

COMRADES

WESTSIDE: 1921

THE CITY

It is 1921, and New York has sliced itself in half. A 30-foot cast iron fence runs down the middle of Broadway, from the Battery to Marble Hill, dividing the bustling Eastside from the dying Westside. East of the fence, there is food, light, and hope, but for the few thousand left on the West, there is nothing but darkness, death, and the cold comfort of rotgut gin.

You are a citizen of the Westside. Will you save it—or burn it to the ground?

THE VANISHINGS

Life on the Westside has always been peculiar. Plants grow faster here. Machines rust quicker. The light plays tricks on your eyes. For centuries, the neighborhood was a curiosity—a bohemian paradise, a scar that the city bore with pride. But then people started to disappear.

Around 1900, the people of the Westside began vanishing into the dark: first a few dozen, then hundreds, then thousands. Finally, the toll became impossible to ignore, and in 1914, the city built the fence, walling off the Westside in a desperate attempt to cauterize the wound. But the night remains hungry.

THE LANDSCAPE

After the fence went up, the Westside landscape rebelled against the civilization that had been built atop it. Buildings were swallowed by the earth. Creeks erupted from the pavement. Trees grew to ten times their size almost overnight. It is beautiful. It is deadly. It is home.

THE DESPOTS

Seven years after the fence was raised, this ruined half of the world's most famous city is divided into two territories, the Lower West and the Upper, with the boundary fixed at Fourteenth Street—commonly known as the Borderline.

Above the Borderline, the people of the Upper West attempt to keep up the appearance of bourgeois respectability. They have a library, a market, a few pathetic schools. Below the Borderline, chaos reigns. The streets are patrolled by ragtag gangs of child soldiers; the nights are terrible; the liquor is cheap.

Glen-Richard Van Alen is the lord of the Upper West. Andrea Barbarossa controls the Lower. Both are self-styled emperors. Both deserve to be destroyed. You and your comrades will do the job.

THE CAMPAIGN

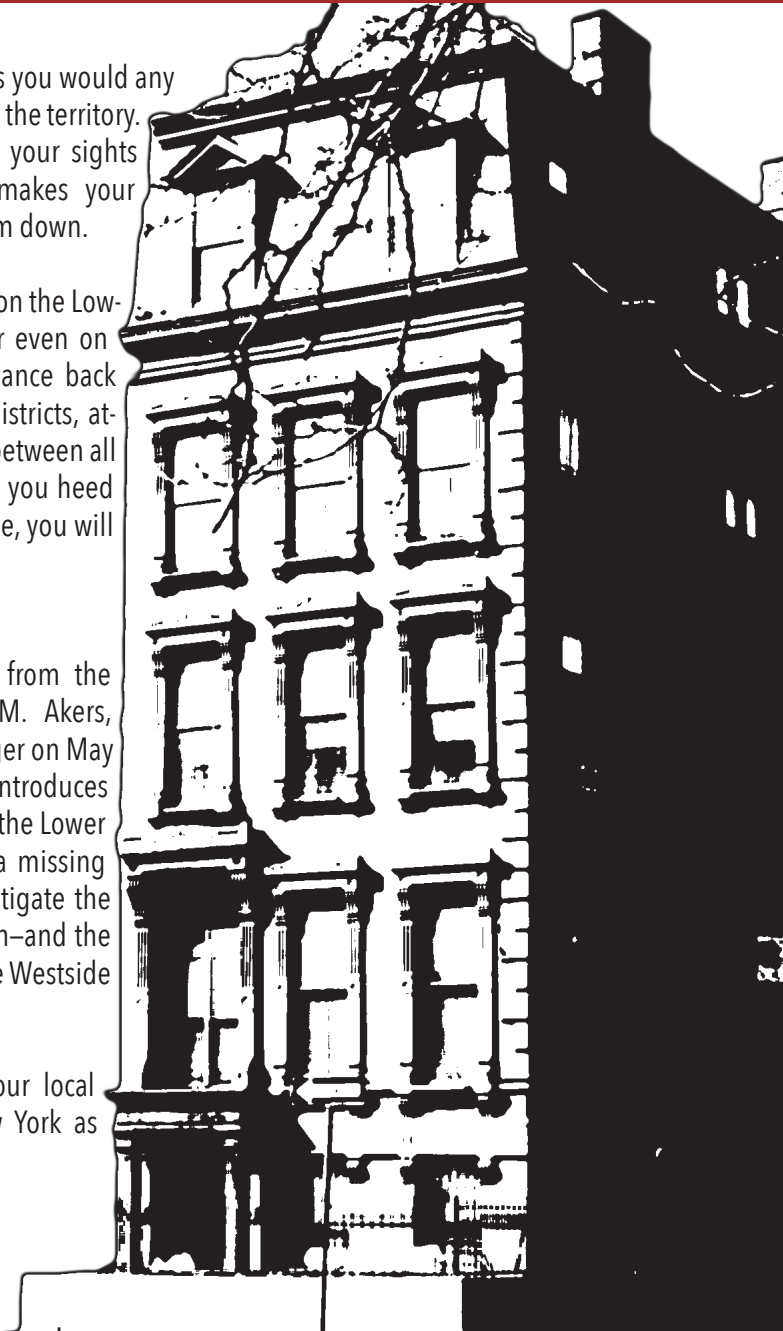
Approach the Westside as you would any game of Comrades. Learn the territory. Choose your setting. Fix your sights on whichever dictator makes your blood boil and bring them down.

You may situate yourself on the Lower West or the Upper, or even on the Eastside. You may dance back and forth between the districts, attempting to foment war between all three factions. As long as you heed the principles of the game, you will have a marvelous time.

THE BOOK

This setting is adapted from the novel *Westside*, by W.M. Akers, released by Harper Voyager on May 7. The first in a series, it introduces Gilda Carr, a daughter of the Lower West, whose search for a missing glove forces her to investigate the truth of her father's death—and the evil forces that caused the Westside to sicken and die.

Order it online or at your local bookstore, and see New York as you never have before.



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THE LOWER WEST

- Washington Square: Home to a broken arch, massive trees, and the indomitable Gilda Carr.
- Father Lamb's: A saloon housed in the campanile of an abandoned church.
- The Fourth Precinct: The ruined lair of a gang of ruined cops, who take money from Barbarossa and will happily ignore any crime.
- The Docks: Once the nation's busiest port, now a sun-blasted wasteland where even the rats fear to step.
- Jackson Square: Domain of the Jackson Square Gophers, a particularly irritating gang of would-be toughs.
- Merrill's: A Cornelia Street speak where the jazz is hot and the booze is tepid.
- Berk's Third Floor: A Broadway dive where Westsiders spit on the East.
- Morton Creek: The sludgy waterway that flows in from the Hudson.
- Madame Fournier's: A failing Twelfth Street corsetry that remains open for reasons unknown.
- The Thicket: The impenetrable forest south of Houston Street, where every path takes impossible turns.
- The Flat: A wide-open field just west of the Thicket, used as a parade ground by Barbarossa's army of children.

THE UPPER WEST

- The Bazaar: Formerly known as Pennsylvania Station, now a market controlled by Van Alen that sells the city's freshest produce, discounted steeply for all Westsiders.
- The Night-Fires: Colossal braziers, one at each intersection along the Borderline, where Van Alen's guardsmen burn the fires that illuminate the Westside night.
- The Library: A converted boxing gym that houses ruined books discarded by Eastside libraries, available free to all.
- Saracini's: A riverfront chophouse specializing in blood-rare beef.
- The Mansion: A deserted Fifth Avenue manse converted into a free midwifery, courtesy Glen-Richard Van Alen.
- The Lighthouse: Where Van Alen spends his nights.
- Sister Sarah's Garden: A sweeping ornamental garden whose tangled paths teem with bizarre plants.
- The Stables: A decaying cathedral converted to house the hundreds of draft horses who fled the toil of the Eastside for the freedom of the West.
- The Tea House: Where the thinkers of the Upper West come to hear themselves talk.

ANDREA BARBAROSSA

Long ago, "Starlight Angie" Barbarossa won a taste of notoriety in the dance halls of the old Tenderloin by dancing a can-can far more vulgar than anything Paris had ever seen. She does not dance any more. From an unknown location in the Lower West, Barbie brews the toxic liquor that holds her empire together, and gives orders to the hundreds of teenage gangsters—the Bleeker Street Stranglers, the Cut-Eyes, the Sparrows—who patrol her streets and hold her peace. Invisible, ruthless, and all-powerful, she is feared by good people everywhere and beloved by anyone who wants a strong drink.

GLEN-RICHARD VAN ALEN

The self-styled Lord of Light, Van Alen is a gentler despot, ruling his swath of the Westside with an open palm instead of a closed fist. His guards wear uniforms; his people are bourgeois, respectable, polite, and terrified of the dangers rumored to lurk in the Westside night. He comforts them with cheap food, free candles, medical services, shelter, and clean water. In return, he asks for unquestioning devotion. Most are happy to give it. Those that aren't are welcome to take their chances south of the Borderline.

OTHER NPCs

- Gilda Carr: Detective, misanthrope, Giants fan. Solver of tiny mysteries and enemy of hypocrites everywhere.
- Cherub Stevens: Chieftain of the One-Eyed Cats, a flamboyant gang that rules the southern edge of Washington Square.
- Bex Red: A painter of gorgeous watercolors, a teller of beautiful lies.
- Lt. Eddie Thorne: Barbie's pet cop, a barfly who moonlights half-heartedly as a homicide detective.
- Otto Conforto: The eight-fingered cornetist who serves as Barbie's private one-man band.
- Ida Greene: Overseer of the Bazaar, the midwifery, and most of Van Alen's charitable operations.
- Furio La Rocca: Van Alen's favorite enforcer—overseer of everything else.
- The Hermit: A possibly-fictional boogeyman who prowls the Thicket.
- Max Schmittberger: Rising star of the *Sentinel* City Room, he thinks.
- Mercy Billings: An itinerant animal lover who roams the Lower West, looking for animals to love.
- Lee Williams: Westside-born Giants shortstop who can't shake the shadows of his home.