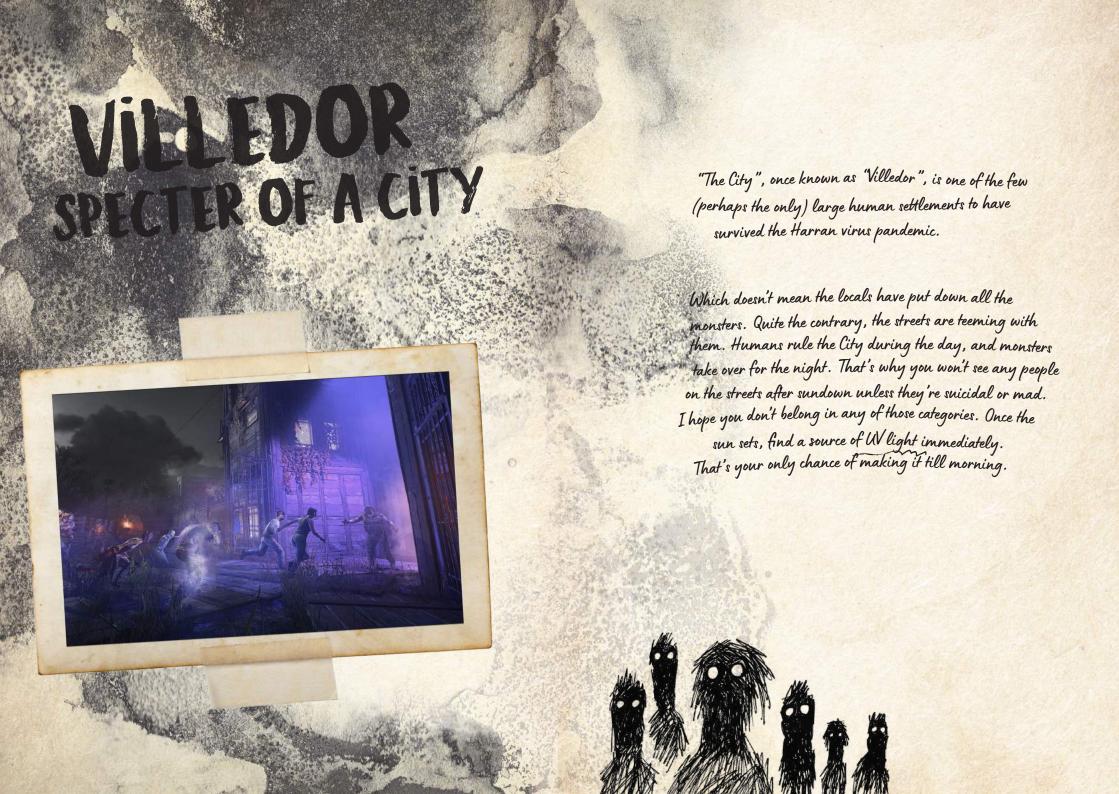


Greetings Pilgrim,

You've found my guide... That probably means
I'm already dead. It is what it is. Maybe the things
I wrote down in here might be of use to someone else now.
I've walked enough in my lifetime.

I assume you're a Pilgrim just like me. If you weren't, my guide would be of little interest to you. Read it carefully if you're heading into the City. It may just save your life.

Getting the information you'll find here cost a lot of effort, cunning, and, sometimes, human lives. Even so, not all of it is real. I collected it in good faith, but it's up to you to check if it all stands up to scrutiny and separate fact from rumor. And once you've done that, you have to pass on this knowledge before you die.



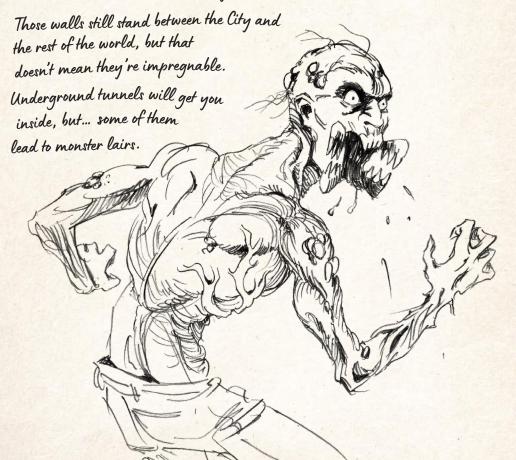
Villedor was lucky, although things didn't look that way in the

beginning. Once the epidemic kicked into full gear, the city was walled off and quarantined.

Research on how to stop and reverse the disease followed shortly after. That's how Villedor became one of the cities covered by "the Protocol".

Supposedly, there were a few places like that, perhaps a dozen or so. But it's said that it was only here people found a way to survive. The walls that

initially made Villedor a prison protected its residents against outside threats. That's some irony, huh?



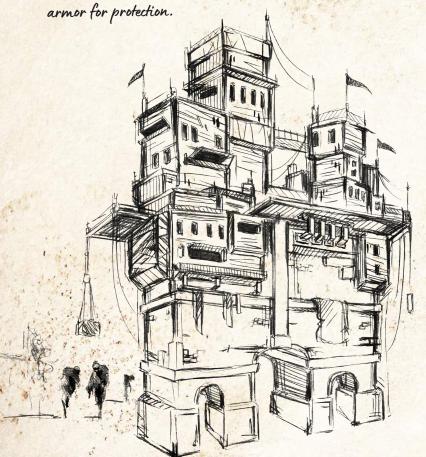


That's why people are afraid and don't risk going outside. I got lucky. The tunnel I chose led me to a human settlement. I hope you get lucky too.

Villedor

The times we live in, they're unique - even more so than we think. You'll see why once you make it into the City.

The fear of monsters pushes people to build palisades and retrofit buildings to resemble medieval strongholds. Fighting is mostly done with melee weapons, and people wear makeshift



The modern Dark Ages. Twenty-five years ago no one would've thought this would be our end. But the City, the garments, and the buildings weren't the only things that changed. People are also different these days. The pandemic brought out the best in us, along with the worst.

We can stand together in the face of danger, but we've also gone wild. We help one another, but we can also be egotistical and cruel. We find new solutions, but we're no strangers to being

What was the line?
"May you live in interesting times," right?

stuck in our ways sometimes

The City is the carcass of the Villedor of old. I went there once before the pandemic hit... Bustling bars, crowds rushing to work every morning, street artists, parks full of people... All of that's in the past now.



But even the virus from Harran wasn't able to change the ancient laws of nature. When something dies, something else gains nourishment from it. That's how it was with Villedor. New people, new thoughts, and ideas for the future. I can confidently say that the City walls have more life inside them these days than the rest of the world combined. I witnessed it for myself and understood that if there ever came a time for our civilization to be reborn, it would be here.

BIOMARKER or death

as soon as you array 4100

Get yourself a biomarker as soon as you enter the City.

Without it, you'll be strung up on a lantern by the first people you meet. Why? Because if you were bitten - you're a ticking time bomb.

Only the biomarker can warn others about the condition you're in.

I wasn't aware of that.

The locals wanted to skewer me with a pitchfork. luckily, someone had a working biomarker for sale. It cost me a fortune – nearly everything I had on me – but at least I survived.

What is this wonder that will save your life? It's an electronic band that keeps track of your blood infection level. If its light is green, you can breathe a sigh of relief. But once it starts going red... you only have a moment to find a light source. If you don't make it in time, you'll spend the rest of your days as a monster.



NIGHT IS FOR THE INFECTED

Humans rule the City during the day, but some monsters also roam in broad daylight. They're the ones that were too weak to find a lair to hide in. They're not particularly dangerous (well, unless you end up in the middle of a horde).







I don't know how old you are or if you remember what life was like before the virus... A world where everything ran on electricity - phones, street lights, even trains.

Nowadays, you can only dream of such things, but the City folks make the best of what they've got.

They power up old generators, dig batteries out of cars, and build windmills to capture energy from the wind.

It's still not enough, though — not even to make sure everyone has access to UV light, let alone other conveniences like powering up a stupid refrigerator...

Den

No one knows how to get the old power plants working again. If someone were to make that happen, they'd become a hero for sure... but so far, it doesn't look like that's gonna happen.



FIREARMS

Before the City fell, there were lots of soldiers here. And with soldiers come pistols and rifles. But today, hardly anyone carries firearms anymore unless it's some sort of pipe gun or something miraculously salvaged from the debris.

During my visit to the City, I tried to find out what had happened to all the weapons and ammo... People gave me different stories:

that the army confiscated them (but then where was it all being stored?) that all bullets were used to fight the monsters, and no new ones were being made (but this doesn't explain the absence of weapons), or that all the firearms had just been melted down to make things that were needed more urgently. I also heard rumors that all this shit is still out there somewhere – waiting in some underground bunker for someone to discover it.





WHAT TO EAT

Villedor used to be a tourist hub, with a bar at every corner and streets smelling of food from around the world. There's nothing left of that today, obviously. People mostly subsist on what they manage to hunt (like rats - not recommended)



or whatever grows on their modest rooftop fields (good source of vitamins a must try).



Having said that, you can still come across a few gems of local cuisine, especially downtown. One such place is the Fish Eye Canteen.

I met some dangerous but also interesting individuals there.

Should you stop by the place, give my best to the owner, Frank.

You can also dine at the Peacekeepers' place, provided they let you on their ship. And if you wander into Old Villedor, keep an eye out for the Bazaar. They'll give you proper food there, as long as you can pay for it.







LONERS DON'T SURVIVE

This City has been waiting for you for years. Overwhelmed by its own internal disputes and weaknesses, it hasn't been able to move forward. As an outsider, you have the unique opportunity to overcome its deep-rooted differences and prejudices. You can be the true wind of change that the City has needed for a very long time.

Choose wisely, as your decisions will shape the future of the city and the whole of humanity.

You will be making choices on many levels that will affect the fate of others, how you traverse the City, the places you visit, or how many and what types of monsters you kill.

All of this impacts the frail fabric of the correlations within the City's structures.

LEARN TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES

Be careful about who you help. As you know, the inhabitants of the City are divided into two groups: the Peacekeepers and the Survivors.

Each group has a completely different philosophy, and when you start supporting one of them, that group will gain more ground and assist you in its own way.

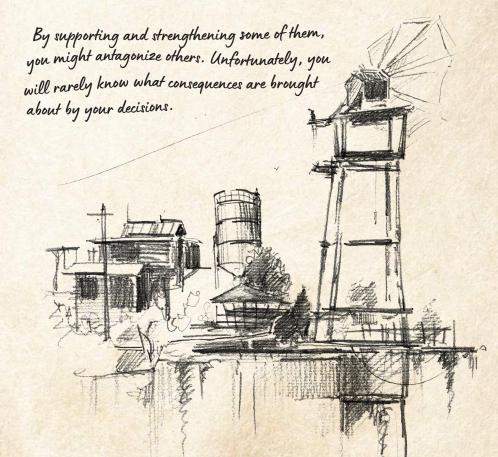
The Peacekeepers tend to use force. They build traps and war machines against monsters, bandits, and the Renegades.

In the districts where you give them control over the key buildings, you can expect the number of infected in the streets to decrease, and in the tougher spots, you will be able to use their war machines during fights.

The survivors are a less homogeneous group that focuses on the City's resources and traversal. If you decide to support them, there will be more suspended bridges, ropes above the streets, safe landing pads, and other structures that increase the safety of rooftop and nighttime traversal. Unfortunately, the number of monsters in the City will not be reduced, and it can even grow over time.

As time goes by, the individual regions of the City will even begin to match the colors of the faction you have chosen. New faction structures will also appear on rooftops. You will be able to enjoy the faction's benefits, such as potable water in apartments, more herbs on rooftops, allies hurrying over to help you in fights, etc.

Each choice comes with its own advantages, consequences, and drawbacks, just like every path a Pilgrim takes is unique. You should be wary of who you decide to help. Many citizens are in conflict with one another.



MORE ABOUT PEACEKEEPERS

The old civilization failed and brought about its self-destruction. It takes radical methods to preserve what little is left of it. The modern Dark Ages is the time of the iron fist. Order must be maintained, no matter the cost. Those who don't fall in line should be removed from society and quickly. People must learn to live in a group. The strong rule, the week die. Freedom of the individual? That's long gone. Survival the group always comes first.

That's the short version of the Peacekeeper creed. Their methods may appear ruthless, but they do what needs to be done.

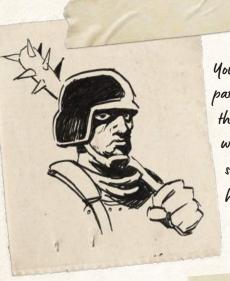






also admit that I ran into trouble a few times while in the City, only to be saved by a Peacekeeper patrol. Talk to them if you need help. But don't expect to rece itright away. Their hands are always full. Their goals include killing monsters, keeping bandits and Renegades away, enforcing their self-imposed laws, and always helping civilians. They claim that all their actions are to ensure humanity's survival.





You're bound to meet many Peacekeeper patrols in the City. You'll recognize them by their blue uniforms. And if you want to talk to their high command or just see how Peacekeepers live, you'll find their headquarters on the huge container ship docked on the river.

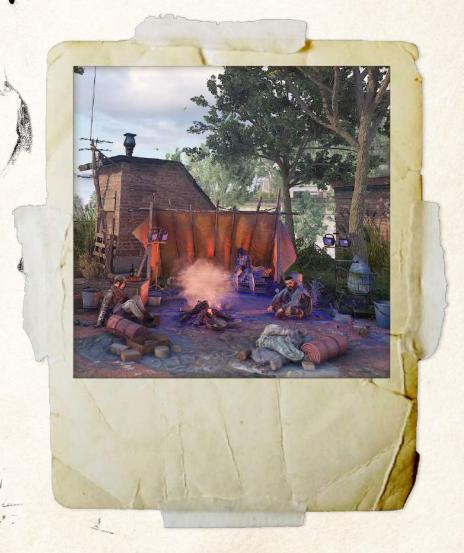
You'd better have the Peacekeepers' rules committed to memory by the time you enter the City.

I managed to get a hold of their list. It's worth remembering.



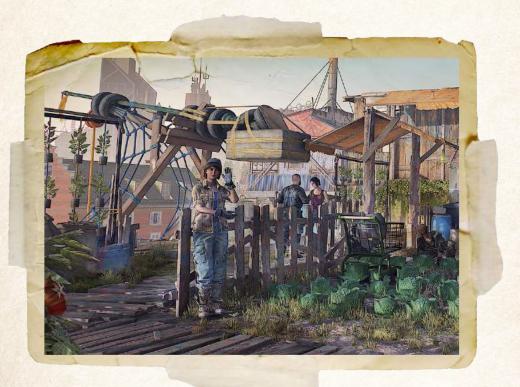
more about survivors

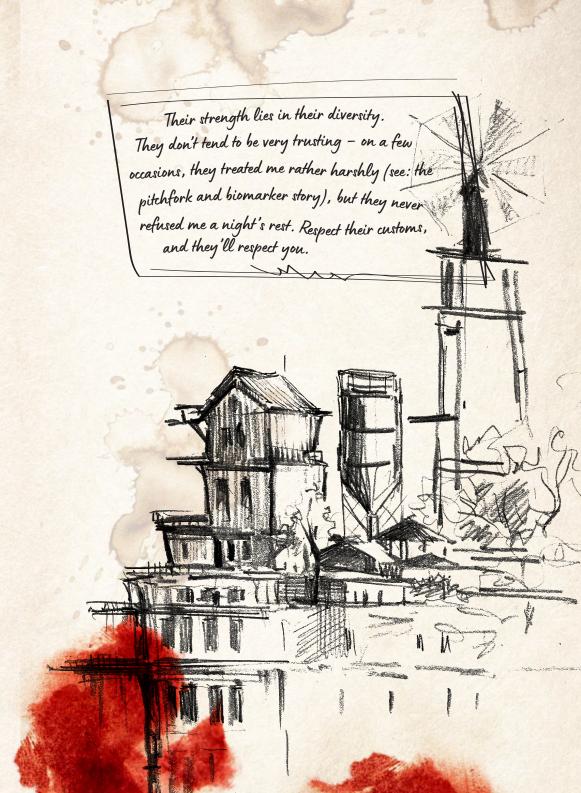
Toeing the line and listening to orders is not everyone's dream. Some folks wish to live life on their own terms. But what does that even mean? Ideas differ between individuals.

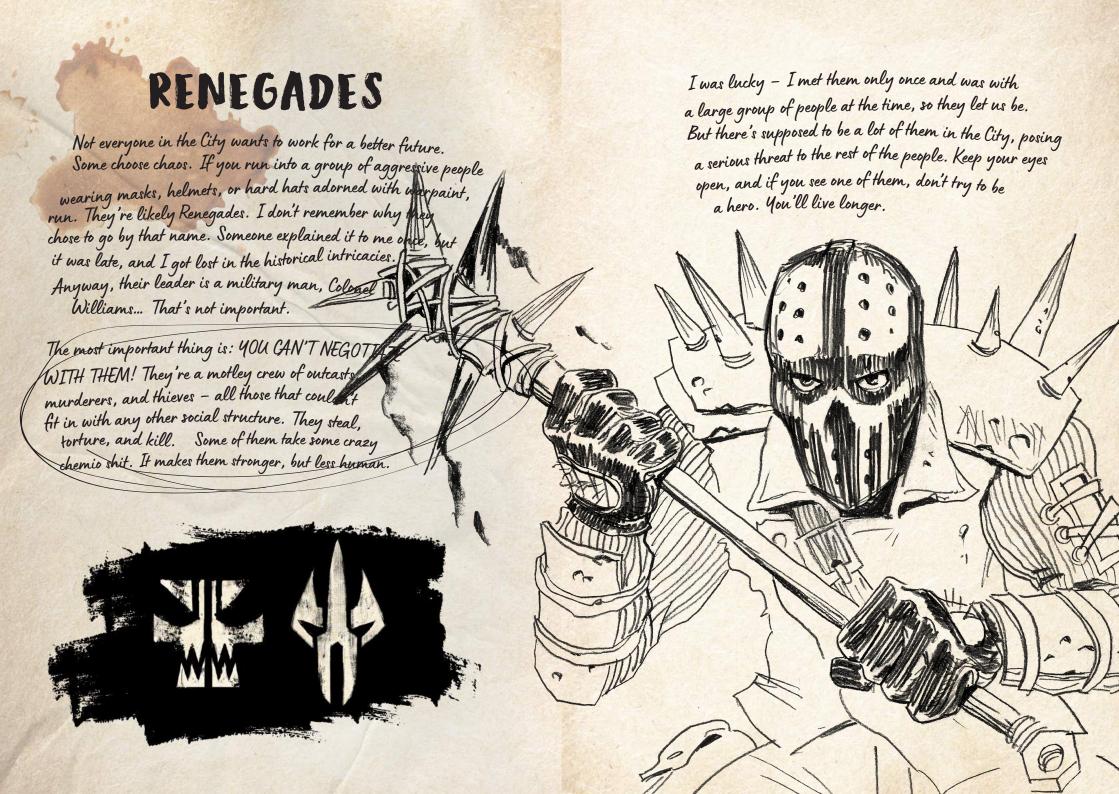


This is why you'll encounter many groups of these "free people" in the City, sometimes wildly different from one another. They don't have a single leader or structure. Sometimes they are even only scarcely aware of each other's existence.

Some among them grow crops and breed animals, some are specialists in assorted crafts, while others still take up hunting or scavenge for valuable items in buildings. But they have one thing in common – they're all trying to build a new world by taking very small steps, starting with their own community.



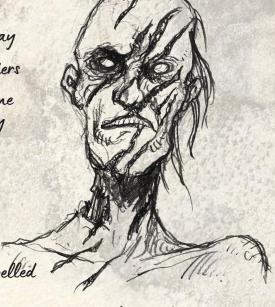




NIGHTRUNNERS

A lot has been said about Nightrunners,

but it's really hard
to separate truth
from fiction. Folks say
they're former soldiers
trained in nighttime
operations. Some say
they got injected
with something.
An entire
Nightrunner
squad supposedly rebelled



against their commanders during the pandemic.



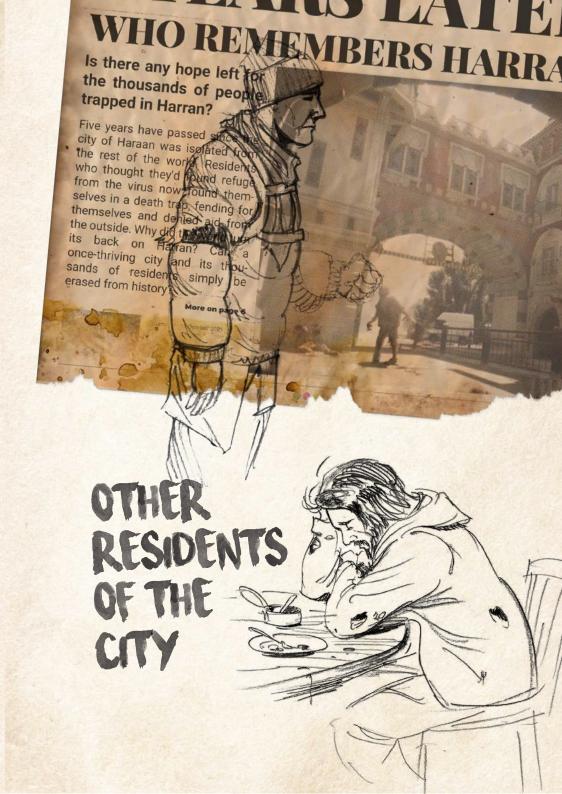
They patrolled the City during the night – defending people who got lost, killing monsters, and repairing what the military destroyed during the day.

And then... something happened.

A failed operation. Some tragedy. And the
Nightrunners were gone. People say that Frank
(owner of the Fish Eye Canteen) may know
something about that, but I couldn't get him
to spill anything. Maybe you'll fare better.

PILGRIMS

During my entire stay in the City, I never met another Pilgrim. They probably perished in the tunnels in an attempt to get past the walls. Supposedly, there's another group doing what we do somewhere in the City. They're known as the "Couriers". The thing is though, at least as far as I'm aware, they're generally well respected. Meanwhile, when I told people I was a Pilgrim, they reacted as everyone does - showing mild interest in my travels and news of the world, mixed with a touch of fear. Some just bluntly asked me what I'd done that no community wanted to take me in, and I was forced to roam the world, carrying packages and information. I quess people will never change... In any case, if you're a Pilgrim, be ready for



People in the City have been through and seen a lot. They might have some work for you, offer a helpful tip... or simply betray you. Watch out for swindlers and bandits. I was lucky enough to meet a few decent folks. For instance, I met a guy who listens for signals from outer space.

He claimed he was picking up messages from a Chinese satellite or space station.

If you meet him, ask how he's doing for me.

Another time, I met a monk who was meditating on the edge of a cornice.

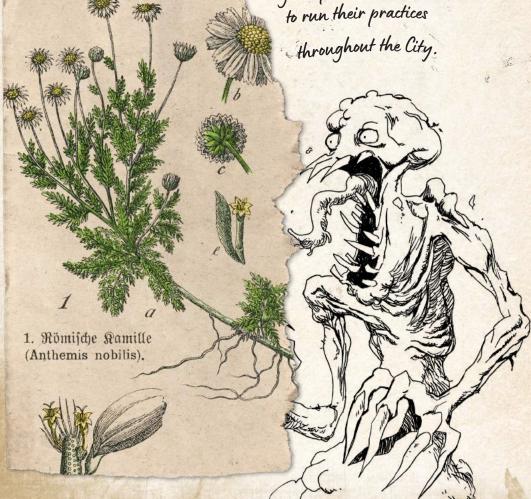
Iinquired about him with a few locals.

They claimed that the monk had access to "the most powerful weapon in the City". Unfortunately, I have no idea about the nature of this weapon.

The monk will reveal his secret only to the person who passes his challenge. I failed. Maybe you will do better.

There are also herbalists who need to hide from the Peacekeepers, as the latter fight against folk superstitions and want to have a monopoly on treating people (that's how it was explained to me).

> But the healers don't give up and continue to run their practices





PEOPLE ARE GENERALLY BEST AVOIDED BUT THESE ONES ARE WORTH SEEKING OUT

As you will soon find out, the City's color palette is rather drab as if the entire landscape is scared to stand out. Maybe this bleak background is what makes this bunch of characters seem all the more vivid. Before the apocalypse, I'd probably peg them as mad and avoid them like wildfire. These days, I do the opposite. I go out of my way to seek them out, and this diary is where I collect my findings, as it were.



Nyra

I think I ran into a girl named Nyra at the pumpkin farm today. I wrote "I think" as I still find it hard to believe that someone like that could really live in this place.



Close your eyes and picture the City. What do you see?

Destruction. Good. What do you hear? Howls of monsters.

You're right. What do you smell?

Exactly - that stench... and from that disgusting stink emerges Nyra with her perfume factory. You'd think she's crazy. I think she's a genius. Nyra is the first entrepreneur I met in the City. Perfume is a product everyone wants and is willing to pay any price for - so long as it rids them of that stench. I bought a bottle of "Turn me on" myself. And I gotta say, it got me a little turned on.

How can you tell that nature is coming back to life in the City? Yes, yes, flowers, trees, and all that, but I mean something less conspicuous. I think we're slowly coming to an end of the fallen civilization mourning period and are beginning to ask ourselves: "How do we go on living?" and "With whom?". We've already tended to our base needs. We have shelter, food, and the means to defend ourselves. So now we're starting to look around for other human beings. Friends, companions, lovers. And this is where Raheem comes in. This incredible guy had the brilliant idea of creating a dating app. Well, I guess it's more of a game than an app... A simple mechanic based on cards with descriptions of characters looking for company. It's called Sparker, and it's all the rage in the City. There's a card with my profile on it out there somewhere...

This is quite a story. Whenever I'm feeling down, which, it pains me to say, has been quite often of late, I recall the tale of beautiful Gabrielle. See, Gabby used to own a modeling agency that was number one in the country and one of the best in the world.

The City's still full

of billboards with gorgeous models, both male and female, proudly flexing their beautiful bodies. In most cases, it's a safe bet that it was Gabrielle who took the photos. But that was then. Today, the concept of fashion doesn't exist. Clothes are meant to be warm and comfortable, not fashionable.

So what does Gabrielle do?

Does she give up? Naaah!

Gabrielle gets to designing and making outfits for scarecrows.

She gets orders from farmers all around the City. Gabrielle is famous again, and her clothes are the talk of the whole City.

Bukowski

I never could help but be touched by folks who didn't give a rat's ass about reality and just did their own thing despite all hell breaking loose around them. Bukowski was one of those folks. The only man in the City who gave a damn about what happened to old art. And when I say "old",

I don't mean from the Middle Ages, I mean from the last ten years. As I'm sure you've figured out by now, people don't have much use for art these days. Paintings by impressionists are coveted not for their artistic qualities but rather because those canvasses carry a lot of paint, which will give more heat when burned than, say, the works of Flemish painters would.

Bukowski isn't interested in burning the paintings, though. He collects them for display in his private gallery.

I went there once – it's a marvel to behold! A wondrous experience. However, I have a feeling that at the first sign of sub-zero temperatures, Bukowski's gallery may start becoming more popular with the City's heat-seeking art lovers.

INFECTED



During all my travels, nowhere have

I had as many opportunities to come face
to face with a monster as in the City.

I also encountered many varieties that

I hadn't seen anywhere else

Residents of the City kept telling me that the monsters are people. That those festering, mutated bodies are what used to be the citizens of Villedor who had a spot of bad luck - by first becoming infected and then failing to take refuge in the UV rays in time.

I'd wish you didn't have a close encounter with any of them,
but if you do happen to get into a fight with
a monster, take heed - you can glimpse the pleading

look of a human in its

eyes. Don't hesitate then.

Kill. No matter what is said
about them - their human
element is now just
a memory. An afterimage.



If you don't kill them, they'll kill you a second later.

I saw people in the City who didn't listen to this advice – and they were sorry. Not for long, mind you, but they were sorry. What I described here are only a few examples that I have seen myself or heard about in rumors. You can be sure that there are way more monsters in the City than that.

BANSHEE

If the City residents I talked to are to be believed, not many people have seen an attacking banshee. That is to say, not many saw it and lived to tell the tale. Seeing a corpse ravaged with deep wounds on the streets of the City means that a banshee was there just a moment ago.

Her long, sharp claws make for a deadly weapon.

She's also supposed to be incredibly fast and agile.

So have eyes in the back of your head and don't allow yourself to be jumped.

And look up banshees supposedly
prefer pouncing
on their victims
from a height.
Agile and fast. She's
a dangerous opponent





SPITTER

I met this son of a bitch personally - which doesn't mean I have a lot to say about it. I chose to run away instead of studying the thing. But here's the crucial part:

the bastard spits acid. Real, caustic acid.

I got all of three

droplets on my clothes
it was enough

to burn right through

them.

If you happen to
encounter this
monster,
I have two pieces of

advice for you.

Number one: you have to be agile as never before. Hit.

Leap away.

Attack its head and fragile back. Repeat until you succeed. Number two is much more effective: run!





This beast is said to be exceptionally mean.

I heard about it from an old farmer who had more luck than brains. Apparently, the howler doesn't attack when it sees a human, it runs away instead.

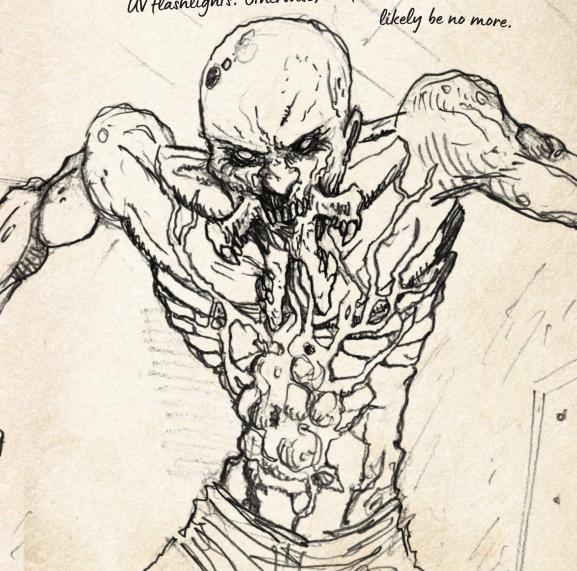
You might think that's good, but soon after,

the nightmare begins. As it's running away, the howler begins to... well, howl, which attracts all the other monsters in the area.

Knowing this can buy

you precious
seconds to spend
on running
away before the
howler opens its
mouth.

The farmer didn't know. His saving grace was two scrap collectors who noticed him and chased away the horde with UV flashlights. Otherwise, the farmer would likely be no more. Chased away the horde with UV flashlights. Otherwise, the farmer would



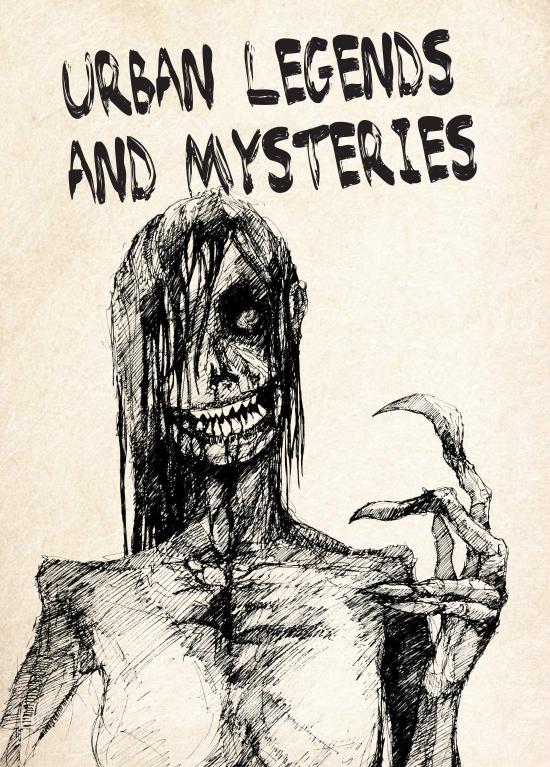


There are many legends told about volatiles. They're difficult to confirm with the source because if you see a volatile up close, odds are you're not long for this world. What we know for sure is that they represent the highest, final stage of a monster's transformation and are devilishly intelligent.



They hunt with strategy, are capable of luring their victims into traps, basically never get tired, re damned strong, and just as fast. You stand no chance against them, so don't even try.

Just run and hope you'll make it.



It's said that part of the City was flooded and has remained submerged underwater for years.

If it's true, odds are no one's managed to plunder it yet. I heard rumors about treasures hidden there – gold, weapons, medicines. But can you even swim in water like that? Wouldn't it be contaminated? Are there monsters living there that we know nothing about?

I collected even more interesting stories from the City. You'll find them here. Is there any truth to them?

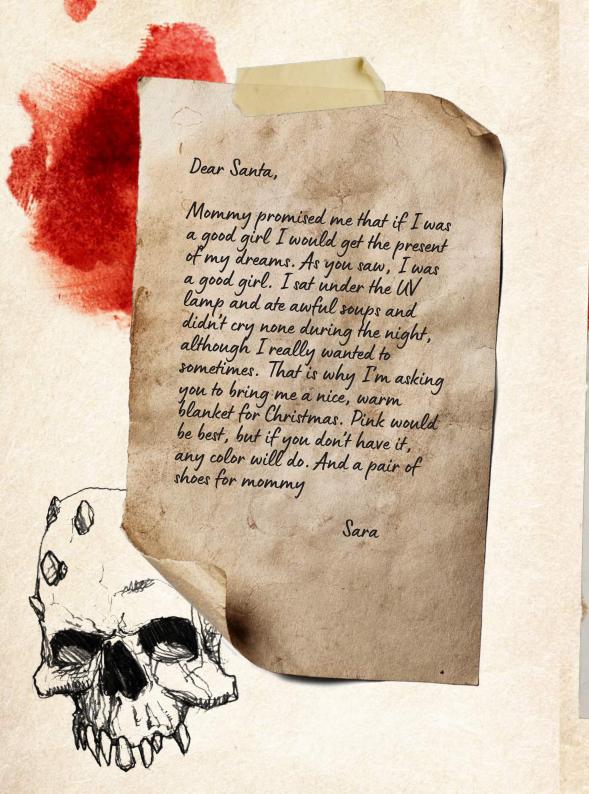
Mental

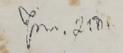
You be the judge.







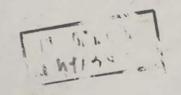




TO THE PROVISIONAL CRISIS COMMITTEE

I AM APPEALING THE COMMITTEE'S DECISION TO DENY ME THE RIGHT TO LEAVE THE CITY OF VILLEDOR. AS I HAVE STATED REPEATEDLY (CORRESPONDENCE ATTACHED), I AM NOT A CITIZEN OF VILLEDOR BUT AN EMPLOYEE OF HAWKINS ELECTRONICS AND WAS IN TOWN ON BUSINESS. MY TWO-DAY DELEGATION ENDED THREE WEEKS AGO.I AM NOT A CARRIER OF THE VIRUS. I LEFT BEHIND TWO YOUNG CHILDREN (AGES 5 AND 3) IN MY HOMETOWN WHO CANNOT MANAGE WITHOUT ME. THEREFORE, I REQUEST THAT YOU GRANT ME THE RIGHT TO LEAVE VILLEDOR AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

SINCERELY, JOHN DUNCAN







Remember that as a Pilgrim, you can exert a powerful influence over the City and its inhabitants. Many of them characters are constantly walking a thin line between good and evil. Everyone has their demons and weaknesses to deal with. The way you approach those people – whether you decide to help them, side with them, or oppose them – will often influence their course of action or even determine who they become in the end. Some of them are set in their beliefs and very sure about their destiny, but others will be hesitant and dependent on your decisions. Choose wisely and try not to treat everyone as your enemy. If you want to save someone and let them grow, you need to see their potential.

You also need to be careful about what secrets you uncover, which darkzones you visit, and what monsters you let loose in the City. Some of the most dangerous creatures have been confined and isolated for good reason. Exploring darkzones can lead you to discover rare, priceless loot. However, you can also inadvertently release monsters that used to be the stuff of urban.





The City is also home to some rare mutations. People tell stories about unusual monsters, but no one is left alive to prove them true. Gathering information on those creatures can bring you closer to the truth... Perhaps you'll even be lucky enough to come face to face with one of them. However, you need to consider if the potential knowledge from such encounters is worth the risk you're taking.

Remember that by gaining more power and influence in the City, you become more responsible for the lives of its inhabitants.

It is up to you whether you become the City's long-awaited salvation... or its greatest curse.

Good luck!

