RESIDENT EVIL)
- ☐ PIPEWORKS
 - ☐ DOWNTOWN (DRILLER COMMUNE, DIG-DUG, MR. DRILLER)
 - ☒ ~~SARASALAND (SUPER MARIO LAND)~~
 - ☐ MUTANT LEAGUE STADIUM (MUTANT LEAGUE FOOTBALL/HOCKEY)
- ☐ OUTLANDS
 - ☐ KONG COUNTRY (DONKEY KONG COUNTRY)
 - ☐ YURIA (GOLDEN AXE)
 - ☐ THE ORGAN TRAIL (OREGON TRAIL)
- ☐ MAYBE PROMOTE FROM BIT PLAYER
 - ☐ SOSORIA (ULTIMA)
 - ☐ KAZAKH FEDERATION (STRIDER)

[REVIEW] THE ORGAN TRAIL

YOU HAVE DIED OF DYSENTERY.

Travelling from Termina through the Outlands is a difficult, but theoretically lucrative endeavor. Whether it's heading out to search for resources for a corp, trading with the Federation, smuggling tech to far off bandits, or settling a new colony for either city expansion or to escape it, people brave the horrors of Hyrule consistently. Eventually enough expeditions had been sent out that routes had begun being named. The most famous of these being the Organ Trail.

Named after the Organ Gulch (Which is named for the amount of bodies tossed into it); the Organ Trail is designed to get the pioneers and truckers who take it to various pockets of safety as quickly as possible. First to the Final Federation, and then through less settled locals for dig sites and company towns to sprout up. It travels over rivers, mountains and forest, and kingdoms hostile and cooperative.

The dangers of such a journey are immense. Monsters roam the land to hunt for their next meal; while bandits and brigands of failed expeditions and desperate New Kingdoms wait in ambush for those unprepared for a fight. Besides the hostile dangers; rough terrain, disease, poisonous berries, and extreme weather all take hundreds of lives every year. Many who regularly travel the route for trade consider the greatest challenge is fording the River Zora, as no kingdom has been able to build a bridge over the turbulent monster infested waters.

People who set out on the trail do so with as much preparation as they can afford. Corp sponsored caravans often walk out of Termina with the most expensive water filtration and food systems in their all terrain vehicles. Meanwhile poorer ones make do with a few rifles, a couple self-sufficient beasts, and a few heirloom clocks to sell, determined to live off the land until they could either make it to their destination; or an abandoned corporate wagon they can hijack. Many who don't die discover the trip was not worth it, turning to banditry or get stuck living in some distant corpo-hydroponics farm or in a small hamlet under the protection of a deranged New Kingdom lord. But those rare few who make it home to show to everyone... the price may be steep, but the prize is well worth it.



SILENT HILL [IN PROGRESS]

"IN MY RESTLESS DREAMS I SEE THAT TOWN..."

NOTES

- On first look the surviving greenery, scenic lake views, and charming old-world style architecture would make one wonder why the Zone commonly referred to as Silent Hill isn't more popular, or how it even survived in the first place. But much like the Castlevania in the Outlands, Silent Hill doesn't function off of conventional logic or reason. It followed us here.
- The scenic views are a trap, and the terror inflicted on its preferred 'prey' serves to silence any survivors that would blow the whistle on it. Even surveyors from the Big Three find the mental scars vivid enough to report nothing out of the ordinary to their supervisors.
- Silent Hill is a weak point in our reality, that leads into a particularly disquieting section of the Dreamlands commonly called the Fog World.
- Most 'in the know' adamantly refuse to contemplate the fact that the terrifying fog may be spreading, slowly, to surrounding Zones. The fact that Silent Hill may be expanding is too terrifying to consider.
- 'The Toluca Zone' is a name for a zone located on the border between Neo Kanto and Neo Johto. One of the paths taken between Neo Johto and Neo Kanto for cargo would be done via highway routes. Some run along the coast towards a border crossing point, but many either diverge from the coastal route and up the rivers towards Mt Silver. The Toluca Zone comprises a valley centered around a lake clustered in the mountain passages.
- In my take there's a mixture of points that can be considered for marrying my proposals to the existing lore proposed prior:
 - Pre-Collapse Hyrule history makes this location a weak point / ley node on the continent as a result of occult events. This leads to The Goddess Stone existing outside of Brahm
 - Humans bring with them The Order and their occult practices, which fracture into sects as a result of different major rituals.
 - Colonists christen The Toluca Zone through the apotropaistic rite of sacrificing a psychic teenage girl and her mother, enshrining them as saints in the faith.
 - Due to how Toluca Zone was colonized, the pipeworks and the otherworld blend into each other beneath the surface such that it becomes hard to tell whether one is on Hyrule or in the Dreamlands, and the fog world blending the overworld with that same space allowing individuals to end up trapped.
- The Order is the chief faction that engages with Occult Research of The Otherworld + Fog World through the schema their faith provides. Some select few (Claudia-Stone Wolf,

Christabella Gillespie, etc) are even capable of summoning manifestations to heed their call. Alchemilla Hospital is headed by Dr Michael Kaufmann, a psychiatrist who runs a drug ring with his directorship as a front, and seeks to not get screwed over by The Order ([Alchemilla Quest Turn 1 Omake](#)). External factions include Metpharm through their ownership and investment into St. Jerome Hospital, potentially Caravan of Dreams, so-on.

CHARACTERS

We Are The Dead

The following is a document of various characters from the many component franchises of 8-bit dystopia, reinterpreted under the hazy, cyberdystopian lens of the City.

THE CITY

WILYCORP

Dr. Albert Wily

Once, "Uncle Wily", as the propaganda calls him, was just a scientist, a member of a team building a brighter, better future for humanity. But when the fires of chaos rose, he was the one who pulled the centre together, forging Wilycorp from the ashes of the old world order. He promised stability, safety and productivity, and people fell over themselves to offer up their freedoms in exchange. With the support of his investors, he bought trust, and with control of the city's core manufacturing zones, he built the army he needed to keep it. Now, Wily stands at the City's heart, and he'll do whatever it takes to keep it that way, because he is all that stands between the city and chaos.

Wily is a genius, a maestro of technical engineering and one of the few keepers of the secrets of the positronic brain, but while his intelligence is the backbone of his self-image, his most potent talent is the gift of gab. Wily has a way of putting people at ease and telling them what they want - what they *need* to hear, and if it helps him get what he wants, well that's just mutualism, isn't it? Even if the fine print doesn't come out quite as fair, it's his name on the company logo, and sometimes, life gives you a few hard knocks. You have to learn to compromise.

Wily believes he's doing the right thing. That in comparison to what a madhouse the City has devolved into, what Robodyne and Metpharm get up to, let alone everything else, he represents a bastion of sanity and progress. As much as Wily believed that Light's optimism made him foolish, he himself is just as blinded in his own way, driven by fear in much the same way; fear of losing what he has, of being wrong, of being forgotten. The fear that in the end, everyone is as secretly weak as he is. He tries to be kind when he can, or so he tells himself, but with every compromise, every lean into authoritarianism, Wily slips imperceptibly further away from that dream he and Thomas shared so long ago.

Proto Man (Blues)

Dr. Mikhail Sergeyevich Cossack

- Former Soviet engineer. Worked on the same team as Wily and Light.
- Prominent Wilycorp scientist.
- Unhappy medium of Wily's cynicism and Light's optimism. He's a realist.
- Designs his own Robot Masters (the ones from 4)
- Tied down by daughter.

Dr. Thomas Light

In the end, Thomas Light walked away.

ROBODYNE

Dr. Ivo Robotnik

- Post-Soviet
- Oligarch
- Incredibly, astonishingly unhinged
- His anonymous PR team can spin wonders but they can only do so much whenever Robotnik insists on making public appearances/speaking live

Sonic the Hedgehog

Concept: Sonic Silverhand

To elaborate on this. Sonic is the character who doesn't really have a clear characterisation. Whether or not we keep the 'Big Blue' moniker, there's a couple factors for spicing up the fastest thing alive's characterisation.

He's a mutant, in a setting where a lot of mutants are homeless, cannibalistic outcasts.

He's a genuine cyber punk. Fuck Eggman, fight the system. The problem is that he's one guy, and he has no organized backing to follow up on the chaos that he creates. He's reckless, destructive, and angry.

He has a reputation. Sonic, whatever name he's wanted™ under, is a known entity, because he's not subtle in the slightest in his willingness to attack Robodyne factories. However, he has no control over what that reputation is.

Tails is the kid that he picked up. A fellow mutant, the kid is what keeps him grounded, forcing Sonic to consider the consequences of his actions on other people beyond his personal rage against the machine.

In his darkest moments, Sonic wonders if the people around him, the kid, the girl... are slowing him down.

METPHARM

Mother Brain

Ridley

When you love your work, you never work a day in your life. Thus is the philosophy of Ridley, a sadistic monster who revels in afflicting pain and terror across the stars. Ridley is the leader of the Space Pirates that terrorized the human colony fleets fleeing towards Hyrule, and continue to pillage human ships that leave the safety of the Hylia System. The reptilian alien's species and planet of origin are unknown, but his resemblance to the dragons from Earth's folklore and the legends of Hyrule is rather eerie. Ridley is a canny tactician that conceals his intellect behind a savage exterior. He cherishes striking fear into human spacers by lashing out at them like a wild beast, only to reveal they've been outwitted in addition to being overpowered.

The leader of the Space Pirates is a sadist, whose depths of cruelty are rivaled only by the average housecat, but he knows when to put business before pleasure. As an organization, the Space Pirate fleet favors hit-and-run strikes. A protracted battle against an armored target is where they falter, and Ridley knows it'd be suicide to engage in such a conflict against the City. Thus, he was amenable to hearing out the "M.B." behind Metpharm when she contacted him first. Ridley and the Space Pirates remain an independent entity from Metpharm, but now, they have a steady source of income and safe harbor that they previously lacked. Space Pirate activity planetside is kept covert, to minimize their risk of exposure from Metpharm's rivals and the greater City. If you see Ridley, and Ridley sees you, then you're in one of two scenarios:

1. Ridley deems you worth keeping alive. Enjoy it while it lasts.
2. You're in the inconvenient, if temporary position of being a surviving witness.

Samus Aran

ZEED

Nakahara, the Shadow Master

In the 20th century, the Oboro clan faced extinction. The modern battlefield was too large, too industrial, for the skilled tradesman to find his place. Worse, Japan descended into impetuous peace, starving the Oboro of the traditional assassination and espionage work the clan relied on for its income.

The Invader Wars changed everything. Chaos and despair descended, but while many clans signed on with the United Nations' hastily put together Strider program, the Oboro found new life. Chaos and war

This is the legacy that Nakahara carries. As the current Shadow Master of the Oboro Clan, he built ZEED from the ground up to carry the legacy of the Oboro into the modern age. Without war, there is no purpose for shinobi, so the war must continue, for the sake of the clan.

Joe Mushashi

Joe Musashi could have everything.

The children go to war. The future of the clan dies in the name of the future of the clan.

ROCKET GROUP

Giovanni

Sabrina

MISSILE COMMAND

Commander Keen

X-SYNDICATE

Mr. X

PIPEWORKS

KOOPA KINGDOM

King Bowser Koopa

Kamek

CHAOS CULTS

Jaquio, Prophet of the Black Moon

Max D. Cap

CARAVAN OF DREAMS

DeDeDe

Meta Knight

Ado The Painter

Occasionally called by her real name of Adelaine, Ado is a young member of the Caravan who paints the visions of the Dreamlands across the walls of the pipes as they travel. A troubled child, Adelaine was abandoned in the pipes and adopted by the caravan from a young age. Her paintings are often described as 'disturbingly lifelike' despite the impossible nature of most of the beings they portray. The truth is, her art is in many ways alive. A vector for the allies of the Caravan in the dreamlands to watch and potentially manifest in the world of the living. And in the dreamlands she's the Paint Roller, skating around creating new beings.

Ado is an eerie child in how cheerful she can be in face of intense horrors. Despite her murals ranging from saccharine to mind numbingly terrifying, the girl is always down to see and judge them the same. The only times her mood shifts is if her (easily provoked) temper triggers. When that happens she will try and use her art to hurt whoever offends her. The tantrum often only ends when the target of her ire is gone or she works herself up enough to fling her fragile form at said perpetrator. Normally granting herself a concussion.

BROTHERHOOD OF NOD

Kane

Anton Slavik

TERMINA

GD TECH

Aganhim

CASTLEVANIA

Dracula

Death

The Belmont Clan

OUTER HEAVEN

Big Boss

Revolver Ocelot

SHADOWLOO

Master Bison

Balrog

Vega

Sagat

OUTLANDS

FINAL FEDERATION

Jack Garland

Sara Cornelia

Meteus Palamecia

Kefka Palazzo

Kefka is a complete success with no downsides.

Rufus Shinra

DRAGONLANDS

The Dragonlord

PIRATES!

K. Rool

The Bonnes

Captain Syrup

MALFESTED

Nightmare

Cervantes

NEW CONTENT

NEW CONTENT

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ROCKET GROUP

"Prepare for Trouble."

In the dark streets of the City, there's only so much that separates a smaller megacorp from a gang. The higher-ups at Silph Co could've never guessed how far that truth spread. Starting as a conspiracy within their ranks, the Rocket Group siphoned off vast sums from Silph to fund a burgeoning criminal empire in loan sharking, protection rackets, and trafficking. Rocket could've been destined to remain another bit player if it wasn't for Silph Co's creation.

Silph Co was formed by fringe scientists, alleged espers, and many "true believers" that set up in Neo-Kanto. Professor Oak, a man at the forefront of documenting Hyrule's biosphere, discovered his Silph Scope could detect more than genetic disease. The lens caught images of strange, immaterial beings invisible to the naked eye. Things that Silph Co should've best left alone. Instead, they explored what was on the other side of the looking glass. Oak and Dr. Fuji were among the first to identify a psionic entity native to the strange dimension they found, dubbed μ (Mu), and sought a means to study it further. Or even initiate first contact.

Unfortunately, they succeeded. Studies of Mu resulted in the "Ditto", a primordial slurry of artificial genes, which would absorb and replicate nearly any matter it touched. From Ditto's ability to create semi-stable lineages that bred true, the first designer "pocket monsters" were born. Silph Co's special projects division, Rocket, sought to push what they could obtain from Mu's DNA even further. The original Mu was an enigma, and the pocket monsters had unreliable loyalty to its creators. Project $\mu 2$ sought to solve both problems, creating a sequel to Silph Co's magnum opus that would make them above reproach.

A black site on Cinnabar Island went down in flames, taking millions in hardware with it. Silph Co's board was swift to punish Rocket for their failure, performing a purge of staff or projects suspected as affiliated with the disaster. When Rocket's admins dug into the black budget and secret weapons projects to strike back, the corporation was torn apart from the inside out. Anyone unwilling to keep their heads down during the Rocket Group's violent coup of Silph Co lost them. When the dust cleared, Rocket became the new masters of Neo-Kanto, and no less than six specimens ran away into the tall grass surrounding a research facility in Viridian City.

Sightings of wild Rattata and Pidgey were reported within the week.

News of Mu-spawned creatures getting loose into Neo-Kanto's ecosystem was potentially catastrophic. The biomonsters overwhelmed the local food chain, replacing local creatures wherever the contagion spread. Plants, animals, fungi, discarded machinery, or even chemical

runoff, without a care for whether these new species were ever alive to begin with. Only by exploiting Galaxy Computers' digitization technology could they contain any creatures tainted with Mu in electronic storage balls, preventing a global outbreak.

Quickly, the admins realized what the street punks using them in cockfights already knew: These beasts could be *trained*. Hundreds of "pokemon" were rounded up by Rocket trainers, becoming superpowered attack dogs that rivaled bioroids. Covert fighting rings where these pokemon were set against each other took form. While Rocket had a monopoly on the "pokeball" technology that converted pokemon into data, they aren't the only ones that have learned to use them. A burgeoning Pokemon League has cropped up in Neo-Kanto, and a few admins have already infiltrated the circuit, seeking to entice aspiring hopefuls to their side. Less-skilled trainers can still find work as cannon fodder, nevermind if they get poisoned by their Arbok.

Pokemon are limited to Neo-Kanto on paper, with penalties levied against anyone caught smuggling them beyond its borders. However, nature abhors a vacuum, and the Rocket Group benefits from pokemon invading new zones. They've already been sighted in neighboring Neo-Johto, among other places. An unlucky family may wake to find a ravenous Golbat in their eaves, capable of stealing gallons of blood in a single night. Rumors of Hypnos stealing away children haven't been confirmed, nor have they been denied. Wild pokemon are seen as pests in most zones they infest, making them frequent targets of Metpharm's biomonitor hunters. Even the notoriously-dangerous fauna of Hyrule beyond the City's limits are said to be facing new challengers. Over a hundred and fifty unique species have been confirmed, and the number is steadily rising.

The Rocket Group skirts the lines between legal corporate operations and mafia tactics, running gambling corners above board and furthering their research of pokemon as living weapons in the backrooms. Rocket serves the will of one man: Giovanni. A mobster through and through, Giovanni understands power in all its forms. If his rivals have wealth, he'll have wealth. If they have armies, he'll have an army. If they have superweapons, he *will* have his superweapon. No waste, no frills, just cold-hearted power grabs. His machinations have led Rocket towards breeding new and more dangerous pokemon, even reaching back into the Dreamlands once more to give entirely new entities flesh at his command. Elemental monstrosities of which modern legends will be made.

Mu Two was only the beginning.



SARASALAND

"Your quest is over."

For those daring plumbers who brave the depths of the Pipeworks, there's rarely a safe port to lay low in when storms are brewing deep below. A Pipes expedition that isn't fraught with danger is scarce, and friendly faces willing to trade goods or provide safe haven for explorers are scarcer. Warring mutants and Chaos Cults seeking to claim the contested ruins and caverns for their own. The closest location to a neutral zone within the confines of the Pipes was the Driller commune of Downtown, which is still much too close to the City for some deep-dwellers.

That was until Sarasaland. A free zone nestled in the middle depths of the Pipes, where the megacorps dare not tread. The interior is a dry sandpit, kept hot by a blazing power star. Sarasaland began as a handful of encampments scattered across the cool oases and mysterious ruins dotting the realm. Humans, mutants, and mavericks alike sought shelter from the angry sun hanging above. Travelers also needed a calm place to restock on supplies, which was a perilous task due to the sheer distance from the City. Sarasaland's deserts are harsh, but more than capable of sustaining life. That rare quality drew outcasts to Sarasaland over time.

As more people discovered this relatively stable and inhabitable slice of the Pipeworks, ramshackle towns and villages took shape. By 20XX, there are four "kingdoms" in total: Birabuto, Muda, Easton, and Chai, united under the flower banner of a human named Daisy. Whether she was a plumber who went native, or a Pipes-born human who ascended to power, the leaders of the four kingdoms respect the authority of their "princess". Princess Daisy's word is law in the eyes of what's otherwise a lawless rabble. Daisy intervenes when Sarasaland is under threat, but in other affairs, she's content to keep her direct involvement to a minimum.

Sarasaland is neutral to every party on, in, and beyond the planet, but this neutrality is a tenuous one. Wily Corp has sent Maverick Hunters to pursue any bioroids that flee to Sarasaland, GD Tech would be willing to do more than murder for a solid foothold into the underground, and the Koopa King himself is rumored to be vying for their mystic power star. For how long Princess Daisy can ward off these big fish enclosing on her small pond remains to be seen.

