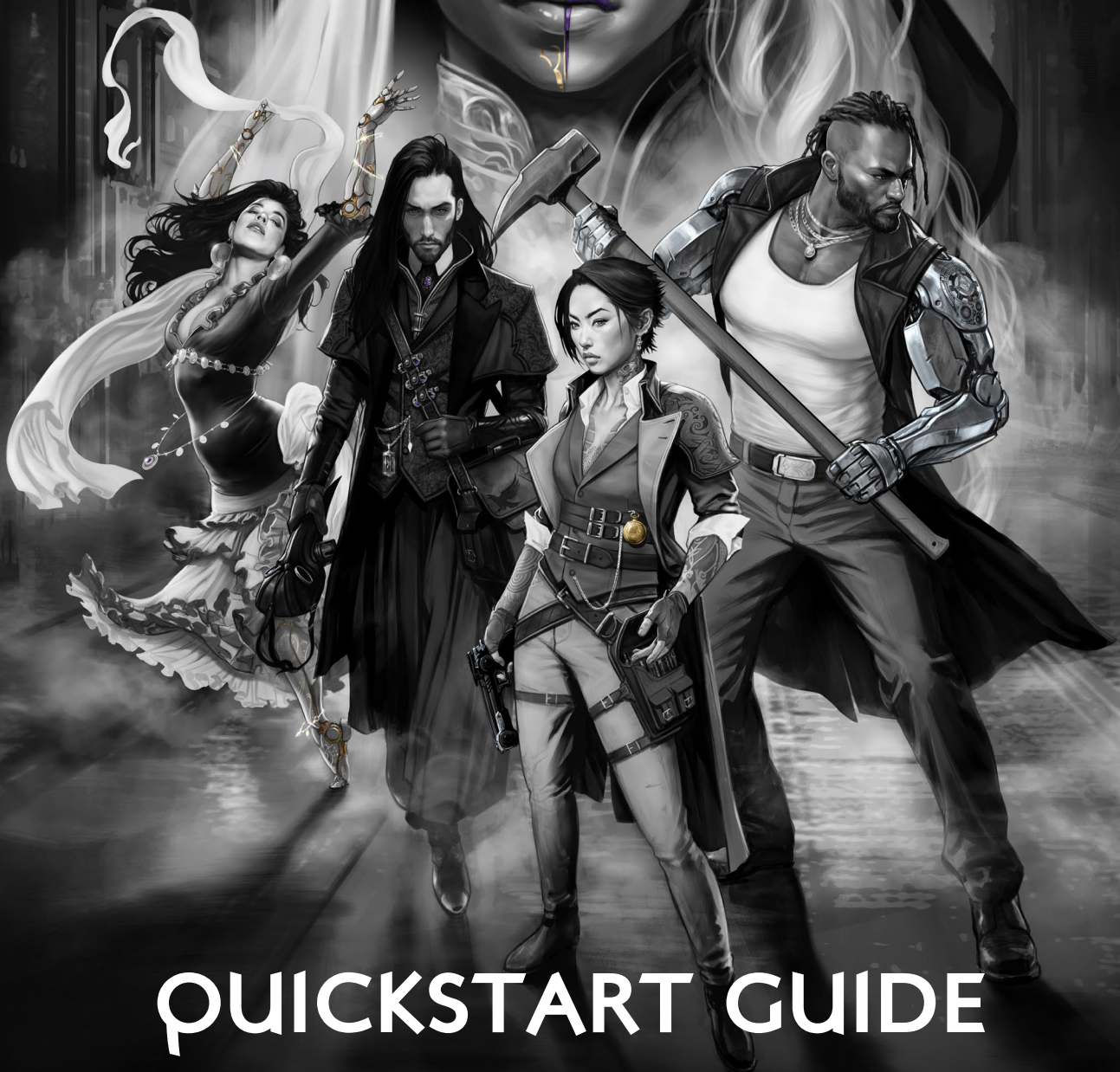


THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

SHADOW CITY

M Y S T E R I E S



QUICKSTART GUIDE

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QUICK START vo.3

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THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE SHADOW CITY

Shadow City Mysteries: the RPG is a tabletop roleplaying game powered by the most popular game engine in the world, but with additional systems for running a clockwork noir that are useful with any game system.

This Quickstart guide has characters and background notes so that you can start playing immediately, including a short adventure that showcases some of the tales you can tell in the setting.

COLOR

It's been centuries since color left the world.

The Church teaches that the death of color was the final curse of the goddess of darkness, upon her defeat by the gods of light. It lingers as a sign to be ever vigilant against the lure of evil: what else could be lost if the gods must intervene again, on so grand a scale?

People of science claim it's something strange about how light refracts in the atmosphere, and one day they hope that rocketry and photography improve to the point that they can confirm whether color can still be seen from space.

Neither can truly explain why *some* things—the high tech and the mystical—still show in color.

The day-to-day life of citizens of the world is one of chiaroscuro, with nearly everything being monotone. Pops of color from Turnstone-infused objects draw every eye in appreciation, while color where no tech should be breeds fear of arcane threats, hidden beneath the popular veneer of science.

CLOCKWORK

Not long after the war of the gods came the discovery of solargium—commonly just called turnstone. This semi-hard rock is permanently oriented to face the sun, revolving once every 24 hours and grinding itself into smooth sand rather than allow any force to stop its turning.

Initially it was something of a curiosity. Shards of it could be used to unerringly tell time, and a big enough slice could power a mill. But under any significant load, such as gearing to transform a 24-hour rotation into a faster one, the rock tends to pulverize itself against the metal.

The industrial revolution came when scientists figured out two key tricks: blending and infusing the turnstone dust into harder metals, and a semi-mystical trick of using mirrored plates to allow it to rotate along any reference point. Power was now reliable, portable, and endless.

Turnstone's only limitation is the science of metallurgy: increasingly small, intricate, or powerful devices put strain on the gearing that requires increasingly-durable metals to house the solargium. Power never runs out, but gears can *strip* out. Every year, the world's scientists and engineers make breakthroughs in what clockwork is capable of. Other sciences, such as chemistry, have lagged from what might be expected in an early modern society, due to the sheer ease of making discoveries of new applications for clockwork.

Society has automobiles, electricity, clockwork-wound weapons, and even intricate “cybernetic” prosthetics and automatons made of countless tiny gears. One of the properties of turnstone that scientists can use but not

explain is that it responds to human will: a prosthetic arm or leg powered by solargium works as well or better than the original, with no clear reason for the interface with human nerves.

The real problem with turnstone is that it's needed for *everything*. Having long-exhausted its own reserves of the mineral, the globe's sole superpower, Vasepon, embarks on wars across the planet with increasingly-thin pretexts in order to open up new mines for the material.

THE CITY

Soreta, more commonly referred to by its sobriquet "Shadow City," is not the capital of Vasepon, but is its largest municipality. As the endless wars continue, the rest of the country becomes increasingly stratified and hostile to those that question its values. But the nation's

leaders are at least smart enough to realize that too much of this will harm their own ability to innovate.

Shadow City is the safety release for the cultural overpressure. This is where its geniuses and its malcontents go to live a life free of the expectations of the regime. As long as the city's factories keep turning out better weapons and its teenagers serve their mandatory few years in the army, the local government is *mostly* left alone.

Which means that it's become a hotbed of internal politics.

Six factions touch every aspect of the lives of the citizens of Soreta. Some, like the Church, are national or even international, but have made a significant foothold in the city. Others, like the Rats, are home-grown and barely exist anywhere else but Shadow City.

What follows are some more details that are useful to navigate the setting. Many more details will be available in the full version of the game.



LIVING IN SHADOW CITY

THE FACTIONS

The Society of Ravens is a conspiracy of the city's wealthy, working together to hold onto their power against the more populous factions. What they lack in membership, they make up for in spending power. They also, like many such societies, have their own secret rites and techniques that have more potency than anyone can guess.

The Court of Rats represents the criminal underworld in the city, tied together by the tails into one organization due to the charisma of the Rat King. Even those that don't live by illicit means might consider themselves part of the Court, if they have nothing to get them into another faction: it's easier to have friends, even Rats, than to go it alone.

The Iron Union claims the membership of virtually everyone in the city that works the harder trades. Led by those that make heavy clockwork for manufacturing and war, they encompass many of the city's laborers. It's pretty common to lose a limb in the gears of industry, so the Union provides relief: bulky but strong "iron" prosthetics, gleaming silvery with almost-color due to the turnstone within.

The Brass Consortium, conversely, collects the softer trades, particularly entertainers, artisans, and service professionals. Many of the Consortium *elect* to have their faction provide them with a prosthetic in place of a flesh-and-blood arm or leg. These intricately-gear'd prosthetics are much better for delicate work than flesh, and gleam yellow from the amount of solargium infused into them.

The Church of Astra is the refuge for those in the city who put their faith in the gods and are willing to follow their precepts. It is public knowledge that the miraculous is possible, though rare, even if the most skeptical of modern

thinkers believe that it's all smoke and mirrors. While the Church is outwardly benevolent, many chafe under its restrictions and seeming monopoly on the mystic.

The Cult of Tenebrous is where those most opposed to the Church wind up. Roundly vilified by the state religion, they are nonetheless useful enough to the *other* factions to get by. While the Church has a *legal* monopoly on magic, the Cult seems to have quite a few tricks of its own. They don't win hearts by being fairly open about following the goddess of darkness, nor the ethically dubious things they do in her name.

EQUIPMENT

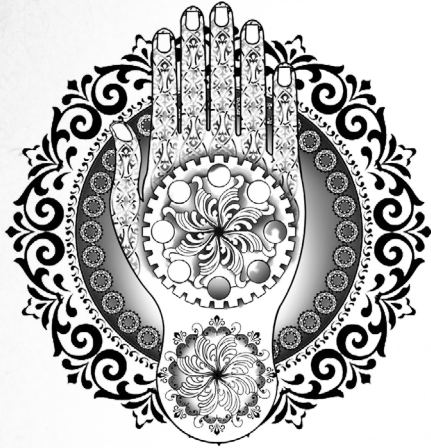
Technology in the Shadow City relies heavily on turnstone-powered clockwork. Below are a few of the unusual items you might encounter in the city. The full RPG will contain many more such items. Additional items that are common in the core rules can also be available, as decided by the DM.

WEAPONS

The most common ranged weapon in Shadow City is the arbalest: a torsion-powered crossbow that is automatically re-wound by its internal clockwork mechanisms, allowing it to generate impressive force. Other than the distinctive sound of the bolt leaving the housing at high speeds, arbalests are nearly silent. Gunpowder technology has lagged, due to the ubiquity and convenience of arbalests, so guns impart significantly less force in comparison. However, they are much faster to reload and difficult to dodge.

While most use common types of melee weapons, it is entirely possible to add powered saws or other clockwork

THE FACTIONS



BRASS CONSORTIUM



IRON UNION



SOCIETY OF RAVENS



COURT OF RATS



CULT OF TENEBROUS



CHURCH OF ASTRA

Name	Type	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Arbalest, Hand	Simple Ranged	\$75	3d4 piercing	2 lb.	Ammunition (range 30/120), Concealable, Winding
Arbalest, Light	Simple Ranged	\$100	3d6 piercing	4 lb.	Ammunition (range 80/320), Winding
Arbalest, Heavy	Martial Ranged	\$200	3d8 piercing	10 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/400), Heavy, Two-Handed, Winding
Gun, Pistol	Simple Ranged	\$50	1d4 bludgeoning	1 lb.	Ammunition (range 50/150), Ballistic, Concealable, Conspicuous
Gun, Revolver	Simple Ranged	\$90	1d6 bludgeoning	3 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/350), Ballistic, Conspicuous
Gun, Rifle	Martial Ranged	\$180	1d8 bludgeoning	7 lb.	Ammunition (range 150/600), Ballistic, Conspicuous, Heavy, Two-Handed
Bonesaw	Simple Melee	\$400	1d12 slashing	4 lb.	
Knife	Simple Melee	\$5	1d4 slashing	1 lb.	Concealable, Finesse, Light, Thrown (range 20/60)
Reciprocating Ax	Martial Melee	\$500	2d8 slashing	12 lb	Heavy, Two-Handed

upgrades to such devices. This makes them more expensive, but extremely effective. The majority are designed as useful tools (such as a doctor's bonesaw or a reciprocating ax for firefighters), as devices of pure and obvious mayhem are likely to get one stopped on the street.

New Properties:

- **Ballistic:** Gunpowder weapons tend to shoot small projectiles that are too fast to dodge and that punch through armor. You gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls with them.
- **Concealable:** Small weapons are easy to conceal in pockets or bags, making them easier to carry in polite society without being obviously armed.
- **Conspicuous:** Gunpowder weapons are loud and leave behind residue. Gunshots are audible at a great distance, and characters able to hear have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) rolls to notice a nearby fight. Alchemist's supplies can be used to detect the presence of gunpowder residue on hands or nearby objects, and recently-fired shots can simply be smelled. When you use a Conspicuous weapon, you have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks until the end of your next turn, due to this smell and the cloud of smoke.
- **Winding:** While powerful, the internal auto-winding torsion mechanisms of arbalests are slow to rearm, and deliver less force if used too soon after firing. After you attack once with this weapon, it is reduced to one damage die (instead of three). At the start of each of

your turns, it recovers one die (to a maximum of three your second turn after the last shot)..

Ammunition costs \$4 per ten for a set of bolts or bullets. Most arbalests and guns can load 5 pieces of ammunition at a time, and require an action to reload once empty. Higher-tech items might have larger load sizes and/or reduce the reload time to a bonus action.

New Ranged Weapons Action: Overwatch

Taking aim at an area, you can fire off a quick shot against anyone who leaves cover.

With this action, you Ready one attack with a ranged weapon you are wielding and choose a cone with a length equal to the normal range that weapon. When a creature that you can see reduces its degree of cover relative to you, you can take a Reaction to make a ranged weapon attack with Advantage. On a hit, the target takes damage and its speed is halved until the end of its next turn.

(This action is available to any character proficient in the ranged weapon they are wielding.)

UTILITY GEAR

Doctor's Kit (\$90, 3 lb.): This kit includes all the tools necessary to patch wounds. As an action, you can use it to heal a target by making a Wisdom (Medicine) check.

- If the target is dying, the Difficulty of the check is 20, and the target regains hit points equal to 1d6 + your Wisdom modifier on a success (failing by 5 or less stabilizes the target without healing them).

- If the target is above 0 hit points but has fewer than half their maximum hit points, the Difficulty of the check is also 20, and the target regains hit points equal to 2d6 + your Wisdom modifier on a success.
- If the target has more than half their maximum hit points remaining, the difficulty of the check is only 15, but the target only regains hit points equal to 1d6 + your Wisdom modifier on a success.

Once you have attempted a check using this kit on a target, you can't use it on the same target again until they have taken at least 10 more points of damage, or finished a long rest.

MAGIC

The world of Shadow City Mysteries is superficially one of science. Other than the hard-to-explain realities of solargium and the death of color, the world is a rising technological state in many ways similar to Earth of the mid-20th-century. The Church is content to treat the miraculous as metaphor, rather than insist on the reality of the mystical in these skeptical times.

And flashy, reliable fantasy magic just runs counter to the noir vibe.

Particularly in the lower levels, magic is subtle and hard to prove. Did that Mystic do something that violates the laws of science, or just use showmanship and trickery? The spells available to the Savant are *explicitly* just tricks: rather than include a ton of one-off powers, we use the mechanics of spellcasting to provide options to those characters.

The following guidelines apply to spells in this setting:

- Verbal and Somatic components are not obvious spellcasting, but can simply be a few words and handwaves: more misdirection than magic words and gestures.

- Material components without a listed cost are irrelevant. If they have a listed cost to cast the spell, replace it with a similarly-expensive apparatus that might be used to perform the spell as a stage magic trick. For this purpose, 1 gp equals \$1.
- Spells cast by Mystics are actually magic, though often subtle. Tell-tale colors matching the character's Spectrum Attunement might accompany spells, when narratively relevant.
- Spells cast by non-Mystics are clever tricks, either a quick way of getting something done or full on smoke and mirrors. They only produce colors if turnstone is relevant in some way. Most of the time, they're simply played off as the character being very talented in a specific way.



RULES

In addition to some new rules mentioned in the sections above, the following are larger systems available to characters in Shadow City Mysteries.

MONEY AND LIFESTYLE

Characters in Shadow City Mysteries have a Lifestyle rating that tracks their general living situation. It works like an ability score: 10 is an average, middle-class lifestyle, and higher or lower reflect better or worse living situations. In normal play, lifestyle goes up or down each month, based on basic downtime income and cash rewards achieved in play. The example player characters have a Lifestyle rating already calculated.

Lifestyle has two major benefits:

- The score is converted to a bonus on the same scale as ability scores (e.g., 10 is +0, 12 is +1, 14 is +2, and so on). The modifier applies to Influence rolls (wealthier people are treated better); see below. The modifier also applies to Hit Dice rolls and any other rolls to recover hit points (poorer lifestyles mean more stress and worse nutrition, while the wealthy are relaxed and able to see a doctor). The DM can apply this modifier to similar circumstances (e.g., Con saves to resist disease).
- Lifestyle provides a “petty cash” benefit: If the cost of a purchase is equal to or under the current Lifestyle rating x \$10, the spend is basically included in their normal lifestyle expenses and doesn’t need to be tracked. (If a PC makes several large purchases of permanent items in a day, total their cost to see if it goes above this threshold.) For example, a character with Lifestyle 14 can spend \$140 on miscellaneous items on any given day without deducting it from their savings.

To generate approximate costs for unlisted goods and services in Shadow City, divide the Earth in 2024 cost in dollars or euros by 6. For example, a meal might cost \$1-\$10, a hotel stay \$20-\$60, and a new standard automobile \$3,500-\$6,500.

INFLUENCE

Characters can use Influence to make long-term progress toward a large social goal. When the PCs try to accomplish something that requires convincing many people (such as a whole faction) to go along with them, use the Influence system.

The players, as a group, are trying to generate Progress toward a particular Influence project. Once they’ve accumulated enough Progress, they have convinced enough people to complete the project. They achieve their goal. The included adventure has some ideas for Progress required for certain Projects.

Influence progress can be accumulated in two ways: social encounters and gladhanding. Classes have special abilities that can influence one or both of these systems.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

If the PCs have an in-play meeting with important members of a group the PCs are working on influencing, the result of the encounter can count toward Influence. After the encounter, the DM determines how the encounter went (see below). Roll the dice described and add or subtract from Progress.

Repeated meetings with the same individuals generally can’t advance the same Influence Progress meter (because those individuals have already made up their minds). The size of the dice used depends on the importance of the group members (d4s for a small group of minor members up to d12 for a

faction leader, a mid-sized group of influential people, or a large crowd of minor members).

Total the Lifestyle modifiers of all PCs participating in the scene, and add the result to the final Progress adjustment.

- **Disastrous:** The PCs wound up making enemies of most of the group, such that they'll try to do the opposite to spite them. -3 dice progress
- **Bad:** The PCs annoyed the group members and/or actually entrenched them in the desire to do the opposite of what the PCs want. -2 dice progress
- **Neutral:** The PCs didn't make any compelling points that would change opinions (a little progress is lost because these people are now set in their ways). -1 dice progress
- **Persuasive:** The PCs convinced most of the group of their goals, though not so much that they'll stick their necks out to forward that agenda. +1 dice progress
- **Very Persuasive:** The PCs convinced the group that what they want is extremely important, and the group members will push this agenda themselves. +2 dice progress

For example, after a social scene with the Rat King where the DM thinks they were Persuasive, they can add 1d12 (plus their accumulated Lifestyle modifiers) toward whatever Influence Project they were trying to convince him of. Their individual social skills should have been incorporated into the social encounter (i.e., it went well enough to count as Persuasive because they rolled well on Charisma checks during the encounter).

GLADHANDING

Primarily as a downtime activity, PCs can talk up their Influence project to people that can support it meaningfully. The DM should provide a short description of exactly what is happening. This does not involve talking to "Named" NPCs, who should be the subject of actual social encounters. Instead, this is politicking with miscellaneous people who might have some "vote" in the process.

The Difficulty of the roll is normally 15, but the DM can raise or lower it if the PCs' agenda is harder for them to grasp or more common-sense.

The PC can make one roll each of Charisma (Persuasion), Charisma (Intimidation), and Charisma (Deception) against the base DC, representing the need to convince, scare, and lie in the normal course of widespread politics. The PC can roll Wisdom (Insight) instead of any one of these rolls to figure out the best way to handle people. The DC increases by +5 if the PC would prefer to roll their best social skill three times.

For every roll that succeeds, add 1d6 Progress (2d6 on a natural 20). For every roll that fails by 5 or more, subtract 1d6 Progress. Add the PC's Lifestyle modifier to the total Progress generated.

Gladhanding takes several hours for each attempt, filling up much of the character's available offscreen time on a given day.

CRAFTING

CREATING NEW ITEMS

To craft a new item, use the following procedure:

- Use the price of the item to determine its Rank, time, Difficulty, workshop, and progress required:
 - » \$0-\$9: Rank 1, 10 minutes per check, DC 10, a small desk to craft on (Lifestyle 10)
 - » \$10-\$99: Rank 2, 1 hour per check, DC 12, a small room to craft in (Lifestyle 12)
 - » \$100-\$999: Rank 3, 6 hours per check, DC 14, a dedicated large room or garage (Lifestyle 14)
 - » \$1,000-\$9,999: Rank 4, a working day (8-10 hours) per check, DC 16, a large garage or basement (Lifestyle 16)
 - » (Higher ranks are outside the scope of this quickstart)
 - » The highest two digits of the price is the progress required (e.g., 50 progress for a rank 1, \$5 item or a rank 2, \$50 item), with cheaper items taking less time per check.
 - » Skilled assistants can bring down the time per check by 10-20% per assistant, for a maximum of 50% for 3-5 assistants.
- Provide half the cost of the item in components.
 - » For most items, this is a simple money spend (which might be within their Lifestyle rating).
 - » For rare items, particularly clockwork or mystical items, the DM may require that the crafter replace some of this cost with rare components gained from Influence or adventure. In this case, the crafter might be able to jury rig or salvage something, at the DM's option.
- After each crafting period, roll three relevant tool proficiency checks at the listed DC for the rank. Each check uses a different ability score suggested by the DM, based on the phase of the project. The DM narrates what's happening with the crafting that requires each ability score (e.g., Strength for applying force, Dexterity for finesse, Wisdom to notice and repair hidden flaws, etc.).
- For each successful check, roll 1d6, or another die assigned by a class or subclass feature. Total the results as the progress made toward the item. Once the necessary progress is accumulated, the item is complete.
 - » If the check was a natural 20, reduce the base component cost by 5%.
 - » A normal failure just provides no progress. For each check that fails by 5 or more, increase the base component cost by 10%.

REPAIRING ITEMS

- Repairing an item treats the Rank of the item as one lower (minimum 1) for crafting time and DCs.
- Minor repairs of common items are generally made for “free” (i.e., as part of Lifestyle costs) if the crafter has a stocked workshop appropriate to the project. They generally only require 10% of the original progress (e.g., a \$5,000 item is fixed as if it was only rank 3, and only requires 5 progress).
- Major repairs require a proportional cost based on the damage (e.g., fixing a car that’s 50% wrecked, requires half the original crafting successes and half the original component cost), but are still done at one rank lower for time and DCs. Even a mostly-destroyed item is faster to rebuild than it would be to make from scratch.
- At the DM’s option, some usual, mystical, or cutting edge items may require specific parts (which can be obtained as part of an adventure) or jury-rigged components to repair.

PUSHING FOR SUCCESS

- **Blood, Sweat, and Tears:** For rolls that fail, you can temporarily reduce your maximum hit points by the number you need to push it to a success (e.g., if you rolled a 5 on the die and needed an 8, you can reduce your HP max by 3 to make the roll a success).
 - » You cannot reduce your maximum below 1 in this way.
 - » You can do this for multiple rolls during a project, accumulating the reduced HP maximum as you go.
- **Burning the Midnight Oil:** Once per crafting period, you can add an additional Con-based crafting check to any set of crafting rolls (getting four rolls instead of three for that period). If you fail the roll, you gain a level of Exhaustion.
 - » This roll *can* be improved as per Blood, Sweat, and Tears, above.
- **Recovery:** Reductions to HP maximum and Exhaustion gained through crafting can’t be recovered until you have finished or given up on a crafting project. Afterward, you regain 5 lost maximum hit points when you finish a long rest, and you remove Exhaustion at the normal rate of one level per long rest.

FEATS

- **Cooking Expert:** You gain the following benefits.
 - » Increase an ability score of your choice by +1 (to a maximum of 20).
 - » Gain proficiency with cook’s utensils.

- » As part of a short rest, you can prepare a meal for yourself and up to six additional creatures. Before expending Hit Dice as part of the short rest, they regain hit points as if you had used a doctor’s kit on each of them. Roll Intelligence or Wisdom (cook’s utensils) and use your check in place of the Medicine roll.

- » When you prepare a meal as part of a long rest, you and up to six other creatures that you feed start the next day with temporary hit points equal to your proficiency bonus. If you have expertise with cook’s utensils, they gain temporary hit points equal to twice your proficiency bonus.

- **Quick Healer:** Increase Strength or Constitution by +1 (to a maximum of 20). Add your Constitution modifier (minimum 1) to all rolls to restore hit points (i.e., from Hit Dice, Medicine checks, or magic; doubled for those that already include this modifier).
- **Expert Training:** Increase an ability score of your choice by +1 (to a maximum of 20), gain proficiency in an additional skill, and gain expertise in a skill in which you are already proficient.
- **Toughness:** Treat your Constitution as 4 higher when calculating hit points.
- **Trained:** You are proficient in three additional skills.
- **Well-Protected:** Increase Strength or Constitution by +1 (to a maximum of 20). While wearing armor, you can reduce incoming bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage by 3.

NEW SPELL

Harrow

Necromancy cantrip (mystic)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 round

With a word and a gesture, you scour the soul of your enemy, for the gods have given you the power to punish. One creature of your choice makes a Wisdom saving throw; if it is currently the target of Protection from Evil and Good, it has Advantage on this Saving Throw. On a failure, it takes 1d6 Psychic damage, and the next time it makes a D20 Test before the end of its next turn, the target rolls 1d4 as a penalty to the D20 Test result.

The spell’s damage increases by 1d6 when you reach level 5 (2d6), level 11 (3d6), and level 17 (4d6).

CHARACTERS

ELEVATOR PITCH

Use the following short descriptions if you need to help players choose a character quickly.

THE FACTIONS

- **The Court of Rats** is the city's organizing principle for crime. Welded together by the powerful Rat King, it represents most of Shadow City's criminals, as well as the dispossessed with no one else to turn to for support. Members have little to fear from other criminals.
- **The Society of Ravens** is an ancient conspiracy of the city's wealthy. They are probably the smallest faction, but by far the richest, and have secrets woven through the fabric of the city, such as their trained corvid messengers. Members get financial and influential support.
- **The Iron Union** is a guild that represents most city workers in the more dangerous trades such as heavy industry, construction, and the like. They provide strong clockwork replacement prosthetics in heavy iron to their members that need them, and ensure a minimum income to their members.
- **The Brass Consortium** is the counterpart guild that represents service and entertainment trades, providing the staff for most of the venues throughout Shadow City. They make intricate brass prosthetics, and many members make elective use of them because they're more agile than flesh.
- **The Church of Astra** is the local branch of the most prominent world religion. Members might be actual

clergy within the religion or simply extremely devout laypersons. They are especially mentally resilient, able to shrug off psychic effects or anything that requires a saving throw.

- **The Cult of Tenebrous** includes those that profane the dominant religion and follow the tenets of a dark goddess. Second-smallest, they must keep hidden but tend to work with a more unified purpose than the other factions for this reason. They receive signs and portents from their faith, and can see in the dark.

THE CLASSES

- **The Infiltrator** encompasses all kinds of agile and stealthy agents. They rely on Sneak Attack for attack and defense, and on Readiness points that allow them to declare they were prepared for a situation. They are especially popular for Court of Rats Thieves, Brass Consortium Sneaks, and Cult of Tenebrous Assassins.
- **The Savant** represents intellectuals, who can run the numbers to get what they want. Their Superiority dice can help them or their allies maneuver, and their spells represent nonmagical tricks of their cunning. Subclasses include the Society of Ravens Doctor, Court of Rats Hustler, and Iron Union Organizer.
- **The Heavy** is a good class for anyone with muscle and toughness. They shove enemies around the battlefield and build up Adrenaline as they get hit, unlocking powerful abilities. The most common types are Iron Union Enforcers, Church of Astra Templars, and Court of Rats Thugs.

- The **Face** is for anyone that prefers to talk their way through life. They spread Encouragement around to help allies, use their social wiles to escape punishment, and master the readied action. They especially support Brass Consortium Entertainers, Society of Raven Lawyers, and Church of Astra Preachers.
- The **Mystic** is the class with real magic, though it starts out subtle and easy to explain to the skeptics. They are full-progression spellcasters, and can switch their attunement stance for other benefits. Among them are Church of Astra Mindspeakers, Cult of Tenebrous Voidwalkers, and Society of Ravens Moguls.
- The **Maker** crafts items as a calling. They have high health so they can endure hard crafting sessions, gain bonuses with weapons they've built, and are vicious and effective warriors. They are most prevalent as Iron Union Gearwrights, Cult of Tenebrous Umbal Alchemists, and Brass Consortium Artisans.

THE CHARACTERS

- **Bittersea** is a Court of Rats Infiltrator (Thief) from East End, one of the worst neighborhoods in town. Agile but weak, they owe their livelihood as a criminal to the Rat King and want this mission to succeed.

- **Dr. Singh** is a Society of Ravens Savant (Doctor) who went to Church School but was called to open a clinic for the poor. Smart but clumsy, they opened the clinic in Court of Rats territory, and the bill is due.
- **Dax Dunfield** is an Iron Union Heavy (Enforcer) who was orphaned as child, so is thrilled to have built a family. Strong but clumsy, their spouse took loans from the Rat King that this mission will help pay off.
- **Larkin** is a Brass Consortium Face (Entertainer) from the backwoods making it in Shadow City as a grifter. Charismatic but unwise, they conned a Court lieutenant, and must see this mission through or be killed.
- **Cormorant** is a Church of Astra Mystic (Mindspeaker) born a farmer and elevated in the Church by faith. Wise but uneducated, they hope to advance in the church by getting old documents from the Rat King.
- **Gadwall** is a Cult of Tenebrous Maker (Umbral Alchemist) who works as a private detective. Tough but bad with people, they need to secure some ancient relics from the Rat King that the cult requires.



BITTERSEA (THIEF)

Faction: Court of Rats

Name: (Bascon or Biyal) Bittersea

Secret: None, the Rat King has requested you to accompany the group to make sure it gets done and prove your loyalty.

Background: Despite the fact that Soreta is almost *all* “wrong-side-of-the-tracks” as far as any normal city is concerned, the East End is chaos even compared to the rest of Shadow City. It’s where immigrants with no money in their pockets crash into the true natives of the city who just refuse to figure out how to move to safer neighborhoods. Everyone here knows their family history, because pride in their bloodlines is all they’ve got.

The Rat King making a play for the neighborhood when you were a teen was a bright spot in a place with no other way out. Quick fingers were all you really had, but you’d been warned never to risk picking pockets or breaking houses in Court of Rats territory, and nobody near you had anything valuable to steal. But when the East End *became* Court of Rats territory, you suddenly had prospects. It still took you a couple of years to convince a higher-up that you would kick back enough of your take to be worth allowing into the city at large. From there, it’s been a life worth living. Most of your family still doggedly refuses to move out of the family hovel, but with the money you’ve been sending home, it’s much nicer on the inside.

You finally met the King himself when you turned 21. And it really was like meeting a king. He’s only had five minutes here and there for you the last several years, but each time he remembers your name and asks how your skills are growing. He might finally be willing to invest fully in you and move you up to the big leagues.

You don’t want to let him down. You can’t even go back to picking pockets in the East End, if you lose his favor. It’s Court of Rats territory, now.

Connections: You’ve worked a few jobs at the King’s behest with Larkin, who doesn’t seem to have a choice. You know Gadwall from East End, though they got out; you heard they got work as a detective.

Other Factions:

- **Society of Ravens:** So the rich have a secret society to stay rich. Figures. How many of the distracted wealthy fools you’ve fleeced have been members?
- **Brass Consortium:** You’ve worked some crowds where you realized that you weren’t the only one with light fingers. Why doesn’t everyone realize that their favorite entertainers are their biggest criminals?
- **Iron Union:** Maybe if the East End had more factory workers, the Union would have taken better care of it so the Rats didn’t have to. But they take care of their own neighborhoods and never mattered much in yours.
- **Church of Astra:** When times were toughest, the Church DID help. But they always wanted you to sing hymns for your supper. Not that you have any problems with the priests, but you’d rather put your faith in kings than gods.
- **Cult of Tenebrous:** It’s hard to walk so long in the shadows without noticing that some people SWIM in them. Can they share what they can do with darkness to a humble thief, and is it worth your soul to learn?

Faction Abilities and Feats:

Protected: Your tattoos announce you as a member of the Court to others that walk the underworld. You will never be the victim of a random crime: if you are stolen from or otherwise attacked by the criminal element, you know that someone is after you specifically and deliberately. You have advantage on Charisma checks to convince criminals (even non-Court) to leave you and your allies alone.

Expert Training: Increase an ability score of your choice by +1 (to a maximum of 20), gain proficiency in an additional skill, and gain expertise in a skill in which you are already proficient.

Toughness: Treat your Constitution as 4 higher when calculating hit points.

Class Features

Sneak Attack (as Rogue 1)

Readiness: You have a maximum number of Readiness points equal to your Infiltrator level. You recover these points to their maximum with a long rest, or your proficiency bonus with a short rest. Additionally, when you succeed on a Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom check in a non-combat scene, you recover 1 Readiness point. You may spend a point of Readiness after you Disengage, Dash, Dodge, Help, or Hide to take an Attack or Ready as a Bonus action.

Skilled Sneak: You may add 1d6 to any Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom check after you have seen the result. This reduces your available Sneak Attack dice by 1, and you cannot use this ability if you have no Sneak Attack dice available. Your Sneak Attack dice recover to full when you roll Initiative.

Readied Holdouts: You may spend a one or more points of Readiness to have an item of value up to \$10 per point of Readiness spent, and that is small enough to conceal on your person, that was not previously purchased in play or listed on your character sheet. Additionally, you may spend 2 Readiness to reroll a failed crafting check for crafting items of size Tiny or smaller (i.e., small enough to conceal on your person).

Ready for Glory: When you roll a natural 19, you may spend a point of Readiness to treat it as a natural 20. At 11th level, you can spend a point of Readiness to turn an 18 into a 20 as well.

Sneaky Influence: When you generate Influence Progress, you may add 1d6 to the Progress. This reduces your available Sneak Attack dice by 1, and you cannot use this ability if you have no Sneak Attack dice available. Your Sneak Attack dice recover to full when you roll Initiative.

Sneak's Defense: As a reaction on taking damage, you may roll half your Sneak Attack dice to reduce the damage by the amount rolled. This cannot reduce the damage below 0.

Always Armed (Level 3 Thief Ability): Starting at 3rd level, you may spend 1 points of Readiness to produce a one-handed, concealable, simple melee weapon (such as a knife or club) or 2 points of Readiness to produce a one-handed, concealable, simple ranged weapon (such as a pistol or one-handed arbalest). You can do this even if you have already been searched for weapons.

These items are customized for concealability, so are not particularly durable or valuable. They are not useful as weapons after 24 hours.

The Bump (Level 3 Thief Ability): At 3rd level, you can use Sleight of Hand to pickpocket a target as a bonus action. In combat, you can attempt to pickpocket someone that is aware of you if an ally is in melee range of the target.



DR. SINGH (DOCTOR)

Faction: Society of Ravens

Name: Dr. (Santokh or Sania) Singh

Secret: Has taken to running a street clinic for the Court of Rats without the permission of the Society of Ravens.

Background: An heir, a spare, and the extras to the church. That's the way it's often done in high society, and it's what your parents expected as well. Your elder siblings were raised to take over the family holdings and businesses, and you went to church school with the hope you'd eventually go to seminary. It didn't take in the way your father hoped.

The school was mostly third-sibling elites like yourself, as well as lesser families trying to get a good education while they made contacts, but the Church let in more income brackets than your parents suspected. You met people that were really down on their luck, and whose families had it worse. They even took you on adventures to the dangerous parts of town. You didn't even know how *much* of Shadow City was very dangerous.

One of your friends got shot trying to keep you from being robbed (you would have even given it up, it was only money). And the real miracle worker wasn't anyone at the church, it was the passing doctor kept your protector from bleeding to death. That was when you realized that you could do more good as a doctor than as a priest.

Your father wasn't happy about it, but at least being a doctor has a certain cachet among the Society. He had you lined up to work at a prominent practice that saw to the bumps, bruises, and cosmetic surgeries of the upper class by the time you finished school. You weren't helping anyone, really. So you started working nights out of a back room downtown, fixing up those that needed it.

You didn't realize that you were on Court of Rats turf, taking business away from the folks they paid to pull arbalest bolts out of their people. But you were apparently doing a good enough job to get on the Rat King's list. And, tonight, he's called you in to see what you owe for him not telling your family, or the Society, about what you do with your nights.

Connections: Cormorant was one of the younger priests that taught you at school. Larkin is a client, and you help keep the tissue around their double-leg-replacement from deteriorating.

Other Factions:

- **Court of Rats:** Your life was so charmed that you didn't even realize that there were enough criminals to organize, until they showed up saying they owned your neighborhood. What are you into?
- **Brass Consortium:** In your day job, you performed an elective amputation for a local musician to get a brass arm. It seems ghoulish to replace the flesh you spend so

much work on with metal, but you can't argue with the seeming superiority of their playing.

- **Iron Union:** These are the real folk you hoped to help: honest, hard workers in Shadow City that just don't have the money for a doctor every time they need it. Maybe once you've helped enough, they'll see you as more than just your breeding and money.
- **Church of Astra:** There but for a mugging would have gone you. You have no problems with the missions of the Church; life as a priest just wasn't your destiny. You never even heard the voices of the gods like some of your classmates claimed to.
- **Cult of Tenebrous:** Church school always pointed out the dangers of the darkness. That there are people that would embrace it is slightly terrifying. But you've met a couple in your practice and they seem... fine, honestly. Maybe that's how they get you.

Faction Abilities and Feats

Patronage: You add an extra 1d6 when making a Savings roll. You may shop at stores and enter other establishments only available to the wealthy.

Parliamentary Delivery: You know how to fold a small paper note and leave it on an exterior surface so it will be picked up by one of the city's trained corvids and delivered to the Society of Ravens' nearest messaging point within an hour. This allows you to pass messages secretly and quickly.

Expert Training: Increase an ability score of your choice by +1 (to a maximum of 20), gain proficiency in an additional skill, and gain expertise in a skill in which you are already proficient.

Trained: You are proficient in three additional skills.

Class Features

Expertise (as Rogue 1, Int or Wis skills only)

Tricks of the Trade: Gain Spells Known, Spell Slots, Slot Level as a Warlock of the same level (no cantrips), with slots recovering as per Pact Magic. Spells have no basic material components, Verbal and Somatic components are limited to words and gestures used to convince people to do/believe things/hide the trick, and are limited to spells that can represent stage magic, mesmerism, preparedness, and smarts. Spellcasting ability is Intelligence. If the spell has a costly material component, it consumes that amount of dollars as some kind of miscellaneous expensive device needed for the trick.

Superior Intelligence: You gain four superiority dice, which begin as d6s. At 7th and 13th level, you gain an additional die. At 5th level they improve to d8s. At 11th they improve to d10s. At 15th they improve to d12s. You expend these dice to use

them on maneuvers, and recover all of them when you take a short or long rest. You start with the following maneuvers:

- **Superior Investigator:** You can add a single superiority die to any Wisdom or Intelligence checks after you have seen the result of the roll.
- **Superior Manipulator:** You can add a single superiority die to the Progress on any Influence roll if you were present in the scene.
- **Superior Aim:** You can add a single superiority die to an attack roll you make, after you have seen the result. Instead, as a reaction when an ally whose target you can see and that can hear you makes an attack roll, you can allow them to add one of your superiority dice to their attack roll (before they roll).

Eye for Flaws: When you are crafting or assisting with crafting, the crafter rerolls 1s on both skill and progress checks. You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks to determine character flaws and on Wisdom (Perception) checks to find physical weak spots.

Additionally, you can use a Bonus Action to study a creature in combat. Until the end of your next turn, you have advantage on attack rolls against the creature, and it has disadvantage on saving throws against your spells and abilities. If you use this as an action instead of a bonus action, one creature of your choice that can see or hear you can benefit from this feature (as you call out these flaws to them).

Additional Maneuvers: Choose one of the following maneuvers. You can choose an additional one at levels 9, 13, and 17.

- **Tactician:** Expend a superiority die to make the Help action as a bonus action. The ally you are helping adds your superiority die to their result in addition to the advantage.

Tricks of a Healer (Level 3 Doctor Ability)

When you gain this subclass at 3rd level, add Cure Wounds and Prayer of Healing to your spell list.

Superior Medicine (Level 3 Doctor Ability)

Starting at 3rd level, when you use Superior Investigator to improve the result of a Medicine check, the target also heals a number of hit points equal to the result of your Superiority die.

Doctor's Mask (Level 3 Doctor Ability)

At 3rd level, you have advantage on saving throws against airborne toxins or diseases. This is usually granted by your signature raven mask, but you know how to quickly use spare cloth or even the top of your shirt if you don't have your mask.



DAX DUNFIELD (ENFORCER)

Faction: Iron Union

Name: Dax Dunfield

Secret: Partner ran up debts to the Court of Rats and you took on their debt to save them.

Background: Your parents died young. Wasting disease for you mother. Industrial accident for your father. But the Union provides. There's always a need for small hands to reach into cramped machinery, and they owed your dad's benefits to you anyway. When you lost your own arm before you hit puberty, in almost the same kind of accident that killed your father, the Union provided then, too.

Despite growing up with it, working on the machines was never really something you aspired to. Especially with as much evidence you have about how dangerous the gears are. You were growing up strong, though, and if you didn't want to shift iron in the normal way, there was space for you to do it more metaphorically. Union contracts don't always enforce themselves.

Honestly, all of that was just a sideline to you. Despite the giant metal prosthetic arm, it was easy to leave your job at the door. Union work paid for a comfortable apartment and life there as the head of a family. You're going to be there for your kids and redeem the loss of your parents. Every time you play ball with your son after school, the fact that you have to spend your nights breaking kneecaps is easy to ignore.

Unfortunately, your paycheck didn't go as far toward the urban idyll as you thought it did. Turns out, you've been drowning in bills for the apartment, the better school, and day-to-day existence in Shadow City. Your partner took out a pretty big loan to pay for it, and it came from some people you'd prefer not to deal with. Maybe the loan was only extended because the Rat King knew you'd do anything to save your family, including taking odd jobs like tonight's, to make sure the payments don't come due...

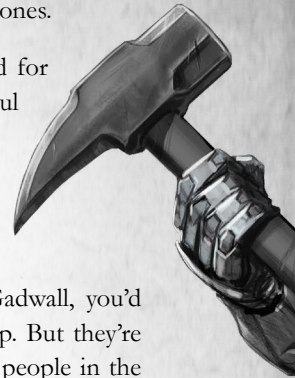
Connections: Cormorant is the junior priest at your temple, and you've bonded over similar cultural heritage. Gadwall is a detective that helps you track down people that owe back dues to the Union, and provides some illicit chemistry to the Union that you serve as middleman for.

Other Factions:

- **Society of Ravens:** Maybe if you put your kids through school, they make the right contacts, and marry someone rich enough, their kids could be so wealthy as to be part of a secret society of rich folk. It's a nice dream.
- **Court of Rats:** It's not like it's hard to get a Union job, if you're willing to put in the work and take the risk. You're not the biggest fan of those that organize around

what they've stolen from others. Especially now that your family is under their thumb.

- **Brass Consortium:** You have as much fun as anyone playing up the "rivalry" between Brass and Iron, but at the end of the day, service professions deserve guild representation as much as manufacturing ones.
- **Church of Astra:** While the Union paid for you to live, the Church helped your soul to heal from your parents' deaths, and the loss of your arm. At times, you almost felt like you could hear the gods whispering in your mind.
- **Cult of Tenebrous:** Before you met Gadwall, you'd have been firmly against cult membership. But they're easy to work with, and more than a few people in the Union use the chemicals only they seem to be able to brew up.



Faction Abilities and Feats

Union Contracts: You treat 1s and 2s on Savings rolls as 3s. You have advantage on checks to source crafting materials or other legal but hard-to-find material goods and equipment.

Iron Prosthetic: Iron prosthetics, even when upgraded, never count against your turnstone attunement limit. Additionally, you have an iron prosthetic (one arm or leg) with its basic features; you may choose one from the Equipment chapter, or use the standard option below. This prosthetic is in addition to your normal starting equipment. You may choose to start without needing a prosthetic, but can have a basic one installed for free by the Union if you wind up needing one during play.

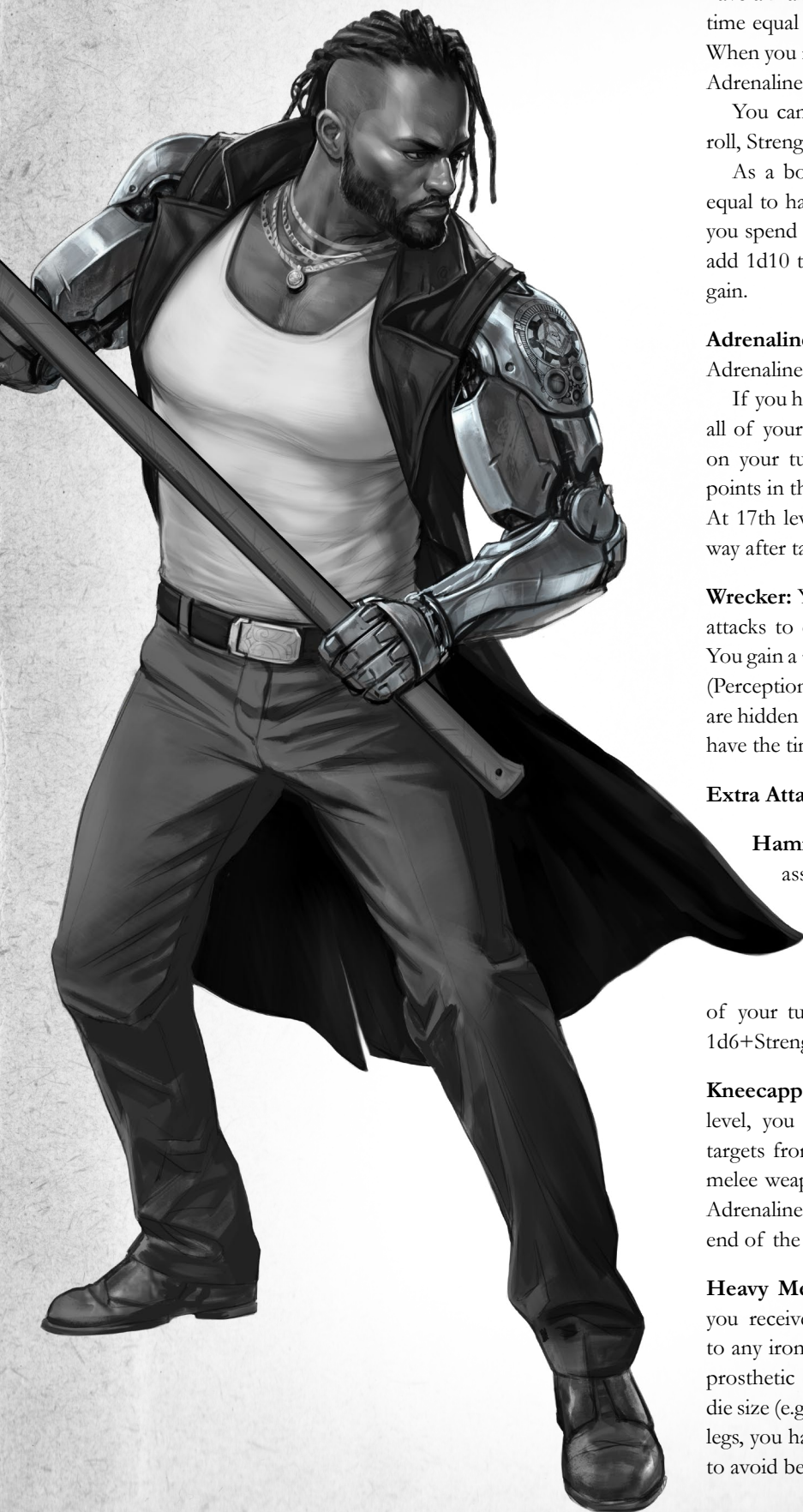
Iron Arm (Standard Iron Prosthetic): You add +1d4 to your Strength (Athletics) checks, rolls made to initiate or maintain a grapple, and tool proficiency checks that use Strength. Your unarmed strikes with the arm do 1d4 damage (or increase the damage die by one size if your unarmed strikes already do increased damage).

Toughness: Treat your Constitution as 4 higher when calculating hit points.

Well-Protected: Increase Strength or Constitution by +1 (to a maximum of 20). While wearing armor, you can reduce incoming bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage by 3.

Class Features

No, You Move: You can Shove as a bonus action. Additionally, when an Influence project loses Progress due to the actions of your enemies, you can spend a Gladhanding period to regain half of the lost Progress.



Adrenaline: Once per turn when you take damage, gain a point of Adrenaline. If an attack scores a Critical Hit against you, gain two points of Adrenaline instead. You may have a maximum number of Adrenaline points at any one time equal to your Strength bonus plus Proficiency bonus. When you finish a short or long rest, you lose any remaining Adrenaline points.

You can spend 2 Adrenaline points to reroll a damage roll, Strength (Athletics) check, or Strength saving throw.

As a bonus action, you can gain temporary hit points equal to half your number of levels in the Heavy class. If you spend 1 Adrenaline point as part of this bonus action, add 1d10 to the number of temporary hit points that you gain.

Adrenaline Surge: As a bonus action, you can spend 1 Adrenaline point to Dash, Disengage, or Dodge.

If you have at least 5 points of Adrenaline, you can spend all of your Adrenaline points to take an additional Action on your turn. Once you do, you can't spend Adrenaline points in this way again until you finish a short or long rest. At 17th level, your Adrenaline is no longer limited in this way after taking an extra action.

Wrecker: You have advantage on Strength-based checks or attacks to damage objects or break through obstructions. You gain a +5 bonus to Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Perception), and passive Perception to notice things that are hidden under furniture or other heavy obstacles that you have the time to move.

Extra Attack (as Fighter 5)

Hammer and Tongs: When you are crafting or assisting with a craft project, any Strength-based crafting checks gain an additional 1d6 Progress if successful.

When you are grappling a target at the start of your turn, you can spend 1 Adrenaline point to deal 1d6+Strength modifier bludgeoning damage to the target.

Kneecapper (Level 3 Enforcer Ability): Starting at 3rd level, you learn to use hammering blows to keep your targets from getting away from you. When you hit with a melee weapon attack or Unarmed Strike, you can spend 1 Adrenaline point to reduce their speed by 10 feet until the end of the target's next turn.

Heavy Metal (Level 3 Enforcer Ability): At 3rd level, you receive the Iron Union's Enforcer upgrade package to any iron prosthetics you have. If you have one or more prosthetic arms, unarmed attacks with them increase by a die size (e.g., 1d4 to 1d6). If you have one or more prosthetic legs, you have advantage on ability checks or saving throws to avoid being pushed.

LARKIN (ENTERTAINER)

Faction: Brass Consortium

Name: (Leono or Lucica) Larkin

Secret: Caught fleeing one of the King's knights. Knight was killed by the Rat King for operational security, You were spared but you owe the Rat King your life.

Background: Where you grew up, there wasn't much use for music and dancing. The uses that backwoods folk could find for someone clearly about to grow up attractive and artistic weren't anything you wanted to consider. Best-case scenario was a trophy marriage to the town priest, using your beauty as a sign of the grace the gods had bestowed. Best case.

By the time you figured out how to hop a train in a way your cousins couldn't track you down and drag you back, you were riding the rails into Soreta. Shadow City: if you can't make it here, you can't make it anywhere. You were trying to prove that true. Despite the advantage of a pretty face, you clearly didn't fit into the social classes you wanted. Years of talking your way out of problems (read: almost pathological lying and grifting) weren't serving you well in a place where everyone was connected. A career as a dancer seemed out of reach after you pissed off someone powerful enough to have your kneecaps broken.

Then it all turned around. You met someone very willing to ignore your country manners and fund your dreams as a cost of dating you. Within a couple of years you had the Brass Consortium membership papers. You had your crippled legs replaced with brass prosthetics that worked better than your original ones ever had. You were getting into the better sorts of clubs and running the better sorts of short cons on the patrons.

It's an open secret that many members of the Consortium dip their fingers into pockets while they're working. Some even dip their knives into backs, for a paycheck, so your faction didn't mind you making extra cash with grifting. But the real criminals did. Turned out you were working Court of Rats turf. More importantly, all the cash gifts your favorite friend had been giving you weren't from their own bank account.

You got stood up for a date. Then you learned you'd never be seeing your special friend again. The guys that showed up instead weren't just going to break your brass kneecaps this time. You convinced them that you hadn't learned any Court of Rats secrets from pillow talk, but not that you hadn't been running a long con to deplete a very valuable business account (and bring it to the attention of the city authorities).

The Rat King says you owe him. He's already killed your best mark, and he's been forcing you to run cons for him, the last few weeks, and you don't even get to keep the spoils. Maybe tonight he'll tell you what he wants, so he'll stop constantly threatening to kill you too.

Connections: Bittersea has been on several of the jobs the Rat King has given you, a thief working the back of house while you distract the front. Dr. Singh is the doctor you see to make sure nothing goes wrong with your prosthetics; you've heard horror stories about what can happen to the edges where flesh becomes machine.

Other Factions:

- **Society of Ravens:** With your country manners, you could never make it into the orbit of the true upper classes of Shadow City. That's a shame. Just grifting one of them might be enough to set you for life.
- **Court of Rats:** Maybe you should have joined the Court when you came to town. Would you be safer as a criminal that danced than you are as a dancer that does crimes? You don't think you'd like to be fully reliant on the King for your safety.
- **Iron Union:** Most of the Union seems to look down on the Consortium as "soft skills" that are not nearly as dangerous as what they do. Honestly, you'd rather risk your arm in a machine than with what some patrons want you to do with it.
- **Church of Astra:** In your small town, the priest ran the place like his fiefdom, and that memory has stuck. The Church folk in Shadow City aren't as overt about their control, but you bet it's still there.
- **Cult of Tenebrous:** With as much heat as you have from all your other illicit activities, slumming with a cult seems like it would bring even more powerful and unwanted attention. They do have the best drugs, though...

Faction Abilities and Feats

The Service Entrance: The Brass Consortium is well known as the foremost purveyors of entertainers. You have advantage on Influence rolls to pick up a particular job as an entertainer, and advantage on Charisma (Deception) rolls to *pretend* to be part of the entertainment to access a location.

Brass Prosthetic: Brass prosthetics, even when upgraded, never count against your turnstone attunement limit. Additionally, you have a brass prosthetic (one arm or leg) with its basic features; you may choose one from the Equipment chapter, or use the standard option below. This prosthetic is in addition to your normal starting equipment. You may choose to start without needing a prosthetic, but can have a basic one installed for free by the Consortium if you wind up needing one during play.

Brass Leg (Standard Brass Prosthetic): You add +1d4 to your Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks and Performance checks to dance. Increase your movement speed by 5 feet.



Expert Training: Increase an ability score of your choice by +1 (to a maximum of 20), gain proficiency in an additional skill, and gain expertise in a skill in which you are already proficient.

Trained: You are proficient in three additional skills.

Class Features

Encouragement (as Bardic Inspiration, Bard 1)

Not in the Face (as Uncanny Dodge, Rogue 5 and Unarmored Defense, Monk 1, using Cha)

Witness Testimony: When you interview a witness, you gain an additional clue (which could be something they are hiding or would have otherwise failed to mention) when you gain information.

Expertise (as Bard 3, two Cha skills only)

Cheap Shot: Add a die equal to the size of your Encouragement die to your damage when you attack a target that did not attack you or force you to make a saving throw since your last turn.

Group Encouragement: As a bonus action, you can expend an Encouragement die to grant all allies within 30 feet of you temporary hit points equal to the number rolled on the die. At 7th level, after you've used this ability, it automatically refreshes at the beginning of your next turn if you are not incapacitated. At 13th level, it refreshes on multiple turns, triggering a number of times up to your proficiency bonus.

Eye for a Bargain: When you are crafting or assisting with a crafting project, reduce the materials cost by 10%.

Making Friends: You have advantage on Charisma checks against any target that currently has one of your Encouragement dice. When you gain Progress toward an Influence project, roll a die the size of your Encouragement die and add it to the Progress generated.

Always Ready: You can use the Ready action as a bonus action, instead of an action.

Leaving the Limelight (Level 3 Entertainer Ability): When you are missed by a ranged attack, you may use your reaction to move up to half your speed. When you use Not in the Face to reduce the damage from a melee attack, as part of that reaction you can choose to be shoved five feet away from your attacker in a direction of your choice.

Spring in your Step (Level 3 Entertainer Ability): At 3rd level, you are given the Brass Consortium's entertainer upgrade package to any brass prosthetics you have. If you have one or more prosthetic arms, you gain +1 attack bonus with thrown or finesse weapons wielded in that arm. If you have one or more prosthetic legs, you double your jump distance and halve falling damage.

CORMORANT (MINDSPEAKER)

Faction: Church of Astra

Name: (Curtal or Celianna) Cormorant

Secret: The Church requires some ancient treaties showing ownership of a particular artifact. Through means unknown the Rat King possesses them, and he will turn them over for this favor.

Background: Growing up on a farm was an excellent early education for being a member of the Church. After all, both are about ministering to a flock.

Little aphorisms like that have served you well on your rise through the ranks. In truth, you hated farm life. Getting up at dawn, mucking out stables, harvesting, and just on and on. You'd planned to get out as soon as you could, regardless. Get to the city. Find a profession that let you wake up closer to noon, and never have to lift anything heavy or gross again. You figured maybe you'd make it as a chef, since you're good enough at it (and can eventually have helpers to do the lifting and rendering).

It was just good fortune that you heard the voice of the gods so strongly. Some might even call it destiny. You certainly do.

Despite what they like to tell everyone, the Church actually has few enough who are able to work miracles that your gifts are enough to see you working your way up the ranks. But you're also good at giving a sermon of folksy platitudes, and can cook up a lovely meal for the high-value congregants. It doesn't hurt that you don't exactly have a questioning mind, taking the Church's teachings at face value and never questioning their social impact.

Tonight is your chance to get inducted into the real mysteries. The Rat King has some documentation that one of your superiors wants, and you're the one to do the favor to get it. Hopefully he's not asking you to do anything too shady. Or that requires heavy lifting, or touching gross stuff.

Connections: You taught Dr. Singh as a teen in the church's school, while you were a young priest, and haven't seen them since. Dunfield is part of your temple, and you've socialized over your shared cultural heritage.

Other Factions:

Society of Ravens: The tithes of the wealthy are how your temple keeps you in nice robes, so who cares if they play at being petty nobility? The Church is clearly the real power in this world.

- **Court of Rats:** You once found a pair of rats in a barn with their tails tangled together. They didn't seem any smarter for it. There's a proverb there, but you have enough sense not to say it to the Rat King himself.

- **Brass Consortium:** One of the highlights of living in Soreta is the quality of entertainment. A shocking amount of your spending money goes to buskers and club performers these days.

- **Iron Union:** Your temple is in a Union neighborhood, and they seem like the city equivalent of the farmers you grew up with. With their big metal arms, they're thrilled to lift the heavy stuff so you don't have to.

- **Cult of Tenebrous:** You fully agree with the preaching about the danger of interacting with cultists. But if the Rat King is going to test you by including one with this favor, your soul is secure enough to work with one. You probably won't even mention who it is to your superiors, lest they ask further questions about your involvement.

Faction Abilities and Feats

True Faith: When you fail a saving throw, you can choose to succeed instead. You may use this ability once per Long Rest.

Iron Mind: You have Resistance to Psychic damage, and advantage on saving throws vs effects that would cause you to become Charmed or Frightened.

Cooking Expert: Increase an ability score of your choice by +1 (to a maximum of 20), and gain proficiency with cook's utensils.

When you prepare a meal as part of a short rest, you and your allies heal before expending hit dice as if you had used a doctor's kit on each of them (your roll on your cook's utensils check replaces the Medicine roll).

When you prepare a meal as part of a long rest, you and your allies start the next day with temporary hit points equal to your proficiency bonus (or double your bonus if you have expertise in cook's utensils).

Trained: You are proficient in three additional skills.

Class Features

Mystic Sense: You learn the *detect magic* spell. You can cast this spell as a ritual, or with any slots you have of the appropriate level. With a successful Wisdom (Perception) roll, you can intuit that this is something mystical in an area, which might justify casting *detect magic* to further investigate.

Spellcasting: Cantrips, Spells Known, and Spell Slots per Spell Level as per a Sorcerer, with Wisdom as the casting ability score. Can cast rituals.

Spectrum Attunement: You can meditate on the colors that you can still see in the mystical pieces of the world, aligning yourself with their meaning. You can change your Spectrum Attunement as part of a short or long rest, switching to a different attunement or having none.

Red: The color of passion and war, a red attunement allows you to add your Wisdom modifier to cantrips or spells you cast that deal damage. It grants you advantage on Charisma checks you make while your target is highly emotional or impassioned. You have disadvantage on saving throws against effects that would affect your emotions, such as charmed or frightened.

Blue: The color of peace and reflection, a blue attunement allows you to impose disadvantage on any saving throws against your spells that read minds or calm emotions. Meanwhile, you have advantage on saving throws to resist charmed, frightened, or attempts to read your own mind. It grants you advantage on Charisma checks you make while your target is calm. You have vulnerability to fire damage, and roll Initiative with disadvantage.

Green: The color of nature and life, a green attunement allows you to reroll one or more dice for healing spells you cast (you must keep the new result) and impose disadvantage on any saving throws against any spell cast on plants or beasts. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) and Intelligence (Investigation) checks in woods, lawns, gardens, or other areas with an abundance of plant life. You have vulnerability to cold and necrotic damage.

The Substance: You have an intuitive understanding of turnstone. When crafting or assisting with a crafting project that uses turnstone, materials costs are reduced by 10% and you have advantage on Wisdom-based crafting checks.

Gold Attunement (Level 3 Mindspeaker Ability): Starting at level 3, you additionally have the option to choose gold with your Spectrum Attunement ability.

Gold: The color of stars and turnstone, a gold attunement allows you to impose disadvantage on any saving throws against your spells when your target is beneath the open sky. Meanwhile, you have advantage on saving throws against spells yourself when in the open in this way. It grants you advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks you make against those who are religious. You leak emotions that even the unsensitive can pick up on, imposing disadvantage on your Charisma (Deception) checks and giving others advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks against you.

Preacher's Power (Level 3 Mindspeaker Ability): At 3rd level, you may add three additional spells known of your choice. They must be from the enchantment school, but do not have to be from the Mystic spell list. You can change one of these choices every time you gain a new level in the Mystic class.



GADWALL (UMBRAL ALCHEMIST)

Faction: Cult of Tenebrous

Name: (Gordy or Geminna) Gadwall

Secret: You require a shipment of rare materials in the possession of the Rat King, and you made this deal to acquire it.

Background: It all started with a dame. Dark hair, darker eyes, and words that spoke blasphemy and made it sound like the ringing of church bells. Enough to make a person drink deep of the shadows to just stay a little longer in her presence.

Well, it started a little earlier. The East End neighborhood where you were born is where the fifth-generation poor meet the immigrant poor. So many shadows there. Maybe you have to love the darkness a little, or you'll go mad in it. You thought you'd gotten out, started a business in a better part of the city. But you always knew the gods weren't looking out for you and your people. Maybe a goddess would.

You never had the connections or the charisma to join the city police force, but you were smart and willing to grind it out. There's a lot of work out there for a private detective that doesn't know when to quit. Especially when your hourly rate is cheap and you'll find the facts sooner or later. You're a pursuit predator: eventually your quarry gets tired of you following and just gives up.

Forensics, that's where the real money is. But without the city's resources, you needed to set up your own lab. Might as well make your own gunpowder while you had the chemistry set out, and everything. When that curvy silhouette eclipsed the nameplate on your frosted glass door, it was probably as much because you were onto something in the chemistry as that you were a great detective.

It's hard work, owing your loyalty to the faction that the Church would like to burn at the stake, like the old times. They'd better take your coat before they do, or they're not going to enjoy the blast radius. It's fine, though, you're respectable. Private investigator work is an easy way to stick to the metaphorical shadows in the same way you do the mystical ones.

Tonight's gig is risky. There might be more upstanding folks around, maybe including a member of the Church, who could have issues if they figure out what faction you represent. But the Rat King claims to have records from before the goddess was defeated, in a folio of the purest purple. The Cult would appreciate you getting your hands on it. Maybe that sultry shadow will come back over to pick it up personally, and tell you exactly how grateful she is.

Connections: Bittersea is a peer from old East End, and seems to be in good with the Rat King; maybe you can rekindle your childhood friendship. Dunfield has employed you a few times to help track down people that skipped out of a Union contract.

Other Factions:

- **Society of Ravens:** You wonder what kind of secret parties the rich have to give meaning to their lives of indolence. "Don't say 'indolence' to their faces."—a more socially-adept friend insisted you write that in your notebook if you wanted to get paid.
- **Court of Rats:** From their place in the city, your faction is looking UP at the criminals. If there's going to be crime, it's good it's organized. Makes it easier to know who to talk to when someone wants to pay to find a criminal.
- **Brass Consortium:** You've never really had much of an ear for music, or the charm to chat up a singer. Honestly, you can't help but look at those expensive brass prosthetics and think about how much alchemical turnstone powder you'd get out of grinding one down.
- **Iron Union:** Your main clients come from the industrial middle class. Just don't let a cheating spouse with a mechanical punching arm find out you were the one that got the photos.
- **Church of Astra:** There's a sin perched atop the world, and everyone smiles in its glory and calls it good. Fixing things is above your pay grade. Best to stay in the shadows away from that terrible light.

Faction Abilities and Feats

Signs and Portents: Your dreams come with obscure warnings, that often give you an edge at just the right moment when what you dreamed of becomes clear. Roll 1d20 and record the number. When you roll that number on a d20 roll, you can expend the ability to reroll the die and take the better result. Or, when you make any d20 roll, you may expend the ability to use the recorded number instead of your actual result. You may not use this ability again until your next long rest, and the number is re-rolled after every long rest.

Shadowsight: You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Quick Healer: Increase Strength or Constitution by +1 (to a maximum of 20). Add your Constitution modifier (minimum 1) to all rolls to restore hit points (i.e., from hit dice, medicine, or magic).

Toughness: Treat your Constitution as 4 higher when calculating hit points.

Class Features

Handcrafted Proficiency: You are proficient in the use of any martial weapon, medium armor, or heavy armor that you craft or repair.

Expertise: Choose one of your proficient skills and one of your proficient types of artisan's tool. You add twice your proficiency bonus to checks you make with that skill and that artisan's tool.



Second Wind (as Fighter 1): You possess deep wells of resolve that see you through dangerous situations. As a bonus action, you can use a Second Wind to regain hit points equal to $1d10 +$ your Maker level. You can use this feature once, and regain the use of it when you finish a short rest.

Forensics: You gain advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to investigate physical items that would be created by a tool proficiency you have, such as poisons or drugs if you have proficiency with alchemist's supplies.

Custom Weapon: Weapons you craft gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls when you wield them. This improves to a +2 bonus at 7th level and a +3 bonus at 13th level. Additionally, at 11th level, the weapons do an extra $d8$ damage (of their damage type) with every hit.

Vicious Strike: When you hit with an attack, you can take 4 damage that can't be resisted. If you do, your attack deals an additional $2d8$ damage.

Ring Giver: When you give an appropriate gift as part of a social encounter, add its Rank (see the crafting system) to the Progress generated for that particular Influence project. At 11th level, add twice the gift's Rank instead.

Extra Attack (as Fighter 5, only with weapons you've crafted)

Pre-Battle Tune Up: As part of a short or long rest, you can improve you and your allies' gear for the next fight by cleaning, refitting, and generally fixing. You can work on a number of characters' gear equal to your Con modifier. The next attack roll made with a weapon by an affected target has advantage, and the next attack roll against an affected target (if they're wearing armor) is made with disadvantage. This improvement disappears if not used before the next short or long rest. At 18th level, these improvements last for the next two attacks.

Purple Smoke (Level 3 Umbral Alchemist Ability): When you become an umbral alchemist at 3rd level, you learn the secrets of infusing the power of turnstone into gunpowder. You may craft firearms ammunition at double the usual cost (to account for the cost of adding solargium) to make alchemical ammunition. Shots fired with ammunition treated in this manner do an extra $1d6$ damage of their normal type. They produce a distinctive purple smoke.

Powder treated in this way is unstable, so ammunition treated in this way has a 50% chance of turning back into normal ammunition with each dawn.

For no cost, you are able to have one full load of alchemical ammunition for one of your weapons after each long rest, that you make from spare components.

SHADOW CITY

MYSTERIES

CHARACTER NAME
Bittersea
FACTION
Court of Rats

STRENGTH	
-1	8
<input type="checkbox"/> -1 SAVING THROWS	
<input type="checkbox"/> -1 ATHLETICS	

DEXTERITY	
+4	18
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 SAVING THROWS	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 ACROBATICS	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 SLEIGHT OF HAND	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 STEALTH	

CONSTITUTION	
+0	10
<input type="checkbox"/> +0 SAVING THROWS	

ARMOR RATING	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM
<input type="checkbox"/> HEAVY	<input type="checkbox"/> SHIELDS

HIT DICE	
MAXIMUM	SPENT
5d8	

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMPLE	<input type="checkbox"/> MARTIAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RANGE	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

INITIATIVE	SPEED
+4	30 ft.

HIT PONTS	
MAXIMUM	TEMPORARY
38	

TOOL PROFICIENCIES	
Thieves' Tools, Disguise Kit	

ARMOR CLASS	
16	
SHIELD	ARMOR
	light

DEATH SAVES	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	SUCCESSSES
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	FAILURES

CLASS FEATURES	
Sneak Attack (+3db), Readiness (0 0 0 0 0), Skilled Sneak, Readied Holdouts, Always Armed, The Bump, Ready for Glory, Sneaky Influence, Sneak's Defense	

FEATS & TRAITS	
Toughness, Protected, Expert Training	

HEROIC INSPIRATION <input type="checkbox"/>

	CLASS	LEVEL
	Infiltrator (Thief)	5
	BACKGROUND	EXPERIENCE
	East Ender	

PROFICIENCY BONUS	
+3	
PASSIVE PERCEPTION	15
PASSIVE INSIGHT	15

INTELLIGENCE	
+2	14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> +2 ARCANA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 HISTORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 INVESTIGATION <input type="checkbox"/> +2 NATURE <input type="checkbox"/> +2 RELIGION	

WISDOM	
+2	14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> +2 ANIMAL HANDLING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 INSIGHT <input type="checkbox"/> +2 MEDICINE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 PERCEPTION <input type="checkbox"/> +2 SURVIVAL	

CHARISMA	
+0	10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +3 SAVING THROWS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +3 DECEPTION <input type="checkbox"/> +0 INTIMIDATION <input type="checkbox"/> +0 PERFORMANCE <input type="checkbox"/> +0 PERSUASION	

WEAPONS & OTHER ATTACKS			
NAME	BONUS/DC	DAMAGE TYPE	NOTES
Pistol	+11	1d4+4 B	5 shots, Conspicuous, Ballistic
Light Arbalest	+8	3d6+4 P	Winding
Knife	+8	1d4+4 S	

LIFE STYLE RATING	
10 (+0)	
INFLUENCE BONUSES	
Sneaky Influence	
PROJECTS	PROGRESS

EQUIPMENT
Thieves' Tools Disguise Kit

CASH	\$100
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SHADOW CITY MYSTERIES

CHARACTER NAME
Dr. Singh
FACTION
Society of Ravens

STRENGTH	
+2	14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2	SAVING THROWS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5	ATHLETICS

DEXTERITY	
-1	8
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +2	SAVING THROWS
<input type="checkbox"/> -1	ACROBATICS
<input type="checkbox"/> -1	SLEIGHT OF HAND
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +2	STEALTH

CONSTITUTION	
+1	12
<input type="checkbox"/> +1	SAVING THROWS

ARMOR RATING	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM
<input type="checkbox"/> HEAVY	<input type="checkbox"/> SHIELDS

HIT DICE	
MAXIMUM	SPENT
5d8	

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMPLE	<input type="checkbox"/> MARTIAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RANGE	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

INITIATIVE	SPEED
-1	30 ft.

HIT PONTS	
MAXIMUM	TEMPORARY
33	

TOOL PROFICIENCIES	
Disguise Kit, Alchemist's Supplies	

ARMOR CLASS	
11	
SHIELD	ARMOR
	Light

DEATH SAVES	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	SUCCESSSES
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	FAILURES

CLASS FEATURES
<p>Expertise, Tricks of the Trade, Superior Intelligence (4db), Tricks of a Healer, Superior Medicine, Doctor's Mask, Eye for Flaws, Additional Maneuver (Tactician)</p> <p>Tricks of the Trade (Ability Int, Save DC 15, Attack Bonus +7) 2 per short rest (cast at 3rd level) from: 1) Cure Wounds, Disguise Self, Heroism, Sanctuary 2) Enhance Ability, Lessor Restoration, Prayer of Healing 3) Revivify (costs 300)</p>

FEATS & TRAITS
Trained, Patronage, Parliamentary Delivery, Expert Training

HEROIC INSPIRATION <input type="checkbox"/>

	CLASS	LEVEL
	Savant (Doctor)	5
	BACKGROUND	EXPERIENCE
	Church School	

PROFICENCY BONUS	
+3	
PASSIVE PERCEPTION	18
PASSIVE INSIGHT	15

INTELLIGENCE	
+4	18
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 SAVING THROWS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 ARCANA <input type="checkbox"/> +4 HISTORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +10 INVESTIGATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 NATURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 RELIGION	

WISDOM	
+2	14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> +2 ANIMAL HANDLING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 INSIGHT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +8 MEDICINE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +8 PERCEPTION <input type="checkbox"/> +2 SURVIVAL	

CHARISMA	
+0	10
<input type="checkbox"/> +0 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> +0 DECEPTION <input type="checkbox"/> +0 INTIMIDATION <input type="checkbox"/> +0 PERFORMANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +3 PERSUASION	

WEAPONS & OTHER ATTACKS			
NAME	BONUS/DC	DAMAGE TYPE	NOTES
Automatic Bonesaw	+5	1d12+2 S	
Hand Arbalest	+2	3d4-1 P	Winding

LIFE STYLE RATING
14 (+2)

INFLUENCE BONUSES
Lifestyle +2, Superior Manipulator

PROJECTS	PROGRESS

EQUIPMENT
Doctor's Kit Disguise Kit Alchemist's Supplies

CASH	\$500
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SHADOW CITY

MYSTERIES

STRENGTH	
+4	18
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7	SAVING THROWS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7	ATHLETICS

ARMOR RATING	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIGHT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HEAVY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SHIELDS

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMPLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MARTIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> RANGE	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

TOOL PROFICIENCIES	

DEXTERITY	
-1	8
<input type="checkbox"/> -1	SAVING THROWS
<input type="checkbox"/> -1	ACROBATICS
<input type="checkbox"/> -1	SLEIGHT OF HAND
<input type="checkbox"/> -1	STEALTH

INITIATIVE	SPEED
-1	30 ft.

ARMOR CLASS	
17	
SHIELD	ARMOR
	heavy

CHARACTER NAME
Dax Dunfield
FACTION
Iron Union

CONSTITUTION	
+2	14
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5	SAVING THROWS

HIT DICE	
MAXIMUM	SPENT
5d10	

HIT PONTS	
MAXIMUM	TEMPORARY
54	

DEATH SAVES	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	SUCCESSSES
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	FAILURES

CLASS FEATURES
No, You Move; Adrenaline (0 0 0 0 0 0); Adrenaline Surge; Wrecker; Kneecapper; Heavy Metal; Extra Attack; Hammer and Tongs

FEATS & TRAITS
Toughness, Union Contracts, Iron Prosthetic Arm, Well-Protected (-3 damage from Bludgeoning, Slashing, and Piercing)

HEROIC INSPIRATION <input type="checkbox"/>

	CLASS	LEVEL
	Heavy (Enforcer)	5
	BACKGROUND	EXPERIENCE
	Orphan	

PROFICENCY BONUS	
+3	
PASSIVE PERCEPTION	15
PASSIVE INSIGHT	15

INTELLIGENCE	
+0	10
<input type="checkbox"/> +0 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> +0 ARCANA <input type="checkbox"/> +0 HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/> +0 INVESTIGATION <input type="checkbox"/> +0 NATURE <input type="checkbox"/> +0 RELIGION	

WISDOM	
+2	14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> +2 ANIMAL HANDLING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 INSIGHT <input type="checkbox"/> +2 MEDICINE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 PERCEPTION <input type="checkbox"/> +2 SURVIVAL	

CHARISMA	
+1	12
<input type="checkbox"/> +1 SAVING THROWS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +4 DECEPTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +4 INTIMIDATION <input type="checkbox"/> +1 PERFORMANCE <input type="checkbox"/> +1 PERSUASION	

WEAPONS & OTHER ATTACKS			
NAME	BONUS/DC	DAMAGE TYPE	NOTES
Unarmed Strike	+7	1d6+4 B	
Maul	+7	2d6+4 B	

LIFE STYLE RATING
10 (+0)
INFLUENCE BONUSES
No, You Move

EQUIPMENT

PROJECTS	PROGRESS

CASH	\$100
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SHADOW CITY

MYSTERIES

STRENGTH	
+0	10
<input type="checkbox"/> +0	SAVING THROWS
<input type="checkbox"/> +0	ATHLETICS

ARMOR RATING	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM
<input type="checkbox"/> HEAVY	<input type="checkbox"/> SHIELDS

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMPLE	<input type="checkbox"/> MARTIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> RANGE	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

TOOL PROFICIENCIES
Disguise Kit, Tinker's Tools

DEXTERITY	
+2	14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2	SAVING THROWS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +8	ACROBATICS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5	SLEIGHT OF HAND
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5	STEALTH

INITIATIVE	SPEED
+4	35 ft.

ARMOR CLASS	
16	
SHIELD	ARMOR
	NitF

CLASS FEATURES
Encouragement (d8 - 0 0 0 0), Not in the Face, Witness Testimony, Expertise, Cheap Shot (+1d8), Group Encouragement, Eye for a Bargain, Leaving the Limelight, Spring in your Step, Making Friends, Always Ready

CHARACTER NAME
Larkin
FACTION
Brass Consortium

CONSTITUTION	
+2	+14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2	SAVING THROWS

HIT DICE	
MAXIMUM	SPENT
5d6	

HIT PONTS	
MAXIMUM	TEMPORARY
32	

DEATH SAVES	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	SUCCESSSES
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	FAILURES

FEATS & TRAITS
Trained, The Service Entrance, Brass Prosthetic Leg, Expert Training

HEROIC INSPIRATION <input type="checkbox"/>

	CLASS	LEVEL
	Face (Entertainer)	5
	BACKGROUND	EXPERIENCE
	Backwoods	

PROFICENCY BONUS	
+3	
PASSIVE PERCEPTION	9
PASSIVE INSIGHT	9

INTELLIGENCE	
+1	12
<input type="checkbox"/> +1 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> +1 ARCANA <input type="checkbox"/> +1 HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/> +1 INVESTIGATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +4 NATURE <input type="checkbox"/> +1 RELIGION	

WISDOM	
-1	8
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +2 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> -1 ANIMAL HANDLING <input type="checkbox"/> -1 INSIGHT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +2 MEDICINE <input type="checkbox"/> -1 PERCEPTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +2 SURVIVAL	

CHARISMA	
+4	18
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 SAVING THROWS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +10 DECEPTION <input type="checkbox"/> +4 INTIMIDATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 PERFORMANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +10 PERSUASION	

WEAPONS & OTHER ATTACKS			
NAME	BONUS/DC	DAMAGE TYPE	NOTES
Knife	+5	1d4+2 S	(four knives, can be thrown at 20/60)
Light Arbalest	+5	3d6+2 P	Winding
Brass Kick	+3	1d4 B	

LIFE STYLE RATING
12 (+1)
INFLUENCE BONUSES
Lifestyle +1, Making Friends

PROJECTS	PROGRESS

EQUIPMENT
Doctor's Kit Disguise Kit Tinker's Tools

CASH	\$300
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SHADOW CITY

MYSTERIES

STRENGTH	
+2	14
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5	SAVING THROWS
<input type="checkbox"/> +2	ATHLETICS

ARMOR RATING	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM
<input type="checkbox"/> HEAVY	<input type="checkbox"/> SHIELDS

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMPLE	<input type="checkbox"/> MARTIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> RANGE	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

TOOL PROFICIENCIES
Cook's Utensils

DEXTERITY	
+0	10
<input type="checkbox"/> +0	SAVING THROWS
<input type="checkbox"/> +0	ACROBATICS
<input type="checkbox"/> +0	SLEIGHT OF HAND
<input type="checkbox"/> +0	STEALTH

INITIATIVE	SPEED
+0	30 ft.

ARMOR CLASS	
12	
SHIELD	ARMOR
	light

CHARACTER NAME
Cormorant
FACTION
Church of Astra

CONSTITUTION	
+1	12
<input type="checkbox"/> +1	SAVING THROWS

HIT DICE	
MAXIMUM	SPENT
5d6	

HIT PONTS	
MAXIMUM	TEMPORARY
32	

DEATH SAVES	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	SUCCESSSES
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	FAILURES

CLASS FEATURES
Mystic Sense, Spellcasting, Spectrum Attunement, Gold Attunement, Preacher's Power, The Substance
Spellcasting (Ability Wis, Save DC 15, Attack Bonus +7)
Cantrips: Guidance, Harrow, Message, Shillelagh, Spare the Dying
1 (4/LR): Animal Friendship, Bless, Command, Detect Magic
2 (3/LR): Aid, Augury, Suggestion, Zone of Truth
3 (2/LR): Fear, Spirit Guardians

FEATS & TRAITS
Trained, True Faith, Iron Mind, Cooking Expert

HEROIC INSPIRATION <input type="checkbox"/>

	CLASS	LEVEL
	Mystic (Mindspeaker)	5
	BACKGROUND	EXPERIENCE
	Farmer	

PROFICENCY BONUS	
+3	
PASSIVE PERCEPTION	17
PASSIVE INSIGHT	17

INTELLIGENCE	
-1	8
<input type="checkbox"/> -1 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> -1 ARCANA <input type="checkbox"/> -1 HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/> -1 INVESTIGATION <input type="checkbox"/> -1 NATURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +2 RELIGION	

WISDOM	
+4	18
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 SAVING THROWS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 ANIMAL HANDLING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 INSIGHT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 MEDICINE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 PERCEPTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7 SURVIVAL	

CHARISMA	
+2	14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2 SAVING THROWS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 DECEPTION <input type="checkbox"/> +2 INTIMIDATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 PERFORMANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 PERSUASION	

WEAPONS & OTHER ATTACKS			
NAME	BONUS/DC	DAMAGE TYPE	NOTES
Staff	+5	1d8+2 B	
Staff (with Shillelagh)	+7	1d8+4 B	
Harrow	15	2d6 Psy	-1d4 to next d20 roll

LIFE STYLE RATING	
12 (+1)	
INFLUENCE BONUSES	
Lifestyle +1	
PROJECTS	PROGRESS

EQUIPMENT	
Doctor's Kit Cook's Utensils	

CASH	300
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SHADOW CITY

MYSTERIES

STRENGTH	
+0	10
<input type="checkbox"/> +0	SAVING THROWS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +3	ATHLETICS

ARMOR RATING	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM
<input type="checkbox"/> HEAVY	<input type="checkbox"/> SHIELDS

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMPLE	<input type="checkbox"/> MARTIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> RANGE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Personal</u>

TOOL PROFICIENCIES
Alchemist's Supplies (Expertise, Advantage), Glassblower's Tools, Gunsmith's Tools

DEXTERITY	
+2	14
<input type="checkbox"/> +2	SAVING THROWS
<input type="checkbox"/> +2	ACROBATICS
<input type="checkbox"/> +2	SLEIGHT OF HAND
<input type="checkbox"/> +2	STEALTH

INITIATIVE	SPEED
+2	30 ft.

ARMOR CLASS	
14	
SHIELD	ARMOR
	light

CLASS FEATURES
Expertise, Second Wind, Forensics, Custom Weapon (+1), Vicious Strike, Ring Giver, Purple Smoke, Alchemical Savant, Extra Attack, Pre-Battle Tune Up

CHARACTER NAME
Gadwall
FACTION
Cult of Tenebrous

CONSTITUTION	
+4	18
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +7	SAVING THROWS

HIT DICE	
MAXIMUM	SPENT
5d10	

HIT PONTS	
MAXIMUM	TEMPORARY
64	

DEATH SAVES	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	SUCCESSSES
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	FAILURES

FEATS & TRAITS
Toughness, Signs and Portents, Shadowsight, Quick Healer

HEROIC INSPIRATION <input type="checkbox"/>

	CLASS	LEVEL
	Maker (Umbral Alchemist)	5
	BACKGROUND	EXPERIENCE
	Private Detective	

PROFICENCY BONUS	
+3	
PASSIVE PERCEPTION	14
PASSIVE INSIGHT	11

INTELLIGENCE	
+2	14
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 SAVING THROWS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +8 ARCANA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 HISTORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +5 INVESTIGATION <input type="checkbox"/> +2 NATURE <input type="checkbox"/> +2 RELIGION	

WISDOM	
+1	12
<input type="checkbox"/> +1 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> +1 ANIMAL HANDLING <input type="checkbox"/> +1 INSIGHT <input type="checkbox"/> +1 MEDICINE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +4 PERCEPTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +4 SURVIVAL	

CHARISMA	
-1	8
<input type="checkbox"/> -1 SAVING THROWS <input type="checkbox"/> -1 DECEPTION <input type="checkbox"/> -1 INTIMIDATION <input type="checkbox"/> -1 PERFORMANCE <input type="checkbox"/> -1 PERSUASION	

WEAPONS & OTHER ATTACKS			
NAME	BONUS/DC	DAMAGE TYPE	NOTES
Pistol	+10	1d4+3 B	Custom Weapon, 5 shots, Ballistic, Conspicuous
Alchemist's Fire	+6	1d4+1 F	Custom Weapon, Ongoing damage
Knife	+5	1d4+2 S	

LIFE STYLE RATING	
12 (+1)	
INFLUENCE BONUSES	
Lifestyle +1, Ring Giver	
PROJECTS	PROGRESS

EQUIPMENT
Alchemical Rounds (5): Add +1d6 to Pistol Damage Alchemist's Fire (6 vials) Alchemist's Supplies Glassblower's Tools Gunsmith's Tools

CASH	\$300
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SHADOW OF DEBT

A QUICKSTART MYSTERY

You have three nights before the debt comes due, and the King of Rats always gets paid. Figure out (and probably *take out*) whoever killed his friend and you're clear. Shame your *other* patrons want this mystery unsolved.

OVERVIEW

This is a short introductory adventure for Shadow City Mysteries. It is designed to one or two gaming sessions of approximately four to six hours (it will go faster if you have fewer PCs with experienced players, and slower if you have all six PCs and are learning as you go). It is built for the pregen characters, but should work for any similarly-balanced party. The combat encounters are meant to be a moderate challenge for six level 5 PCs. If you have fewer players, remove a proportional number of enemies or reduce their attacks (advice for four players is included in the combat encounters).

If this is anyone or everyone's first time playing Shadow City Mysteries, give the players the summaries of the various factions, classes, and pregen characters so they can make an informed choice. Provide an overview of the new rules such as Influence and Crafting so they realize they are an option in the adventure.

THE CRIME

While the suggested clues are listed in this section, the party may investigate in ways not listed. The following is provided for you, the DM, to improvise responses. The players won't understand all of this until the very end.

Karlo Mercy was a traitor to more than just the Iron Union. He'd recently been offered a hefty sum to help Cho

Silver. With the information he could provide about both the Iron Union and the Court of Rats, he could be a valuable aid to the political campaign. Turay spotted Karlo meeting Silver, and that was relayed to the Rat King by his own Cult of Tenebrous contacts. In addition to his hatred of traitors, the Rat King believed that this political campaign would come at his own expense. So Karlo had to die, and ideally Silver needed to be framed for it.

Last night, two of the Rat King's favorite assassins (borrowed from the Brass Consortium and the Cult of Tenebrous) sneaked into the building through a rusted-out air vent at the back of the squat. They placed a music box out on Karlo's desk, then hid, just in time for him to return from a meeting with Cho Silver. He turned on the music box, and it played a Thallassian dirge (the Rat King and Karlo met during their state military service fighting in Thallassia). As it completed, the assassins killed him with multiple arbalest shots from cover, starting with shots to his legs to slow him and his arms to keep him from fighting back. His flailing smashed the music box (which they were supposed to recover), and he dragged himself in a bloody trail toward the door before they finished him off. They left the same way they had come in, after planting evidence and trying to conceal their own.

Both assassins were very agile, but one preferred knives and the other guns, so their arbalest shots weren't as accurate as they might have otherwise been. The arbalest bolts were taken back by the assassins, other than the one used for the headshot that they dropped while exiting that was stolen by an acquisitive crow. If they could be found, the other two have faint scratches, suggesting that the user had mechanical fingers. One area where shots were fired from has traces of the alchemically-modified gunpowder that suffuses the Cult of Tenebrous assassin's coat from years of shooting.

The assassins returned the journals they took to the Rat King, but they were assassins, not investigators. The King sent in the PCs as actual investigators to hunt down any additional information about Karlo's schemes that he couldn't find in the journals.

COLD OPEN: THE RAT'S NEST

As the scene begins, read aloud or paraphrase the following.

It seems to be a quiet night at the Rat's Nest: the dance floor is only half-full, and the band is second-rate, at best. If any of them are even Brass Consortium, it's hard to tell since none have the tell-tale brass-colored prosthetics. The whole club is, in fact, in flat monochrome except for a few coppery and gold metallic flashes behind the bar, and in the clothes or hair of a few of the wealthier patrons.

That just makes it more obvious where you're going. The Rat King's raised booth at the back of the club positively glows, golden with turnstone enameling. For all that, the man seated there is dressed in black and white, other than the silvery sheen of his mechanical right arm. You notice a faint pall of purple smoke, as if someone has just left the booth. He sees you across the room and motions imperiously for you to join him.

The Rat's Nest is a popular club in one of the slightly shady neighborhoods in the central district of Shadow City: just dangerous enough that the non-underworld patrons get a thrill when they visit. All the police in the neighborhood are fully paid off, and it is an open secret that it is the central meeting spot for the Court of Rats. The power of the Court in the city can be intuited by how open organized crime is allowed to be here.

The **Rat King** (real name long forgotten even by his closest allies) is one of the most powerful people in Shadow City, still at the young edge of middle age and having climbed atop the Court of Rats with his own bloody hands. Clean-shaven, athletic, and heavily tattooed, his bodyguards are out of earshot in the noisy club because they know he can handle himself for long enough to cover the distance if the PCs start anything. (If a PC *does* attack, simply narrate that they are quickly beaten 0 HP: no stats are provided because this is a fight they shouldn't start and cannot win.)

- With a successful DC 10 **Wisdom (Insight)** check: he really *is* this confident and secure in his own power.
- With a successful DC 20 **Wisdom (Insight)** check: he finds something amusing; he's up to some greater scheme that they're only a small part of.

Speaking brusquely, with the accent and simple phrasings of someone that grew up on Shadow City's streets, he confidently lays out the following, assuming that anyone dares disagree with his orders. He's quick to twist the knife of what they owe him if they do.

- One of his informants, **Karlo Mercy**, didn't report in last night. A runner that went to check on him found a bloody murder scene at his squat at 452 Breakers Lane, in the Industrial District.
- Karlo was a friend from their stint in the military about 20 years ago (both are somewhere in their 40s). Most citizens of Vasepon do a mandatory military tour in their late teens or early 20s, though the Rat King carries himself like he spent longer in the service than the minimum that the PCs probably served.
- Karlo was Iron Union, but had his eyes on a lot of things in the district. Someone could have figured out he was working for the Rats and punished him. He might have been involved in something the Rat King didn't know about. Maybe it was just a simple robbery or crime of passion, though the Rat King didn't know of any current or jilted lovers.
- The place is locked back up, but it's only a matter of time before the police in the area stick their noses in. Maybe literally: with the recent warm weather, the place is probably starting to stink by now, so someone will call the cops when they smell it.
- The Rat King wants the PCs to figure out what happened, why, and whether there's any blowback on him. If there is, hide it from the authorities. He figures three nights should be plenty of time. Any longer, and he'd worry that the police or other factions might get out ahead of him on it and put him in a tight spot.

As the PCs are dismissed from the booth, they can make a DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. On a success, they notice **Detective Slate**, an off-duty officer still wearing his detective's long coat over at the bar. Older, grizzled, and clearly drunk, he is an easy enough target (DC 12) for **Charisma (Persuasion)** checks or the like to convince him that the PCs are working for the Rat King and he should help them with any police interference in their mission. At least two successful checks, being nice to him, and buying him a drink grants the PCs 2d6 + their Influence bonuses to the **Influence Project: Deputized** (described later in this adventure), as he eventually checks in and lends some of his authority to the PCs. Remind the PCs involved to check whether they have special abilities that allow them to further improve Influence results.

After this, give them a few minutes to introduce themselves to one another and head on out.

NIGHT I

THE CRIME SCENE

Read aloud or paraphrase the following.

Breakers Lane under the moonlight is an abandoned industrial sprawl. During the day it is probably full of vehicles, but at night it's as dead as the body you're here to investigate. They don't even run the streetlights at night, for all that the internal clockwork generators can run basically for free. At a glance, it's impossible to tell which of the windowless brick-and-corrugated-metal warehouses are run-down but in business, and which are shells left behind for squatters.

452 is definitely the latter. The fence around the lot is rotted out, the parking spaces hold drifts of trash, and the facade of the small building is full of cracks that shift oddly in your electric torchlight. Surrounded by taller warehouses, this was probably once a foreman's office, or used by the local government inspector. Fitting, then, that it was the residence of a spy for the Rat King.

The PCs have likely driven here in one or two clockwork automobiles, or taken a streetcar that let off nearby (though the trams don't come often this time of night). Vehicles powered by turnstone tend to be bulky, with large engines but no need for fuel tanks or exhaust under the car, leaving lots of room in the cabin.

While the neighborhood is quiet this late in the evening, it's not completely empty. The PCs can make Wisdom (Perception) checks. Give out one of the below pieces of information to each player that succeeds against DC 12, or two items if they succeed against DC 22:

- A patrol car of police passes by, a couple of blocks away. They might discover the crime scene soon, given the local roads and their direction. The players could attempt to intercept them, to work on their Influence project to be free to investigate.
- A light is on in an upper-story window of a nearby warehouse, with a vantage on the scene. Whoever's in there might have seen something last night. This is the office of Rissa Smith, the Iron Union **Worker**.
- On the corner of Breakers Lane and the more major road, Central Avenue, a small bodega is open and could have noticed someone coming or going to Breaker's Lane through the main way last night. This is the shop of Tejan Turay, the Cult of Tenebrous **Merchant**.
- A seemingly nonfunctional and rusting car at the very corner of the parking lot (**7 on the map, page 31**) has curtains taped to the insides of the windows and bedding inside. While empty right now, perhaps someone sleeps

in the car and knows something. This is the dwelling of Rafa Kadir, the Court of Rats **Pickpocket**.

All four sets of characters are described in **Night 1-B: Interviews**, on page 32.

NIGHT 1A

FORENSICS

Time Passes

Each check in this scene takes a few minutes. Mention to the players that the longer they stay around, the more likely they are to be interrupted, by the cops or other passersby. Ask each player what they're doing in each period: rather than all piling on a single type of investigation, hoping one player rolls high, they need to divide up their efforts. This should give more player characters the opportunity to find something useful and keep success from being virtually automatic with six people rolling on everything.

The front door of the building (**1**) is locked.

- A DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals that it's scratched up as if the lock and deadbolt were picked, likely by the Court of Rats runner that found the body. The deadbolt wasn't re-locked, only the handle, since locking the deadbolt without the key would have been difficult. Nonetheless, this may be a locked room mystery.
- A successful DC 12 **Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** check opens the remaining lock, though they may waste time on the deadbolt if they don't realize it's already unlocked. The door is fairly sturdy, requiring a successful DC 20 **Strength (Athletics)** check to kick down, and it has AC 18 and 20 HP for weapon attacks.

The building is windowless, but if the PCs walk the outside, a successful DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** check notes a rusted-out ventilation grate at the apex of the roof (**2**), and that the wall would be free-climbable along the decayed mortar between the bricks with a successful DC 22 **Strength (Athletics)** check. Once aware of this, they can make a **Wisdom (Perception)** check.

- A check result of 15+ leads to spotting recent finger- and footprints, indicating someone did climb up.
- If the result is 20+, it's fairly obvious that there are enough marks that someone climbed up *and* down.
- If the check result is 25+, there are enough differences in certain marks to speculate that *two* people climbed up and down, though the tracks are confused enough it's

hard to get more information than that. (**CLUE:** The killer went in through the ventilation grate).

Once inside (3), read the following:

The Rat King wasn't wrong: it's starting to smell like death in here. If there was ever a cooling system in this building, it's long broken. By the heat of the day tomorrow, the smell will spread to the nearby streets. Right now, it just makes your investigation unpleasant.

A few clockwork lamps light the space, not visible outside through the well-sealed door and lack of windows. The place has been turned into a home, though nothing of much value is on display. A large room that was once some kind of office has a kitchenette set to one side, a secondhand desk to the other, and a meager bed in the back. Based on the shape of the building, the door in the back corner probably opens to a small bathroom.

The former resident lies in smeared blood trailing from the desk, as if he was shot down and didn't make it out the door. He has several obvious wounds in his back, including one right into his skull as he lays face down, sprawled a body length from the door.

The PCs can investigate the scene. Raise the Difficulty for clues if they crowd in and start trampling on evidence. Areas of investigation in the room and their clues are:

- **The Body, Wisdom (Medicine):**

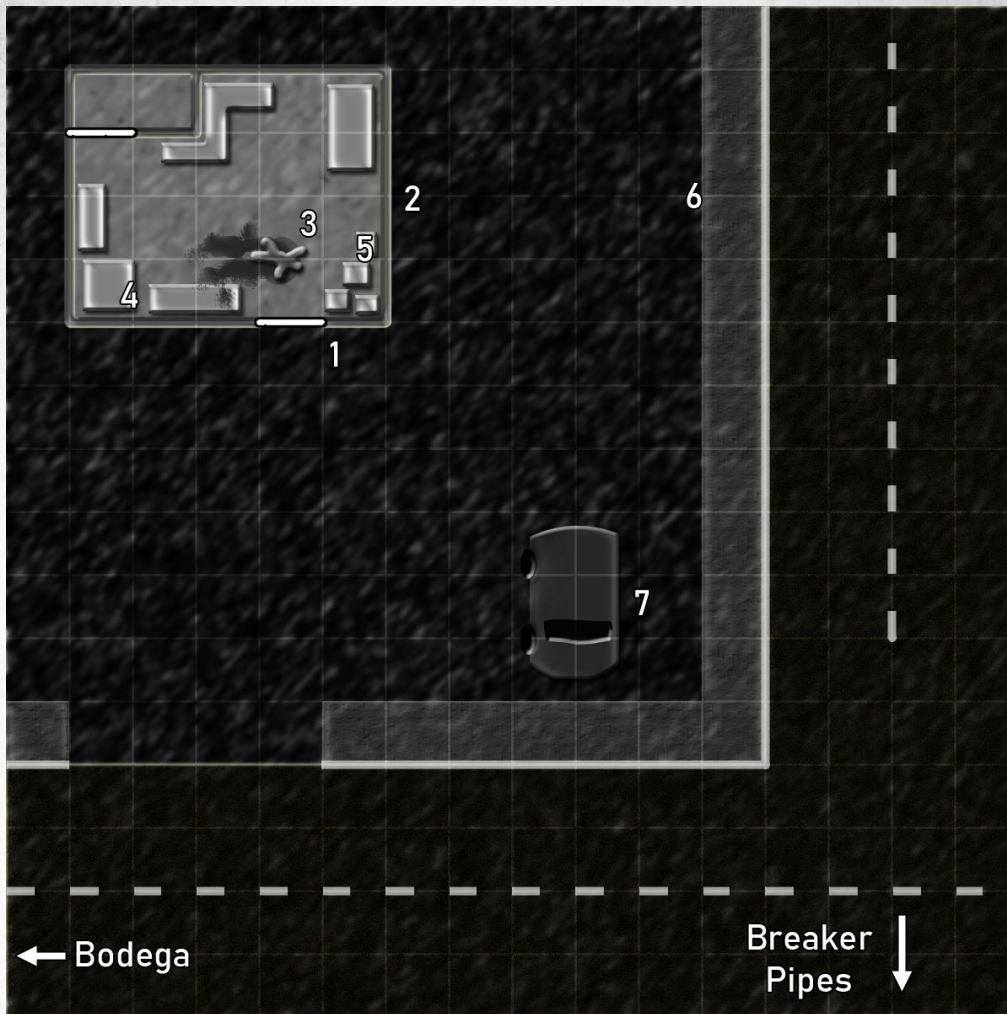
- » On a result of 5+: Karlo was a man in early middle age (somewhere in his 40s), scarred, skinny and slightly undernourished. His Iron Union-provided prosthetic left arm was torn up by the attacks that killed him. His clothes are inexpensive but well-kept.
- » On a result of 10+: His jacket was off and hung it by the door, but was otherwise still dressed, so was likely killed just after coming in or just before heading out. The six wounds on his body (two in the legs, two in the arms, one in the back, and one in the head) are all arbalest bolts, forcibly removed postmortem.
- » On a result of 15+: The leg wounds were probably first, to keep him from running, and came from opposite sides of his body. In fact, unless he spun around in the fight, the arm wounds also suggest attackers from either side. The back and head wounds finished him off, from above him while he was on the ground. Temperature and rigidity make it likely he's been dead at least all day. The wound to his head (which was probably the final cause of death) is messy, as if the bolt was hard to yank out. Damage to the skull in the process seems more than a normal hand can do, and suggests a prosthetic right arm.
- » On a result of 20+: There were two slightly different models of arbalest used: the attacks on his right and head were one attacker, and those on his left and back

were another. Arbalests can have different spring strengths, so attacker distance is hard to place, but the execution shots are deeper. Likely the killers started at range from inside this room, then moved close for the shots into the back and head. It seems likely that he was killed the previous night, but being more accurate than that is impossible without details about the temperature and airflow during the day.

- » On a result of 25+: This took place quickly, since the blood loss from each wound is similar. Likely he was shot in the legs, started crawling for the door, was shot in the arms, and then approached and finished off from behind. He may not have even seen his attackers. There's no indication that he was left to suffer or interrogated, just dispatched dispassionately.

- **The Floor, Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival):**

- » On a result of 5+: Karlo was shot first over by his desk, and then dragged himself toward the front door. There is a tremendous trail of blood. A few weird mechanical pieces, smashed on the floor near the desk, don't seem to have come from the damage to his arm. They might, if repaired, reveal what they were part of (see **Crafting Project: Repair the Music Box**, at the end of this document).
- » On a result of 10+: The wounds on the body match the trail: the blood is thickest in two trails as if he was bleeding from his legs, then his non-prosthetic right arm, as he crawled across the room. The pool of blood under him suggests that he received his chest and head wound at the same spot he came to rest, rather than while he was moving.
- » On a result of 15+: He started trying to scrawl something in his own blood near the start of the trail, and that may have been why they shot him in the arms. He didn't get far: a single line matches a smudge of blood on his right index finger. He probably knew something about his killer that he was hoping to pass on.
- » On a result of 20+: The edges of the blood pool were wiped away originally, before more blood spread and covered them up. Since the arbalest bolts are missing from the body, the killer stepped in the blood while recovering the ammunition, cleaned up, and did *not* leave bloody footprints on the way out: professionals, or at least observant killers.
- » On a result of 25+: There are tiny smudges of blood the killers didn't fully clean. There were two people, and they walked toward the back wall together, where there's an easy climb up to the air vent out of the room.



• **The Rest of the Room, Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight):**

- » On a result of 5+: The room is jumble of old crates and salvaged furniture. It looks like a particularly poor university student's off-campus housing. Nothing of value is left prominently. Some documents may be worth investigating.
- » On a result of 10+: The desk contains more documents that might be worth looking at, and also a revolver that he never got the desk drawer open to grab. If he had, he'd realize that it had been carefully unloaded.
- » On a result of 15+: Next to the desk, a large empty crate was probably his dinner table from the stains on it. It was pushed a short distance, based on the dust track on the floor, from where it looks like it usually stood (4). Based on how that dust is disturbed at the back, it is likely it was pushed forward so someone could hide behind it and pop up to surprise Karlo. The missing bullets from Karlo's revolver are placed neatly in a pile next to the crate, where he wouldn't see them.
- » On a result of 20+: There are other disturbed crates on the opposite side of the room, closer to the bed

(5). It's possible another assailant hid in here to attack him from the other side. Behind where that person might have stood, there are scratches on the interior bricks, as if someone climbed up to vent at the apex of the roof, which might have once been part of a powered air system. Over here, there is a faint smell of gunpowder, which is strange because the murder weapon was an arbalest, not a firearm, and Karlo doesn't seem to have gotten off a shot.

- » On a result of 25+: Karlo had very cleverly hidden \$492 in various bills in a trick slat of one of the seemingly-random crates. He could have gotten to it quickly, but it was hard to find without knowing it was there.

• **His Documents, Intelligence (Investigation) or (History):**

- » On a result of 5+: Karlo kept documents stored in various places around the room, some even shoved in the empty refrigerator. They are a mix of handwritten journals that seem like minutia of his daily interactions, various newspaper clipping scrapbooks concerning crime and unions, and many typed letters that look like contacts sending him information.

- » On a result of 10+: There are gaps in the information, even for how disorganized the information is. It looks like someone stole at least a handspan of his journals from a couple of places, given the holes. There's a stray invoice from the warehouse across the street, Breaker Pipes, for a shipment of a pallet of steel pipes to 12420 Main Street. It seems recent but not related to anything else.
- » On a result of 15+: A few of the cabinets have scratches from metal fingertips. They don't seem to be the same size as Karlo's mechanical arm, and are from a right arm rather than the left. Whoever rifled through the documents likely had a prosthetic right arm. A document shoved into a recent journal is a redacted military report about the death of one Omar Mocci, ten years ago, when deployed to Thallassia as part of the Fifth Combat Group. A note scrawled on it in Karlo's handwriting says, "Guess he was tortured to death to give up the smuggling ring. He must have given up my name, but why wait to talk to me now?"
- » On a result of 20+: Most of the missing journals seem to be recent, given the dates around them. There are probably also some letters missing from the same period. With the note about the military in Thallassia, an older journal from ten years ago lists Omar Mocci and a few other people with dollar values as if they were sending him money. The names are scratched off, with a note: "Omar is dead. Everyone else arrested. This project didn't last as long after I mustered out as I'd hoped."
- » On a result of 25+: The last page of one of the most recent journals before some that were taken references being invited to a meeting with "The Politician." While "The King" is mentioned a lot, as are various other terms that seem to refer to Iron Union members (like "The Foreman," "The Legbreaker," and "The Secretary"), there is no other reference to The Politician.

Outside, once the party understands that there are arbalest bolts missing and that the killers climbed in and out through the upper vent, a PC needs a successful DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice a glint of sharp metal atop one of the turned-off street lamps at the edge of a side street a short distance from the air vent (6). It's hard to tell against the dark night, but it appears to be underneath a sleeping crow.

Waking and coaxing down the crow with its shiny prize is a DC 20 **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check. A Society of Ravens character can make this check with Advantage if they think to use their Parliamentary Delivery feature to get the crow to come down and take a note. They might also use magic, such as *Animal Friendship*. Shimming up the pole to scare off the crow and take the bolt requires a successful DC 20 **Strength (Athletics)** check; the tough climb is why the crow roosts there.

The bolt was likely dropped by the murderers. It still has some blood and gore stuck to its head, and the angle of scratches along the length imply that it was grasped by metal fingers to remove it from the body.

NIGHT 1B INTERVIEWS

After finding all the clues they can in the building, the PCs can seek out eyewitnesses. It is now only a DC 10 to notice clues pointing to bystanders they didn't spot heading in, as they've acclimated to the neighborhood.

In addition, Rafa Kadir (the **Pickpocket**) lurks across the street, waiting for them to leave so he can go back to his car. Since he has Advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) in deep shadows, a character needs a successful DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to spot him in hiding.

If the players spent at least 15 minutes investigating the building and were not careful about their noise and light, the patrolling cops notice them, unless the PCs flagged them down to talk already. If they spent 30 minutes or more, they're spotted even if they were careful, unless they took extreme precautions not to be noticed. Officers Harz, Park, and Redstone are the black-masked patrol officers (use **Bodyguard** stats). They are not on the take from the Court of Rats, but *do* fear getting in the King's crosshairs. The confrontation would have to go *very* badly for them to try to arrest the PCs (which costs them 3d6 Influence Progress), but the cops try to kick them out of the crime scene if the PCs don't reach 20 Progress on the project. If the PCs do very well convincing the cops, they can add 2d6 + Influence bonuses to the project, which may reach the first tier of deputization.

If the players don't think of it, suggest that they talk to the possible bystanders. Since the night is getting late and big groups can spook people, it would make sense to split up.

Masked Cops

It is common for police in Shadow City to wear black masks. This ranges from thin balaclavas, which all officers keep in a pocket and don before going into an active situation, to heavy, face-concealing riot helmets. This is a terrible decision for community-oriented policing, further distancing the cops from their constituents due to their ability to mete out anonymous force.

However, the police unions have convinced the government that it's necessary due to the power of organized crime in the city: recognizable officers face retribution from the Court of Rats. Unless they're eating or otherwise feel safe and unlikely to provoke reprisals, most cops wear the masks whenever they're in uniform. Those whose faces you can see, like Detective Slate, are either protected by the Rat King or for some other reason are unafraid of him.

That is, run three separate scenes with only a couple of the PCs, so you don't have 4-6 players all talking over one another to socialize.

The available witnesses and what they know are listed below. Key facts are listed, and those should be awarded for even basic roleplaying and checks. The NPCs reveal further details based on how the PCs interact with them, at the DM's discretion. Suggested DCs for Charisma and Wisdom (Insight) checks are included, but feel free to adjust them based on player approaches.

RISSA SMITH, IRON UNION WORKER

Across Breakers Lane from the crime scene, in the upper story of a warehouse (Breaker Pipes) that distributes metal tubing of various sizes, an office worker stays very late most nights finishing up filing and accounts. She has a cot in one of the back closets, even though she technically lives elsewhere (with a friend who often has guests that she doesn't like). Banging on the door calls her to the window to ask what they want; a character needs a successful a DC 15 **Charisma (Persuasion or Deception)** check to get her to let them in. If she thinks they might be thieves or murderers, she flatly refuses.

Smith is an orphan, raised by the Iron Union to be a **Worker**. A young woman in her early 20s, she is dark-haired and athletic, but lacks social graces and has the vocabulary and accent of someone raised with on-the-job education here in the Industrial District. She has an iron prosthetic for her right leg, and no other prostheses. That leg doesn't look dexterous enough to climb the brickwork of Karlo's squat, and there isn't any evidence of that kind of scratches on the bricks. She has big dreams of inventing a new metallurgical process that would make her uncles and aunts in the guild thrilled with her, but lacks the education to know where to start.

- **Why she doesn't want to talk:** She's not supposed to sleep in the warehouse, but gets away with it because the foreman treats her like a niece, so she shouldn't have been here to see anything last night. Karlo had been cozying up to her, and she thinks she might be a suspect for his death (she didn't realize he was just using her for information, and didn't plan to date her). Figuring out her problems and assuring her that she isn't a suspect requires appropriate ability checks against DC 13; with successes, she grows more forthcoming.
- **What she reveals easily:** Karlo was a well-liked fixer in the area, and she never figured out why he was allowed to live in the squat next door and didn't have the money to live anywhere nicer. Iron Union folks went to him for things they couldn't find on their own. She suspected he was selling them drugs, and worries that he was murdered by someone looking for money or drugs, or a deal went wrong. She saw him get out of a nice car the night before (a chrome-plated Rider-Smith towncar; a

very expensive near-limousine), and didn't see him again today, which was unusual.

- **What she reveals with effort:** She didn't see anyone leave through the roof vent, as her window doesn't have a good line of sight to that side of the building. Several of the local foremen's relationships with Karlo soured recently. Yesterday afternoon, he got into a screaming fight (she didn't hear what it was about, just the raised voices) with her "Uncle" Schroeder Mains, the local foreman, but she knows that Uncle Mains would have been home last night (the PCs can later confirm this alibi). Karlo had asked her whether she knew anything about an old abandoned warehouse on the South side, at 12420 Main Street, and she thought that it was weird that several large shipments of steel pipes were sent to a place that was theoretically empty.

TEJAN TURAY, CULT OF TENEBROUS MERCHANT

There is a bodega on corner of Breakers Lane and Central Avenue, built into a strip of businesses that face Central Ave. The neighboring businesses are a hardware store and pet store that are closed this time of night, but the bodega serves the large population of citizens in the area (both legitimate apartment dwellers across Central Ave. and squatters like Karlo), so is open late. As a corner store, it has windows where one can barely make out Karlo's squat, as well as anyone turning off of Central onto Breakers Lane. While there are a couple of other part time workers, one man mostly runs the shop by himself, from shortly before lunchtime until late at night.

Turay the **Merchant** is a small, weird, middle-aged man, with an enormous pile of patina-green (turnstone-dyed) dreadlocks atop his head, and a beard so long and unkempt that it's hard to make out the maze pattern on his overly casual tunic. He's from Tizga, a small country that is currently an international enemy, but he's old enough (and his accent weak enough) that he might have moved here before his country became an enemy in Vasepon's endless search for rare-earth metals. He is perpetually toying with a battered cigarette (he's quitting smoking, and likes the feel of it in his hand but is trying to use pure willpower to not actually smoke it).

There are a number of "cultural" items with a maze motif hanging in the back of the shop that signal to Cult of Tenebrous members that he is part of the cult, but anyone else needs a successful DC 15 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check to puzzle it out.

- **Why he doesn't want to talk:** He's a member of the Cult of Tenebrous, and tries to seem harmless to anyone he thinks might be an antagonist. He spied on Karlo for the Cult, and if he learns the man was murdered, he assumes it was for something he told his handlers. Convincing him to speak freely requires a successful

DC 12 check of some kind for anyone who displays membership in the Cult of Tenebrous, or a DC 20 check for anyone else.

- **What he reveals easily:** Karlo used to come into the shop a few times a day. Turay missed him today and assumed he was sick. Yesterday around lunchtime, Karlo got a sandwich (canned fish, very hygienic, and bread made fresh every day by a bakery down the street, probably not why he was sick) and absently wondered about what you could *do* with enough steel pipe to connect one side of the city to the other. Turay told Karlo an old Tizgan legend, about a metal maze of tubes full of turnstone dust that drove the disloyal mad as they walked its corridors. (This fanciful story isn't what the shipment from Breaker Pipes is for, but should point them that way regardless.)
- **What he reveals with effort:** A *very* nice automobile dropped Karlo off in the early evening yesterday, and Turay mentioned that to his superiors because it wasn't the first time he'd seen it. He doesn't know car models, but it was a big mirror-plated sedan. If Karlo is dead, he may have done something to piss off Turay's friends. Also, Karlo brought a woman (whose description matches Rissa Smith) in here a few time for "dates" that Turay could tell were just Karlo buttering her up for information. He was pretty sure that Karlo was in love with no one but money.

RAFA KADIR, COURT OF RATS PICKPOCKET

Hiding in the shadows across the side street from the squat is a young man who lives in the broken-down car in the parking lot, waiting for the PCs to leave so he can get some sleep.

Rafa is a **Pickpocket** who works various areas around the city: wherever there's something to draw a crowd. The teen has hair he's tried to cut himself *specifically* to be about standard for the city, and wears basic gray clothes that won't stand out. He looks thin and undernourished. He's technically in the Court of Rats, but is supposed to be working his old neighborhood on the far west side of town. Karlo was basically his landlord, and Rafa worked out that Karlo was working for the Court (Karlo told Rafa about things as a non-Union sounding board). When Rafa returned from his evening's activities, he spotted several individuals in his friend's squat. He hadn't realized Karlo was dead, as he was doing Karlo a favor and wasn't able to stay here last night.

Why he doesn't want to talk: A bunch of adults spotting him and accosting him is scary. He is trying to make a living while not doing what the Court of Rats allows him to do (plying his trade in a less lucrative area of the city). He's an impressionable youth and subject to intimidation, especially if the PCs convince him that they're working directly for

the King. Charisma checks to interact with him have a DC of 10.

What he reveals easily: Karlo asked him to watch a seemingly-abandoned warehouse on the southside at 12420 Main Street, so he wasn't sleeping in his car last night. That warehouse seems like a front for something important, and he saw two people with lots of iron prosthetics that dressed like they had money check in on the place while he was watching it.

What he reveals with effort: He's surprised the Rat King hired a bunch of people to investigate Karlo's death. Rafa knows they were friends from the war, but as far as he knew, Karlo hadn't been able to talk to the King for a couple of weeks. Karlo complained that the King loved him when he was useful, but was the "what have you done for me *latehly?*" kind of friend. Maybe the job at Main Street was about getting something new the King would care about. (If compared later, Karlo sent Rafa off whenever he thought Cho Silver might come around, to make sure the teen couldn't report back about his meetings.)

(As the PCs finish talking to the witnesses after searching the crime scene, you should be around a third of the way through your session time. This might be a good time to take a short break. It's late enough that by the time they got across town to 12420 Main Street, it is swarming with curfew cops. Suggest that they reconvene there early the next night after working day jobs, and possibly using Crafting, or some Gladbanding with the Influence system to improve their relationship with the police.)

NIGHT 2 INTERVIEWS

WAREHOUSE MAP

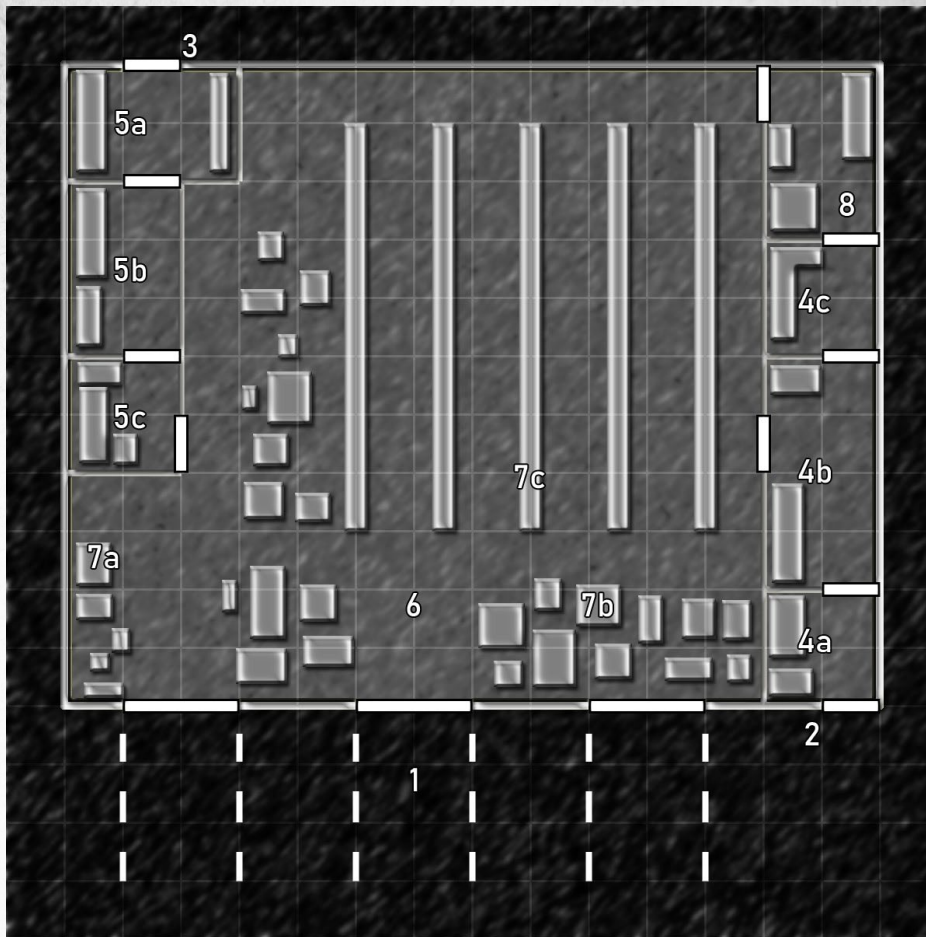
The conspiracy that's taking place on the south side of town has little to do with Karlo's murder. The clues the PCs find here help them eliminate the Iron Union's involvement in Karlo Mercy's death and give them actionable intelligence they can use to pursue the leads from the previous night, of an expensive car that visited him.

12420 MAIN STREET

Main Street winds throughout much of central Shadow City, reaching high address numbers as it hits the South Side. The warehouses here are mostly for exports and imports, near as they are to the shipping centers. Main Street here is very wide to accommodate the trucks coming and going to these warehouses.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following.

Unlike the compact buildings of the neighborhood last night, where every ounce of space in the neighborhood allocated to some use, on the South Side there is sprawl. Vast lots of asphalt separate buildings from one another, still warm from the light of the day



and reeking of the chemicals that have seeped into them. While trucks need no power source other than the turnstone in their engines, down here they are laden with the strange components of modern industry.

Also unlike that neighborhood, this space is busy throughout the night, streetlamps still bright and trucks coming and going from every warehouse you can see. Every warehouse except the one you're looking for, that is. Well back from the road, its three large bay doors are shut up tight in the rest of the corrugated steel of the building's walls and roof, and no sign of vehicles in the lot. A human-scale door is to the right edge of the front, and a few small, barred windows are placed high atop the walls to let in daylight. No light escapes them from within.

The bay doors of the building (1) are latched tightly from inside. Crashing through them would be possible but *tremendously* noisy and obvious to cars passing on the road: it requires a successful DC 24 **Strength (Athletics)** check to shoulder-check through a corner. The door has AC 17, 30 HP, and immunity to Poison and Psychic damage. The regular-scale door (2) has a heavy combination padlock, slightly rusted. A successful DC 20 **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check lets a character feel out the combination and unlock it.

There is a back door (3) on the opposite side of the building, less visible from the road, where the door is key

locked. A successful DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception or Survival)** check reveals that *this* door is used frequently, and automobiles often park in the back near this door (but are not here now). A successful DC 17 **Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** check can pick the lock, and smashing through this door would be less noticeable.

Whether the party enters through the back or front human-sized door, they find a series of dusty office rooms along the wall of the warehouse (4 or 5). Empty filing cabinets and dusty desks and tables suggest a long-abandoned warehouse, though there are many footprints in the dust of the rooms connected to the back entrance (5). These rooms have windows onto the warehouse floor, but they're covered in opaque cardboard from both sides of the glass, as if to protect them from damage. Finding a door into the main room from one of the connected rooms reveals that the windows are covered to conceal that this "abandoned" warehouse is fully stocked.

Five long shelves run across the length of the warehouse, with space for mechanical lifts to move between them, and reaching up almost to the ceilings about ten yards high. In the space closer to the bay doors (6), a large array of stacked crates are loosely grouped but not well organized, as if dropped off recently and not distributed to the shelving. It's not obvious *when* they schedule their secret deliveries, but they clearly get a lot of them. In addition to the steel pipes in Karlo's invoices, the shelves hold many other metal mechanical parts. Some have a coppery glimmer and tick quietly in the silence of the warehouse: turnstone engines.

The far back room of the warehouse is a makeshift workshop (8), where pieces from the warehouse are assembled into the war machine prototypes being made here. The Iron Union is developing a new class of automaton for the war effort, using off-the-shelf components to lower the price compared to the more purpose-built turrets currently in use. While they're not ready to be presented to the government yet, they *have* gotten a couple of them working.

ENCOUNTER 2-A: THE DEFENSES

These two **Clockwork Turrets** are loosely packed in crates in the corners to either side of the bay doors (7a and 7b), and attack when at least one PC gets close to them. A complicated remote control deactivates them while the place is in use. As the PCs don't have it, their guard mode fully initializes.

There is also a **Trap** built into the shelving units (7c). As a lair action, the first time a PC is between the shelves on Initiative 20 while the turrets are still active, the higher shelves can collapse and drop heavy metal pipes and other components down. Every character in between two shelves must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 15) or suffer 22 (4d10) Bludgeoning damage. Afterward, the area between each of the shelves is Difficult Terrain.

If there are four (instead of six) PCs, reduce the turrets to 66 HP each, and they make two attacks with their **Multiattack** action, instead of three.

Investigating the Warehouse

After the fight, the party can make **Intelligence (Investigation)** or **(Tinker's Tools)** checks to put together what goes on in this warehouse.

- On a result of 15+, they work out that this space is a secret lab for making more of these war machines from literal off-the-shelf parts.
- On a result of 20+, they find a set of blueprints in the workshop with a note about patent applications once the prototypes are ready. It doesn't seem like the Union is developing an illegal robot army or anything. The secrecy, however, is strange. Was Karlo killed over this?

A strange feature of the workshop is a series of photographs taped to a wall, taken with a telephoto lens, of a well-dressed, androgynous individual and their bodyguards. They are often photographed getting out of an expensive car that could match the description of the one seen near Karlo's squat (any PC who decides they have an interest in fine cars can identify it as a Rider-Smith towncar). With a successful DC 15 **Intelligence (History)** check, a character recognizes Cho Silver, a local city council member with their sights set on higher office. Society of Ravens members make this check against DC 10, as Silver is present at many faction meetings. A handwritten note under the pictures reads, "If seen near the warehouse, call Nial immediately."

Meanwhile, the activation of the robot defenses *automatically* made a call out to Nial Hunter to rally the human protectors of the warehouse.

If the party is still here after a few minutes, they hear trucks skid to a stop at either side of the building, covering both exits, and the doors being opened by heavy hands. If the PCs locked the back door behind themselves, they gain an additional round to prepare. A character can make a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** check as an action to unlatch and throw open any of the bay doors from inside.

ENCOUNTER 2-B: THE RESPONDERS

A number of Iron Union **Legbreakers** equal to the number of PCs arrive and approach the building from both sides at their full movement speed until they encounter the PCs. If the PCs came in cars, one of the Legbreakers stay near the vehicles, and one stays outside the bay doors in case they try to escape that way, until it's clear that their opponents are pinned down or their friends are getting defeated.

It's possible to stop the fight with Charisma checks, especially for a character belonging to the Iron Union making a good shouted argument. Characters also might interrogate one of them defeated and left alive. Names for the Legbreakers are Nial Hunter, Zelia Stone, Rona Wright, Jochi Rivers, Yisun Rivers, and Hua Song. They reveal details that get the PCs closer to figuring out what is going on, per the sidebar.

What's Going On

With manipulative factions looking to get their fingers into everything in Shadow City, the Iron Union's new idea for a cheap-to-make automated turret was worth keeping secret. It wouldn't do for them to get most of the way to a patent, only to have the Ravens or the Rats steal it out from under them.

None of them knew that the security of the warehouse was blown, and were surprised to get the alert that the PCs had broken into the warehouse. They knew Karlo Mercy, and nobody had heard he was a spy, or about any plans to kill him. The one person they were worried about was a rich politician named Cho Silver, whose car had been seen in the Industrial District a few times, and who could screw up their access to several key components of the turrets, enough to muscle in on the deal if they knew about it. Maybe they had something to do with Karlo's death, if both of them were sniffing around this warehouse?

(The PCs need to ask around to figure out how to get in touch with Silver, so they likely cannot accomplish it tonight. You should be about two thirds into your session time.)

NIGHT 3

THE MASTERMINDS

This marks the final night that the Rat King gave the party to get the job done. All clues likely currently point at Cho Silver, though the PCs might also be trying to make sense of the repaired music box by now. They need to interview Silver and get a confession by the time the night is over.

PREPARATIONS

Getting access to Cho Silver involves some calls to contacts during the day and requires a DC 15 **Charisma (Persuasion)** check. A Society of Ravens member rolls this check with Advantage. A success reveals that the councilmember is in closed meetings throughout the day, preparing for a two-week fundraising retreat at a private location. Silver plans to leave right after the one event that they couldn't cancel: a speaking engagement at an upscale midtown restaurant this evening. If the check result is 20+, it's revealed that the two-week getaway was arranged last-minute, and Silver *tried* to cancel the speaking engagement, so it feels like skipping town prior to Karlo's body being discovered.

ATTENDING THE EVENT

The gig at the Sundial Lounge is for donors, and it's expensive and nearly sold out. Convincing the ticket office to sell a ticket requires a successful DC 12 Lifestyle check. Society of Ravens members have Advantage on this check, and for every 4 that the result exceeds the DC, the PC can buy a ticket for a guest (i.e., 2 tickets at 16, 3 at 20). Tickets are \$100 each, even after making the roll.

If PCs decide to sneak in as part of the help or entertainment, they roll a **Charisma (Deception, Disguise Kit, or Performance)** check. The DC for this starts at 14 and increases by 3 for every additional PC that attempts the ruse (i.e., 17 for the second PC, 20 for the third, 23 for the fourth). Brass Consortium members have Advantage on this check.

RESEARCHING SILVER

Characters that spend a few hours at the library looking through old newspapers or a similar research trip can roll **Intelligence (History)** to put together a profile on the wealthy politician.

- On a result of 5+: Silver is in their late 30s, unmarried, and on their second council term, having been re-elected in the last cycle. They have an eye on becoming Mayor, possibly as early as next election. The pictures match the shots in the warehouse workshop: the councilmember affects an androgynous appearance with clean, angular features and a short haircut.

- On a result of 10+: They are the eldest child of a wealthy branch of the Silver family, who have lived in Shadow City for at least two previous generations. They have a law degree from Soreta University, a basic tour of duty in the nation's military, and served as an Assistant District Attorney for several years before shifting to full-time work as a politician. Their council votes have been tough on crime, and not particularly friendly to the guilds. Representing an upscale neighborhood, they have the votes of the well-to-do and the support of the police.
- On a result of 15+: Silver's time in the military was in internal investigations, rather than a combat role. They received a commendation for taking apart a smuggling ring within Vasepon's Fifth Combat Group in Thallassia... which was the same group that Karlo Mercy had been in a decade earlier, so it's possible that was a connection between Silver and Karlo. With only basic combat skills from their tour, Silver is always photographed with at least one bodyguard, and often several.
- On a result of 20+: Having alienated the guilds and criminals, there doesn't seem to be much hope in Silver's mayoral bid without some major change in leverage. Everyone in Shadow City assumes nobody wants to leave: if Silver had some major wins that made the news, perhaps they could skip straight to regional or even national office.
- On a result of 25+: It hasn't been announced yet, but connecting the dots in a few of the recent papers makes suggest that Silver provided the police some information that they used to raid a drug warehouse at the edge of the Industrial District. The Iron Union looks weak, since they claim they had no idea, but the Court of Rats could have that set up with an informant like Karlo Mercy telling them which warehouses weren't patrolled.

AT THE SUNDIAL LOUNGE

A large venue with an open floorplan, the entire restaurant has been closed tonight for the private event. Its tables are oriented to dine while watching the speakers' podium at the back, which doubles as a bandstand for the string quartet that plays before the speeches start. This place is fancy, with rich wood furnishings and crystal lights, but lacks the decadence of a truly elite restaurant. The visual centerpiece is a massive and complicated golden clock set as the backdrop of the stage, its time even now counting down to the deadline to meet with the Rat King.

An extensive kitchen, storage for spare furnishings, and a waiting room for performers make up the back of house. There are two private dining rooms that aren't being used this evening. Any PCs that work as the help can case these areas and try to corner Silver in one of them for a conversation.

Disguise

Seeing the Disguise Kits on their sheets, the PCs might want to pretend to be Karlo Mercy to talk to Cho Silver. This will be difficult: Silver met Karlo multiple times in close proximity so is familiar with his appearance, while the PCs have little to go on about his mannerisms or pre-death appearance. The Wisdom (Disguise Kit) check has Disadvantage for any PC that is not slender and male-presenting, and Silver has Advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to see through the disguise (by meeting the DC set by the PCs' disguise roll) and on Wisdom (Insight) checks to counter the disguised PC's Wisdom (Deception) checks.

Sergeant Shalebridge, an older woman who's a cop to her very core (see the Influence project) is the first speaker, and goes on at around 7 pm. She talks about community policing and various initiatives that her precinct engaged to make several neighborhoods safer (which, not coincidentally, are less affluent neighborhoods that border nicer ones). She is dreadfully boring. When she finishes, she sits at the bar, and the PCs might decide to talk to her to get more Influence with the police. A good conversation can award 2d10 + Influence bonuses Progress.

After a brief intermission for waiters to clear plates and take dessert orders, Cho Silver gets up to talk. They have a rich mid-tone voice with polished diction and a local accent. They deliver a rousing speech about recent wins in improving the community, broadly talking up the city council's votes while implicitly taking the credit. It comes up in passing that they were directly responsible for shutting down a drug den right in the Industrial District (as the PCs might have surmised), and plan to continue that kind of improvement. Silver goes on for over twenty minutes, filling in specific points with the usual rousing political platitudes and possibly-made-up anecdotes from talking to citizens, but it is a very engaging speech.

Silver's car (a chrome-plated Rider-Smith towncar) pulls up at the restaurant's back entrance. The PCs can recognize it from the warehouse photos. After speaking, they shake hands and have brief conversations with a few wealthy donors next to the stage before attempting to retreat through the back of the house to get in the car. The PCs decide how they intercept Silver. This is not meant to be a combat encounter, but Silver is a **Politician** with two **Bodyguards** (Nico and Lara). Any kind of loud conflict quickly draws additional support from the restaurant, with the police only a few minutes away.

Mentioning Karlo Mercy, 12420 Main Street, or the Rat King get Silver to stop and talk, if the PCs succeed on a DC 15 **Charisma** check (**Deception**, **Intimidation**, or **Perception**, depending on tactic). If they've reached 40 Progress with the Influence project, they have Advantage

on this roll if they approach Silver as if they're just another witness, not a suspect.

SILVER-TONGUED POLITICIAN

Use the background and sidebar to improvise answers to the PCs' questions. The players may have to attempt varied tactics before they reveal everything they know. The following are some possible responses to likely topics of conversation:

- **Karlo's Murder:** Silver doesn't have any prosthetics (and doesn't seem to move like someone that could climb a wall, hide in the shadows, and assassinate a man with an arbalest). Their bodyguards also don't have prosthetic arms, *or* seem quite that competent. It's possible, of course, that they hired assassins that aren't here right now. Silver claims to be surprised that Karlo is dead. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check determines that it's probably honest surprise. With a result of 20+, a PC recognizes *anger*. Karlo being dead is *bad* for Silver.
- **Silver's Car:** They admit to having had recent conversations with Karlo. They point out that if they were trying to be circumspect about it, why would they have driven him in their very recognizable car? They're curious who, specifically, noticed them (maybe they were trying to be a *little* circumspect by coming in that late).
- **The Iron Union Warehouse:** Silver claims they wanted enough leverage to make an honest offer to license the technology early and at a discount. From Karlo's notes, some of Silver's boffins put together that the Union was building some kind of weapon system with net launchers, probably an automaton. Delivering that to the city could have gone a long way with the police department. They deny any underhanded plans to steal the patent from the Iron Union, though a successful DC 17 **Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that Silver had at least *thought* about doing that, given the opportunity.
- **Court of Rats Connection:** Silver pretends for a while that they thought Karlo was just an Iron Union member with information and a cashflow problem, but the PCs can eventually get them to admit that, yes, they used Karlo as a source for the Court of Rats' projects. He was paid very well for operations Silver could direct the police to, and they had grand plans to use him to keep the Rats at bay for the election cycle and on into higher office.
- **Omar Mocchi's Death:** Silver *really* doesn't want to admit that they got the information to break up that smuggling ring back during their military service by torturing the ringleader to death. A successful DC 17 **Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that they're lying about that, but it is extremely challenging (DC 22 with Charisma (Intimidation)) to get a confession.

Assuming the PCs don't kill Silver and get most of the above information, they likely leave the conversation no longer regarding them as a suspect. If the Iron Union didn't kill Karlo Mercy, and neither did Cho Silver, who did?

The giant clock in the Sundial Lounge counts down. There's no time left. They have to report what they've found to the Rat King and hope it's enough...

Silver's Secrets

Silver got onto Karlo Mercy years ago in the military: Karlo had stewarded the smuggling ring with the Rat King while they were in the service together, and passed it on to Omar Mocchi when he mustered out. Silver couldn't go after him that much later, but learned his name as part of torturing Mocchi to death to give up his co-conspirators, and happened across him recently. A little digging was enough to figure out that he was still friendly with the Rat King. After that, it took meeting him and providing enough money to flip him. After all, the Rat King wasn't paying much for what Karlo learned about the Iron Union, but Silver was willing to pay a lot for what Karlo knew about the Rat King.

If Karlo gave Silver some leverage on the Iron Union's secret project, that would also be great. Those net-launching turrets could be a great asset to an already-militarized Soreta City Police Department.

Silver believes in law and order, and is too prominent to worry about being assassinated, just like all of their closest friends. They never considered that they might put Karlo in danger by openly associating with him. He was a useful tool, at the end of the day, and his death means that Silver needs a new angle for the election. The PCs may not have the power to blackmail Silver over the covered-up death of Omar Mocchi, but that doesn't mean the Rat King doesn't...

BACK AT THE RAT'S NEST

The Rat King is still in his booth at the back of the club, as if he never left. Tonight is a busier night for the venue, with a Brass Consortium band and a talented singer playing to a packed dance floor. The PCs never had an opportunity to find the actual assassins who did the deed, but probably have theories about the crime. The Rat King takes in their assertions with an air of nonchalance, but a successful DC 20 **Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that he's very interested in what they discovered: there's a good chance of a real benefit to him, but a slight risk it creates a problem.

The following are potential responses based on how the PCs report:

- **They blame the Iron Union or Cho Silver for the murder:** The Rat King lets them lay out their reasons. If they got there by some method that he could hand to the police and use to harass his enemies, he's impressed (even knowing the PCs are wrong). If the PCs jumped to that conclusion with poor logic, he's less impressed.
- **They blame the Rat King for the murder:** If they think they can prove it to the police and suggest that they'll

try to, he's pissed off and reminds them of what he has over them. If they admit that they know he ordered the murder but can't prove anything (and don't intend to), he's impressed with their detective skills and knows that he could use them for work in the future.

- **They blame someone else for the murder:** He's amused by whatever red herrings they followed, but has a hard time figuring out how to use that for his own purposes.
- **They tell him about the Iron Union war machines:** This is useful information that Karlo hadn't given to him, so he's interested to hear it. He's very happy if they give him blueprints or other materials from the warehouse, especially if they explain that Silver wants to use these turrets for the Shadow City police so they might be turned on Court of Rats people in the future.
- **They tell him that Silver destroyed the Fifth Combat Group smuggling ring:** He didn't know that for sure, and adds it as another reason to hate Cho Silver. If the PCs can provide the redacted death report for Omar Mocchi and/or other evidence that Silver tortured the man to death for the intel that broke the ring, he's *very* happy to have that blackmail.
- **They provide other information they learned:** Most of this is noise that he already knows and has no use for. If they found something else useful to his schemes, he's pleased to learn it.

There are three main possible outcomes, based on how the players did and what they choose:

- **Making an Enemy:** Any PC that accuses the Rat King and acts like they plan to use it against him has made an enemy. He immediately exercises whatever leverage he has (probably refusing to give what he promised), and kicks them out of the club with the understanding that actually going against him is a pretty big risk with what he knows. Maybe they feel vindicated getting out from under his thumb.
- **Making a Contact:** Any PC that mostly got things right and indicates that they're not going to make problems for the Rat King gets what they were promised, and can walk away. If they were largely wrong, he might not give them everything he promised (or extends the timer on what they owe him).
- **Making an Ally:** If they were very right, got him some of the extra information, and seem willing to ally with him, the Rat King makes a patronage offer. He has lucrative work for clever investigators that can keep their mouths shut. Hopefully they don't think too hard about how that worked out for Karlo Mercy...

(After this conversation, you should have used up most your session.)

EPILOGUE

Project how the PCs' choices change Shadow City going forward.

If you're not going to continue this plotline, you can step back and clear up any questions the players have about what was going on, perhaps narrating a brief closing scene of the Rat King meeting up with a pair of assassins who match the descriptions of Karlo's killers and suggesting that they might need to go after any of the PCs that thwarted him.

INFLUENCE AND CRAFTING

Influence Project: Deputized

This investigation would be a lot easier if the party had at least tacit permission from the police force to investigate.

Progress Track

- 20 points: Police won't go out of their way to hassle the PCs when investigating, and let them finish investigating the first crime scene.
- 40 points: PCs are noted as consultants and can use that fact when talking to witnesses to make them more willing to talk.
- 60 points: PCs receive an extra clue from the cops.
- -20 points: Subsequent police encounters start out confrontational.

Social Encounter Opportunities:

- **Detective Slate:** An off-duty and dirty cop at the Rat's Nest (d6 Influence)
- **Officers Harz, Park, and Redstone:** Patrol officers near the crime scene (d6 Influence)
- **Officers Orion, Branch, and Weir:** Senior officers that may respond to conflicts in later scenes (d8 Influence)
- **Sergeant Shalebridge:** A sergeant the PCs might seek out, or encounter if they're arrested (d10 Influence)
- Use **Bodyguard** stats for cops.

Gladhanding and Opposition:

- PCs can Gladhand by talking to cops during the day.
- If anyone has a particularly confrontational social encounter with any of the cops, the officer's die result subtracts from Progress each day, as they talk to their fellow officers about these interfering civilians.

Crafting Project: Repair the Music Box

There is an unusual clockwork contraption near Karlo's body. Once repaired, it provides a clue to the mystery: the Rat King had it delivered to the victim before he was murdered, and it plays a funeral dirge popular in Thallassia, where the Rat King and Karlo Mercy did their military tour together. The killers were meant to retrieve the box, but it got smashed in the attack and they left it, assuming it no longer had value.

The intricate device was originally worth \$2,000, and is broken enough to require \$500 worth of replacement parts. Repairing it is a Rank 3 project (DC 14, 6 hours per check) and requires 10 Progress to fix. The check uses Tinker's Tools, though a character could use Thieves' Tools or Gunsmith's Tools with Disadvantage on the check.

As a reminder of the full crafting rules earlier in this document:

- A crafting project of this difficulty requires a nicer workshop than they are likely to have, but they can call on Iron Union, Brass Consortium, or Society of Ravens contacts to rent one for a day or two, at \$15 a day.
- The crafter rolls Tinker's Tools (or Thieves' Tools/Gunsmith's Tools at disadvantage) three times, using a different ability score for each roll (for this project, Dexterity, Wisdom, and Intelligence make sense).
- For each roll that succeeds against DC 14, the crafter rolls a Progress die. This is usually 1d6, but might be modified by class features.
- With only 10 Progress required for this project, a character can succeed in one crafting session with average rolls.

Crafting Project: Bullets and Incendiaries

For an Umbral Alchemist, Purple Smoke ammo costs \$4 of materials per 5 bullets, and is a Rank 1 project (DC 10, 10 minutes per check, uses Alchemist's Supplies), requiring 80 Progress. Regular bullets require \$2 of materials per 5 bullets, and only 40 Progress (non-Umbral Alchemists can make regular bullets).

Alchemist's Fire costs \$100 of materials per each and is a Rank 3 project (DC 14, 6 hours per check), requiring 20 progress. It is an Alchemist's Supplies check.

NPCs AND ANTAGONISTS

MERCHANT *(any faction)*

Armor Class 12 (light armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +3, Insight +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +3

Senses passive Perception 14

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

ACTIONS

Light Arbalest (recharge 4-6). Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d12+1) piercing damage.

Beat Feet. The merchant can Dash and Disengage as part of the same action.

WORKER *(usually Iron Union)*

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 20 (3d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +4, Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Actions

Sledgehammer. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d10+2) bludgeoning damage.

Wrench. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 10/30 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

PICKPOCKET *(usually Court of Rats)*

Armor Class 14 (light armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Actions

Knife. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4+3) slashing damage.

Hand Arbalest (recharge 4-6). Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

LEGBREAKER *(usually Iron Union)*

Armor Class 17 (heavy armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8+18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Actions

Multiattack. The Legbreaker makes two melee attacks.

Heavy Arbalest (recharge 4-6). Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d8+1) piercing damage.

Crippling Maul. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage, and the target's speed is reduced by 5 ft. until they recover hit points.

POLITICIAN (*usually Society of Ravens*)

Armor Class 13 (not in the face)

Hit Points 14 (3d8+0)

Speed 30 ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA

10 (+0) 10 (+0) 11 (+0) 14 (+2) 16 (+3) 16 (+3)

Skills Deception +7, Insight +5, Performance +5, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Bonus Actions

Encouragement (recharge 5-6). The Politician grants an ally +1d6 on their next d20 roll.

Actions

Resort to Fisticuffs. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Not in the Face. The Politician takes half damage from a weapon attack.

BODYGUARD (*any faction*)

Armor Class 14 (concealed medium armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Insight +2, Intimidation +2, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Protector. On rolling initiative, the Bodyguard chooses an ally to protect. The Bodyguard has advantage on an attack roll against any creature in melee with their protection target or that has attacked the protection target in the last round.

Actions

Multiattack. The Bodyguard makes two melee attacks or a light arbalest attack and a melee attack.

Light Arbalest (recharge 4-6). Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d12) piercing damage.

Telescoping Baton. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Take the Hit. When an attacker chooses a target for an attack or spell that is adjacent to the Bodyguard and the Bodyguard would also be a valid target of the attack or spell, the Bodyguard becomes the target instead of the original target.

CLOCKWORK TURRET (*Medium Construct*)

Armor Class 18 (steel plating)

Hit Points 99 (18d8+18)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 13

Challenge 5 (1800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Like Clockwork. The Clockwork Turret doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Undaunted. The Clockwork Turret does not have disadvantage on ranged attacks when an enemy is adjacent.

Detachable Plating. As an action, a character adjacent to the Clockwork Turret may make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand or Tinker's Tools) check, DC 18, to lower the Clockwork Turret's AC by 2 (to a minimum of 14). This reduction persists until the construct is repaired.

Actions

Multiattack. The Clockwork Turret makes three attacks.

Repeating Heavy Arbalest. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

Immobilizing Net. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4+4) bludgeoning damage and the target is restrained. The target may escape as per a normal Net attack.