

**GURPS**

Fourth Edition

# *Locations: Hellsgate*<sup>TM</sup>



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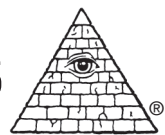
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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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# INTRODUCTION

Centuries ago, a volcanic eruption in an all-but-uninhabited patch of desert brought up something more than smoke and lava. When the clouds of ash settled, the center of the volcano was occupied by the rudiments of a new city . . . one of an unsavory character. This was Hellsgate, a city ruled by demons – refugees from underworld wars. Too far from civilization to be challenged, it grew into a center of magical trade and a destination for cultists and desperate travelers alike.

Hellsgate is a mid-sized city in a place where no city has business being. It can support little permanent immigration, but most of its inhabitants are effectively immortal and unable to leave. The city is full of magic, but it's magic with a dark tinge to it. Despite existing in the mortal world, it is imbued with the essence of the underworld, and the demons and souls of the dead who make up the majority of the population live there as though it were the afterlife.

Depending on one's perspective, the city is either "free" or "lawless." Its rulers place few restrictions on inhabitants and welcome newcomers, who are usually desperate and therefore easily corrupted and exploited. However, they make a brutal game of justice, punishing anyone on a whim. For permanent residents, Hellsgate is either a prison or respite from the wars of Hell. For visitors, it is equal parts desire and danger.

**GURPS Locations: Hellsgate** presents a complete description of the city and its inhabitants, including new racial templates for the demons and lost souls, and full character sheets for important and colorful NPCs. It is suitable for use in any fantasy game that could benefit from a little piece of Hell on Earth. Adventurers can stumble across Hellsgate on their travels or visit it intentionally to acquire forbidden items or lore. Though it may qualify as the most evil city in the world by some standards, it's stable and open enough for a group to visit and explore . . . though at considerable risk.

So is Hellsgate an opportunity for the daring or a stain on the world? Subtle foe or friend to be kept at arm's length? That's up to you.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby is trained in anthropology and archaeology but now works for the medical division of a large corporation. In his spare time, he lives as a recluse in a house built generations ago, with his wife, son, and several friendly but not very bright dogs.

## Hellsgate Stats

**Population:** 76,000 (Search +2)

### *Physical and Magical Environment*

**Terrain:** Desert

**Appearance:** Ugly (-2)

**Hygiene:** -1

**High Mana** (Common Enchantment)

### *Culture and Economy*

**Language:** Demontongue

**Literacy:** Accented

**TL:** 4

**Wealth:** Comfortable (×2)

**Status:** -1 to 3

### *Political Environment*

**Government:** Dictatorship

**CR:** 2 (Corruption -1)

**Military Resources:** \$1.216M

**Defense Bonus:** +9

### *Notes*

Search modifier is +3 for any kind of esoteric knowledge, and +4 for anything related to demons (e.g., demonic lore or diabolical artifacts). Many areas of the city have aspected mana. The entire city is low sanctity, with some areas of no sanctity.

## Using GURPS Mass Combat

Due to the city's unusual population (*Residents*, p. 6), the city is remarkably defensible. During a siege (only), divide the number of demons and lost souls by 20, instead of 50, to determine how many elements may be pressed into service. Use the standard rules for mortal residents.

Lost souls are Medium Infantry with mostly Basic equipment and Inferior quality (though some are better); their casualties may be replaced at 10 times the normal rate. Most demons should be treated as Super-Soldiers, with a minimum of Good equipment and Good quality. Some of the larger, more powerful demons are instead the equivalent of Ogres, Giants, and (in one or two cases) Giant Monsters.

Reviewers: Michele Armellini and Roger Burton West

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## CHAPTER ONE

# WELCOME TO HELLSGATE

Hellsgate is located far from any major cities or kingdoms, in an area considered nearly uninhabitable. In some ways, this is fortunate, as most people think of it as a distant place of malevolent influence, rather than as an immediate threat. Despite being in such an inhospitable environment, Hellsgate supports a large, remarkably diverse population.

## THE CRATER AND ITS ENVIRONS

Hellsgate sits on the western edge of a region of volcanic peaks and craters about 20 miles across. The land rises toward the center of the region, with several peaks much higher than Hellsgate's rim, though none directly overlook the city. The land to the east of the volcanic region is predominantly steppe-like plains, while to the west (closest to Hellsgate itself) is desert. The surrounding territory is lightly populated with small farming villages and nomadic herdsman; the nearest town worthy of the name is over 100 miles away to the northwest.

The immediate area around the crater is essentially uninhabited and uncultivated, though some of the city's residents may hunt or gather wild foods there; if using the survival rules from *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 3*, the region counts as Very Poor. Fortunately, most inhabitants don't need to eat. The ground is rocky and steep, made from sandy black soil full of lumps of cooled lava and jagged shards of obsidian. Lava pipes provide numerous hiding places for the area's indigenous fauna – and can shelter travelers as well.

The city itself occupies the inside of a volcanic crater three-quarters of a mile across at its widest point. A portion of the southeastern wall of the crater collapsed long before the city was formed, giving the available space a lopsided U-shape. The limits of the city are marked by a defensive wall

around the upper rim of the crater. Within the walls, the land is extensively built up, a stark contrast with the completely undeveloped land outside. However, there are many deep cracks in the ground too wide to be paved over, so the network of streets is stitched together by short bridges. Most are made of stone and reinforced with heavy chains, providing them with a bit of flexibility against occasional tremors. Some cracks expose patches of underground lava, the heat of which is harnessed for industrial use; see *Deep Forge* (p. 17) for one extreme example.

The homes of the least prominent residents are just behind the walls. Prestige increases as one goes downhill, with the seat of government at the very bottom of the crater. Gardens and courtyards are few and far between, mostly around or within demonic palaces.

For the resident demons, the most important aspect of the city's geography is its innate Hellishness. Demons cannot be banished from it! They can be summoned *from* Hellsgate and banished *back to* it, however. They can be banished (back to Hellsgate) if they are outside of the city. The settlement also supports unearthly flora and mystical processes which could not exist elsewhere in the mortal world.

The region has warm, dry climate. Summers are very hot during the day, though temperatures drop off sharply at night. Winters are cool, but rarely dip below freezing. Precipitation usually comes as brief but violent thunderstorms, which are inconvenient in the city and frequently cause sudden floods in low areas around it. However, there's not nearly enough rain to support more than small, thorny shrubs and other desert vegetation. Ironically, the climate in the city proper is a bit milder than that of the surrounding region. During the summer, shade from the crater walls shifts throughout the day to cool different areas of the city, and lava just under the surface provides natural heating during cold seasons.

## HISTORY

Several centuries ago, the demon lord Brogogin, Duke of the Bleeding Thorns, found itself on the losing side of one of Hell's endless wars. With several powerful enemies closing in, it decided to flee. Brogogin was not the first demon to escape to the mortal world, but for its exile, it did something nearly unique: It brought a piece of Hell into the material world, in a stable, persistent way. The core of a city – consisting of

Brogogin's palace, a number of other demonic residences, and the demons and lost souls inhabiting them – arose from an outpouring of smoke and lava during a minor volcanic eruption. The volcano subsided with unnatural speed, and the demons set about surveying their new surroundings and stabilizing their new home.

Brogogin's plan was to wait out the current conflict, a matter of a mere century or two. It would spend the time gathering power and sending spies back to the underworld from its new refuge, then strike at its enemies when the time was right. During that time, Hellsgate was a focus of superstitious dread for the widely scattered mortal residents of the region. Brogogin and his followers occasionally hunted them for sport, but once they had determined that the region contained no meaningful threats to them, for the most part they ignored anything beyond the crater rim.

## BROGOGIN OVERTHROWN

However, the plan did not come to fruition. Brogogin's underlings, with neither the opportunity to serve in Heaven nor to reign in Hell, found a third option. Unlike Brogogin, they realized certain advantages living far from the constant battles of Hell and closer to supplies of fresh souls. And so, after about 50 years, a cabal of lieutenants overthrew Brogogin, encased it in a prison of volcanic glass, and established control over the city.

Under the cabal, official policy shifted from one of ignoring the outside world to one of, if not friendly relations, then at least cautious engagement. Instead of killing mortals for sport, demons of Hellsgate would venture out from the city to trade favors and magical items for slaves and materials not available in the city itself. Lone monsters and diabolists drifted into the city and, finding it a safe haven, settled there. They were followed by their family and servants, by drifting exiles with no other place to go, and by merchants whose desire for profit was stronger than their fear of damnation. Slowly, the city filled up with the living as well as the dead.

Indeed, it was the presence of the living which gave Hellsgate a more prominent place in the world. The original residents of the city either could not or preferred not to leave the city, making it essentially a destination for a desperate few. But within 250 years of its creation, Hellsgate had its own "native" mortal residents who could go out into the world to trade or otherwise make contact. Though the city grew slowly, thanks to tightly constrained natural resources, its economic status increased by leaps and bounds.

## THE SACRED LEAGUE LAYS SIEGE

This commercial growth did not go unnoticed by the outside world. A number of religious organizations became aware of the presence of a tiny piece of Hell on Earth, causing understandable concern. Two centuries ago, an alliance of fighting monastic orders and neighboring small kingdoms assembled an army to destroy Hellsgate. This *Sacred League* made their way across the dry plains to the city. Ultimately, though, they mostly defeated themselves. It was difficult to support an army traveling across the dry plains, and mortal agents working for the cabal were able to exploit tensions in the disparate group. The army slowed, and nearly a quarter of them turned and returned home. When the remaining men reached the mountains, they discovered that their cavalry-heavy force was dangerously unsuited to the terrain, and the heavily armored knights were forced to fight in an unfamiliar role as infantry. Despite several valiant attacks, some of which penetrated well into the city, the brief siege proved to be costly and futile.

The war resulted in few changes around the city. The walls were raised and reinforced, particularly around the gateway, and three members of the cabal were either killed in the fighting or assassinated, but little else was altered, either physically or politically. In the outside world, the Sacred League fell to squabbling, and its leaders were discredited. Its members, who included most of the nations closest to Hellsgate, adopted a policy of avoiding entanglement with the city rather than actively seeking its destruction, doing no more than intermittently forbidding imports from the city. To regions farther away, Hellsgate remained a distant concern at best, and a mere legend to others. There has since been no meaningful overt threat to the city from a mortal world that seems content to pretend that it doesn't exist.

*I got to keep  
movin' . . .  
And the days  
keeps on worryin' me  
There's a hellhound  
on my trail.*

*– Robert Johnson,  
“Hellhound  
on My Trail”*

## HELLSGATE TODAY

While most of the world seems to ignore Hellsgate, those familiar with politics and economics can see a deeper game being played. A number of pragmatic interests have clearly decided that the city is not an obvious threat to the mortal world; after all, the ruling demons have shown little interest in the outside world, and most of the city's residents can never leave (*Lost Souls*, p. 6). Certainly, no one is trying to make friends with a group of demons, but several powerful interests are asking themselves if Hellsgate isn't a threat, how can it be useful?

Many nearby nations are carefully jockeying for advantageous positions along trade routes leading to the city. Others are attempting to raise moral panics in their neighbors, which would leave the instigators in a better position to capitalize on trade. Rumors also place foreign agents in Hellsgate itself, gathering information on its capabilities and looking for ways to manipulate the cabal. Will the world attempt to out-corrupt these exiled lords of Hell? And, as some believe, has that been their plan all along?

# RESIDENTS

Hellsgate has approximately 76,000 permanent residents and, at any given moment, a few thousand visitors. A sizable minority are distinctly and proudly inhuman, and even the majority of those who *appear* to be human are anything but.

## DEMONS

Although the demons in the city are a minority, the city emphatically belongs to them. They cannot even be banished from Hellsgate; it is considered as much “home” for them as Hell itself (see p. 4 for more details). No one has established a precise count of the demonic population; some demons look identical, while others change shape frequently, and none are going to put up with an impertinent census taker. However, those with an opinion place the number of intelligent demons in the city at around 14,000, with an unknown number of imps, demonic beasts, plants, and semi-living objects. One of the city’s mysteries is how *long* many of them have been here.

Though the demons present a unified front to the outside world, their politics is known to be a very rough game, with assassination as a frequent means of advancement. Yet despite the turnover, the city’s other long-term residents indicate that the number of demons has not significantly changed over the past centuries. The demons are slowly reproducing, building new ones, or bringing some in from outside. Naturally, they’re not talking.

See pp. 19-20 for demonic meta-traits and racial templates.

## LOST SOULS

While the demons rule the city, the lost souls, about 50,000 of them, make up the bulk of the population. These are spirits of the dead, banished to Hell, who were caught up in the formation of Hellsgate. They are tangible beings, and seem human (or whatever they were before they died), but have several differences.

Lost souls are technically dead. They continue to exist, but do not age, cannot reproduce, and cannot be killed. They don’t need to eat or drink – although they *do* feel hunger and

thirst if they do not. In addition, they are subject to frequent bad dreams and chronic aches and pains. These are not debilitating, but they do make everyday life relatively unpleasant for them.

As well, lost souls are explicitly subjects of Hell. They do not have the will or physical ability to resist their demonic masters, nor to even really try. They also cannot leave the city. Its edge is like an impenetrable wall to them; they cannot be pushed, pulled, or magically transported beyond it.

See p. 20 for the lost soul racial template.

## MONSTERS

The demons of Hellsgate have no objections to monstrous races and individual monsters of various kinds, so several of those have taken up residence. There are over 6,000 “goblin-kin” of various kinds (goblins, orcs, trolls, and similar monstrous humanoids), a few hundred ghouls and similar petty undead, several dozen vampires, and 1,000 or so less easily classified creatures, such as nature spirits, living creations, and unnatural hybrids. Some, notably many of the goblin-kin, are sufficiently social as to collect in particular neighborhoods. Others are more isolated, living as alone as possible in a crowded city and interacting with others only when necessary.

Racial templates for monsters will vary by setting. For example, a game set on Yrth should use those found in *GURPS Banestorm*, while a dungeon fantasy game will use *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*.

## HUMANS AND SIMILAR FOLK

Non-monstrous mortals, of whom there are about 5,000, make up the smallest significant group in the city. The vast majority are human, with a smattering of other races in residence. Some collect in ethnic or ideological enclaves, notably those acting as local agents for foreign trading houses or demon cultists who have come to live near the objects of their worship. Many, though, live dispersed through the city, often sharing lodgings with lost souls.

*. . . Hail horrors, hail  
Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell  
Receive thy new possessor; one who brings  
A mind not chang’d by place or time.  
The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.*

*– John Milton, Paradise Lost*

# GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY, AND TRADE

Despite its diabolical origins, Hellsgate must function like any other city on a day-to-day basis. The inhabitants go about their business under the eyes of their legal and political masters.

## THE DEMONIC CABAL

Rule of the city is in the talons of a cabal of demons. Not long after the city's formation, Brogogin was overthrown by its lieutenants and encased in a block of obsidian, which now serves as a table around which the cabal deliberates. (Brogogin is trapped and dormant, not dead.) Its former lieutenants are in turn served and occasionally overthrown by their own followers.

There are 13 seats on the cabal, with no chairman or other position of even symbolic leadership. Succession is by assassination. It's possible for a demon to possess more than one seat at a time (the record is five) after killing multiple cabal members, but holding several seats makes one a high-profile target whose seats are eventually divided among the assassins.

The cabal acts as a combination civic government, business board meeting, scholarly forum, and drinking and gambling society. It spends very little time actually ruling the city. Most of the cabal's time is devoted to arguing points of demonic lore, making elaborate wagers, and comparing various pleasures (such as the music of screams or the taste of virgins' blood). They only occasionally discuss what to do with "their common property" (the city itself and the lost souls therein).

The cabal's governing style is capricious, to say the least. It issues proclamations when a consensus is reached on pressing matters – but absent a united statement, each cabal member's individual word is law to anyone not under another demon's close patronage. This is the case *even* if cabal members contradict one another; if that happens, so much worse for the person caught in the dilemma! Indeed, some suspect that the ruling demons issue contradictory orders as a pretext for handing out the punishments they enjoy so much.

And the punishments delivered by the cabal are quite brutal. Unlike some places, where many lesser offenses are punished by fines, punishments in Hellsgate are almost always physical: hard and grisly labor, public beatings and torture, scarring and branding, combat in the Perpetual Arena (p. 15), dismemberment, and death (for mortals) or immurement (for lost souls; see *Rim Wall*, p. 12).

On the other hand, the cabal doesn't really care what happens in the city on a day-to-day basis. Trade is unrestricted. Goods which are contraband almost everywhere else are allowed or even encouraged in Hellsgate. Even items which might appear to threaten the city's rulers aren't prohibited; a powerful demon-killing sword might be of great interest to a demon who wanted to kill *other* demons. Most traditional crimes (theft, assault, etc.) are rarely (if at all) punished officially. However, vigilante justice often fills in for official neglect.

Speech and expression are relatively free, in that there are no laws against disturbing the peace, holding unusual political positions, or fomenting revolution against the cabal. Secret police are not listening at keyholes to ensure no one expresses inconvenient opinions. Still, directly insulting a demon or actively challenging the cabal is essentially a quick but painful form of suicide.

For muscle, the cabal employs a group of particularly dangerous demons: the Diabolic Guard (p. 22). They protect the cabal and occasionally parade around the city, punishing anyone who looks guilty as they go. It's best not to attract their attention, but both running away and trying to look inconspicuous tend to draw their attention anyway.

Behind all of the usual demonic jockeying for dominance, there is one contentious political point. The cabal's intentions regarding the underworld have shifted several times over the city's lifetime. Just after the cabal overthrew Brogogin, their intention was to cut themselves off from Hell completely. Most of the members of the cabal were facing even worse fates than Brogogin if they were to have plunged back into the fighting. Since then, as new members came into the ruling council, their position has wavered between secretly infiltrating Hell using a plan similar to Brogogin's (supported by older demons whose thoughts have turned toward settling old scores), maintaining the current "embargo" against Hell (more conservative older demons and a number of younger ones who are used to the current situation), and opening up communication with Hell but not fully engaging with it, acting as a mid-point for commerce and communication between the underworld and the mortal world (the remainder of the cabal).



## THE DEVIL'S ECONOMICS

The city's magical nature and connection to the underworld make it a source of many unusual artifacts and unique magical materials. The ruling cabal is happy to sell demonic blood, skin, or any other body parts that can be used for alchemy, enchantment, or other mystical enterprises. Indeed, it's a nice way of turning a profit after defeating a rival.

Many of the magical items sold in Hellsgate are in some way cursed or at least tainted by their diabolical connections. The negative effect is usually minimal: enchanted blades with a detectable aura of evil, scrying stones which occasionally show shadowy demonic images, magical armor with a faint but persistent smell of brimstone, and so on. However, every now and again someone will end up with an item with more serious problems.

The city also does a small but extremely lucrative trade in spices and drugs compounded from plants grown in Hellsgate's tiny garden, the secretions of diabolical insects, and other ingredients found nowhere else. Like its enchantments, the city's raw ingredients carry a certain demonic taint with them, but are rarely directly harmful to the careful and knowledgeable user. Hellsgate's poisons are some of the best and most reliable known. See *Hell's Kitchen* (below) for examples.

While the city's less diabolical merchants trade in coin and valuable materials, demons are willing to barter for less tangible

goods. Some are willing to accept a buyer's soul as payment, coming into the demon's possession after death. The population of lost souls resident in the city has increased slightly but noticeably through this practice; the opinion of such souls is that, in the long run, it wasn't worth it. Also, demons may (infrequently) propose a specific service or favor to be called in later, with the soul forfeit if the buyer doesn't follow through. The service may range from the seemingly innocuous ("Write this apparent gibberish on the wall of a specific temple with this special chalk.") to the clearly morally repulsive ("Burn down an orphanage, using fluffy bunnies as kindling."). Few are clearly onerous, but a wise potential buyer will hesitate to accept such an offer.

The city is also notable for what it *doesn't* trade in. The demons and lost souls who form the majority of the city's population don't need to eat or drink, but they do enjoy it. Therefore, Hellsgate brings in a fraction of the food one might expect of a city its size, and what comestibles it does import tend toward luxury items: wine, spices, and high-quality meats.

In the final analysis, though, Hellsgate is certainly rich, but it isn't quite as wealthy as one might expect, given how lucrative its trade is. Transport across the nearby desert is punishingly expensive, and while profit-hungry merchants are willing to travel to this little piece of Hell, they will only take the risk for a very large cut. Consequently, although Hellsgate is making a number of people very rich, many of them don't actually live there.

### Hell's Kitchen

These are a few of the more popular items of Hellsgate's produce.

*Bloodletter's Draught:* This healing potion is used by torturers to keep subjects alive for more torment. It's effective, though its side effects are unpleasant. A dose gives the drinker Regeneration (Regular) for the next 1d+2 hours. However, the consumer must make two separate Will rolls: one to avoid moderate pain and one to avoid being nauseated (see p. B428 for both). Either or both side effects last for the duration of healing. \$75, 0.5 lb.

*Seer's Clove:* This pungent spice gives horrible but prophetic dreams. The night after consuming an ounce or more of Seer's Clove, the consumer has nightmares (p. B144). In addition to being terrifying, the dreams are full of important if often impenetrable symbolism. The consumer may attempt to find and interpret important symbols in the dream, as for Oracle (p. B72), but at -5 to both rolls. \$250/oz.

*Toxic Spines:* These are a common body part sold as weapons. Though the larger ones perform poorly against armor, all have unpleasant lasting effects. If the spine damages a living target, it does one point of toxic damage for four hourly cycles, resisted by HT. While under the effect of the toxin, the target is also at -1 to DX and IQ from pain (-2 for Low Pain Threshold, no penalty for High Pain Threshold). Most spines are sold as blowgun

darts. A few particularly large ones are crafted into lightweight arrows; treat these as standard arrows (not bodkins, etc.) with a (0.5) armor divisor. These spines cost 25x as much as a normal dart or arrow (+24 CF).

*Yellow Dust:* This dreaded poison is composed of spores which infect the target. It is a contact agent with a half-hour delay and a HT-4 roll to resist. Inflicts 1d-4 toxic damage, repeating at four-hour intervals for 12 cycles. The target's skin becomes covered with unsightly fungal growths, reducing appearance by one level per two full points of injury until he becomes Hideous. This is temporary; normal appearance is restored at one level per day when the damage stops. It's also *contagious*. Anyone who comes in contact with the target must make a contagion roll (p. B443) or become infected. \$175, 1 lb.

*Unholy Basil:* This herb, whose flavor and potency survive drying admirably, provides notable spiciness with strong overtones of mint and licorice. It is also a notorious stimulant, making the consumer prone to activity which is both vigorous and unwise. Consuming an ounce or more of it restores 2 FP, but only for four hours, after which the user loses them *and* another 2 FP! For the duration, he also has Impulsiveness (12) – or -3 to his self-control rolls if he already has Impulsiveness – and is at -3 on all other rolls to resist strong emotions, whether from external influence or disadvantages such as Bad Temper and Lecherousness. \$25/oz.

# DAILY LIFE

Life goes on in Hellsgate, if you can call that living.

## ARCHITECTURE

Buildings in most of the city are depressingly similar: rough towers resembling squared-off termite mounds made of charcoal, with doorways and windows cut into them by indifferently skilled labor. Some are slightly pyramidal, noticeably larger at the bottom than the top, while a few are larger at the top than at the bottom. Many stand at a slight angle, overhanging the street below or leaning toward a neighbor. In some buildings, the residents level the floor with a layer of sand under flagstones or floorboards, but many have given up and have become used to uneven floors.

The most unusual thing about these buildings is that they are not built; they *grow* in fits and starts, keeping pace with the city's population. From time to time, a tower will groan and shudder and, over the course of a day or two, extrude a new top story. Or it may shrink or expand a bit, opening an alley a bit wider or closing it off. On occasion, a building growing at an angle will collide with a neighbor, damaging the top stories of both. Many of the towers are four stories tall, and some are five.

The towers are remarkably sturdy. They are made of solid, if relatively soft, stone (treat as brick for *HP and DR of Structures*, p. B558), and while they tremble with the small earthquakes which occasionally afflict the region, they sustain little or no damage. On the other hand, they're not particularly attractive. The stone is easy to work, but the coarse texture makes it poor for sculpted decoration – not that that stops some residents from trying to spruce up their building fronts with relief carvings. It does not take conventional paints well, and the buildings' tendency to occasionally grow and shift makes facing them with more attractive materials problematic. However, a number of buildings have metal ladders and balconies anchored deeply in their walls; these seem fairly immune to the underlying structures' changing dimensions.

As in many other cities with tall buildings, shops and other public areas are mostly on the ground floor with residences above. However, a lack of space sometimes leads to multi-leveled craft and shopping districts, with two or three levels of shops. These have well-excavated fronts to display wares, iron ladders and steps decorated with individual craftsmen's marks, and even metal suspension bridges between different buildings' balconies, giving a street two or even three vertical levels of "sidewalk."

Toward the bottom of the crater, one sees more diverse buildings, fewer open craft workshops, and less dedicated "retail" space. In addition to the monumental architecture of the Bone Palace, the Anticathedral, and so on, there are many buildings which were individually constructed, as opposed to the "grown" ones farther up-slope. Individual palaces and wealthy homes are made from everything from polished marble to resins secreted from long-vanished insects. This part of the city is home to the city's more formidable alchemists and enchanters and the more successful importers. Although one may buy and sell there, visiting such a combined residence and workshop is more akin to a consultation with an expert advisor or petitioning a patron than visiting a shop.

Though heavily built up, the city does have a few open public spaces. Except for plazas attached to important public buildings (such as the Bone Palace), they're usually found around bridges spanning crevasses, which are themselves usually found at or near the intersections of major streets. See *Jagged Landing* (p. 18) for one example.

Because there are few organic materials used in the city's architecture, the chance of a city-wide conflagration is next to nothing. Of course, given the city's situation, any building with substantial wooden structural members would have burned down long ago.

*All the best bands are  
affiliated with Satan.*

*– Bart Simpson, in  
The Simpsons*

#8.17

## FOOD AND CLOTHING

For the bulk of the population, food is a luxury rather than a necessity, which means that the residents of the city eat little but extremely well. Lost souls retain something of the tastes they had when they were living, so ingredients for a dizzying range of ethnic cuisines can be found in Hellsgate. A wide variety of animals are brought in for fresh meat, and sometimes live fish are imported in tanks of water at great expense. Alcoholic spirits and strong wines are widely available.

The living must eat more, but can live more cheaply: The local mortal diet is based on dry bread made from barley and other coarse grains, supplemented with dates, legumes, and a variety of squash. Mutton and poultry are the main meats. The locals drink a throat-punishingly heavy date wine when on a budget.

The monstrous residents of the city tend not to be as discerning in their tastes. They eat more than humans and most humanoids, but will consume food which is notably less fresh – even indigestible by the standards of more refined races. Anthropophagy isn't prohibited, but residents of the city are usually on their guard, so they also import slaves as a food source. The city's monsters sometimes resort to a grislier food source: the lost souls. Though the flesh of the lost souls isn't as tasty or nutritious as that of the living, it does provide basic sustenance. Poorer monsters have no qualms about supplementing their diet by waylaying lost souls, butchering, and consuming them. One lost soul provides almost a month's worth of food; with decent care, the victim's body regenerates in about four months.

Fashions are likewise varied. Most demons and the more monstrous residents of the city rarely wear anything, and when they do, it's usually jewelry or belts and straps to hold equipment. For comfort and availability, mortals and lost souls often fall back on clothing suitable to the region. What passes for native costume consists of either a robe or baggy pants and shirt or vest, a broad sash, and a head cloth worn as a keffiyeh or small turban. Because of the rough and sometimes searing hot ground, unusually heavy footwear is worn at all times. Even relatively lightweight sandals and slippers have soles made of several layers of leather or solid wood. Fine boots are particularly prized.

## AMUSEMENTS AND SPECTACLES

For such a naturally grim place, Hellsgate features a surprising number of ways to have a good time, though few would be regarded as good, clean fun. The city has more than its share of taverns, which serve a dizzying array of drinks. A number of them specialize in providing a particular type of

alcohol or reproducing a particular society's variety of public house. Taverns are also a center for the city's few performing artists – primarily storytellers, dancers, and musicians. Although some occasionally stage small plays, Hellsgate doesn't have a significant tradition of theater. Public houses providing more potent intoxicants (lotus, opium, and the like) are fairly common, as are brothels. Indeed, in many taverns, the companionship of the staff is also on sale.

Gambling is a popular amusement, with games from all over the world, ranging in time from modern to ancient. New games and variations on existing games are popular. Lost souls and demons alike are avid players of a complex chess-like game involving dozens of pieces and a board which can change shape during play. Lost souls, for whom no wound is permanent, have an active dueling culture – providing yet another thing for gamblers to wager on. The better duelists are often veterans of the Perpetual Arena. Lost souls are disinclined to fight mortals, but will do so with those who absolutely insist.

Public spectacles are generally produced by demons and feared by other residents. For the demons, sport, arts, and pageantry involve someone being hurt, which leads to them organizing such events as concerts of music consisting of tuned screams; spectacular demonstrations of punishments for wrongdoers; and football-like games in spaces strewn with caltrops, shards of obsidian, and other hazards. Such events inevitably attract large crowds; lost souls are compelled to attend, some mortals are drawn out of a sense of morbid curiosity, and demons and many monstrous residents actively enjoy them.

## LIFE OF THE MIND

The vast majority of residents have no offspring to educate. Nearly 3% of lost souls are technically those of children (up to age 16), but their situation bears little resemblance to that of mortal minors. Thus, Hellsgate has no universities or other formal centers of learning, and professional teachers are few and far between. However, many lost souls pursue the consolations of philosophy. There's a great deal of intellectual discussion, leaning heavily on legal and moral philosophy. Collectively, the lost souls own a remarkably diverse range of intellectual texts imported from across the world. Some know and have attempted to reproduce fragments of lost works, though not necessarily successfully.

Since Hellsgate is a center of trade in magical items and substances, it has a higher than usual proportion of magicians as residents, and even more as visitors. There is no magicians' guild, but there are several small, informal organizations of magicians, alchemists, and other magical professionals.

A number of more powerful demons are known to have their own libraries, consisting mainly of demonic lore. The demons only discuss these matters among themselves, however, not with outsiders. The libraries themselves are fabulously valuable, but well-protected, and their contents are themselves sometimes hazardous to touch or to read (*Dangerous Books*, above).

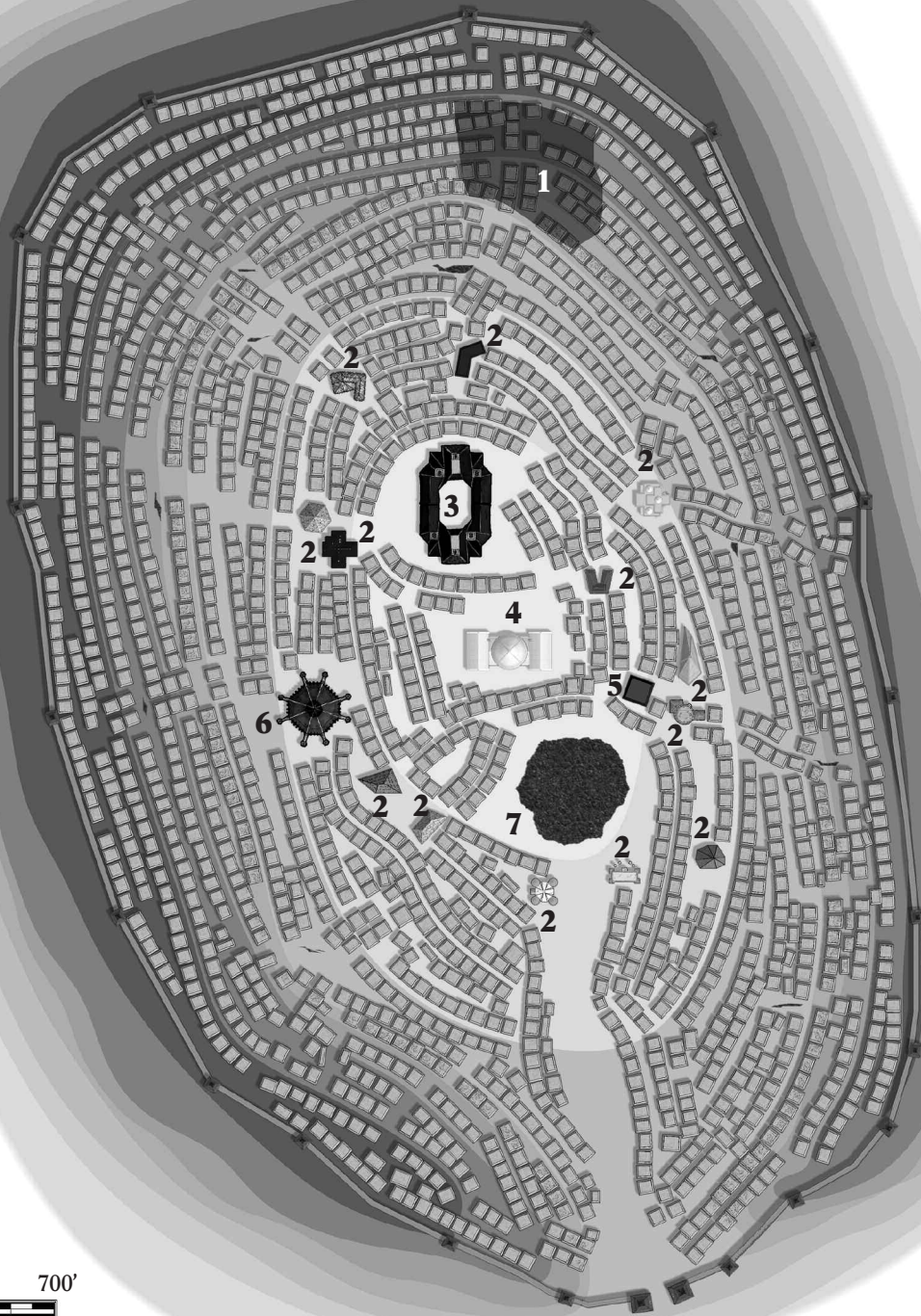
## Dangerous Books

Knowledge comes at a price, particularly in Hellsgate. Many demons own books which can protect themselves against unauthorized readers. Any one (but only one) of these modifiers may be applied to a book or an entire library. Doing so halves the cost (-0.5 CF), but does not affect weight. See *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4* and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8* for more on books, and *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 1* for more on libraries.

*Corrosive:* The book is damaging to the touch. A corrosive book does one point of corrosion damage to the hands per hour of reading. Flimsy gloves (DR 0) are destroyed after the first hour; armored gloves (DR 1+) last longer, but every five hours of reading reduces their effective DR by 1. Readers usually keep the books in heavy cases lined with non-corroding glazed tiles. Such a case weighs twice as much as the book it contains and costs \$10 per lb.

*Maddening:* The book is disturbing beyond its subject material. It has illuminated capitals which subtly project horrifying images, and the words whisper uncannily into the reader's ear. Anyone reading the book must make a Will roll at +2 at the end of the day; this roll is at -2 for every full hour spent reading. On a success or critical success, nothing happens. Failure means his dreams were tainted, and he spends the next day afflicted with a -10-point disadvantage (or combination of disadvantages) chosen by the GM. Critical failure makes this -20 points! Phantom Voices and Phobias are common.

*Toothed:* The book doesn't want to be read, and may bite. Once per hour of reading, the book will slam shut. If the reader fails a Dodge roll, his hand is caught for 1d-1 crushing damage. A few books have sharper but lighter teeth and do 1d-3 cutting damage instead. Cautious readers wear gauntlets, put weights (at least 5x as much as the book weighs) on the open book, or attach heavy clamps to their reading tables, to prevent this.



## MAP OF HELLSGATE

For descriptions of locations, see pp. 12-18.

### Key

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Shadow Street   | 4. Bone Palace   |
| 2. Cabalist Hive   | 5. Font          |
| 3. Perpetual Arena | 6. Anticathedral |
|                    | 7. Fire Garden   |

# CHAPTER TWO

# GAZETTEER

This is a survey of places in Hellsgate, ranging from the important to the insignificant. The notable locations are well-known landmarks or centers of civic activity. Everybody knows them, even if some of their inner workings are secret.

The common locations rarely have reputations that extend beyond their own neighborhoods, but are typical of the homes and business establishments of the city.

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Any visitor to the city cannot help but notice a number of the city's more spectacular features.

### RIM WALL

A defensive wall around the rim of the crater, made from roughly squared blocks of local black stone, marks the dividing line between the normal world and the transported underworld of Hellsgate. The wall is relatively short (12' tall along most of its length, with the occasional 18' to 20' tower), but it's at the top of a very steep slope, effectively increasing its height considerably. It becomes taller as it follows the slope down the collapsed part of the rim, reaching a height of 50' at the main gateway, though the parapet does slope downward toward the gate. The wall is lightly patrolled by lost soul guards; other residents of the city sometimes come up for the view. Careful infiltrators could slip over the wall under cover of darkness without detection, but, considering the always-open gate, there may be little point.

The wall has a single opening, at the southeast gate. The doors (which register as magical to anyone capable of perceiving that) are made of slabs of the same stone as the walls. They pivot on thick stone hinges. However, the gates are never closed, save in time of military emergency. The gateway is guarded by two to eight demon warriors with heavy armor and long spears, standing statue-like on either side of the gate. They have not been known to interfere with anyone entering the city, nor do they even appear to be observing newcomers closely. They have, though, very occasionally stopped people from leaving.

Unlike most of the city's monumental architecture, the wall and gates are almost purely utilitarian, with none of the disturbing decoration found in many other important buildings. There is one exception: At several spots along the wall, there are lost souls who have been subjected to *immurement*. As punishment for crimes (real or imagined), they have been pressed against Hellsgate's border, with the wall built up behind them. Immured lost souls face years or decades of unrelenting hunger and thirst; it is one of the more maddening punishments the cabal hands out. Save for the peculiar effect of the edge of the city, the imprisonment is purely physical, and the lost soul may be freed by digging a tunnel

through the wall behind him. However, that won't go over well with civic authorities.

### FIRE GARDEN

The Fire Garden occupies a roughly circular area 150 yards across at the bottom of the crater, near the Bone Palace. This is the city at its most stereotypically Hellish; it is an area of bubbling lava, flames, and outcroppings of blackened rock. It's also the source of many of the city's most valuable plants and other "natural" substances (see *Strange Fruit*, p. 13). The Garden is full of bizarre vegetation: stony shrubs with needle-sharp thorns, jagged crystalline trees, carnivorous plants with sharp teeth and whip-like vines, flowers made of flesh with bloody nectar, and so on. These grow and change according to their own cycles which have little or no relation to the seasons of the mortal world. Non-demons are forbidden from removing anything from the Garden, though some attempt it with varying degrees of success.

The Garden is a favorite spot of the city's demons, as they are unaffected by its destructive heat and sulfurous fumes. The living cannot survive with magical protection; most of the Garden is as hot as being *on fire* (1d-1 burning damage per second), and some of it is much, much hotter. There are a few exceptions, including small patches of paradoxically chilling slime (1d-1 fatigue damage per second) and a handful of unmarked paths which allow relatively safe passage, even for mortals. These paths change from time to time; a successful Area Knowledge (Hellsgate) roll will identify one. Someone who lacks that skill (or fails the roll) can attempt to carefully pick his way through the Garden; this requires a Vision roll every four yards to find safe places to step. Failure leaves him marooned on the last safe bit of ground he found. Visitors with any sense will hire a guide who knows the paths and has protective footwear available.

### BONE PALACE

The Bone Palace, which sits at the center of the city, is one of the few pieces of architecture which came along with the city's formation. It was Brogogin's ancient headquarters, and now serves as a capitol building.

## Strange Fruit

These are just a couple of dangerous plants which may be found in the Fire Garden.

*Glassflower:* The glassflower is a beautiful (but dangerous) flowering tree, made of a slowly growing substance with the prismatic sheen of leaded glass. Anyone who runs or is thrown into a glassflower takes collision damage (p. B430); this damage is halved, but it is cutting *and* has an armor divisor of (2). A one-yard tall glassflower has HP 47; a two-yard one, HP 94; and a three-yard one, HP 141. (Glassflowers rarely grow taller!) Glassflowers are Fragile (Brittle) and take double damage from crushing attacks. Their large leaves and flower petals may be carefully snapped off to serve as improvised weapons; these weigh 1 lb., do thrust+1(2) cut at Reach C, and use Knife skill at -2.

*Grasping Weed:* This blood-drinking plant resembles a tangle of low, thorny vines. It attempts to grapple the legs of anyone stepping on it, with effective ST 11 and DX 11. There is no hit location penalty, as the target is standing on the weed; visitors unfamiliar with the grasping weed do not get a defense against its first attack! Once the target is grappled, hollow-thorned vines find their way to the target's skin and start drinking his blood. Armor protects completely for a number of turns equal to its DR, until the vines find their way through gaps. Thereafter, the target loses 1 HP per second from blood loss. A one-square-yard patch (one hex on a combat map) of grasping weed has DR 1, HP 10. Like a

swarm, attacks on the grasping weed hit automatically, but it only takes one point of damage from crushing, impaling, or piercing attacks.

*Hades Lotus:* One of the most attractive plants in the Garden, the Hades lotus is a human-sized pitcher resembling a giant, multicolored lily surrounded by layers of curling green fronds. The scent of the plant is intoxicating, attracting most humanoids and keeping them there to be slowly digested. Those with No Sense of Smell/Taste are immune to the plant's aroma, and Protected Taste and Smell gives +5 on all rolls to resist its effects. Anyone coming within a yard of the lotus must roll against HT or suffer euphoria (p. B428) for the next hour. Thereafter, as long he remains euphoric and within scent range of the plant (four yards, under typical circumstances), he must roll against Will every minute to resist moving to the center of the plant. *Anyone* moving into the center of the plant must roll against HT immediately, then again every minute, or be afflicted with ecstasy for an hour. If that happens, the target falls or leans against the acidic surface of the lotus, taking one point of corrosive damage per minute. The plant isn't terribly durable (DR 1, HP 8), though it's usually safer to drag victims away than to spend time close to the plant, killing it. The lotus is the source of a particularly valuable drug, so the authorities in Hellsgate will be especially unhappy with people who damage one.

As implied by the name, the building is made of bones, mostly from the bodies of slain demons, as well as tusks and other hard remnants of the dead. The domed roof of the council chamber at the center of the Palace is a vast rib cage, partly open to the sky. The chamber is surrounded by a maze-like ring of smaller rooms for private conferences. Windows are either natural openings, such as eye holes in skulls, or covered by transparent carapaces of giant insectoid demons.

The structure is held together by desiccated scraps of muscle and connective tissue, and it is much tougher than it looks. Use the DR and HP of iron and bronze (p. B558); few structural members are more than four inches thick. The structure is also *undead* to some extent, with parts of the structure moving under their own power. The doors can be opened and closed like doors anywhere else, assuming they're unlocked, but they also respond to commands by demons. It's also generally known that some rooms in the Palace, lined with bone spikes and stacked limbs, can defend themselves (*Palace Dangers*, below).

Though not used as a residence and only sometimes used for meetings of the cabal, the building is continually occupied by demonic clerks keeping records, politically aware demons using it as a meeting place of their own, and demonic guards keeping sensitive areas safe. Non-demons are allowed into a large entrance hall and (if summoned) into the council chamber itself, but may not go elsewhere in the Palace without a guard or special permission. Permission is usually signified by a grotesque badge, bracelet, or other highly visible sign which, once donned, can only be removed by a demon or by being cut off.

## Palace Dangers

Many of the Bone Palace's hallways and rooms are effectively *trapped*, in that anyone entering the area without permission is subject to one of the dangers below. Each trap is described by the following statistics.

*Detect:* The skill to roll against to spot the trap before it gets triggered.

*Disarm:* The skill to stop the trap from going off. "No" indicates that the trap cannot be disarmed.

*Circumvent:* How to avoid the trap entirely; e.g., stepping over tripwires or walking stealthily so as not to waken sleeping guard animals. "No" indicates the trap cannot be circumvented.

*Evade:* How to avoid or resist the trap's effects if it can't be circumvented. "No" indicates the trap cannot be evaded.

*Effects:* What the trap does if it isn't disarmed, circumvented, or evaded.

*Shots:* How many times the trap can go off before it has to be reset or reloaded. A trap which does not need resetting, such as an open pit, has an infinite number of shots.

*Rearm:* The skill to roll against to reset the trap after it has gone off. This statistic does not exist for a trap with infinite shots.

*Steal:* The skill roll or circumstance necessary to take the trap away and use it elsewhere. "No" indicates that this is not possible.

## Devouring Floor

A section of sticky, corrosive flooring, which can consume the unwary.

*Detect:* Per-based Hidden Lore (Demon Lore) or Traps.

*Disarm:* No.

*Circumvent:* Automatic if that section of floor can be avoided, or if a layer of sand or other inorganic covering is laid down over it.

*Evade:* No.

*Effects:* Move is halved; in tactical combat, each yard of movement costs 2 movement points. Each yard of movement also requires a ST roll at -2. Every full second spent on a devouring floor does 1d-4 corrosion damage.

*Shots:* Infinite.

*Steal:* No.

### Grasping Corridor

The bone-lined walls, floors, and even ceilings of a corridor spring to life, trying to grab and even kill trespassers.

*Detect:* Per-based Hidden Lore (Demon Lore).

*Disarm:* No.

*Circumvent:* Varies for each corridor (e.g., speaking a password or carrying a special object). Never possible with a simple skill roll.

*Evade:* Any active defense.

*Effects:* A typical corridor contains one pair of skeletal arms per square yard (HP 5 per arm – each pair has ST 11, DX 11, and Wrestling-12). They attempt to grapple anyone within one yard; floors grapple the legs (at no hit location penalty) and walls grapple the torso. If successful, they attempt to takedown and pin the victim. Particularly secure areas may have multiple sets of arms per hex, as well as arms which attempt to punch, choke, snap necks, and wrench limbs.

*Shots:* Infinite, but a hex where the arms have been destroyed is safe.

*Steal:* No.

### Screaming Room

An alarm which produces a maddening scream that can stun the hearer, and summon every nearby guard. This is usually found in rooms, but may also be placed on individual objects.

*Detect:* Per-based Traps.

*Disarm:* DX-based Traps.

*Circumvent:* Automatic if the area or item can be avoided; otherwise no.

*Evade:* Deafness. Protected Hearing gives +5 on the Fright Check.

*Effects:* Fright Check as per *Terror* (p. B93). Audible with an unmodified Hearing roll at 128 yards.

*Shots:* 1.

*Rearm:* DX-based Traps.

*Steal:* If the alarm is attached to an object, it may be stolen along with that item.

### Sweeping Scythes

A door frame made of long sections of sharp-edged bone. If a non-demon without an official token of permission (see below) attempts to pass through, the scythes sweep across the doorway like scissors.

*Detect:* Per-based Traps.

*Disarm:* No.

*Circumvent:* The sweeping scythes can't be completely stopped without blocking the doorway, but a boulder or heavy

beam carefully placed in the doorway can prevent the scythes from closing all the way. Roll Traps at -4 to get it placed properly without setting it off.

*Evade:* Dodge at -1.

*Effects:* 2d cutting damage.

*Shots:* Infinite.

*Steal:* No.

*We approach the city  
named Dis, with burdened  
citizens, with vast hordes.*

*– Dante Alighieri  
Inferno: Canto VIII*

## ANTICATHEDRAL

The demons of Hellsgate make a point of *not* venerating any gods, the lost souls largely don't see any benefit in it, and religious practice, while not explicitly outlawed, is pursued by mortals only in private, if at all. However, the cabal deliberately conducts blasphemy. There is a regular schedule of performing insulting rituals aimed at a variety of deities. They're not trying to influence the gods so much as simply staking out a position, though it's a position which involves bloody sacrifice and enthusiastic mockery of things many mortals find dear.

The site of this activity is the Anticathedral, the sole structure in Hellsgate with a religious purpose, if that's the right word for it. The hexagonal building has several concentric tiers of taller and taller spires, surmounted by a majestic spike at the center. The building is made of a light gray stone, rumored to be native to the underworld, and is lavishly decorated with distorted holy symbols and obscene iconography. Less visibly, the structure occupies a zone of no sanctity; divine magic is essentially impossible there. The Anticathedral's centerpiece is a huge sacrificial altar in the shape of a stepped pyramid, made of copper and decorated with gold. Its top has a number of heavy rings to which chains may be attached, and the whole structure has gutters for blood and ichor draining down from the top.

Around the large central chamber, which takes up most of the building, are a number of niches which are used for semi-private rituals. For example, the accession of a new member of the cabal is typically marked with a small ceremony where the demon emphatically resists all gods and other external masters. Many of the niches, though, have a commemorative purpose. The remains of many deposed cabalists are interred there, some in vats of acid or urns of never-ending fire to prevent them from regenerating or being reanimated. (A forever-flaming copper urn weighs 42 lbs. and has DR 3, HP 14; it provides little more fire than a torch, but cannot be extinguished unless the urn is destroyed.) One niche is decorated with the severed heads of every leader of the Sacred League; a few were taken on the battlefield, but many others were collected posthumously by the city's agents.

## CABALIST HIVES

In addition to their positions of power, the members of the ruling cabal have personal strongholds in the lower city. These are known as “the hives.” About a quarter of the city’s demons are associated with one specific cabalist’s hive, spending most of their time in one or running errands for their master.

The external appearance of the hives varies widely, from piled hexagonal components made of unknown materials to conventional (if somewhat ramshackle or macabrely decorated) architecture. The structures seem to have properties of metal and shell, combining hardness with iridescent sheens. The material also provides considerable protection against magical scrying (treat as Scrywall at level 20). Doors and windows are almost invisible when closed.

Few mortals visit the hives, but those who do report that spaces are often filled with faint noises (some speculate it’s demonic music) which seem to have no source, and the internal arrangements of the buildings change from time to time. Still, they contain the sorts of rooms one would expect of any household engaged in commerce and government: large public rooms for holding court and meetings, private chambers, workshops, storerooms, and so on. Holding cells and torture chambers are to be expected, though used only for particularly sensitive prisoners; the demons of Hellsgate like being *publicly* cruel unless they have secrets to keep.

## THE FONT

Because there is very little water in the region, almost all of it comes from a prodigiously productive, if somewhat unreliable, magical fountain just outside the Bone Palace: the Font. The Font is made of five levels of square black marble tiers, each of which is larger than the one below. The Font’s contents spout from the top and run down the outside of each upper tier into the next one down, brazenly defying gravity. From there, the liquid falls into a square basin at the bottom, then into a network of black marble troughs, running upward to the wall and pouring over it. Once passing over the wall, though, the liquid usually evaporates into mist or simply vanishes.

Just what comes out of the Font changes. It usually produces water that is somewhat impure but entirely safe to drink and wash with. Occasionally, this water becomes brackish, and from time to time (a total of a few days every month), it turns into something else entirely: vinegar, sewage, poison, blood, or some other liquid, usually unpleasant and often toxic. Every

few years, the Font produces an intensely flammable substance, briefly filling the system with a network of liquid fire. The entire contents of the system change within seconds, so most residents set aside a barrel of water to use in emergencies as a matter of course.

## THE PERPETUAL ARENA

One of the things demons like best is pain and suffering in others, and they are endlessly delighted that mortals can be paid or threatened to put themselves in positions where they can be hurt. The best such position in Hellsgate is the Perpetual Arena, a large, oval-shaped venue. The Arena is festooned with the bones of the slain, artfully cemented to the black stone walls. The supply of new bones is constant, but older bones decay and fall off (or are stolen by vandals or fans seeking souvenirs), keeping the Arena from becoming a giant ossuary. Within, tiers of stone seats are sectioned off by ramps and stairs. Special entrances provide access to rooms under the Arena where competitors prepare, set pieces are stored, and so on.

The Arena is host to a near-constant series of gladiatorial games, lit at night by torches, magical shimmers, and even glowing gouts of lava. Most combats are one-on-one battles between lost souls (some long-term residents of the city have become surprisingly good at fighting due to their participation in the games), though larger contests are occasionally staged. The demons are endlessly creative in staging duels which are unusual and elaborate to the point of being downright baroque: battles between ground-based, naval, aerial, and even semi-subterranean opponents; grudge matches between members of rival ethnicities or ideological persuasions; large numbers of gnomes, goblins, and other small races fighting a smaller number of trolls or giants; fights on stilts or networks of tightropes over a pool of carnivorous fish or metal spikes; fights with elaborate scenery and strict rules about where and how the combatants can fight in different areas of the Arena; and so on.

Admission to the Arena is free, though seating is somewhat segregated. Demons have a substantial swath of front-row seating reserved for themselves, and the cabal has luxurious box seating. The Arena also welcomes mortals willing to test their skills. Winners are paid substantial purses, publicized in advance: valuable spices, works of craft, magical items, and sometimes just gold. Purses start around \$10 per average point of primary fighting skill among the combatants. The real money, though, is in gambling; see *Amusement and Spectacles* (p. 10) for more details.

# COMMON LOCATIONS

These locations aren’t particularly notable, but they are typical of the homes, businesses, and associations of the city.

## HOUSE OF THE FOUR CLAWS

Despite the name of the place and the rather grotesque sign, which looks a bit like a giant chicken’s foot, the Four Claws is actually a nice place. In the ground floor of a tower along the city’s southwestern rim, this is an inn catering to a mixed clientele of mortals and lost souls. It’s close enough to the gates that

it usually has at least a few visitors, though most of the customers are locals.

The floor of the large room is carved into three descending square tiers. The top tier, around the edge of the room, is the most poorly lit and usually crowded. The second tier down is kept sparsely populated. Seats at the tables there are given to the relatively wealthy or to rakes and the socially mobile, who bribe the staff to give them seats there. The bottom tier, often lit by enchanted glowing crystals hanging from the ceiling, is usually used for entertainers. The Four Claws generally features dancers, with accompanying musicians huddled in the corner.

The Four Claws caters to as broad a clientele as possible. Most of the drinks and food it offers are hearty but nothing fancy, but it is known to keep better drinks in reserve for those with a little extra cash, and the cooks have a wide range and can accommodate special requests for the right price. It's a good place to see a broad range of Hellsgate's population, though demons and monstrous residents rarely if ever appear. The occasional brawls are inevitable, and immortality has given the lost souls a relatively relaxed attitude toward casual violence. Regardless, bouncers are on hand to prevent damage to furniture, drinks, and other expensive things. A typical bouncer is a lost soul (p. 20) with ST 13-15 (1d/2+12), Intimidation-16, and Brawling-14.

## BONE CROSS

Where the Four Claws is a relatively inviting place, the Bone Cross (its sign is a crossed set of oversized leg bones from an unidentified skeleton) is the last place most people would want to go. This tavern is frequented by monsters, who are largely representative of the city's monstrous community: mostly goblin-kin, with a few less humanoid creatures in the mix (*Monsters*, p. 6).

### On the Menu

Local dishes (see *Food and Clothing*, pp. 9-10) are available for typical restaurant meal prices. Just about any other dish or drink visitors might want is available in Hellsgate's public houses, but for up to 5× standard prices for standard dishes of other societies . . . or 10× or more for delicacies exotic even in their native lands. The city also offers even stranger fare, of which these are a few examples.

*Fire Wine:* Often served at events where demons will be present, this sweet but spicy pinkish-amber wine gives the drinker a faint essence of fire. For every degree of inebriation, the drinker gains two levels of Temperature Tolerance against heat. However, the drinker must also roll against HT as he passes each level of inebriation. On a failure, he takes a point of damage. On a critical failure, he catches fire (p. B434). \$120/pint.

*Lover's Ragout:* This dish, prepared by a handful of specialty chefs, is regarded as the ultimate romantic gesture. This heavily seasoned stew is made from morsels cut from the hearts of the two people intending to eat it. Gathering the ingredients requires surgery on both parties; a typical chef who offers this meal will have Surgery-15. Each participant takes no damage if the chef's Surgery roll critically succeeds, 1d if it succeeds, 2d if it fails, and *dies* on a critical failure. \$3,500, not including wine pairings.

*Wolf's Liquor:* This liquor is brewed to release aspects of the user's inner animal nature, often causing bestial characteristics to come to the surface. For each level of inebriation, roll against HT. On a failure, the drinker gains: +2 ST, Bestial, Claws (Blunt), Fur, and Teeth (Sharp); his IQ drops to 7; and self-control rolls for his mental disadvantages worsen a step if possible (e.g., 15 or less becomes 12 or less). These effects last until the drinker sobers up. Despite the name, the features which appear aren't always those of a wolf, though they always suggest a predatory creature. \$260/pint.

The Bone Cross occupies the ground floor of a faintly pyramidal building in the eastern part of the city. There are three public entrances, each with a heavy, iron-bound door, and no windows. Half of the interior space is divided into niches by mortared rubble walls. Some customers want privacy, and keeping most of the clients broken up into small groups reduces the chance of general mayhem. The city's monstrous residents can be sociable (if they couldn't, they wouldn't live in a city), but many of them have limited patience with their fellow creatures, and limiting their contact with one another, even in a technically public place, limits problems. The rest of the space is essentially open, with widely separated tables and thick stone pillars. The Cross is dimly lit, and it's one of the chilliest public places in the city, though individual niches may be supplied with torches and braziers for those who desire more light and heat. A wide range of intoxicants are served, which many mortals would find toxic or merely vile, though some of the city's human residents have acquired a taste for those few brews which cross racial lines.

In keeping with the city's sparse legal tradition, the Cross' clientele are generally a live-and-let-live crowd, but they aren't especially friendly and keep themselves segregated. Members of any monstrous race won't get a second glance, but there's an unspoken expectation that they'll keep to their own kind (lizard men drink with lizard men, trolls with trolls, and so on) unless introduced to others. Humans and similar beings may enter unmolested, but will receive a wary reception and very poor service; once the patrons are certain they're *definitely* human (not vampires, monsters in human disguise, etc.), the reception will become quite chilly indeed. A rotating staff of monstrous bouncers, selected for strength rather than brains (e.g., trolls, minotaurs, and lizard men), are on hand to keep fights from spreading too far. They're experienced brawlers, and are happy to beat offending patrons to death. A typical bouncer has ST 12-14 (1d/2+11) – *before* racial modifiers – and Brawling-16.

## STREET OF EXCHANGERS

This short street near the gate is the center of used equipment dealing – which includes fencing stolen goods. There's quite a lot of this going on in Hellsgate, so it's a very active area. The most general shops are at ground level; their entire floors are commercial space. They strive for high turnover, so they sell fairly cheaply but buy cheaply as well, and the quality of their merchandise is average at best.

Each building front also has at least one iron or bronze stairway leading up to the second story and a series of metal balconies creating a virtual aerial sidewalk. There are even several spots where narrow suspension bridges (held up by chains) cross the street, allowing visitors so inclined to browse the entire second floor without returning to the first. The shops on the second floor are smaller and not as busy as the first. They're also much more specialized, with merchants who know their particular areas well. Prices may not be as attractive, but the average quality of the merchandise is often higher.

Several buildings have additional external stairways leading to the third floor and another tier of shops there, though not all buildings have them, and the third level doesn't have an unbroken series of pedestrian balconies.

Third-level shops are a mixed bag, combining extremely specialized merchants who buy and sell few things but sell them dearly, and junk dealers who will buy anything for a pittance and sell them to people who can't afford anything better.

The Street of Exchangers is one of the city's busiest. It is crowded during daylight hours, and even at night many shops stay open, using torches, candles, and magical light sources to illuminate their wares. It's also very noisy; the rattling and creaking of the metal balconies and stairs combines with the sound of the crowd to make it very difficult to hear (-2 to -4 on all Hearing rolls). Pickpockets are rife, and it's not unknown for someone to buy something, lose it, and find it again the next day in the same shop where it was originally purchased.

## DEEP FORGE

Because of the desolate surroundings, fuel for metalwork in Hellsgate can be expensive. However, one of the city's immigrants has found away around this problem. Huric the Dwarf (p. 23), who is something of a renegade among his people, has set up what he calls his "deep forge," which takes advantage of the city's environment to increase raw metal production. With considerable supernatural assistance (he employed several magicians to manipulate elementals for him), he set up a duct system which circulates air down from the surface, through a carefully constructed network of natural and artificial tunnels, underground across lava pools, and up into his foundry. By itself, the superheated air isn't quite enough to melt copper and iron, but it is sufficient to smith other metals and cuts down his fuel costs enormously when working with bronze and steel.

In addition to being a foundry of the highest quality (+2 to any metalworking skill), it's eerily well-adapted to producing unusual goods. Gadgeteers *also* get +2 to prototype rolls *and* +2 to Weird Science rolls supporting them (see p. B479). Huric refuses to let anyone else use his foundry, but industrial spies might try to copy his design.

## PASCHAL TOWER

This tower, about halfway down the southeastern slope of the crater, is typical of buildings in the city, providing shared residential and commercial space. All of the tower's long-term residents are lost souls, though mortals can be found there frequently.

The ground floor is divided into a series of shops: a candle-maker, a tailor, a seller of writing implements, and a small tea-room. The second story is mixed use: apartments for the tea-seller and tailor's families, a tapestry-weaving workshop, and a maker of pins and needles. Unlike some more densely trafficked areas, the buildings in Paschal Towers do not have upper-story storefronts. The third floor contains apartments for the other shopkeepers. The fourth floor and fifth provide room and board to visitors and short-term residents (e.g., people displaced by colliding buildings, bad relationships, or economic hardship).

The building takes its name from the self-styled Duchess Yvette du Paschal (p. 23), who represents herself as the landlord and public voice of the tower, all of which makes her a colorful local figure. She does not actually have any authority over the building. However, she does operate the accommodations in the top two floors, which, along with her forceful personality, gives her a strong voice in communal affairs.

## HOUSE OF THE SKINNED BROTHERS

Though there are exceptions, most of the lost souls are a glum lot, convinced of their guilt for numerous sins in their living days and now resigned to unending punishment. Some have gone even farther than that, embracing their suffering and forming associations which are, if not exactly religious, then at least philosophically oriented around that fact. One of the more visible is the Skinned Brothers. Despite the name, it includes as many women as men. As a sign of penance, they remove one another's skins on a regular basis. This is incredibly painful and leaves the subject debilitated for several days, but for the next month or two until their next skinning (during which time they suffer from constant moderate pain; see p. B428), they serve as very visible symbols. Their skinlessness, they say, physically represents the exposure of their innermost sins. They exhort their fellow lost souls to humbly accept their suffering, and warn visitors to improve themselves to avoid their own fate.

When not out bothering the people around them, the Skinned Brothers occupy a small tower in the southern part of the city. The third and fourth floors are living spaces for the members of the Brotherhood. The second floor is used as a meeting and ceremonial space, the centerpiece of which is a heavy table with many drawers and an elaborate set of restraints and shackles. The table is used for the group's ritual flayings. The more deft and experienced members of the Brotherhood have developed sufficient skill to remove a skin in a single piece, which is harder than it sounds. While a mortal would die of blood loss long before the procedure was complete, lost souls remain alive and moving (so much as the restraints allow) through the entire process.

The skins are processed into leather and sold on the ground floor, where they are snapped up by merchants supplying the necromantic trade. A typical skin is about two square yards, \$90, and 4 lbs.; in some schools of magic, incorporating one into an appropriate magical item reduces enchantment costs by 2%. This commerce helps support the group, and in the minds of the Brotherhood, serves as yet another way of getting their message out.

## LIBRARY OF THE DEAD

Juntala Pahwar (pp. 23-24), one of the more literate lost souls, lives in the northwestern quarter of Hellsgate, where the upper city becomes the lower. He is a scribe and book-binder by profession, primarily taking dictation and copying letters and other records for a living. However, he has embarked on a more personal project: recording the lives of every one of the lost souls. So far, he's compiled over 500 detailed biographies by pursuing anyone willing to talk to him. Each starts with a set of basic identifying information: name; national, religious, family, and other important affiliations; dates of birth and death (though some of his subjects don't know or can only provide information in calendar systems no one else understands); and similar vital statistics.

What follows after the introduction is typically impeccable in penmanship but rambling and disjointed in content, as Juntala takes down recollections as they come. He's a surprisingly good interviewer, getting his subjects to speak at great length about all manner of personal issues and experiences.

Indeed, some of his volumes might be extremely relevant to historians, students of the lore of lost civilizations, and others searching for hidden knowledge. However, because of the way they're organized (or, more to the point, not organized), finding out anything in particular is extremely time-consuming. Juntala welcomes readers, but doesn't let the books leave his increasingly crowded shop. Given his spotty coverage and disjointed writing, finding anything relevant to a given historical period requires a Research roll at -4. However, if that roll succeeds, the researcher gets +3 to a subsequent History roll.

As a highly skilled bookbinder, a number of extremely valuable works pass through Juntala's hands. His library is not itself exceptionally well secured, but when he's working on an important project for demons, they tend to keep an eye on things. There are rampant rumors that Juntala hides secrets in the bindings of his books, so even owners of his more unremarkable volumes must guard them against vandals trying to cut them open to find treasure maps and mystical instructions.



## SHADOW STREET

This is actually a neighborhood rather than a street, covering a few adjacent avenues in the northwestern part of the upper city. The neighborhood gets its name from the layers of black-painted sailcloth used as canopies, stretched between buildings on a network of chains. This keeps the street level in permanent darkness and upper stories of buildings in, at best, perpetual twilight; visibility is at -2 on the fourth floor and at the intersection leading *into* Shadow Street, -5 on the third floor, and -8 everywhere else. The layered fabric will burn, but takes no damage from crushing, impaling, or piercing attacks, and cuts one foot per second per *die* of damage from a cutting weapon.

This quarter is home to many of the city's nocturnal residents, notably the bulk of the lesser undead and a large proportion of the vampire population. Several of the towers are controlled by a vampire or small group of them, each of whom treats it as his personal stronghold. The cabal would not hesitate to disabuse them of this notion if it became important to them, but vampires, particularly long-lived ones, tend to be savvy enough politicians not to press the issue. Still, it's generally

believed that certain undead wouldn't mind if the demons went back to where they came from and left their city in other hands.

The neighborhood is not particularly safe for mortals. Lost souls are a bit better off; their flesh is nutritious to living monsters, but the equivalent of a thin gruel to vampires. This is not to say that entering it invites attack, but the residents frankly view the living as prey. Armed groups of mortals are quite safe; the monsters of Shadow Street aren't suicidal. Those accompanied by or under the protection of residents are likewise safe; to attack would be a breach of courtesy, albeit an insult to the fellow resident, not the unfortunate mortal. However, most residents of Shadow Street believe that any lone, unprotected fools who stray into the darkened streets simply don't have what it takes to survive in this difficult city, and if by their death they can do someone else some good, so much the better.

## JAGGED LANDING

Halfway up the slope on the western edge of the city, Jagged Landing is typical of the city's large public spaces. It's a lopsided hexagon at the intersection of six streets. Going clockwise from the north, they are:

1. *The Street of Confectioners (Main)*: Occupied mostly by dealers in sweets, dried fruit, syrups, and related foods.
- 2-3. *Silk Alley*: These two streets are devoted to textile and clothing sellers of all sorts.
4. *The Street of Confectioners (South)*: An extension, which continues past the intersection but then only runs for another short block.
5. *Lesser Potters*: One of the two "ceramic streets" of the city, where most of the merchants sell pottery, statues, and so on.
6. *White Bol-Takacs*: An area predominantly occupied by ghouls and goblin-kin, named after the long-dead vampire who used to oversee the neighborhood.

A narrow but deep crevasse cuts across the intersection, separating Lesser Potters and the southern Confectioners from the rest. The crevasse is spanned by a wide bridge, liberally decorated with ornate iron spikes, with particularly large clusters at the ends, from which the intersection gets its name. The space is otherwise open, save for a few brick pillars; each is 6' to 8' tall and a yard or so in diameter, with a name and crime inscribed upon them. These serve as temporary prisons for lost souls who have committed significant offenses but don't quite deserve immurement.

On a typical day, Jagged Landing fills in from the outside to the center. Most regular business happens in the shops around the perimeter. Peddlers set up booths and lay down carpets on which to display their wares, sometimes creating concentric rings of casual sales spaces. The center mostly sees pedestrian traffic and short-lived knots of people meeting one another before drifting off somewhere else to find a drink or a bite to eat, often around the prison pillars; "meet me at *lèse majesté* in Jagged Landing" would not be a surprising instruction. Otherwise, the open space is given over to occasional clusters of migrating birds or native giant moths scavenging dropped crumbs; giant moths are usually harmless, but if aroused, treat as a swarm of bats (p. B461).

# CHAPTER THREE

# CHARACTERS

Hellgate's demographics could keep a sociologist busy for years; no other city can boast a demonic ruling class with a populace comprising dead souls, monsters, and "normal folk." (See *Residents*, p. 6, for details.) Some of the more notable and interesting residents are discussed here, along with racial templates for the demons and lost souls unique to Hellgate.

*I come to do the  
Devil's work.*

– Arthur Miller,  
*The Crucible*

## WEALTH AND STATUS

Wealth does *not* grant Status in Hellgate. There are only two methods by which Status can be acquired:

1. Demonic power. Common demons are inherently Status 1, while greater demons are Status 2. Demons may not purchase further levels of Status; in Hellgate, power *is* Status.
2. Administrative Rank (Hive) 2+ grants one level of Status.

The combination of these two factors produces the following:

Status	Example
-1	The homeless and outcast
0	Most citizens and visitors
1	Most common demons
2	Common demons of Rank 2+ and greater demons of Rank 0-1
3	Greater demons of Rank 2+

## RACIAL TEMPLATES

The demons of Hellgate are a wildly varied lot, from toy-like familiars to hulking near-leviathans. Thus, the demonic templates which follow are *suggestions* – a baseline from which the GM may deviate when designing custom demonic NPCs. Any of the new demonic abilities from *Dungeon Fantasy 9* or *Monster Hunters 3* can be used to quickly "beef up" one of these devils.

### New Meta-Trait: Hellgate Demon

These traits are inherent to all demons found in Hellgate. Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; Fragile (Unnatural; Not in Hell or Hellgate, -50%) [-25]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Immunity to Mind Control [30]; Indomitable [15]; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous) [40]; Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents; Prevents direct harm to truly good or holy folks only, -50%) [-5]; Unaging [15]; Unfazeable [15]; and the feature "Affected by True Faith and Pentagram." 165 points.

serve the *real* demons. They're still able to boss around lost souls, but they have no actual authority past the understood threat of, "If you act against me, I'll tell my boss."

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST-2 [-20]; IQ-2 [-40]; HT+1 [10].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** SM -1; Will +2 [10]; Per +2 [10]; Basic Speed -0.25 [-5].

**Advantages:** Blunt Claws [3]; DR 5 (Limited, Heat/Fire, -40%) [15]; Hellgate Demon (above) [165]; Temperature Tolerance 3 (Heat) [3].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Bloodlust (15) [-5]; Bully (9) [-15]; Callous [-5]; Duty (To boss; 15 or less) [-15]; Sadism (12) [-15]; Selfish (12) [-5]; Wealth (Dead Broke) [-25].

## COMMON DEMON

239 points

These evil creatures make up the majority of the demons in Hellgate. They serve the Hives of more powerful demons, claim "ownership" over small areas (e.g., a couple of towers), and torment anyone they think they can get away with hurting. These demons can be roughly lumped into three categories, reflected in the final advantage choice: brutes, fliers, and mages.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+2 [20]; HT+2 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Will +2 [10]; Per +2 [10]; Basic Speed -0.50 [-10].

## DEMONLING

46 points

Also known as "imps," these small creatures are not technically part of Hellgate's ruling class. Instead, they are the gofers, servants, and whipping boys conjured up from Hell to

**Advantages:** DR 3 [15]; DR 5 (Limited, Heat/Fire, -40%) [15]; Hellsgate Demon (p. 19) [165]; Magery 0 [5]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Sharp Claws [5]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Status 1 [5]; Striker (Piercing; Tail; Limited Arc, Behind, -40%) [3]; Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat) [5]. • *One* of ST+3 [30], Flight (Winged, -25%) [30], or Magery 3 [30].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Bloodlust (15) [-5]; Bully (9) [-15]; Callous [-5]; Sadism (12) [-15]; Selfish (12) [-5].

## GREATER DEMON

495 points

These demons, formidable both physically and intellectually, rule the common ones with a scaly fist. The advice from the introduction to *Racial Templates* (p. 19) is *especially* fitting here; each greater demon should have something unique or special about it. Suitable examples include extra body parts; poisonous bites, stings, or claws; toxic or sense-obscuring auras; and ranged innate attacks. Cabalists, in particular, should have at *least* 50 points in custom abilities added – the PCs should be wary to take one on in a straight-up fight! See *Notable Demons* (below) for examples.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+7 [70]; DX+2 [40]; IQ+2 [40]; HT+4 [40].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Will +2 [10]; Per +2 [10]; Basic Speed +0.50 [10].

**Advantages:** DR 6 [30]; DR 10 (Limited, Heat/Fire, -40%) [30]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Hellsgate Demon (p. 19) [165]; Magery 3 [35]; Night Vision 9 [9]; Sharp Claws [5]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Status 2 [10]; Striker (Impaling; Horns; Limited Arc, Forward, -40%) [5]; Striker (Piercing; Tail; Long, SM +1, +100%) [10]; Temperature Tolerance 10 (Heat) [10].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Bloodlust (15) [-5]; Bully (9) [-15]; Callous [-5]; Sadism (12) [-15]; Selfish (12) [-5].

## LOST SOUL

104 points

Unlike the various demons (above), lost souls have a single, consistent racial template. There is a huge amount of variety among the lost souls themselves, but this should be represented by the GM assigning each a *professional* template or a proper assortment of advantages, disadvantages, and skills. The typical lost soul has accumulated several lifetimes' worth of knowledge and will be highly skilled in one or more areas.

Lost souls cannot be permanently killed. They have no special regeneration abilities, but will *eventually* recover from any damage. They hunger, but don't need to eat and drink; starvation and dehydration make them uncomfortable, but do not cost them FP. They have a limited need for air; they are vulnerable to suffocation, but will never lose HP from it. Thus, they can be knocked out, but not "killed" (or given brain damage) via oxygen deprivation. They cannot leave the city, and automatically fail *all* resistance rolls against demons, whether against demonic Influence rolls, Detect Lies, spells, innate abilities, or anything else.

**Advantages:** Doesn't Breathe (Must breathe, but cannot lose HP from suffocation, -50%) [10]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Unaging [15]; Unkillable 2 [100].

**Disadvantages:** Chronic Pain (Mild; 1 hour; 12 or less) [-5]; Divine Curse (Cannot leave Hellsgate) [-15]; Divine Curse (Cannot resist demons) [-15]; Nightmares (12) [-5]; Social Stigma (Subjugated) [-20].

**Quirks:** Still compelled to eat and drink. [-1]

# NOTABLE DEMONS

The members of the cabal are powerful, ruthless, and devious. Other than that, they tend to have little in common. These demons can be regarded as a representative sample. Any has a base value of 15 points if taken as a Patron, but will also demand a Duty with a frequency at *least* as common as that of the Patron advantage. Any may also act as a Contact, with Current Events (Hellsgate)-18, Politics-18, or Hidden Lore (Demon Lore)-21.

## EAARAZ

932 points

Eaaraz has perhaps the most conventionally demonic appearance in the cabal: blackened skin, bat-wings, horns, fangs, bony spikes at most major joints, and a tendency to shoot flames in combat. Although he suffers no harm from light, Eaaraz prefers to stay in the dark. He's one of the sneakier members of the cabal, concealing himself in a hidden position for a night and eavesdropping on whomever happens by. He's somewhat of a conservative, supporting isolation from Hell, but there are also hints that he'd prefer to expel everyone but demons and lost souls from the city.

**ST** 20 [30]\*; **DX** 14 [40]\*; **IQ** 14 [40]\*; **HT** 15 [10]\*.

Damage 2d-1/3d+2; BL 80 lbs.; HP 20 [0]; Will 16 [0]\*; Per 16 [0]\*; FP 18 [9].

Basic Speed 7.00 [-15]\*; Basic Move 7 [0]; Dodge 10; Parry 11 (Brawling).

6'6"; 220 lbs.

### Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Hell [0].

**Languages:** Common Tongue (Native) [6]; Demontongue (Native) [0]; two others at Accented (GM's choice) [8].

### Advantages

Administrative Rank 4 (Hive) [20]; Chameleon 4 [20]; Discriminatory Hearing [15]; DR 8 [10]\*; Eidetic Memory [5]; Extra Attack 1 [25]; Fangs *replace* Sharp Teeth [1]; Greater Demon [495]; Infravision [10]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Legal Immunity [20]; Regeneration (Regular) [25]; Silence 2 [10]; Status 3 [0]\*†; Wealth (Filthy Rich) [50].

## Disadvantages

Compulsive Snooping (12) [-5]; Enemies (Demonic rivals; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Jealousy [-10]; Loner (9) [-7]; Megalomania [-10]; Phobia (Bright light) (15) [-7].

*Quirks:* Minor intolerance toward non-Hellish folk; Prefers magic to physical combat. [-2]

## Skills

Acting (A) IQ+2 [8]-16; Administration (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Area Knowledge (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+1 [2]-15; Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-16; Broadsword (A) DX [2]-14; Current Affairs Hellsgate (E) IQ+2 [4]-16; Detect Lies (H) Per [4]-16; Fast-Talk (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Hidden Lore (Demon Lore) (A) IQ+2 [8]-16; Innate Attack (Breath) (E) DX+3 [8]-17; Innate Attack (Projectile) (E) DX+2 [4]-16; Intelligence Analysis (H) IQ [4]-14; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-16; Lip Reading (A) Per-1 [1]-15; Observation (A) Per+1 [4]-17; Politics (A) IQ+2 [8]-16; Stealth (A) DX+3 [12]-17; Tactics (H) IQ [4]-14; Thaumatology (VH) IQ+1 [2]-15‡.

## Spells‡

Breathe Fire (VH) IQ+6 [20]-20; Burning Death (VH) IQ+1 [2]-15; Clumsiness (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Command (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Create Air (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Create Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Drunkenness (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Fire Cloud (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Fireball (H) IQ+1 [16]-20; Flame Jet (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Foolishness (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Forgetfulness (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Heat (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Ignite Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Itch (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Lend Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; No-Smell (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Purify Air (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Recover Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Shape Air (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Shape Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Sickness (H) IQ+1 [1]-15; Spasm (H) IQ+1 [1]-15.

- \* Includes modifiers from greater demon template.
- † Includes +1 for Administrative Rank.
- ‡ Thaumatology and all spells include +3 for Magery.

# HUNDRED-CUTS

1,000 points

Take the decaying corpse of a predator like a wolf or crocodile, replace the flesh under the rotting skin with saw blades and tangles of razor wire, and fill the head with glowing embers so that a faint red glow is visible from the eyes and cracks in the skull, and you've got Hundred-Cuts. His political leanings are difficult to identify (he changes positions on issues regularly), and he has an explosive temper, leading to sudden bursts of violence. Though given to berserker rages, Hundred-Cuts is blindingly fast and has been known to cut down multiple enemies with his blade-studded limbs before they even knew a fight was happening.

**ST** 23 [60]\*; **DX** 15 [60]\*; **IQ** 12 [0]\*; **HT** 15 [10]\*.  
Damage 2d+1/4d+1; BL 106 lbs.; HP 23 [0]; Will 16 [10]\*; Per 14 [0]\*; FP 15 [0].  
Basic Speed 9.00 [20]\*; Basic Move 11 [10]; Dodge 13†; Parry 13† (Brawling).  
5'6"; 300 lbs.

## Social Background

*TL:* 3 [0].

*CF:* Hell [0].

*Languages:* Common Tongue (Native) [6]; Demontongue (Native) [0].

## Advantages

Administrative Rank 4 (Hive) [20]; DR 10 [20]\*; Combat Reflexes [15]; Danger Sense [15]; Extra Attack 2 [50]; Greater Demon [495]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Intuition [15]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Legal Immunity [20]; Long Talons *replace* Sharp Claws [6]; Regeneration (Fast) [50]; Recovery [10]; Status 3 [0]\*‡; Terror (-3 to Fright Checks; Visual; Always On, -20%) [48]; Wealth (Filthy Rich) [50].

## Disadvantages

Berserk (12) [-10]; Bloodlust (9) *replaces* Bloodlust (15) [-10]; Enemies (Demonic rivals; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Impulsiveness (15) [-5]; Megalomania [-10]; Overconfident (12) [-5]; Paranoia [-10].

*Quirks:* Politically capricious; Won't cast spells unless he feels outmatched or in genuine danger. [-2]

## Skills

Administration (A) IQ [2]-12; Area Knowledge (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Brawling (E) DX+3 [8]-18; Current Affairs (Hellsgate) (E) IQ [1]-12; Forced Entry (E) DX+2 [4]-17; Hidden Lore (Demon Lore) (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Intimidation (A) Will+2 [8]-18; Politics (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Stealth (A) DX [2]-15; Tactics (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Thaumatology (VH) IQ [1]-12§.

## Spells§

Great Haste (VH) IQ+3 [8]-15; Haste (H) IQ+3 [4]-15.

- \* Includes modifiers from greater demon template.
- † Includes +1 for Combat Reflexes.
- ‡ Includes +1 for Administrative Rank.
- § Thaumatology and all spells include +3 for Magery.

*The flesh under the rotting skin hides  
saw blades and tangles of razor wire.*

# SHAMSHAH

1,037 points

Shamshah is one of the four remaining members of the original cabal. His body is humanoid, but he has the head of a lion, a flexible tail with a poisoned barb at the end, and tiny bristles all over his skin like a cactus. He's in the minority among demons in that he usually wears clothing, typically tattered royal finery. He enjoys acting as a judge, making processions around the city with a detachment of the Diabolic Guard. He picks random individuals, gives them an impromptu "trial," and sentences them to baroque punishments. He uses his combination of Empathy, Interrogation, and Psychology to quickly discover actions about which the accused feels guilty. (His magic can be more effective, but he takes pride in his skills.)

Shamshah appears delighted by material wealth and has agents who participate in a great deal of trade. Those who know him speculate that his Greed is less of a personal foible and more the desire to corrupt mortals by inspiring greed in them. In addition to being monumentally strong and durable, Shamshah is a master of poisons, which he produces from his stinging and the spines on his body.

**ST** 23 [60]\*; **DX** 14 [40]\*; **IQ** 15 [60]\*; **HT** 16 [20]\*.  
Damage 2d+1/4d+1; BL 106 lbs.; HP 23 [0]; Will 17 [0]\*; Per 17 [0]\*; FP 16 [0].  
Basic Speed 8.00 [0]\*; Basic Move 8 [0]; Dodge 12†; Parry 12† (Brawling).  
6'8"; 280 lbs.

### Social Background

TL: 3 [0].

CF: Hell [0].

*Languages*‡: Common Tongue (Native) [4]; Demontongue (Native) [0]; two others at Native (GM's choice) [8]; three others at Accented (GM's choice) [6].

### Advantages

Administrative Rank 4 (Hive) [20]; Combat Reflexes [15]; DR 10 [20]\*; Empathy [15]; Extra Attack 1 [25]; Fangs *replace* Sharp Teeth [1]; Greater Demon [495]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Legal Immunity [20]; Luck [15]; Regeneration (Fast) [50]; Reputation +3 (Original cabalist; All demons and Hellsgate citizens; Always) [7]; Short Spines [1]; Status 3 [0]\*§; Striking ST 4 (Bite Only, -60%) [8]; Toxic Attack 1 point (Cyclic, 30 1-second cycles, Resistible, +1,450%; Follow-Up, Spines, +0%; Resistible, HT-3, -15%) [16]; Toxic Attack 1d-2 (Cyclic, 30 1-second cycles, Resistible, +1,450%; Follow-Up, Tail, +0%; Resistible, HT-5, -5%; Side Effect, Agony, +150%; Symptoms, Severe Pain after losing 1/3 HP, +120%) [37]; Wealth (Filthy Rich) [50].

## Diabolic Guard (405 points)

This template is typical of the demons guarding the cabalists. See *The Demonic Cabal* (p. 7) for more.

**Attributes:** ST 15 [30]\*; DX 13 [60]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 12 [0]\*.

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d+1/2d+1; BL 45 lbs.; HP 15 [0]; Will 14 [5]\*; Per 13 [0]\*; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [5]\*; Basic Move 6 [0].

**Advantages:** Combat Reflexes [15]; Common Demon [239]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; *and* Reputation +1 (To be avoided; All citizens; Always) [2].

**Disadvantages:** Bully (6) *replaces* Bully (9) [-5] *and* Duty (To the Guard; 15 or less) [-15].

**Primary Skills:** Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Broadsword (A) DX+1 [4]-14; Intimidation (A) Will+1 [4]-15; Observation (A) Per [2]-13; *and* Shield (E) DX+1 [2]-14.

**Secondary and Background Skills:** Area Knowledge (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Hidden Lore (Demon Lore) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Law (Hellsgate) (H) IQ-2 [1]-9; *and* Tactics (H) IQ [4]-11.

\* Includes modifiers from common demon template (p. 19).

*Perks:* Can "milk" poison for later use as a digestive or blood agent. [1]

### Disadvantages

Compulsive Legalism/Judging (9) [-7]; Enemies (Demonic rivals; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20]; Frightens Animals [-10]; Greed (9) [-22]; Megalomania [-10]; Odious Personal Habit (Self-assured and patronizing) [-10]; Selfish (6) *replaces* Selfish (12) [-5].

*Quirks:* Concerned with maintaining his public image as a ruler; Prefers to bully via extracting confessions. [-2]

### Skills

Acting (A) IQ [2]-15; Administration (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Area Knowledge (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+2 [4]-17; Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-16; Broadsword (A) DX [2]-14; Current Affairs (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+1 [2]-16; Detect Lies (H) Per+2 [2]-19¶; Diplomacy (H) IQ-1 [2]-14; Hidden Lore (Demon Lore) (A) IQ+1 [4]-16; Intelligence Analysis (H) IQ [4]-15; Interrogation (A) IQ+3 [12]-18; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-17; Law (Hellsgate) (H) IQ [4]-15; Leadership (A) IQ+1 [4]-16; Merchant (A) IQ [2]-15; Observation (A) Per-1 [1]-16; Poisons (H) IQ+3 [16]-18; Politics (A) IQ+2 [8]-17; Propaganda (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Psychology (H) IQ+1 [8]-16; Public Speaking (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Strategy (Land) (H) IQ [4]-15; Tactics (H) IQ [4]-15; Thaumatology (VH) IQ [1]-15\*\*.

### Spells\*\*

Bravery (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Compel Lie (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Compel Truth (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Control Person (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Emotion Control (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Fear (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Hide Emotion (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Hide Thoughts (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Lend Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Loyalty (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Mind Reading (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Mind Sending (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Possession (VH) IQ [1]-15; Recover Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Sense Emotion (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Sense Foes (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Telepathy (VH) IQ [1]-15; Terror (H) IQ+1 [1]-16; Truthsayer (H) IQ+1 [1]-16.

\* Includes modifiers from greater demon template.

† Includes +1 from Combat Reflexes.

‡ Cost of all languages adjusted for Language Talent.

§ Includes +1 for Administrative Rank.

¶ Includes +3 for Empathy.

\*\* Thaumatology and all spells include +3 for Magery.

## COLORFUL CHARACTERS

These are just a few of the unusual individuals to be found around Hellsgate. Two of them – Huric (p. 23) and Elewa (p. 25) – assume that the GM is using nonhuman racial templates from the *Basic Set*. If this is not the case, simply swap out that racial template for the campaign-dependent one,

adjusting other traits as necessary. For example, in a *Dungeon Fantasy* game, Huric would use the 20-point *Dungeon Fantasy 3* dwarf template instead of the 35-point one on p. B261; this would reduce his point total by 15 points, lower his Will by 1, raise his FP by 3, and so on.

# DUCHESS YVETTE DU PASCHAL

271 points

The Duchess du Paschal represents herself as having authority over Paschal Tower (p. 17), a commercial and residential building in one of the city's many market districts. A number of lost souls claim some sort of distinction, such as a noble title or religious office, but few continue to insist on continuing to use those titles as the Duchess does. Whether or not she was a member of the nobility is, of course, an open question. However, her comprehensive grasp of home economics and easy command of the constantly changing group of chambermaids and scullions who keep up the rooms leads many to believe she was, at least in some way, connected to the operation of a large household.

If the GM decides on the Duchess' former station in life, he should add additional traits to her social background to represent this.

**ST** 10 [0]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 12 [20].  
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0];  
FP 12 [0].  
Basic Speed 6.00 [5]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9.  
5'4"; 120 lbs.

## Social Background

*TL:* 3 [0].  
*CF:* Hell [0].  
*Languages:* Common Tongue (Native) [0].

## Advantages

Fashion Sense [5]; Lost Soul [104]; Social Chameleon [5];  
Wealth (Very Wealthy) [30].

## Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Professional) [-5]; Combat Paralysis [-15];  
Selfish (12) [-5]; Stubbornness [-5].  
*Quirks:* Aloof; Secretive about her past life. [-2]

## Skills

Acting (A) IQ [2]-14; Administration (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Area  
Knowledge (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+1 [2]-15; Current Affairs  
(Hellsgate) IQ [1]-14; Diplomacy (H) IQ-1 [2]-13; Economics  
(H) IQ-1 [2]-13; Finance (H) IQ+1 [8]-15; Housekeeping (E)  
IQ+1 [2]-15; Leadership (A) IQ [2]-14; Merchant (A) IQ+1  
[4]-15; Propaganda (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Savoir-Faire (High Society)  
(E) IQ+2 [4]-16.

# HURIC THE DWARF

265 points

Huric, a blacksmith by trade, owns and manages Deep Forge (p. 17) – a shop built over a magical foundry. Though his elaborate place of business and its extensive underground infrastructure have been derided by his neighbors, Huric is clearly a visionary craftsman who is making his unorthodox setup work, producing very pure metals from imported ores, and high-quality metal items of all kinds. However, he's also got more than a touch of the mad scientist about him. Huric is both short-tempered and absent-minded, and his workshop –

with its elaborate system of winches, pull-chains, and blazing hot vents to control air-flow through the ducts – is a series of accidents waiting to happen.

The following statistics assume that Huric uses the dwarf template from p. B261. See the introduction to *Colorful Characters* (p. 22) for details on changing this.

**ST** 12 [20]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 13 [20]\*.  
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 14 [4]; Will 14 [0]\*; Per 13  
[0]; FP 13 [0].  
Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9.  
4'6"; 110 lbs.; SM -1.

## Social Background

*TL:* 3 [0].  
*CF:* Dwarven [0].  
*Languages:* Common Dwarven (Native) [0]; Common  
Tongue (Accented) [4].

## Advantages

Artificer 4 [30]\*; Dwarf [35]; Gadgeteer [25]; Versatile [5];  
Very Fit [15]; Wealth (Very Wealthy) [30].

## Disadvantages

Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Bad Temper (12) [-10]; Gluttony  
(12) [-5]; Oblivious [-5]; Overconfidence (12) [-5]; Pyromania  
(15) [-2]; Workaholic [-5].

*Quirks:* Couldn't care less about maintaining a safe work  
environment; Won't let anyone else use his foundry. [-2]

## Skills

Alchemy (VH) IQ-3 [1]-10; Armoury (Body Armor) (A) IQ+4  
[2]-17†; Armoury (Heavy Weapons) (A) IQ+3 [1]-16†; Armoury  
(Melee Weapons) (A) IQ+4 [2]-17†; Armoury (Missile Weapons)  
(A) IQ+4 [2]-17†; Engineer (Artillery) (H) IQ+2 [1]-15†; Engineer  
(Combat) (H) IQ+2 [1]-15†; Engineer (Materials) (H) IQ+2  
[1]-15†; Engineer (Mining) (H) IQ+4 [4]-17†; Hidden Lore  
(Elementals) (A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Intimidation (A) Will-1 [1]-13;  
Machinist (A) IQ+3 [1]-16†; Mechanic (Wheeled) (A) IQ+3  
[1]-16†; Merchant (A) IQ [2]-13; Metallurgy (H) IQ [4]-13;  
Prospecting (A) IQ [2]-13; Research (A) IQ [2]-13; Smith  
(Copper) (A) IQ+3 [1]-16†; Smith (Iron) (A) IQ+5 [4]-18†; Smith  
(Lead and Tin) (A) IQ+3 [1]-16†; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-1  
[4]-12; Two-Handed Axe/Mace (A) DX+1 [4]-12.

\* Includes modifiers from dwarf template.  
† Includes +4 for Artificer.

# JUNTALA PAHWAR

204 points

Juntala is a scribe and bookbinder living in a middle-class part of the city. Despite being immortal, he gives every appearance of being ready to die again. He is frail, nearsighted, and moves slowly. However, connoisseurs of the craft regard his skill as a book maker as bordering on the supernatural. His knobby fingers are deceptively twisted when at rest, but are remarkably nimble when he sets to work, creating signatures, aligning, stitching, binding, and embossing. Where the work of other specialists is required (e.g., jewelers to inlay volumes with gems and precious metal decorations), the designs he provides them are meticulous and often innovative.

Even the demons hold his work in high regard, and send their finest materials and even manuscripts to him for binding.

Juntala is currently embarking upon an epic project to record the life of every lost soul. See *Library of the Dead* (pp. 17-18) for details.

**ST** 9 [-10]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 10 [0].  
Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 9 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 13 [-5];  
FP 10 [0].  
Basic Speed 4.00 [-20]; Basic Move 4 [0]; Dodge 7.  
5'5"; 135 lbs.

### Social Background

*TL:* 3 [0].

*CF:* Hell [0].

*Languages:* Common Tongue (Native) [0]; Demontongue (Accented) [4]; two others at Accented (GM's choice) [8].

### Advantages

Eidetic Memory [5]; Gifted Artist 4 [20]; High Manual Dexterity 4 [20]; Lost Soul [104]; Wealth (Comfortable) [10].

### Disadvantages

Bad Sight (Nearsighted) [-25]; Curious (12) [-5]; Obsession (Catalog the lives of every lost soul) (12) [-10]; Skinny [-5]; Unfit [-5].

*Quirks:* Disorganized; Soft-spoken. [-2]

### Skills

Artist (Calligraphy) (H) IQ+2 [1]-16\*; Artist (Illumination) (H) IQ+2 [1]-16\*; Diplomacy (A) IQ-1 [2]-13; Hidden Lore (Demon Lore) (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Hidden Lore (Magical Writings) (A) IQ [2]-14; Interrogation (Voluntary Interviews) (E) IQ+2 [4]-16; Knot-Tying (E) DX+4 [1]-14†; Leatherworking (E) IQ+4 [1]-18\*; Occultism (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Philosophy (GM's choice) (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Research (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Sewing (E) DX+8 [1]-18\*†; Speed-Reading (A) IQ [2]-14; Writing (A) IQ+3 [12]-17.

\* Includes +4 for Gifted Artist.

† Includes +4 for High Manual Dexterity.

## KNAKKA THE ASSASSIN

318 points

When he was alive, Knakka was an excellent killer for hire. He truly enjoyed his work, but growing madness led to his failure on the job and consequently his death. Being a lost soul is a particularly painful punishment for him since so few around him can be killed . . . but that doesn't stop him from trying. He picks people at random and tries to kill them, choosing a method (poison, knife through the ribs, collapsing building, etc.) as the mood takes him. He doesn't stop until he's scored what he regards as a kill, then moves on to the next target.

For the lost souls, this is annoying, but many simply regard him as a sad and mostly harmless madman, a sort of mascot. For visitors and mortal residents, he's a more troubling issue. He's highly skilled but almost completely unhinged and easily distracted by the voices in his head. If Knakka targets a visitor, a long-term resident will likely provide a warning. Any mortal

residents upon whom Knakka fixates can take him as an Enemy; the value depends on their relative power levels (see p. B135).

**ST** 13 [30]; **DX** 15 [100]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 12 [20].  
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 13 [0]; Will 13 [5]; Per 13 [5];  
FP 12 [0].  
Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0]; Dodge 11\*; Parry 12\*  
(Knife/Shortsword).  
5'8"; 155 lbs.



### Social Background

*TL:* 3 [0].

*CF:* Hell [0].

*Languages:* Common Tongue (Native) [0]; Demontongue (Accented) [4].

### Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15]; Flexibility [5]; Gizmos 1 [5]; Lost Soul [104]; Night Vision 7 [7].

### Disadvantages

Bloodlust (12) [-10]; Callous [-5]; Compulsive Assassination (9) [-22]; Flashbacks (Severe) [-10]; Phantom Voices (Diabolical) [-15]; Reputation -3 (Murderous loon; Hellgate citizens; Always) [-7]; Short Attention Span (9) [-15]; Wealth (Struggling) [-10].

*Quirks:* Likes to use many different methods to kill people. [-1]

### Skills

Blowpipe (H) DX [4]-15; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-16; Climbing (A) DX+2 [1]-17†; Crossbow (E) DX+2 [4]-17; Escape (H) DX+1 [1]-16†; Fast-Draw (Knife) (E) DX+1 [1]-16\*; Fast-Draw (Sword) (E) DX+1 [1]-16\*; Forced Entry (E) DX+1 [2]-16; Garrote (E) DX+1 [2]-16; Holdout (A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Knife (E) DX+3 [8]-18; Poisons (H) IQ+2 [12]-14; Shortsword (A) DX+1 [4]-16; Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-17; Thrown Weapon (Knife) (E) DX+2 [4]-17; Traps (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Wrestling (A) DX [2]-15.

\* Includes +1 for Combat Reflexes.

† Includes +3 for Flexibility.

# SISTER FA ZIN TSU

68 points

Sister Fa is either the most devoted or the most foolish missionary in history. She came to Hellsgate 15 years ago to minister to the living and the lost souls (and, if they were interested, even the demons). She was allowed to stay in the city on the condition that she never perform any religious ceremonies, pray, or even mention any deities. Sister Fa does her best to comply, but does make the occasional error. She's under near-constant surveillance, so when she does slip up, she's almost immediately dragged off for several days of torture and then set free again. (Her soul is too pure for the demons to torture her *directly*, but they have little difficulty finding a non-demon willing to do the dirty work.) While Sister Fa sees this as just another challenge, the demons see it as a tremendously amusing joke, and they are very clever at arranging circumstances which will cause her to make more mistakes.

**ST** 10 [0]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 10 [0].  
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 15 [15]; Per 12 [0];  
FP 10 [0].  
Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8.  
5'3"; 130 lbs.

## Social Background

*TL:* 3 [0].

*CF:* Human Lands [0].

*Languages:* Common Tongue (Native) [0]; Demontongue (Broken) [2].

## Advantages

Blessed [10]; Clerical Investment [5]; Fearlessness 4 [8]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Magic Resistance 3 [6]; Rapid Healing [5]; Voice [10].

*Perks:* Honest Face. [1]

## Disadvantages

Charitable (12) [-15]; Chummy [-5]; Disciplines of Faith (Asceticism) [-15]; Honesty (12) [-10]; Stubbornness [-5]; Vow (Minister to those who need it, no matter the risk to myself) [-15]; Wealth (Poor) [-15].

*Quirks:* Stutters a bit when emotional; Thinks cats have a "touch of demon" in them. [-2]

## Skills

Area Knowledge (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Current Affairs (Hellsgate) (E) IQ [1]-12; Diplomacy (H) IQ+1 [2]-13\*; Exorcism (H) Will [4]-15; First Aid (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Housekeeping (E) IQ [1]-12; Literature (H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Meditation (H) Will-1 [2]-14; Public Speaking (A) IQ+1 [1]-13; Religious Ritual (GM's choice) (H) IQ [4]-12; Riding (Horse) (A) DX [2]-10; Singing (E) HT+2 [1]-12\*; Teaching (A) IQ [2]-12; Theology (GM's choice) (H) IQ+2 [12]-14.

\* Includes +2 for Voice.

# THE LATE ELEWA IBN ZURI

450 points

Elewa is one of Hellsgate's older vampires. He is surprisingly undiplomatic, though "undiplomatic" for a vampire can still be

"mindbogglingly subtle" for many mortals. However, he realizes this and survives by keeping himself out of potential conflicts. He oversees several adjacent towers well away from Shadow Street, ruling the resident ghouls and humans (most of whom are distant descendants) autocratically. He leaves this domain no more than once or twice a month. Elewa's is known for being fairly neutral in other people's disputes, so he is frequently appealed to as a judge in complex disputes – when individuals are inclined to settle matters peacefully. However, his services don't come cheap, especially if he's asked to use Oath (*GURPS Magic*, p. 138) to bind others to his rulings. Elewa could act as a 10-point Patron.

The following statistics assume that Elewa uses the vampire template from p. B262. See the introduction to *Colorful Characters* (p. 22) for details on changing this.

**ST** 16 [0]\*; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 15 [100]; **HT** 13 [30].  
Damage 1d+1/2d+2; BL 51 lbs.; HP 20 [0]\*; Will 15 [0]; Per 18 [0]\*; FP 16 [9].  
Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 7 [5]; Dodge 9.  
5'10"; 160 lbs.

## Social Background

*TL:* 3 [0].

*CF:* Hell [1]; Human Lands [0].

*Languages:* Common Tongue (Native) [0]; Demontongue (Native) [6]; two others at Accented (GM's choice) [8].

## Advantages

Contact Group (Former clients; Hellsgate general knowledge-15; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [10]; Danger Sense [15]; Empathy [15]; Intuition [15]; Magery 2 [25]; Reputation +2 (Fair and reliable; Hellsgate citizens; Always) [5]; Social Chameleon [5]; Spirit Empathy [15]; Vampire [150]; Wealth (Comfortable) [10].

## Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Always honor a sworn oath; provide impartial service to clients; never accept a bribe) [-5]; Colorblindness [-10]; Cowardice (12) [-10]; Laziness [-10].

*Quirks:* Prefers to be bluntly truthful with people; Won't break the law unless absolutely necessary. [-2]

## Skills

Acting (A) IQ [2]-15; Area Knowledge (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+1 [2]-16; Body Language (A) Per-1 [1]-17; Current Affairs (Hellsgate) (E) IQ+1 [2]-16; Detect Lies (H) Per+2 [2]-20\*; Diplomacy (H) IQ [4]-15; Law (Contract) (H) IQ-1 [2]-14; Law (Hellsgate) (H) IQ-1 [2]-14; Literature (H) IQ-2 [1]-13; Merchant (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Observation (A) Per-1 [1]-17; Occultism (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Performance (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Politics (A) IQ [2]-15; Psychology (H) IQ-1 [2]-14; Running (A) HT [2]-13; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-15; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-1 [1]-14†; Urban Survival (A) Per-1 [1]-17; Wrestling (A) DX+1 [4]-12.

## Spells†

Bravery (H) IQ [1]-15; Emotion Control (H) IQ [1]-15; Fear (H) IQ [1]-15; Keen Hearing (H) IQ [1]-15; Lend Energy (H) IQ [1]-15; Loyalty (H) IQ [1]-15; Oath (H) IQ [1]-15; Recovery Energy (H) IQ [1]-15.

\* Includes +3 for Empathy.

† Thaumatology and all spells include +2 for Magery.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# CAMPAIGNS

Hellsgate may be an interesting place, but what can you do with the (quite literally) damned thing? Here are some ideas.

## USING HELLSGATE

Hellsgate can be fit into a wide range of fantasy campaigns with little work. It's a long way from anything important and it's not an expanding power, so it can be tucked away in any remote corner of the map without having a profound impact on the setting as a whole. In a low-magic setting, low mana levels may mean that most of its agents and products are significantly less effective outside of the city itself, while in a high-magic campaign, it may be just one more large-scale producer of magical goods and evil plots among many.

The GM does not have to make Hellsgate the focus of a campaign. It can exist on the periphery of awareness, as a far-off center of subtle but disruptive activity. Demonic agents might travel to the PCs' home area to infiltrate and corrupt local organizations. Local evil cultists and necromancers may use supplies and advice originating from Hellsgate. It may even be the source of the occasional demonic army.

However, the city is most interesting when adventurers actually go there! Travelers may infiltrate the city, whether to gather information or to track down and stop specific enemies. Those with purely material interests can find a wide range of utilitarian goods there. Scholars and magicians can find vast stores of arcane knowledge, although the people with that knowledge may be unwilling to part with it without attaching conditions. While merchants and philosophers engage in their trades, caravan guards and other traveling companions can do a bit of their own shopping – and try to protect their masters in a city where the authorities shrug at most crimes and chuckle at the most horrible ones.

## GURPS *Dungeon Fantasy*

There are a couple of ways to work Hellsgate into a *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign. One is to treat the whole place as one big dungeon. It's full of demons, monsters, and lost souls (some of whom have a few centuries of fighting practice behind them). And since the town is fabulously wealthy, there's lots of loot to be gained. Adventurers need to be stealthy, trying to work undetected so they don't bring the whole city down on their heads.

Hellsgate can also serve as a combined dungeon and town. The city's a good place to pick up unusual, special-order, and high-powered gear; if it's available for sale anywhere, it's available there. Individual buildings or neighborhoods can then be the object of stealthy adventures. Delvers can raid a cabalist's hive for powerful artifacts or run through Shadow Street (p. 18) to take out a number of vampires. Given the city's casual attitude toward law and order, adventurers can make a

decent living from quick attacks on monstrous neighborhoods. It will get the monsters up in arms, but the demonic authorities may or may not be interested.

In addition to the demonic templates on pp. 19-20, many *Dungeon Fantasy* demons can be found in Hellsgate. Lesser residents of the city include petty demons (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9*, p. 32) and devilkin (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9*, p. 33), though since they're on their home ground, the former don't have a Duty while the latter aren't Fragile. Among the more powerful demons, as-Sharak (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 21), peshkali (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 25), standard demons (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9*, p. 34), and demons of old (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 10) can be found. Variations, such as the customization notes on p. 34 of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9* and the monster prefixes on p. 36 of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, are common. Note that these demons will be more willing to negotiate than their written descriptions suggest, as they are on their home ground.

*May the devil make a  
ladder of your backbone  
while he's picking  
apples in Hell.*

*– Irish curse*

## GURPS *Espionage*

Hellsgate provides a great deal of employment for spies. Foreign interests have placed a number of agents there to try to make some sense out of the cabal's actions and to steal valuable secrets. Demons are known to spy on one another by placing agents in one another's hives. Some interests in the city, notably the undead whose time horizons match those of the demons themselves, keep an eye on the inner workings of the cabal as well. It is suspected by some that Brogogin's ancient enemies may have tendrils extending into the city (figuratively, anyway), but the possibility raises more questions than it answers: If they've known about Hellsgate, why haven't they done anything about it? Just about any adventurer could easily be recruited to snoop around the city, particularly if he's got otherwise legitimate business there.

For its part, Hellsgate is known to have a network of spies and informants in other nations. Many are mortals, but some are monsters and demons in disguise. Some people suspect that Hellsgate has *multiple* spy networks, sent on overlapping missions both to gather information and to keep an eye on other spies. An unusual spy campaign could be made of monster PCs acting as an espionage or infiltration unit under the orders of the cabal.

## GURPS Martial Arts

Hellsgate is a good place to look for a fight. An entire fighting-oriented campaign could be set in and around the Perpetual Arena (p. 15), where a broad variety of interesting terrain and fighting styles are on offer. Fighters can face anything from purely orthodox hand-to-hand styles on an open plain to magic-assisted combat with exotic weapons against semi-humanoid or non-humanoid opponents on peculiar, even shifting terrain. All-around fighting ability is key; one-trick ponies will die quickly. For those with less of a fighting bent, there's social adventure to be had arranging the right fights, scouting out the opposition, and figuring out which way to bet.

In either case, **GURPS Martial Arts: Gladiators** is indispensable. In addition to providing advice on how to build gladiator characters and sample templates, it provides a wealth of information on gladiatorial combats, the support mechanisms around a gladiatorial arena, and the show business around it all.

## GURPS Thaumatology

Hellsgate can be an informal school for learning the magical arts. Practitioners of a wide variety of magical schools (see **GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles**) visit the city, and a number of lost souls are trained in long-forgotten styles. The Fire Garden (p. 12) is aspected toward fire magic, and the Bone Palace (pp. 12-14) toward necromancy; each is effectively very high mana for those colleges. There are rumors that each cabalist hive (p. 15) contains an area of aspected mana, with each hive favoring a different college. There are even a few spots, mostly in the lower part of the city, where the mana is said to be intermittently *twisted*.

Of course, demons have their own magic and other secrets. Hellsgate may be the best place in the world to study demonic lore. Indeed, entire adventures could be built around a sort of covert anthropology: sneaking into hives simply to observe demons' daily lives.

## CUSTOMIZING THE CITY

Hellsgate can be altered to fit into *many* types of campaigns. The two most significant changes involve reworking the city's place in the world, literally or figuratively.

## Changing the Location

Hellsgate can be dropped into the middle of *any* barren terrain, not necessarily a desert (p. 4). Its volcano could be in an island atoll, surrounded by arctic wastes, or in the middle of a steaming jungle. The climate might change a bit, but the city's place in the world would remain the same.

But placing Hellsgate closer to other civilizations, regardless of terrain, makes its diplomatic situation vastly more complicated. The volume of trade would pick up, making the city much richer, but some neighbors might clamp down on their borders to prevent the spread of demonic influences. It also becomes much more difficult to ignore. A second incarnation of the Sacred League (p. 5) is a very real possibility, or there may even have been a *series* of Sacred Leagues.

## Changing the Genre

Hellsgate is written for a conventional swords-and-sorcery fantasy campaign, but it can easily be modified for other settings. Specifically, in a more modern game (e.g., urban fantasy or **GURPS Horror**), its technological trappings and legal status need significant updating. Hellsgate might be its own tiny Third World country in a lawless corner of the globe. Phone service is bad, there's only six hours of electricity even on

a good day, and immured souls are tangled in barbed wire and rusting chain link fences at the border – but customs officials will smile and wave you through at the tiny airport without checking what you've got in your suitcase. Vehicles and cheap AK-47s replace riding beasts and swords, and cinder block and poured concrete replace the slowly growing stone of the towers. In a **GURPS Monster Hunters** campaign, the city is full of demons, outcast angels, vampires, and rogues of every description, with cryptids in the sewers. And since the monsters run the city, the hunters need to be even more undercover than usual.

In a particularly low-magic campaign, Hellsgate might be even more remote – an “in-between” world. It would be the bridge between the “second world” of faeries, ancestral spirits, the astral plane, etc., and Hell itself. Getting to the more magical second world would be a significant task, but getting from there to Hellsgate would be much easier than traveling directly to Hell.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

Finally, here are some specific plots to go with the territory.

### *In Case of Emergency, Break Glass*

In order to save the world/defeat a powerful enemy/uncover ancient wisdom/(your favorite crisis here), the PCs need the fresh blood or body parts of a bona fide demon lord.



# *A man's relationship with the devil is a very private thing.*

– Nigel Tufnel

Naturally, most demon lords are disinclined to give these things up, particularly to mere mortals, and they mostly live in Hell anyway. But Brogogin is trapped in its obsidian slab in the council chamber in Hellsgate (*Brogogin Overthrown*, p. 5). Perhaps what the adventurers want can be extracted if they carefully drill through or chip away at the table without releasing the demon. But they'll need to keep the council chamber clear long enough to do it . . . and hope that the spell on the obsidian slab which keeps Brogogin imprisoned won't be dispelled if the table is significantly damaged.

Or perhaps releasing Brogogin is *exactly* what they want to do. Unleashing it would certainly cause widespread panic and chaos through the city, which would in turn provide a lot of cover while adventurers complete some *other* task. They may even expect Brogogin to cooperate with them or provide them with a reward for releasing it. The GM may smile sadly at the charming naivety of players expecting gratitude from a powerful, ruthless, and revenge-minded lord of the underworld.

## **Tab A vs. Slot B**

The PCs or their Patron or employer have come into possession of a slightly magical blade. Evidence suggests, however, that it's a part of a larger and *much* more powerful infernal device, perhaps a magically propelled fighting vehicle. Its maker (and, it eventually develops, most of its other parts) can be found in Hellsgate. To reassemble the device, the PCs must track down the other parts, which are useful in themselves: several more magical blades, a centipede-like propulsion system now carrying goods for a demonic merchant, and several metal plates that make up an armored carapace now being used as armor by fighters in the Perpetual Arena (p. 15). Of course, they're racing against others who are trying to assemble the device themselves, and nobody is yet sure whether or not using the reassembled device drains the user's soul . . .

## **Holy Assassins**

The PCs are contacted by a holy organization, the modern, covert descendant of the Sacred League (p. 5). Their mission is straightforward: Kill a particular member of the ruling cabal. The League believes that this demon has been studying Brogogin's old methods and has discovered away to vastly increase the area of Hell-like territory in the mortal world. This would lay waste to large swaths of terrain, drive back all manner of holy people and organizations, and give the demons a freer hand to travel without fear of banishment and with unkillable armies of lost souls. Considerable mystical resources and the support of the cabal must be mustered in order to do this; the demon has not yet done so, but the matter is an increasingly urgent one.

Naturally, things will look suspicious when the investigators go to Hellsgate. As they look for the demon's weaknesses and good escape routes, it will become apparent that the demon in question isn't trying to do much of anything. In fact, he's one of the conservatives who wants neither more contact with the underworld nor with the mortal world, and he's often at odds with expansionists. Could the Sacred League be mistaken? Is it a different demon planning to increase Hell's foothold in the world? Has the League fallen victim to misinformation planted by a subordinate who wants the demon's seat on the cabal? Or is the demon playing a particularly subtle game, gathering power elsewhere so he can overthrow the cabal as a whole and take sole charge of an expanded territory in their place?

## **Thy Will Be Done**

A king has died without an obvious successor, bringing his branch of the ruling dynasty to an end. Now the nobility has divided into two factions, each supporting its own rival to the throne, drawn from families which diverged *centuries* ago from the now-extinct ruling line. In hopes of avoiding a devastating civil war, the leader of one faction has hit upon a plan which hovers between brilliant and bizarre. The legitimacy of the rival branches of the family hinges on the interpretation of a proclamation made by a long-passed ruler. That legendary ruler? Now a lost soul in Hellsgate. The adventurers' mission is to travel to Hellsgate, find the soul in question, and convince him to support their candidate for the throne. Along the way, they might encounter rival adventurers sent to silence the former king, and his deceased majesty wants nothing to do with either side.

## **Go to Hell**

It may happen, on a particularly epic quest, that adventurers need to descend to the underworld, whether to retrieve a loved one or confront tremendous evil forces on their own home turf. Hellsgate isn't the right place for that. The lost souls' loved ones passed away long ago, and the evil forces which run Hellsgate, though formidable for any individual, aren't *cosmic* evil by any stretch of the imagination. Hellsgate is but a distant outpost of the full underworld.

But it might be the easiest way of getting there.

When Brogogin dragged Hellsgate out of the volcano (*History*, pp. 4-5), it did so through a tunnel across the dimensions. That tunnel still exists. If the heroes can open the gate, it's a few days easy walk down a broad, sloping tunnel straight to Hell. Naturally, there are a few complications. First, the cabal doesn't want the gate opened, and will dismember anyone who tries, with particular speed and efficiency. Second, it's in a conspicuous location: in the center of the chamber in the Bone Palace (pp. 12-14), right under the great obsidian table in which Brogogin is imprisoned.

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... we got into the deep waters of the river Oceanus, where lie the land and city of the Cimmerians who live enshrouded in mist and darkness which the rays of the sun never pierce neither at his rising nor as he goes down again out of the heavens, but the poor wretches live in one long melancholy night.

– Homer, *The Odyssey*

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