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Each month I detail a new location in the World Atlantis Broke and publish it as a port-of-call. These content packs can be used with any tabletop roleplaying game—steampunk or no—or simply enjoyed as colorful reading and dream-fodder.

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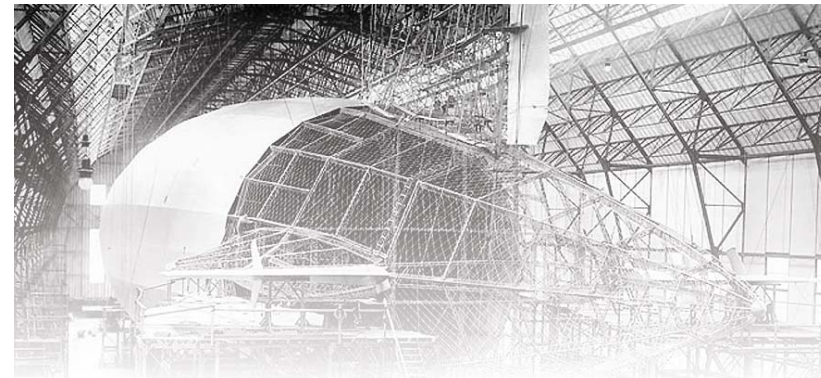
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SPECIAL THANKS

This particular port-of-call enjoyed significant support from the perfectly lovely harping monkey himself, Mick Bradley. Mick also proposed Detroit as port-of-call's location, and it turned out great.

Thanks, Mick!



Mick Bradley presents

The Detroit Machine

So there I am, hanging by my fingertips on the catwalk. The gas bags are billowing underneath me, the hiss of hydrogen is echoing all around the room, and oh yes, I'm still on fire.

I know it's only a matter of time until some scrap of my pants or a half-burnt boot goes fluttering down into the gas bags. I very, very carefully scissor my legs, trying to stamp out the flames smoldering on my legs. Which of course wrenches my slight grip on the platform above me, and my fingers are cramping so hard I think I might let go just to give them a break.

And of course that's when the shady figure comes out of the shadows. They squat down over me and say, "I'll give you a hand, friend, but there'll be a price..."

WELCOME TO DETROIT

You'll find in the following pages a detailed description of Detroit: a thriving, bustling, metastasizing metropolis at the nexus of the Great Lakes trade network, now the center of the Union's airship industry. Pressed tight against the Canadian border, this industrial boomtown is rife with sharp-eyed spies, scheming agitators, and rapacious industrialists.

This port-of-call includes six NPCs scuttling through the city's shadows, ready to drag the picaros into their world of plots and schemes.

The Detroit Machine examines the industry that literally keeps the world's progress aloft, the people who toil and suffer to make it go, and the cut-throat national machinations that keep it booming.

TO THE REVEREND DEAN TAUY JONES, OTTAWA UNIVERSITY, KANSAS—

You would not recognize Detroit if you saw it. The dirty little boomtown huddling against the walls of the fort that grandmother described is gone, replaced with a sprawling, steaming, noisy, glittering eyesore the likes of which you never did see.

It is pretty as far as American cities go. There are wide streets lined with tall buildings. The streets spray out like sunbeams from the “Grand Circus” park—that’s a little dollop of trees that was supposed to be a big circle, but they couldn’t stand to not build on half of it, so it’s a half-moon, instead. Outside of that little spit of land, though, what spindly trees they allow are kept in cages on the street curbs. The great stone buildings and the long straight streets would be canyons, devoid of all life, if it were not for the people.

They make up for the deadness of the city by cramming it full of people and horses, and pigs and chickens and cattle if you know where to look. (And rats.) At certain times of day, when the factories let their workers go home for the night, the press of people turns into rivers that sluice down the streets. You can get caught up in the current, dragged along to the tenement houses on the outskirts of the city, where the workers pack themselves up again, cramming into little rooms stacked on top of each other.

Life in Detroit is supposed to be much better than in other big cities. To my eye, it’s about the same as Toledo or Buffalo or Montreal, just with more people. I have a friend who came from New York City, and he says his rooms in Detroit are ten times bigger than what he had back East. But he also says that he rented a plank to sleep on in New York, and this was the whole of the space he had. If others came here with the same story, Detroit must be a paradise to them.

No one who lives here was born here, which makes it strange. No history. No sense of place. Just busy busy busy. The docks are always jammed with traffic and the factories go from dawn to dusk, so there is much work, and above all this is the goal that the whites pursue. Work and work and work, and they have their fill of it in Detroit.

AMERICAN FACTORY WORKER NAMES

The United States of America, and especially the north, is awash in European immigrants, former slaves, and folks from even father abroad. While there is a decided push to “Americanize” many names on arrival, traces of ancestry persist.

Masculine Names

- Antone
- August
- Beaumont
- Benj
- Charles
- Ernst
- Frank
- Fritz
- George
- Henry
- J.W.
- James
- John
- Joseph
- Ned
- Robert
- Samuel
- Silas
- Thomas
- William

Feminine Names

- Alice
- Angerona
- Anna
- Bertha
- Catherine
- Crescentia
- Elizabeth
- Emma
- Genevia
- Harriet
- Ida
- Johannah
- Lizzie
- Margaret
- Mary
- Mena
- Minnie
- Sarah
- Sophia
- Theresa

Gender Neutral Names

- Avery
- Jack
- Jessie
- Quinn
- Madison
- Sammy
- Sidney

Surnames

- Ahlborn
- Burnes
- Cabanne
- Devlin
- East
- Heanley
- Hoffmeister
- Hunter
- Martin
- McCormac
- O’Brien
- O’Gorman
- Rickel
- Schaefer
- Schweneck
- Steinroder
- Stoope
- Thomas
- Uding
- Williams

NAMES LOCAL AND NEARBY

THREE FIRES NAMES

The Three Fires Confederacy comprises the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, but this once-powerful coalition has seen its lands divided across the US-Canadian border and most of its members on the American side relocated to Kansas. Many, however, remain in the area, continuing to trade across the Great Lakes. A few thousand live in the Walpole Island Reserve, which sits opposite Lake St. Clair from Detroit, on the Canadian side of the border.

- Abbishkagog
- A'ean Dajei Waibequey
- Anean Duckumme Keskung
- Baise Mainz
- Basainz
- Bausuh
- Cheiusaima
- Chemaimisquaw
- Eyeendub
- Gamenweiwei Geshig
- Gumeisai Gaiguey
- Jesainz
- Kamei Zegaigun
- Kamei Wunanneckey
- Mezesay
- Obeegwood
- Ommei Meece
- Ommei Sowajawaib
- Shamanetoo
- Soongey Benisce
- Wabaunique
- Zaimah
- Zhon Zho

Lumber and ore and cattle and great heaps of grain come in every day by ship and now even by train. They turn out all manner of things from these materials—bits and bridles; pots, pans, knives and other cooking tools; parts for wagons, parts for guns, parts for trains, and of course the airships. Most of these (save the trains and airships) are what I sell back to Walpole and Manatoulin, and bring to the city “indian stuff:” mostly furs but also grain, these days; occasionally horses. Because you see, I am a part of the great machine of Detroit, too.

Which is a very long way around to answering your question, if there are any Odawa or Ojibwe or Potawatomi who might want to travel south to your new university. Most of us, on both sides of the border, have been gobbled up by Detroit. We may live up or down the river, or across the lake, but we send what we harvest or make to Detroit, and they send back (often through me) the basics of modern life. We can't always afford much, but your offers of modern luxuries and a white man's education—especially 800 miles away—are not as enticing compared to what we might get here. I'll ask the folks I trade with, but I don't want to get your hopes up.

Best wishes to you and your family (and your school).

Your niece, Sowerjee Jones

WELCOME TO MY AIRSHIP FACTORY, CHILDREN.

When your teacher contacted me and asked if I could give her classroom a tour through my factory, at first I thought it was a very bad idea. The factory floor is no place for children, I thought! But then she told me that you were all very bright, very curious, and very well-behaved children, and I thought: perhaps we can do this without any children falling into a separation table and being disintegrated into their constituent atoms.

Yes, I have your attention, now, do I? Follow along, listen carefully, and don't touch anything.

Here at the doors, you see we have a number of train tracks that lead right up to the factory. The trains bring in shipments of feldspar—the most common kind of rock you can find. They offload their cargo onto these conveyer belts, which carry the rocks up, up, up into one of these great funnels.

Now, do you see what we have here at the bottom of the funnel? Does anyone recognize it from the papers, perhaps? This is a separation table. From Atlantis. Or maybe some vault somewhere; there are sixteen separation tables in this factory, and I've lost track of where they all came from. But what a separation table does, assuming you give it enough heat, is disintegrate anything into the atomic elements that it's made of. And what, do you think, is feldspar made of?

Hydrogen? Hydrogen. That's a very good guess, little girl, but it is wrong. There is no hydrogen in feldspar. But there is a very great deal of aluminum, among other things, and so we separate out the aluminum from the silicon and oxygen and such dross. Because aluminum is what we make dirigibles out of. The aluminum sand is shunted over into this blast furnace. It gets up to about 1400 degrees in there, and the sand melts down to liquid metal. We throw some copper and magnesium granules in, too, just a little, like nutmeg and cinnamon in a cake batter. What comes out: aluminum alloy.

JOHN O'NEILL, FENIAN REVOLUTIONARY

Tall, broad, and well-muscled, John O'Neill looks most like a crude slab of a man packed into breeches and coat like meat pressed into a sausage casing. His features are rough and uneven: a heavy brow, a busted nose, a crooked gash for a mouth. But his hair is perfection, slicked and sculpted into an elegant ebony prow. He is a poor man of no breeding at all elevated to a petty celebrity for which his life has left him wholly unprepared. His thumbs find their way behind his lapels often, making his lapel pin, a gaelic harp, glint in whatever light is available. He is always in the company of a gang of sycophants who hang on his every word and leap to enact his every wish.

O'Neill came to American shores at age fourteen, during the height of the Great Famine in Ireland. Like many others, he scraped together small jobs to survive. Eventually he joined the Army, fought first in Utah against Mormon settlers, then in California and throughout the South against Confederates. The United States has never felt like home to O'Neill, however, so he found common cause with the Fenian Brotherhood, a militant organization dedicated to direct action to win Ireland's freedom. O'Neill participated in three separate invasions of British Canada, all of which met with failure. The American press, however, adored the Fenian invasions, turning O'Neill in particular into a popular folk hero.

After the last invasion at Pembina, O'Neill was captured by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. During transport to prison, the convoy was attacked by masked riders who freed O'Neill and handed him a glittering pendant, then disappeared into the trees. As he trudged southwards, the pendant spoke. The voice claimed to be a friend, a revolutionary who sympathized with O'Neill's position, but insisted that the Canadian invasions would never work. However, if O'Neill would consent to work with the voice's organization, which had the British Empire in its cross-hairs, they could easily effect a Free Ireland in gratitude.

For lack of better options, O'Neill accepted. He was led to Detroit and the LaMountain factory. He landed a job purely on his own celebrity, and then went about his benefactor's strange errands, all focused on the factory's separation tables.

Exemplars

- gold harp lapel pin
- well-maintained heavy hand cannon
- ruddy hulking buck
- sniggering sycophants

Classes

- Ringleader (In Charge)
- Revolutionary (Conspiracy)

Approaches

- with Force
- with Honesty

Languages

- fluent Gaelic
- fluent English
- broken Polish
- broken German

Possible Wants

- four separation tables
- Winter captured to ransom for Irish political prisoners
- to know who he's working for
- Sowerjee's logbook and maps of the US-Canadian border
- a Free Ireland; the picaros can give him that, right?

KLEMENTYNA SZWARC, UNION ORGANIZER AND COMMUNIST

A stolid, middle-aged woman, there is little about Klementyna Szwarc that would make her stand out from the long line of other workers at the LaMountain factory. She wears her hair in a bun to prevent it from catching in the machines. She wears no make-up on her broad face. The cut of her giant black coat is perhaps a touch odd; she brought it to the States from Poland, and so it is subtly foreign in uncountable ways. But it is bulky enough to hide a seemingly endless supply of pamphlets, which she puts into the hands of every other proletariat drone she meets.

In Poland, Szwarc led a life very similar to the life she leads in Detroit. She performed low-class, semi-skilled labor: in Poland making shoes; in Detroit, she makes gasbags. She lived close to poverty, her survival relying on each paycheck with no real ability to save, in a tiny tenement owned by the man who also owned the factory she worked at. Her situation has not changed in Detroit. In Minsk, she joined the Communists who were organizing workers to protest the Tsar's heavy-handed policing of occupied Poland. For that, she fell afoul of the authorities and had to flee her homeland. Now in Detroit, she is working hard to organize the workers again.

Szwarc knows that she is heading for trouble. She knows that everyone she convinces to come along for the ride will share her fate in whole or in part. She knows that people will probably die. But she also knows that change is coming, that the inequalities of her world cannot last forever, and that eventually, the people will stand up and when the police and the armies try to put them down, the people will prevail. Szwarc has little hope that her little union at LaMountain will be the protest to turn the tide. Instead, she hopes that, once they fall, they will inspire others to make their own stand.

Exemplars

- heavy black coat
- stack of lurid pamphlets
- sturdy, pale working woman

Classes

- Revolutionary (Damn the Man)
- Refugee (They Will Come For Us)

Approaches

- with Reason
- with Force

Languages

- fluent Polish
- fluent Russian
- broken German
- broken English

Possible Wants

- LaMountain's formal recognition of the worker's union
- the factory sabotaged
- trigger mass violence
- forge LaMountain's will to deed the factory to the workers
- commandeer an airship

Up the stairs, yes, I believe there's enough space on the catwalk here. You can see the workers pouring the aluminum into forms. There, those are girders. On the opposite side of the floor, those molds are for propellers. And here before us, they're pouring out sheets for the exterior of the hull. Now, the aluminum is nicely ductile—that means it's easy to bend and shape—when it first comes out of the furnace. Very convenient. Those rough sheets go through the great rollers you see at the far end of the floor, which flattens the sheets to an even thickness.

Come along, come along, through the door here to the next building. Here you can see we have many many aluminum sheets laid out on racks. There are anywhere from five hundred to one thousand sheets in here, cut to various sizes, and do you know what they are doing? They are just sitting here, cooling and hardening. At a few points in this process they'll be bent into the shapes that they'll need to be. Most of these will be hull panels, which have just a bit of a curve to them. Yes, you can touch these, they're all room temperature, although do take care; the edges may be sharp.

And now... let's go into the assembly hanger. This way. Yes, worthy of mouths agape, isn't it? This building is so large that clouds form up top sometimes! And as you can see, we have four craft under construction. This near one has only had its skeleton put together, no outer hull panels yet; you can see the decks for cargo and crew inside. And that one there, a little farther along; they're attaching the gas bags inside the frame. Over there, they're riveting on the last panels to complete the hull. And this beauty is nearly finished. We're mounting the engines and finishing up the tailboom in back. Tomorrow we'll inflate the gas bags, tow her outside, and give her a test flight.

Who'd like to come back tomorrow?

*—John LaMountain,
as remembered by Melvin Vaniman, then aged 12 years*

COMRADE WARYNSKI—

Thank you for the pamphlets. Your choice of courier was reliable, but please cease your attempts to recruit her. She complained to me about your overtures and how you spoke of her people's treatment by the moneyed oligarchs of Britain and America. The Ojibwe have a tradition of capitalism longer than our own, comrade. Besides, the less she knows about what she is moving the better.

I am glad to have this literature. No printer I could find here would publish even gently-worded encouragement for workers to unite. I am not sure if it is the fact that every petty businessman dreams of transforming himself into an industrial baron or simply the Pinkertons' growing reputation for cracking down on any trace of union activity. They laud their freedom of the press, but all of their presses seem to be terrified into silence.

I have made promising inroads at the dirigible factory, however. The women in particular are very keen on organizing. More than a few of them are suffragettes, and I cannot quite tell if they wish to organize for better working conditions or for the vote. Honestly my primary hurdle is quickly becoming the impression among the men that unionizing is somehow a woman's affair.

Regardless, the brutal conditions of the foundry and forge, both predominantly operated by men, gives both them and myself good impetus to agitate. The rate of bloody accidents is alarmingly high, and with the demand for more airships ever-pressing, I do not think LaMountain will countenance any changes that would slow production, even if it kept his workers whole.

I have seen half a dozen men lose an arm or a leg, and there must be over fifty who are missing one or more fingers. The latter convalesce for a matter of days before they return to work, bloody bandage still wrapped around their hand, to work as much as they might. The workers' pay and the city's tenement rents are nearly identical, and so no one can afford any loss of income.

I started a revolving collection to ease, and hopefully lengthen, the convalescence of those unfortunate workers. With careful shepherding, I have convinced both the charitable contributors and the grateful beneficiaries to meet in the evenings. They understand the necessity of organizing, but they are afraid of what may happen. Fears which are perfectly rational. LaMountain has already said he will not hesitate to hire the Pinkertons to break a picket or quash a demonstration.

I know that they will eventually come for us in the night, although I do not tell my fledgling union members about that inevitability, not yet. I have started making inquiries about safe houses, but have not shared the purpose of my questions. They will know soon enough. Let their enthusiasm and their dedication push us through these first stages; when we reach the time for action, the necessary consequences will reveal themselves.

Until a better day,

—Szwarc

CLARA WINTER, BRITISH SPY

There are two versions of Clara Winter. The first is a cheery and inquisitive, if somewhat clumsy, Englishwoman on tour across America, looking into investments left to her by her uncle. She is affable, unpretentious, and the often chagrined owner of a massive head of unruly hair; she receives a marriage proposal from a hopeful American boy every other week. The other Winter is a no-nonsense professional dressed in a sleek jumpsuit, hair drawn back in a severe bun. She asks precise questions and expects precise answers, and moves with the confidence and determination of a jungle cat. Which Clara Winter one has the pleasure of meeting matters entirely on the circumstances.

Clara Winter is a spy, and a good one. The only child of a middle-class London couple, Winter asked for and received the best education that could be allowed a young woman. She might have found a husband with a minor noble title if Atlantis had not erupted out of the sea. Sorcery came alive again and Winter discovered she had something of a knack for it. She enrolled in one of the first Academies of Sorcery to open its doors, and on her graduation—at the top of her class—she was approached by the crown. They had need of people with her talents, as they were about to go to war over Atlantis.

Now a veteran of ten years of espionage in a world growing stranger by the day, Winter has found herself in Detroit. While the United Kingdom and the Union are theoretically at peace, her activities here would not be regarded kindly were they to come to light. She has been gathering intelligence on various military facilities within striking distance of British Canada, in case hostilities re-ignite. While surveilling the LaMountain factory, she stumbled onto John O'Neill, whom she considers a serious threat. Her supervisors, however, do not agree. To complicate matters even further, she's also discovered an old colleague and lover, the Union spy Isaiah Black, active in the area. She is due to move on to Chicago in a few days, but that may mean losing O'Neill entirely.

Exemplars

- midnight operations jumpsuit
- long vine-patterned wand
- rangy, frizzle-haired Englishwoman

Classes

- Spy (Infiltration)
- Theurgist (Secrets of the Universe: cold, locks, distance)

Approaches

- with Grace
- with Reason

Languages

- fluent English
- fluent French
- fluent German
- fluent Central Italian
- broken Arabic
- broken Portuguese
- broken Spanish

Possible Wants

- O'Neill on Canadian soil, arrested
- technical specifications of LaMountain's newest dirigible design
- Black eliminated
- turn Klementyna to report on O'Neill
- to know why Black left her that night in Plato's Landing

ISAIAH BLACK, AMERICAN SPY

If spies are supposed to be unassuming, Isaiah Black is the perfect spy. Short and spare, round-faced and dark-eyed, he has also mastered the shuffling gait of a laborer too tired to be worth noticing. So all-consuming is his demeanor that he carries his orichalcum scanner on his janitor unility belt along with a ring of keys and rubber-bulbed spray bottle. No one notices. Only when he speaks with conviction does all the pretence fall away, revealing a fervency that overwhelms all else.

Born into slavery on St Helena Island in South Carolina, Isaiah escaped and traveled north via the Underground Railroad. He was recruited into the Union's Army Intelligence when Britain allied itself with the Confederacy, making Canada no safe refuge for him. Taking on the simple surname of "Black," he served with distinction in the rebellious states, displaying a flair for infiltration and quick-draw shooting. When his record was noticed by army brass, he was pulled from the South and put into play in the dangerous machinations of Atlantis, both during and after the war there. It is in no small part to placate Black that the Union has continued to occupy the Sea Islands where he was born and his family still resides.

As overt tensions cooled, Black was brought back into the states to work counter-espionage. This has brought him north to Detroit again. His handler at Fort Backus has given him the task of rooting out communist agitators from the LaMountain dirigible factory, which Army Intelligence considers an essential strategic asset. But Black now finds himself disillusioned, confused, and frustrated. The ideals he joined up for seem as distant as the millions of slaves still in chains deep in the South.

Black's handler is sympathetic but adamant that the assignment is important... and has intimated that Black's continued service will keep the Sea Islands occupied and his family safe. It seems ludicrous to Black that the Army would make strategic decisions based on his cooperation, but he just can't be sure.

Exemplars

- battered Atlantean scanner
- concealable matte dagger-pistol
- short dark freedman

Classes

- Spy (In Plain Sight)
- Duelist (30 Paces)

Approaches

- with Misdirection
- with Honesty

Languages

- fluent Gullah
- fluent English
- broken Yoruba
- broken Spanish
- broken French

Possible Wants

- Klementyna caught for a real crime
- to run off with Winter
- trace the source of the union pamphlets
- to know what O'Neill is up to
- get blackmail material on LaMountain for a Dove senator

CONTROL—

I have positive identification of an American agent operating in the LaMountain Factory. The fact that he is here, in the same facility as John O'Neill, does not bode well for us. Or Windsor. Scratch that; if O'Neill has Union support, his dreams of targets may extend as far as Toronto.

I'm getting ahead of myself.

In my last dispatch I reported finding John O'Neill, a known Fenian revolutionary who has already led armed invasions into Britain's territory at Ridgeway, Eccles Hill, and Pembina. These incursions were privately-financed adventures involving relatively small numbers of troops, and were easily repulsed. The ease of our victories, not to mention O'Neill's somewhat ridiculous goal of seizing land in Canada and then trading it for Britain relinquishing claims on Ireland, has historically led the Crown to dismiss O'Neill as a threat. However, I believe this assessment has entirely missed the point.

O'Neill's prior invasions weren't failed conquests; they were publicity.

He has become something of a folk hero in the Union. The Irish population is especially fond of him, for obvious reasons, but the rest of this nation has also come to admire his quixotic exploits against their northern rival. If that respect has penetrated the actual Union government, O'Neill may have serious backers and pose a very real threat to the security of the Canadian colonies.

O'Neill works at the LaMountain dirigible factory in Detroit; in the course of my surveillance, I identified one Isaiah Black, a known agent of the Union's spymasters. I have encountered Black on more than one occasion. As is common in the Queen's service, those encounters have alternated between cooperation and opposition. He was involved in the Plato's Landing affair (our side) as well as foiling the Chicago plot (their side). He is a seasoned agent of considerable skill and tenacity.

I find it doubly troubling that an American agent is meeting with a Fenian revolutionary in the Union's preeminent dirigible factory. This juxtaposition of elements makes it not just possible but likely that Black is coordinating with O'Neill to secure airships from LaMountain for an invasion of Canada. Washington will be able to claim that O'Neill seized the ships directly from the factory, absolving the Union of direct involvement. This plot must be halted before Toronto burns.

— *Boreas*

TO CUDJO BLACK AT PENN CENTER—

I am very pleased to be able to write to you, just write, and have the post office get my letter all the way down to Frogmore. How strange it is—welcome strange, but strange still—that you are not Behind Enemy Lines. But I suppose the government has always had a hard time figuring who the enemy is. You’d think we’d signed a peace treaty with the rebels for all the ruckus we aren’t causing. As if post delivered to the Union’s little beachhead in South Carolina is worth millions still in chains on the mainland.

Why do I do this, Joe? Years back now, the Railroad got me out of Frogmore and all the way up to Detroit. And I got here just in time to look at Windsor over the river as the newsboys shouted about the Brits siding with the rebels. No freedom in Canada for me. Stranded in Detroit, it seemed like just plain sense to join the war effort. And maybe they don’t want me for a soldier, but they’re happy to use me and my friends in the Railroad, so I say, “Sure, I’ll be your spy.”

They send me back down South, they send me clear out to Atlantis, they send me all hell over the place. First I’m fighting rebels in the cause of freedom. Then I’m fighting Brits and Germans and genuine Africans from Africa, and all so’s some Atlantean thing gets in Union hands and maybe that’ll help free some folks. Then comes the cease-fire, and now I’m watching a airship factory for communists, lest they blow it sky-high out of spite. They tell me the factory is a key element of the Union’s war machine, but it does not escape my notice that here I am, guarding some white man’s property with nary a slave wanting freedom in sight.

These aren’t national secrets, by the by, and even if they were, I doubt the lady in question—a Pole who can barely read and write in English—is going to make heads or tails of a letter written in Gullah.

SOWERJEE JONES, ODAWA TRADER

An indomitable saleswoman, Sowerjee ensures her endless smile is usually the first and most lasting impression she makes. She wields it like a weapon, fending off disdain, disarming unwanted attention, and driving home her bottom line. Sowerjee is here for business. She brought her book, containing ship’s log, cargo manifests, and timetables. Her fashion varies to suit her customers—a modest and unadorned full-length skirt for dealing with whites, Odawa dresses in bold colors and striking patterns for trading with First Nations folks. Whatever she might be wearing on any given day, she tops it with a thick woolen shawl.

Happy to tell you her family have always been traders, Sowerjee has taken to the family business with verve. She upgraded the canoes her father and uncles used to transport goods, investing in an old but sturdy riverboat she christened My Humble Canoe. She takes great enjoyment in telling customers she has something they need “back in My Humble Canoe.” She has travelled across all the Great Lakes and even down the canals to the Hudson river, but she knows her best business is shipping around Detroit.

Sowerjee has of course seen more than her fair share of difficulties and discrimination, and has often had to fight to overcome the reactions of people who disdain her skin or look askance at her adoption of her “white man’s” boat and accounting. Her preferred response is to breeze past any obstacles with an air of efficiency and a charming smile, but such an approach takes its toll. Sowerjee recently realized that she is very, very tired, and she doesn’t know how to fix that.

Exemplars

- blue woolen shawl
- battered ship’s log
- smiling russet-toned woman

Amenities of My Humble Canoe

- bridge
- cargo hold
- engine room
- mess

Classes

- Trader (Just the Thing)
- Mariner (Ship’s Mate)

Approaches

- with Misdirection
- with Grace

Languages

- fluent Ojibwe
- fluent English
- fluent French
- broken Seneca

Possible Wants

- anonymous pamphlet delivery to Klementyna
- help luring O’Neill onto My Humble Canoe so she can abandon him in Canada
- revenge on LaMountain for cheating her in a prior deal
- recover her missing logbook page detailing her smuggling
- public recognition from La-Mountain, legitimizing her in the eyes of Detroit society

PERSONS OF NOTE

JOHN LAMOUNTAIN, DIRIGIBLE MANUFACTURING MAGNATE

To look at John LaMountain, one would not take him as a millionaire war profiteer. He is a man of spare build and sharp features, with wispy brown hair that never quite seems to behave itself. He dresses the part, in expensive suits from New York, London, and Paris. Their intended aesthetic effect is ruined, however, by the slightly out-of-fashion stovepipe hat he wears and the bright green goggles he draps over it.

While now hideously rich, LaMountain has always lived for the sky, and for peopling it via airships. One of the pioneers of aeronautics, LaMountain made ascents as a young man in New York. When violence divided the United States, he joined the war effort on the Union side and was the first person to report military intelligence from a reconnaissance balloon. He parleyed that notoriety into a lofty position in the United States Balloon Corps. As the Civil War was subsumed into the Atlantean War, LaMountain connived to become the Union's primary manufacturer of military dirigibles.

Building an endless series of newer, bigger, better, and faster airships is LaMountain's dream come true. He is pillar of city life in Detroit and a respected industrialist to the rest of the United States. He shares a large and luxurious home with his lover Thaddeus Wilder, with only the thinnest veneer of discretion required to keep Detroit society calling them "good friends." All of which is to say, here at the top of the world, just about anything can be seen as a threat to LaMountain's perfect life. He has daily difficulties in procuring material, settling labor disputes, or dealing with "dove" politicians who think the Union could do with a few less airships in its fleet and its balance sheets. His response to nearly all of these is heavy-handed bravado and bullying; he knows he's on top, and he's going to keep it that way.

Exemplars

- begoggled stovepipe hat
- charcoal bespoke suit
- sharp-featured pale businessman

Amenities of the LaMountain Factory

- Factory Floor
- Separation Tables
- Unchristened Dirigible
- Executive Office

Classes

- Tycoon (Home Office)
- Inventor (Powered By... Dirigible)

Approaches

- with Force
- with Money

Languages

- fluent English
- fluent German
- broken French

Possible Wants

- the fledgling Union crushed
- US-British hostilities re-ignited
- Sowerjee to smuggle him Canadian cattle
- quietly sponsor O'Neill's next invasion
- implicate Klementyna in a crime, treason, or espionage.

The thing that strikes me, brother, is that this lady doesn't want much more than we did before the war. We worked the land and wanted a piece of it for our sweat. And the freedom, of course, but that's all part of it, right? The freedom to benefit from the work you do, the freedom to make your life the better for living. And this lady, goes by Clementine, is passing out pamphlets saying that the folk who work in the factory ought to have a say in how the place is run.

But that's a threat to national security, apparently. So I'm sniffing after her trail, trying to trip her up and find some cause to arrest her. The other day my handler actually said any pretext would do. It didn't have to be much of a crime, just look like one. Which brings me back to my earlier question. Why do I do this?

And here's the worst part of it: the other day I ran into an old flame, a British lady I worked with at Plato's Landing. And even though she says she's left the spying game behind, it can't be a coincidence she's snooping around the factory where a bona fide communist is handing out literature smuggled in from Canada.

So maybe I'm just war-weary and overly suspicious after doing this too many years. Maybe there really is a plot afoot here at LaMountain. Maybe I am doing good work, helping to keep the Union strong, so they can continue to keep you lot—perched on an island in the middle of the Confederate coast—safe and happy. I don't know any more. I wish I could be there with you, though. Maybe someday soon I will be—in the flesh or in the spirit.

My love to all the family.

—Isaiah Black

BY THE NAME OF HERMES PYLAIOS, DIVINE MESSAGE-BEARER!

I think I got that right. I mean, if I got that right, you're hearing me now. If I didn't, I guess I'm just standing in my room talking to a necklace. Like a bleeding gombeen. But I guess I'll just go on talking, just in case this thing is working.

I got your message about the rubbings. Glad they worked out for you. It wasn't easy getting up close to those separation tables without nobody watching. "What are you doing, John?" "Oh, just rubbing charcoal over this paper on top of the separation table." You know? Oh, you asked about the edges of the rubbings being singed, that's because the steam conduits run right underneath where the inscriptions are.

The parts of the inscription that didn't make the rubbings are covered up by the conduit or buckled over by the material funnel. I couldn't get at those parts without unbuckling the whole table, and I sure couldn't have managed that without showing my hand. But now that's what you want me to do, I suppose, so that's going to be a trick.

You should know, this place is lousy with spies. There's a janitor who's quietly talked me up, which would be strange since he's a black, so I had one of the boys follow him. Turns out he's got a handler who works at Fort Backus. There's also some sort of anarchist skulking around trying to unionize the workers in the factory. She also chatted me up — it's nice being the hero of the people, sometimes — and when I mentioned the janitor, she confided in me that he must be a Brit spy, because she saw him stepping out with a white lady she knew to be working for the crown.

I only bring this up to say, maybe this isn't the right time to try and grab the tables. Moving four plates is a tall order to start with. Those things are heavy, and you've got to crate them up with an orichalcum lid over top, since anything else that brushes up against it turns into dust. And LaMountain has the foundry going twenty-four hours a day, six days a week. He lets the workers go to church on Sunday, but not the guards.

I can make a try at the separation tables, but it will be expensive. I'd need to pay off a crew to creep in, bash down the guards, and pull the tables out of the foundries. We can pack the tables up face-to-face and load them onto a railcar due to leave Sunday evening. I don't see how I pull this off without leaving my place here, though, since I'd have to stay with the tables. Sure as hell not trusting anybody I can pay off to get them safely to you.

Maybe that means I can finally meet you face to face, aye? I can give you this necklace back, you can send me somewhere I can do some damage. I know you think I need to be patient, but your plans move so gammy slow! I want to see a free Ireland before I die. You say that'll happen if you get your way, and so far I've trusted you. But I want answers, and soon.

Anyway. If'n you want me to make the grab, I'll need about a hundred dollars for the bribes. Talk to you, or just to this damned necklace, soon.

John O'Neill Out.

COMING TO DETROIT

If you'd like to lure your picaros to Detroit, you'll need some good bait. Plot hooks, personal connections, and intriguing rumors can bring them running. Here are a few details you can drop into other adventures to put Detroit on your list of potential destinations.

- An airship wreck in Lake Michigan lost its cargo into the water; a passenger whom the picaros are tracking down is probably washed up on the lake shore somewhere. Nobody knows the vagaracies of the lake better than Sowerjee.
- The picaro's airship has taken a heavy beating and needs repairs; no better place for repairs than the factory that built it.
- A component of the Betylus Device recovered at Plato's Landing appears to carry a sorcerous resonance from its last encounter with Clara Winter, and will not function until she dispels it.
- LaMountain is in the market for more separation tables, and the picaros have recently, ahem, *acquired* one.
- Someone has been writing cryptic clues on the envelope interiors of airships coming out of the LaMountain factory. The picaros need to find out what they know.
- Cudjo Black has been found dead at Penn Center in South Carolina, and his will deeds an ancient text to his brother. The picaros need that book, but it's already been sent to Detroit.
- Eight doppelgangers of a prominent Russian official have cropped up across the world, each claiming to be the bona fide Ivan Krupin; the only person who can verify who is the real Ivan is his former lover, Klementyna Szwarz.
- One of the picaro's younger siblings, lost in the chaos of the U.S. Civil War, has recently been seen working at the LaMountain factory.
- There's an old tunnel that runs directly under the military base at Charleston, but its entrance is well-hidden. It was used by the Underground Railroad until the local conductor was discovered and shot; Isaiah Black knows how to find it.
- The rail car carrying the package that the picaros misplaced terminates in Detroit.
- The sorcerer the picaros just defeated screamed something about "my Fenian pawn in Detroit" right before he exploded in a shower of light.

Plots, Counterplots, and Shipping Gears

By now you may have noticed that there seems to be more plots and counterplots happening in Detroit than there are shadowy agents to pursue them. When the picaros come to Detroit, the Game Master will need to choose which plots are actually in motion and which are fabrications, distractions, or paranoid delusions. Much of this happens almost automatically with the selection of Key GMCs, but some careful pruning and even rewriting on the GM's part can twist this port-of-call into any shape desired.