# City Denizens

## 1 Introduction

This sheet provides additional information about life in the City, beyond what’s present in the scenario in the rules document.

## 2 History

The ancient history of the City is not well recorded. Some legends say that, once upon a time, the three Peoples each resided separate from the other two.\(^1\) Then, thousands of years ago, the Others brought the People to the City and erected wards around it.\(^2\) In those days, the Others were viewed as gods walking amongst us. Those People who had the closest contact with the Others were said to be revered as priests and demigods.

Life in the City was not paradise. Simple survival required work – growing food in the frozen tundra was difficult even for the Sourcers. To survive, the People learned to trade with each other. However, contact between the Peoples was fraught, and frequently escalated to violence. Arguments led to fights, fights led to raids, raids led to battles. When things got to that point, the Others would usually intervene and stop the bloodshed.

Then, the Others left, only returning to visit once a century. . . . and battles led to wars – horrible, devastating wars.

To halt the slaughter, the Others on one of their visits imposed a magically-binding Treaty – first Treaty of Lasts. It was not the same Treaty as we have today, but according to the stories the basics were there to prevent the Peoples from slaughtering each other. The first several Treaties changed dramatically in the details, but in the last many hundred years, the variations between iterations of the Treaty have been minimal. It has been millennia since the last war between the Peoples.

## 3 Treaty of Lasts

The current Treaty, the 412th, specifies that a someone from a People may not kill anyone of a different People. It also draw the boundaries\(^3\) between the territories of the Kingdom of the Yoke, the People’s Land of the Source, \(\leftrightarrow\) (the current name of Changer territory,) and Neutral Ground (almost always referred to as The Pit.)

### 3.1 The Festival of Return

Every 101 years and seven months, the Treaty wears down and expires. When it is time for a Treaty to end, an Other, the Witness, comes down from the skies in its Ark to oversee the writing of a new Treaty.

Over the course of two weeks, the Treaty restrictions lapse and the People honor the Return of the Witness with a city-wide celebration. During the Festival, minor details of the next Treaty are discussed (subject to the approval of the Witness). At the end of the Festival, the new Treaty is created and the Witness returns to the skies.

Between the weakening of the Treaty and the influx of people into the Pit, it is common for Festivals to be when secret cabals and other crazies come out of the woodwork to try to carry out whatever scheme has become the focus of their obsessions. This

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\(^1\) Some say it was paradise.
\(^2\) To keep us safe? Or to keep us inside?
\(^3\) Which generally change slightly each Festival, as each government tries to claim more Points of Interest for themselves.
Festival is likely to be no different.

### 3.2 The City

The City is a circle about 40 miles in radius, with a population of about 5 million People\(^4\). The Treaty specifies the territory of each Race – to the northwest for the People of the Yoke, to the northeast for the People of the Change, and to the south for the People of the Source. A map of the current political division of the City can be found at [http://web.mit.edu/munch/upl/Maps/PoliticalMap.png](http://web.mit.edu/munch/upl/Maps/PoliticalMap.png).

### 3.3 The Pit

The Treaty also sets aside the center of the City, an area of about 2 miles in radius, as Neutral Ground belonging to no one People. Most of the approximately 100,000 residents of Neutral Ground are outcasts from their own societies, those that could not or would not get along with their own People. Many of them live in slums, and overall living conditions are significantly worse than in the other territories. Neutral Ground is more commonly referred to as the Pit.

The Treaty specifies the Pit is governed by a council with one representative from each People. Laws in the Pit are passed with a unanimous agreement of the three Councilors. Unsurprisingly, there are very few laws, and the main laws that are applicable to most people are that murder and drugs are illegal, as to a lesser degree is theft. Most other laws in some way pertain to trade regulations. An order of Enforcers is empowered to punish those violating the law. Because killing someone of a different People is not allowed by the Treaty, the Enforcers always include members of all of the Peoples so that deadly force can be used when necessary.

#### 3.3.1 Pit Economy

The Pit economy is... dysfunctional at best. Fortunately for its residents, the Pit seems to be a source of much magical power. The Councilors trade that power for the goods that the Pit needs to function.

Locally, the Pit economy runs on trade of handcrafted bone – scrimshaw.

### 3.4 The Wards

For as long as the People have lived in the City, there have been wards around its circumference preventing anyone from getting in or out.\(^5\)

The wards are clearly imperfect, as attested to by the slow influx of apekin and their artifacts into the City. There are rumors that well-connected people can arrange, at great expense, to take a trip outside into the apekin world... where magic doesn’t work.

### 3.5 Other Artifacts

The City has many magical artifacts left behind by the Others. While it isn’t public just how one would use them, it is known that the Treaty prohibits it. When the Treaty is weak, there’s always the Witness here to keep People from messing around where

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\(^4\) About half the area of Massachusetts, for reference, with comparable density.

\(^5\) Those among the People who’re more disgruntled about that than most have been heard referring to Others as “jailors” and calling the City a prison.
they shouldn’t. . . except this time.

4 Races

4.1 People of the Change

The People of the Change⁶ are commonly called “fickle”, though they are more likely to refer to themselves as great innovators and inventors. Their magic is the magic of changing one thing to another. It tends to be rather . . . imprecise but allows them to rapidly create grand things that have never been seen before. Changers trade their inventions, art and entertainment to the other People.

The Changer lands are currently called “襟”。 The official name is chosen by the Changer Councilor at the end of each Festival. Recent previous names include The Empire of Glass, Bob, Sirlacc’s Studio, and some name so long that it took the Councilor two days straight to utter it. There is no government in襟 and no laws. While襟 has the highest murder rate of any of the territories, Changers chafe at having restrictions placed on them, and prefer the risk of being murdered to having to do what they are told.

Changers have the ability to control their physical form, adult Changers are most readily distinguished by whatever strange defining feature they chose for themself. Fashion is taken very seriously by Changers.

4.2 People of the Source

The People of the Source⁷ have a reputation for being slow and indecisive, but it is hard to make laws and decisions quickly when everyone in the territory has an equal say in those decisions.

Sourcers practice the magic of creation; where they farm the land bears more fruit than it could possibly support, where they mine more ore comes forth than could have possibly fit in the space it came from. Sourcers trade the raw materials they create for the goods of the other People. Sourcers live in clans and don’t believe in personally owning property.

The People’s Land of the Source, more commonly called the Clanlands, are officially a direct democracy, though the Source-moot makes most day to day decisions.

Sourcer society is agendered, and all Sourcers use the third person singular pronoun "they.” Sourcers tend to dress simply in loose but practical clothes.

4.3 People of the Yoke

The People of the Yoke⁸ are thought of as stiff and controlling, but they see themselves as well ordered and efficient.

Yokers practice the magic of binding, precisely writing out how things ought to be in a crafted good, and then it is so. They trade these goods to the other People. The power of the written word in Yoker magic is also used to bind People with magically-binding contracts.

The Kingdom of the Yoke is ultimately ruled by the Erlking⁹ and their subordinates, and people are assigned what job they are to do according to their skills by the government. Yoker clothing becomes more and more elaborate with the rank of the

⁶In descending order of politeness: People of the Change, Changers, fairies.
⁷a.k.a.: Sourcers, dwarves.
⁸a.k.a.: Yokers, elves.
⁹Erlking, Duke, Prince, and all other Yoker titles are not gendered. Many of the current Princes are female, for example.
4.4 Apekin

There are a few apekin also resident in the City, though most live outside it.

Apekin are rather different than People. They don’t have any magic, they have strangely short lifespans, living on average a fifth of the amount of time that People do, and they also breed ridiculously quickly. Apekin in the City are mixture of those who’ve somehow been brought across the wards and the descendents of same.

As they’re not affected by the Treaty, apekin aren’t citizens and have no rights. Some People find having human companions quite pleasant, and take them on as pets. There are also People who consider having a pet who isn’t limited by the Treaty to provide unique opportunities. . . . As pets are property, any legal issues regarding them are the responsibility of their owner to report and/or resolve.

Virtually all apekin in the City live in the Pit – their presence is banned from Yoker and Sourcer lands. . . and is a considerably less safe place for an apekin to live than even the Pit is.

Apekin come in all sorts of weird shapes and sizes.

Apekin outside the City were until very recently widely regarded as weak and inconsequential. They were living in hovels lit by physical fire last most People had heard. It’s general knowledge that the most recent name for the human territory the City is located in is “Canada”, and that another nearby human territory was recently started being called “Japan”.

5 Current Events

Three days ago, as the Ark of the Witness descended from the skies, the unthinkable happened – the apekin attacked it! Badly damaged, it crashed into the Pit, killing hundreds. Perhaps worse, the crash killed the Witness – everyone in the City could hear its death-cry in their heads.

That is, apparently, when the wards failed, and the City became both visible and accessible to the outside world. . . and apekin from both “Canada” and “Japan” seem to be heavily armed and marching towards the City. While they are weak from their lack of magic, their tendency to breed rapidly means they have far superior numbers.

Meanwhile, the weapons the apekin used on the Ark seem to have left it and its surrounding area cursed. Hundreds more who were close to the crash site have died from the curse in the days since. What’s more the Other’s Ark seems to have crashed in to the under-workings of the city, and curse is spreading to affect the entire area.

. . . and, of course, the Treaty of Lasts has started to degrade, as it does about every hundred years. With the Other dead, the Treaty will lose power entirely soon. It’s already easier to break its rules than it would be under normal circumstances. If a regression to constant war is to be avoided (because there is little question that war is the inevitable conclusion of a Treaty-less City) then it must be rebuilt without the help of the Witness. Important people from all three territories are already descending on the Pit to see their interests represented in the new Treaty.

The City has never seen events like this before, and only time will tell what is remaining for the City on the other side.

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10 . . who apparently prefer the term “human”.
11 Among the People, many couples have trouble bearing children. Among each of the races, there are those who advise on propitious matches in this regard: Yentas amongst the Yokers, Grandmothers amongst the Sourcers, and Matchmakers amongst the Changers.
12 How could they not be without magic?