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A Shadow of the Demon Lord, Godless: A World of Fire and Blood Adventure for Novice Characters

Isolon stands on the edge of a vast, trackless wasteland, a collection of buildings built atop the ruins of what came before. Positioned on the edge of a slow-moving river, it offers haven to travelers, protection from the horrors of the deserts, and succor for the hungry and thirsty. For all that Isolon promises, however, it is also a place fraught with peril, a community in the grip of a three-way struggle between rival gangs, a conflict that is beginning to tear the town apart. And it is in that conflict in which the player characters find themselves caught in the middle.

Last One Standing is an adventure for novice characters in which they must navigate the perils posed by three violent, bloodthirsty gangs. There are likely many ways for the group to complete the adventure: perhaps by choosing one gang to support against the other two, or by finding some creative way to prevent

the impending fight from impacting Isolon's innocents. In the end, the settlement's future rests in the characters' hands. Do they have what it takes to save the townspeople from terrible violence and bloodshed?

This adventure was written for use with *Godless: A World of Fire and Blood*, which presents a post-apocalyptic setting for *Shadow of the Demon Lord*. You might run this adventure as a sequel to *In a Pig's Eye* or *Dancing in the Ruins*, or for some other starting or novice adventure. If you want to run this adventure in Urth or a different setting, you might have to make some modifications to fit the story into your world.

Getting Started

The adventure assumes the PCs have been living in Isolon, especially if they have played through *In a Pig's Eye*. If so, the characters will already know about the various gangs vying for control of the community. Take a few moments before the adventure begins to introduce Isolon to the players and reveal the major factions to them, the lay of the settlement, and any other details you might choose to add.

The group doesn't have to live in Isolon, however. The characters might have come to the community during their travels, perhaps seeking refuge from the horrors of the wastes, looking to resupply, or simply to gather information. Not long after the characters arrive, it should be clear to them that all is not as it seems and that the locals behave rather strangely. The characters might encounter Skitter (see page 3), who gives them the skinny on what's going on, or, especially if the characters appear competent or dangerous, they might be approached by representatives of one or more gangs interested in recruiting the characters as agents. Of course, the characters might themselves seek out employment with one of the gangs.

If the characters resist overtures from the gangs or take no action to become involved, the characters might be drawn into the plot after witnessing gang members harass some locals. Alternatively, Sara Stone (see page 3) might try to recruit the characters to join the rebels.

Running this Adventure

You can run this adventure in several ways. You can use it as a straightforward scenario, with the characters finding employment with one of the gangs and working to both build their reputation standing and help the gang take over Isolon.

Alternatively, you can run the adventure as an

extended scenario, using it as the basis for several adventures of your own design with the various missions as starting points. Inevitably, though, the characters will find themselves in the center of a power struggle fought between the various factions to take over Isolon. Either way, the settlement's future depends upon the actions the PCs take.

Isolon

Isolon rose from the ruins of an older city, a place buried under the debris from the great catastrophe that ended the old world, and saw the rise of a new one from the ashes and chaos. The settlement started as a refuge offering shelter to wanderers and survivors from the violence and scarcity in the wastes.

The growing population and success of the settlement tempted the ambitious, corrupt, and sadistic to act on their baser instincts. In the absence of any central authority in the community, the strong and brutal seized power and quickly formed factions who fought bloody battles amongst themselves. Along with killing untold innocents, they winnowed themselves down into three mostly cohesive gangs who are currently engaged in low-level conflict with one another. The instability of the relations between the gangs and the impending all-out conflict between them has made Isolon almost as dangerous as the wastelands surrounding it.

The settlement stands on the shores of a massively wide river of polluted water. Structures include a water processing plant, shipping docks, a junkyard, a shop district, a hotel, a clinic, a government building, and several residential blocks. Some of the newer structures use the tops of buildings stabbing up from the buried ruins of the old city, but most are constructed from sheet metal and the frames of trucks and ships.

The gangs have yet to carve out territories from Isolon, but the locals know it is just a matter of time before they will. Most locals keep their distance from the PCs, being leery of strangers and fearing repercussions from the gangs. Cornering a local to force them to talk will result in a steadfast refusal to discuss the current situation, and nearly everyone will direct all inquiries to Skitter, the nominal leader of Isolon.

Characters

The settlement's key characters include all of the following. You can easily expand the list to add more color and detail, while also seeding them with hooks for future adventures.

Skitter

A battle-scarred orc, Skitter (as a **veteran**), became sheriff at the behest of the gangs and performs his duties at their pleasure. Pressure from the factions makes Skitter little better than an ineffectual puppet. Skitter realizes there is little he can do by himself to help the town, so he bides his time, gathering information about the gangs and doing his best to keep the people safe. If the player characters take any action against the gangs, Skitter tries to recruit their help to regain control of the town.

Lucas Murphy

As the owner of the Ratspike Hotel and Bar, the dwarf, Lucas Murphy (just “Murphy” to the locals), doesn’t ask many questions and keeps his head down. Being one of the few bars in town, he does overhear a lot of gossip from drunk gang members. He keeps a shotgun under the bar to discourage any outbreaks between the gangs or any ornery locals.

Buck Bloom

A mechanic who has refused to join the Scrappers, his business in the shop district barely exists these days, partly because of the Scrappers’ influence, but mostly because of the depression over his missing daughter, Gedney (see *Dancing in the Ruins*).

Doctor Lyons

Nonhumans needing medical attention are often turned away from the Cult of the Reawakened or they are too afraid of the rumors of their kind going missing from the cult’s headquarters. At the Quick Clinic, Dr. Lyons (as **survivor**) sees anyone who comes in need of help.

Sara Stone

Leader of a rebellion against the gangs, Sara Stone (as a **ganger**) is a suspicious dwarf and helps the characters only if they show some competence in standing up to the gangs. She leads roughly two dozen rebels (as **gangers**) who are trained for combat. For now, they bide their time until they recruit numbers enough to move against the other factions.

The Gangs

Three groups struggle for dominance in Isolon.

The Scrappers

Collecting all the parts and trash they can get their hands on, the Scrappers are mechanical savants able to create and repair weapons, vehicles, and other machinery. This practice has become

important for the survival of Isolon. Scrapper salvage teams venture into the wastes to find useful junk to maintain the buildings and machines of the town. They have become protective of their knowledge and defend it with their lives, as it is the main leverage they have over their rivals.

Headquarters

The Scrappers use a large junkyard, called Benzin, on the edge of town as their base. A ten-foot-tall chain link fence reinforced with sheet metal and lined with barbed wire surrounds it. Towers with riflemen stand at key positions, never more than 100 yards apart.

A small town in its own right, Benzin contains barracks for the grease monkeys, a small race track, a fuel refinery, garages, and mountains of priceless junk looming everywhere.

Interactions

The Scrappers will give their trust more easily than the other groups, especially if the party includes someone mechanically inclined. They have straightforward intentions, believe that the settlement needs them, and that they should control it. They have been slowly building up their supply of weaponry and vehicles to take over.

Characters

The following characters are key members of the gang.

The Architect: As the leader of the Scrappers, the enigma known as The Architect (as a **cyborg**) knows more than anyone about all things mechanical. He uses this knowledge to stay on top. A bald human in his early forties, he has a three-fingered mechanical claw in place of his left hand and an eye patch made from a hood ornament. New tech and gizmos interest him and he’ll do just about anything to learn about them.

Bubblegum Chrome: In charge of vehicles, Bubblegum (as **driver**) knows cars inside and out. She can outdrive and outgun any of the other monkeys with ease. She has never met an equal in a race and would be impressed if anyone even came close to besting her times on the track.

Futz: Head tinkerer and machine builder, Futz (as a **ganger**) cares more about machines than he does people. Uninterested in the gang war, he stays with the Scrappers for access to the constant stream of parts they bring in.

Smoke: Smoke (as a **ganger**) infiltrated the Scrappers to take down The Architect. Years ago,

ISOLON



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. WATER TREATMENT | 4. RUINED BUILDING |
| 2. DOCKS | 5. HOUSING BLOCKS |
| 3. SHOP DISTRICT | 6. JUNKYARD |

before the Scrappers existed, a gang led by The Architect destroyed his hometown, killing nearly everyone and razing it to the ground. It has taken Smoke several years to gain the gang's trust, so he will not endanger his cover without good reason.

Other Members: Scrappers (as gangers), known locally as the grease monkeys, wear mechanics' overalls with tool belts on most. Nearly all have blackened fingers and faces from constant exposure to oil and exhaust. Most are armed with hand weapons such as wrenches, crowbars, and tire irons. One in four carries a pistol and one in six has a rifle.

Merchant Cartel

Considering themselves to be the lifeline of Isolon, the Merchant Cartel controls the water processing plant. Their control gives them immense power as they trade the water to citizens and outsiders for food, weapons, and ammo. Their caravans provide a steady trade, and the Cartel uses those products to keep a tight grip on the town, especially over the other two gangs. The only thing holding them back is the necessity for the upkeep of their caravans and their facility, maintenance that can currently be performed only by the Scrappers.

Headquarters

The Merchant Cartel's base stands atop an old water treatment building, most of which lies underground, collapsed and mostly flooded (part of the underground city described in *In A Pig's Eye*). When Isolon was first built, engineers converted the floor below the level of the river into a water processing plant. Three stories of the building poke out of the ground and the Cartel fixed-up and reinforced it in key places. Guards with rifles watch from windows in the higher floors and patrols walk the perimeter. Guards are regularly rotated through the entrances and the shipping docks. It takes considerable effort to keep the water processing plant running smoothly. Without the Scrappers, the plant would shut down and the Merchant Cartel would lose their power and influence.

Interactions

Seen as stingy or selfish to some, the Cartel never gives anything away. Trade is their creed and lifeblood. They won't put up with much, but if the PCs show their worth, the Cartel might take them into their group. If the characters act in

a manner perceived as disruptive to the Cartel's interest, or fail to properly contribute to the system, the Cartel will exile them.

Characters

The following characters are key members of the Merchant Cartel.

Atlas: The Master Merchant, Atlas (as a **warlord**), is a huge man, looking more like a bouncer than the shrewd businessman he is. He uses his looks not only for intimidation, but also to get his rivals to underestimate his brains and keen business sense. Atlas dresses in clothes that were once fine but are now worn and dirty, barely containing his bulk.

Rhetor: Charged with keeping track of all the business and contracts the Cartel runs, Rhetor (as a **survivor**) feels he could do better elsewhere and thinks Atlas is going to get them all killed because of the tenuous hold they have on the processing plant and the citizens of Isolon. Rhetor is looking for a way out of the Cartel, one that would allow him to escape with his life intact, and not without profit.

Roach: Roach (as a **ganger**) carries a rifle with him everywhere, always preferring to fight from a distance. He leads the guards of the Cartel and most of his troops consider him rather unhinged. Roach never trusts the PCs, even if the rest of the Cartel does. Roach trusts no one, and looks for any excuse to take action against those he greatly mistrusts.

Ginn: Ginn (as a **ganger**) attempts to keep the water processing machinery running with her limited mechanical knowledge. Loyal to Atlas, she continually pleads with him to bring someone else with technical expertise into the gang to take over before the machines decay beyond her ability to repair, at which point the gang will have little choice but to submit to the Scrappers.

Other Members: Traders, also known colloquially as "Rogues," wear the Cartel's uniform, leather jackets with the MC logo on the sleeves. Most look well fed and all are well-armed and armored. The Rogues are in better health than anyone else in Isolon.

Cult of the Reawakening

Father Quilby created the Cult of the Reawakening to heal the people of Isolon, both in body and spirit. At least, that's the story he tells. Quilby believes

only humans to be worth saving and the cult puts all its efforts to nourishing and sustaining those they find in the community. While they have no room for others, they make no outward or obvious show of being hostile to mutants or "other riffraff" that happens to inhabit their community. In fact, the Cult even invites refugees of all ancestries to stay inside their sacred walls.

Quilby preaches to any who will listen and many in Isolon turn out for his sermons. He focuses most of his lessons on reminding people that they will one day reclaim their lands and that the Cataclysm was an important event, altering humanity's course in a positive way. The inspiring messages he delivers and his peaceful, helpful manner are a façade, masking the fact that Father Quilby is nothing more than a con man and a fraud.

Quilby befriended Metzger, the butcher who now calls himself a doctor. Metzger is more than willing, even anxious, to experiment on whatever creature he can get his hands on, especially the unsavory tainted races. He uses experimental surgery, various chemicals, and dark magic to create uncontrollable mutant monstrosities that they then release. The monsters wreak havoc for a time until the Hospitallers, the Cult's militant arm, rush in to "save" the town. The affects of this ploy is that most consider the Cult to be a force for good, and indispensable at that.

Seen as a safe haven against the violence and corruption, the followers of the Reawakened, specifically the Hospitallers, use force to keep the peace and protect the citizens against the dangers of the wastelands. Many Cartellers and Scrappers are members of the cult and show up for healing and sermons, much to the dismay of those gang's leaders. The Cult's grip has begun to tighten around even some outlying communities as well, suggesting the Cult's fortunes are on the rise.

Headquarters

The Cult laid claim to the ruins of a large building, and it is there where their members live, work, and rest. Most times of the day, followers can be found praying and meditating in the main room surrounded by large common areas containing beds for any who wish to stay, and dining tables for any who need to eat. Whispers abound of some people disappearing from this place, never to be seen again.



Beneath the main floor stretch the lower levels, chambers, some in ruins and others intact, used by various members for housing. Deep underground, accessed by a guarded stair, is Metzger's lab, a torture chamber of horror and madness. A few floors below that is a Void stain through which whispers nudge Metzger into trying new and horrible ways to mutate and scar his victims.

Interactions

The Cult offers a place to rest and some minor healing to the PCs, being generally friendly to them. If any characters happen to belong to ancestries other than human, the Cult might be reluctant to send the group on more important missions until after they have proven their worth. The Cult might even attempt to kidnap a nonhuman player for experimentation in Metzger's laboratory.

Characters

The following characters are key members of the Cult.

Father Quilby: A man (as an **awakened**) barely in control of himself at any given time, most see Father Quilby as the charismatic leader of the Cult, a savior, and hero to the common man. Disputes are brought before him, and he solves them swiftly and, often, brutally. He knows, despite the creation of the Hospitallers, the cult does not have the firepower to deal with either of the other gangs head on.

Doctor Metzger: Father Quilby found Metzger (as a **ganger**) wandering the wasteland, almost dead. He had been a community's butcher and was exiled when he went crazy in his store and slaughtered his customers. He convinced Quilby (and himself) he is a doctor. He uses strong doses of radiation and magic to turn animals and people into mutant monsters. A steady supply of "sinners" keeps him busy at all hours.

Brother Ando: Almost a mutant himself, Brother Ando (as a **crazy**) survived a particularly violent radiation storm, which left his skin burnt and hardened in some places. Father Quilby uses Ando as an example of the survivability of humans in the new world. Meanwhile, Brother Ando clings to sanity by a thin thread and is given to angry outbursts and acts of violence. These sinister urges serve Quilby well when he must punish someone publically, a sentence Ando is only too happy and eager to carry out.

Order Sergeant Mallus: The head of the Hospitallers, Mallus (as a **ganger**) is a simple man, devoted to the Cult but never dwelling too much upon its teachings. He carries out his orders unquestionably to destroy mutants and sinners alike with ruthless precision and merciless quickness.

Other Members: Low-ranking followers of the Cult wear simple robes and carry hand weapons. Most are **survivors** but one in eight are **fanatics**. Higher-ranking members (as **gangers**) wear ornate robes and carry heavy melee weapons. Finally, Hospitallers (as **gangers**) wear Halloween masks and decorated robes over mail armor. They carry heavy weapons, while one in four carries a pistol or rifle.

Gaining Trust

The player characters have opportunities to work for one, some, or all of the gangs at large in Isolon. Such employment provides the group with opportunities to gain the gang's trust and rewards from that trust. Each gang has jobs the characters can undertake. When a group completes a mission successfully, their trust with the group increases by one. Each time the group fails to complete a mission, the trust drops by 1 (minimum 0). Trust and its rewards follow.

Trust	Effects
0	The characters, if members of the gang, lose their membership and the gang members are generally hostile to the group.
1	Each member of the group receives a gang uniform and enjoys limited access to the headquarters.
2	The group can meet with any named members of the gang, other than the leader.
3-4	Each member of the group gains 3d6 gc with which they can purchase equipment.
5-7	The group gains a vehicle of your choice or a dirt bike for each member of the group.
8	The group can meet with the gang leader.

The group might lose or gain more trust than normal depending on how they acquit themselves during a mission. If the characters exceed expectations, such as bring back more than requested or risk their lives for other gangers, they might increase trust by two or more. Similarly, if the group makes an extreme mess of things, the group might drop their trust by two or more, just kick them out, or do something worse.

Scrapper Jobs

Salvage Team

Requires trust 1

The player characters are part of a Scrapper salvage team of 5 gangers sent into the wastes. They search sites such as an airplane graveyard, a cracked open submarine in the desert sand, or an ancient shopping mall. As good as the Scrappers are at finding salvage, they often come across unexpected things as well. See “Site Encounters” on page 8.

Road Pirates

Requires trust 3

The Scrappers lend the characters a vehicle to travel to a distance outpost, where they are to pick up some new compressor parts. The journey is easy as it uses an old highway with desert as far as the eye can see in either direction. Unfortunately, the trip takes them through territory belonging to the Polecats, a vicious group of road pirates. On the return trip, the Polecats (1 driver and 5 gangers in a van) attack. The Polecats attempt to stop the characters any way they can, even at the expense of their own lives.

Sabotage

Requires trust 5

The Architect asks the players to infiltrate the Merchant Cartel and sabotage the water processing plant. The Architect’s advisors assured him that the damage can be repaired once the Cartel has been removed from power.

Merchant Cartel Jobs

Delivery

Requires trust 1

The group escorts a caravan and its precious cargo through the unforgiving wastelands to a distant outpost. See the “Site Encounters” on page 8.

Investigation

Requires trust 2

Unknown assailants regularly ambush Caravans traveling the main trade route to the next major settlement. When the group goes to investigate, they find the route goes through a wide ravine and

in one section a lot of broken glass, bits of metal, and other debris showing where the bulk of the attacks took place. Upon further investigation, the characters find a cave in the ravine wall, about 10 yards from the ground. This is the home to the attackers, a tribe of 7 inheritors.

The Noise

Requires trust 3

Something is on the loose in the lower sections of the water processing plant, killing members of the Cartel. The rare survivors emerge seriously injured and barking insanities about a beautiful woman. The player characters must descend into the damp, moldy halls of the plant and eliminate the creature (as a hag) that has taken up residence there.

Demolitions

Requires trust 5

Through trading, the Cartel obtained three sticks of dynamite and a detonator. They ask the players to infiltrate the Scrappers’ junkyard and blow up their gasoline refinery. The Scrappers will be effectively eliminated from contention, and the Cartel believes their possession of a source of constant clean water will keep them in power even without the gas.

Cult of the Reawakened Jobs

Defend the Town

Requires trust 1

The characters are tasked with joining a squad of 4 Hospitallers in defending the town from mutant attacks. This can be done multiple times, each time against 3 to 5 medium monsters or 1 large monster.

Pilgrimage

Requires trust 2

The player characters escort a group of followers on a pilgrimage to a sacred location. Use the “Site Encounters” section following.

Mission Trip

Requires trust 3

The Cult lends the group a vehicle so they can retrieve medical herbs and supplies from a neighboring community. Use the Road Pirate encounter previously.

Gather Intel

Requires trust 5

The group must infiltrate the other gangs and learn everything they can about their structure, weaknesses, and find ways to start in-fighting or get them to fight each other.

Site Encounters

Use the following encounters as examples or make up your own.

Roamers: The group hears the sputtering of motorcycle engines while searching some ruins. As they scatter for cover they see gangers approaching to lay claim to the salvage (5 **gangers** and 2 **bikers** on dirt bikes).

Scorpion Swarms: A windstorm cleared away the sands, exposing a mostly intact airplane. The group can enter through the missing cockpit glass. Once inside the cramped plane, low clicking is heard echoing from within. Waves of chitinous creatures pour from the back of the plane (4 **animal swarms** with the poisonous trait).

Junker: A pile of junk catches the group by surprise as it comes to life with a grinding metal roar. A **medium construct** made from haphazard junk and trash stands up and attacks.

Lash Crawlers: While exploring a partly buried structure, a group of 8 **lash crawlers** spring out from the cracks in the walls to attack. If the group survives and searches the area, they find several eyeless corpses. The first time a character discovers a corpse, he or she must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1 **Insanity**.

Increasing the Challenge

If you want to make an encounter more challenging, you can make the site drenched in low or moderate radiation, add structure mishaps, or have a rapid moving dust storm engulf the area.

Salvage

Use the following table to determine the salvage found by the group if they survive the Site Encounter. Roll 1d6 a total of d3 times for the salvage they find. Add 3 to the roll if the mission was for the Cartel and add 6 to the roll if it was for the Cult.

Roll	Salvage
1	Electrical Parts
2-3	Mechanical Parts
4-5	Gas
6-7	Batteries
8-9	Food
10-11	Medicine
12+	Water

Ending the Adventure

If the characters rid Isolon of all the gangs, they can either take over the town for themselves or let Skitter or Sara lead. If the latter, the new leader recruits locals to form a militia and defend the town.

Alternatively, the adventure might end when one gang gains power. This happens when the characters successfully complete the highest trust jobs for a gang.

If the Scrappers gain power, Isolon becomes the most industrialized town in the region. They relieve the Cartel of the “burden” of running the water processing machinery, maintain it themselves, and provide the new merchant leaders with motorized caravans to speed up and extend the towns reach in the region. The xenophobic Cult is run out of town.

If the Cartel gains power, the town becomes a booming trade hub on both land and water. Because of its new found wealth, however, Isolon becomes a prime target for marauders and is constantly under siege. The town can only hold out for so long before it is taken over by a newer, stronger gang.

If the Cult of the Reawakened gains power, the town becomes a religious sanctuary for humans. The Cult’s monstrosities are sent farther and farther away to spread fear and draw more people into the Cult’s fold. Any beings not deemed pure human are “cleansed.”