

THE CITY OF EVERWAY

Adventure Background

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1. Ideas

What's going on in Everway is a fight between change and stasis. All the sub-plots should reflect this.

1. The Moondance family runs a secret cult dedicated to furthering the aims of the Walker. They are trying to assist him in finding the capstone of the pyramid. Once placed, this will put the whole 1000 spheres into stasis (this could either mean that everything stops, or simply that evolution or radical change is no longer possible - the Moondance cult presumably thinks the latter. All change, in their view, is change towards corruption [one of their scholars in the Platinum Chamber has discovered entropy]). The cultists think that the only way to stop things getting worse is to stop change forever). Clues: a. The Pyramid is exactly the same as it was thousands of years ago - no sign of weathering or age. The rocks of which it is made are made of a material - call it midianite - that is completely impervious to change. It is the stuff of which the spheres themselves are made. Alternatively, it is the Walker him- or herself. Or (better) - the Walker is a golem made of midianite! No, because then he couldn't create gates. b. Despite all the changes to the ruling families, the culture and society of Everway has remained remarkably constant over the centuries. No invasion has been successful - any attempt to alter the fabric of Everway is nullified by the Pyramid [a perfect parallel with Amber!].

2. The Walker himself is on a sphere far distant from Everway. The Sphere is huge and consists entirely of capstone-like rocks [Who set this up and how?]. The Walker has to test each rock to find out if it is the one.

A thought on how this sphere was created - this reeks to me of mirror magic. Imagine a sphere created by two mirrors at slight angles to each other. Result - an endless series of reflections. [NB this implies that mirrors create shadows, which I don't think was true in Hugo's original game]. Setting this up (or destroying it) would require Flame's Book of Sphere Creation.

3. Everway has at least two histories, at least one of which is a "pious fiction". Create one history, then start from the beginning, looking for an alternative explanation of each event.

4. The Platinum Chamber is also not what it seems. A secret group within the Crookstaff and Scratch families knows about Avatars. They wish to change the Avatars so that they can become Avatars.

Previous experiments have resulted in one Avatar ceasing to exist (Hope/Despair? Love/Hate? Past/Future?), leaving a vacuum that has been filled by the Usurper [how was this done? Ans: a cross-sphere spell similar to the Scorpion Plague caused the card representing the Avatar in the Fortune Deck to be destroyed. Or this may have been a symptom. An alternative is that the Avatar is trapped somewhere in a similar fashion to Anubis]. Alternatively, the Usurper was *always* present. Silly Me added it deliberately so that "non-canonical" Avatars could exist (this seems uncharacteristically thoughtful).

A second experiment involved the creation of Wrath and his ilk. How about: the secret group is known as "the Twelve". Wrath is the last remaining member of a group that performed a great magic in an attempt to turn themselves into immortal beings. I like it! The current Twelve know all about Wrath. They have been honing him as a tool to kill Avatars. Unfortunately they decided to fire him at Death first...

5. Darkfall on Everway: I like the idea of the Mist of Corrosion encircling Everway, then closing in... This would be a way to get the heroes out of Everway when I want them to move on again. NB The Mist cannot ultimately succeed because the stasis field of the Pyramid will stop it. It could convert large numbers of the townsfolk into Scorpion people first, though...

Visions

The Tower of Roots

A square in Everway containing a wizard's tower made of huge roots that rise out of the ground along the roads leading to the square and twist together, bulging at the top to enclose the living quarters. The wizard is a renegade member of the Crookstaff family.

The Walker's Ark

A huge ruined stone boat half-buried in the ground. Legend has it that the Walker created it to help him gather the stones making up the Pyramid. Why he abandoned it is not clear - some say that the Wastrel, the Walker's traditional foe, sabotaged it. Others claim that it was a grandiose folly built by *Storm Whiteoar*, the first of the Whiteoar kings, to celebrate the great sea victory against the realm of Wavebreak.

The Peril Bells

Bell hung in towers in located in strategic parts of Everway. Popular legend has it that the Walker hung the bells to guard the Pyramid and that they ring by themselves when Everway is in great danger [in fact, most unlikely - a powerful king/mage caused them to be created. Someone may notice that there is a Peril Bell for each major area of the city].

The Smilers

A sinister secret society that takes an interest in the heroes.

The Hero's Tavern

Run by a weaselly character with a line in dubious legendary artifacts.

Some of the other inhabitants...

- *Glen*, a Miss Flyte-type character (m) who has been awaiting a summons from a member of the Gold family for him to come and join her in Everway proper. He has been waiting for the last 20 years and has become an alcoholic.
- *Morbid Greener*, a doctor specialising in the treatment of victims of Libertine's Itch (a sexually-transmitted disease that makes the genitalia turn red and itch constantly - relief is only obtained by sexual congress) in the Street of One Thousand Kisses.

Shadow-men

Seen at night.

The Princess Persimmon Emerald

Caught up in palace intrigues.

The Rubber Man

A thief who is expert at getting out of tight spots.

A Show of Monstrosities

The Glass Man (his skin is transparent!)

The Scaled Men (Basahni Greenskins)

The Toothed Woman (tusks grow out of her mouth)

Man whose legs are fused together

The multiheaded woman

The Pickers in the Rubbish Dump

Mudbank family - a separate Realm within Everway.

The Stinking Ones

A disreputable and secret offshoot of the Mudbank family. They work in the sewers. Their sinuses are cauterised at birth so that the smell does not bother them. They tend to die young, as a) their personal hygiene is not of the best, and b) food is almost tasteless to them. To encourage them to eat, their food is brightly coloured and strong tasting. They know of all the secret routes into people's houses, and some of the more unsavoury things they get up to. For example...

Property Inheritance, Marriage Prices and Male Infanticide

By long tradition, property in Everway inherits purely through the female line. To encourage inter-family marriages, males must pay a marriage price to the family into which they marry. This makes male children expensive. Some of the poorer families therefore secretly practise male infanticide, disposing of every other boy. This would lead to catastrophic loss of status if such information were to leak out.

The Motley

A group of the Mask Family, members of the Motley have an ability to act as doppelgangers to a quite alarming degree. Some hint of their abilities can be seen as they mock passers by, aping their gestures. Employed as doubles by other families.

The Green Mountain Warriors

Hired as mercenaries when Earthshaker threatened Everway and who were never paid. They set up camp outside Everway (possibly not in Strangerside?) and have stayed there ever since. (See also v1). When visited by the heroes, challenge them to prove their worth by drinking increasingly fermented yak's milk without throwing up - 3 days old: Earth + fortune \geq 3, 1 week old: Earth + fortune $>$ 4, one month old: Earth + Fortune $>$ 5 etc. Must try to outlast Earth 4 Warrior.

Having a Smoke

A Sage sitting on the ground with smoke puffing gently out of his ears.

Kid

A small girl with intensely orange hair, asking questions of her mother.

A Box of Feelings

A wizard (perhaps the one that lives in the Tower of Roots?) has lost the box in which he keeps his feelings (it must have been stolen by someone smart enough to get past magical wards - Redfox?). The heroes need his help (to get into the Library of All Worlds), which he will not give without it.

Woman with Horse (v75)

White Raven - A traveller in Everway, charged with seeking out Rathgard and telling him of his inheritance. She can control any animal that she has skin-to-skin contact with - she is reputed to be able to control people in the same way... Her bags contain rare herbs which she trades.

Card Game (v31)

A scene from a Shuffler gaming house.

Two knights (one a black-hander) are gaming with a Mother (*Graceful* - a beautiful child who had the misfortune to grow up into a plain and boring woman). Gambling is her secret vice. The knights' master (a visiting dignitary) is watching them - he is left-handed.

Carnival Scene (v41)

A scene from the Carnival of Masks. Two Mask family members perform a dance for the entertainment of onlookers.

Scrolls (v15)

The private library of a Crookstaff family coven. The scrolls are normally concealed behind a blue drape. *Plot idea*: The heroes have to break into a coven to retrieve one of the scrolls - a means of fingering Ulrich as W's murderer.

The Pawn Shop (v12)

A shop of dubious reputation in Strangerside, associated with the Heroes Tavern. Adventurers pawn their possessions to obtain hefts for paying for their accommodation and other necessities of life. If the items are not reclaimed in the specified period, they are made available for sale. The shop's owner is Weasel's cousin *Otter Stoatson*.

Priest (v76)

His deepness *Immolator Buryer Tender*, head of the Tender family. He is carrying the Book of Endings which describes all the various methods of disposing of corpses. The Tendens believe in helping people towards their endings (hence the spiral on the cover) before death as well as after - they offer spiritual guidance to help you move forward in your life, as well as offering euthanasia to those who wish to die.

Dark Secret: Buryer is also head of the *Smilers*, a secret society of assassins. The methods

by which they choose their victims are obscure, but money may well be involved... Would they be a better choice for the killers of W.? Would imply that Buryer is one of the Twelve - plausible? I suppose if he was convinced that transfiguration rather than death was his natural end...

Pregnant Woman (v70)

Princess *Persimon Emerald*. She is in one of the gardens of Everway. Definitely a villainess. Cousin to Morningstar Emerald, with whom she does not get on.

Man with Large Bird (v47)

Trader Gold, husband of Saffron Gold. Originally a Mask family member until Saffron married him. He is now extremely rich. Saffron is considerably older than he is. The bird is a *cantor*, a fabulously rare beast which can sing like a human.

Three Men reading a Map (v28)

Three adventurers from Strangerside - *Sand of the Desert*, *One Eye Bluecloak* and *Snubnose*. They are reading a map of Wavebreak.

The Box of Faces (V16)

The box containing *Hawk Crookstaff's* feelings. A thief (*the Rubber Man*) has broken into Redfox's house (using the sledgehammer) and is raiding it (how did he find out? Perhaps Redfox has a taste for drink. Or someone is trying to disable the city's aerial magical defences (Cunning?)). The man behind him is his bodyguard. The raid is taking place during a festival, hence the mask.

Man with Axe (V57)

The man is Redoak Crookstaff(?) and he is summoning Shadow Men using the Axe of Shadows in one of the cellar of one of the ancient houses close to the Pyramid. The Shadow-men live in the Axe when they are not abroad doing the axe-wielder's bidding. The Shadow Men communicate using an eiry rising and falling moan. They are almost impossible to detect at night unless you see the strange blue fire that burns behind their eyes and mouths. They can move light objects and report on what they see, but otherwise have no special powers.

The origins of the Shadow Men lie, as their name suggests, with the sorcerer Shadow. They were a religious order that decided that he was an abomination that must be wiped out. Shadow defeated them and bound their souls to the Axe for eternity. He subsequently gave it to the Crookstaffs as payment for the necromantic magics that keep him alive.

Square with Skulls (v64)

The Square of the Three Travellers lies to the southwest of the Host headquarters in northern Everway. The statue is an allegory, though of what is hotly debated. It shows three figures standing back to back around a central pillar which used to support a lantern (stolen many years ago and never replaced). One figure is a bearded human, one a hairless, scaly, wise-looking creature with a high forehead and leonine ears, and one a fiery, demonic being. Some say that the figures are an allegory for human nature, others that it represents the variety of travellers who come to visit Everway. Others deduce significance from the position of the figures (the human looks towards the bazaar and the Pyramid, the demon towards the Host headquarters and the palace, and the scaly being towards the Library). Yet others say that the missing lantern is the key - the development of reason and knowledge is supported by all creatures who come to Everway, regardless of how strange they may be. The alternative view - that the three creatures are looking away from each other and from the light and that this represents the triumph of ignorance and prejudice over any attempt to reconcile different races - has also been expressed. The sculptor, *Chisel Stonebreaker*, who was responsible for many of Everway's statues in the golden age of building after the Plague Years and the conquest of Fourcorner, was characteristically opaque on its meaning, claiming that it represented "the relationship between the Principles, the World of Flesh and the Spirituous Continuum".

The skulls are those of criminals who have been executed under the King's Justice for treason, rape or murder. They are laid out on the first day of the month in various squares as

a reminder to the populace, a tradition started in the days of the Whiteoars and never rescinded. Most of the skulls are ancient as there have only been three executions in the past century.

The Prison (v30)

One of several Watcher lock-ups in the city where miscreants are kept before trial before local Watcher magistrates. The leg irons are to prevent mass break-outs when one of the prisoners is sent for trial. The current inhabitants are mostly members of the Motley, who often deliberately have themselves arrested so that they have somewhere to sleep at nights. The dog-headed creature is called Howl and is the victim of a needle demon. He was caught urinating in a public place. The figure at the window is a Mask family member who was arrested as a result of family intrigues.

The Bazaar

The Everway Bazaar is a large square just off the Imperial Way. It is run by the Gold family who employs the Watchers to keep order. The stalls are hired out at half a (silver) heft a day - in principle, this is on a first come, first served basis, but in reality the regular traders always use the same stalls. One of the jobs of the Watchers is to ensure that stallholders pay their fees at the Gold counting house at the west end of the market.

The market is divided into several areas, depending on the items sold:

Groceries, Drinks, Pots, Furniture, Cloth, Clothing, Herbs and Spices, Gems and Jewelry, livestock (small - large animals are traded at the farmer's market outside the city walls), furs, metalwork, leatherwork, hornwork.

Young Man with a Hawk (v43)

He is *Morningstar Emerald*, the eldest son of Horizon Emerald's younger sister *Lustre* and her husband *Garnet* (though there were whispers, following the scandal of *Facet* and *Plane*'s appearance, that he too may be illegitimate - *Garnet*, however, has stated categorically that *Morningstar* is his genuine son and there is a strong resemblance). He is fourth in line to the throne, and is the highest status member of the Emerald family who could marry out of it (after the fate of the *Farwatcher* family during the Blood Plague years, the first, second and third in line to the throne are not permitted to marry). The question of whom he could form an alliance with has exercised the major Families to a considerable degree. Several approaches have been made but so far he has refused all of them, much to his parents' displeasure. He says that he prefers the company of his hawk, which he can often be seen exercising in the gardens, to that of women (needless to say, the rumour that he is gay is doing the rounds). He often goes out riding outside the walls of Everway and was once lost for three days in the Sunset woods, an incident which resulted in the arrest and subsequent release of members of several dissenting families. In character he appears spoiled, vain and shallow (like his sisters - see below), though anyone who gets to know him will realise that his insouciance is calculated. Dark Secret 1: He has a telepathic link with his hawk. Dark Secret 2: He wants to be a druid and makes regular secret visits to the Green Hand coven (supports Redoak against Ulrich).

Girl on the Balcony (v26)

Velvet, a daughter of the Night River people from the realm of Gloom, is watching the Carnival of the Little Death with her pet rock leaper. She was brought to Everway by *Saffron Gold* as an investment. She is a truth-teller which would be an invaluable asset in business (and family) dealings. Sadly her powers are restricted by the Pyramid, but *Saffron* has yet to realise this.

Wizard with Staff (v72)

This is *Hawk Crookstaff* (restored to health). He is using a flaming hands spell to light his way in the stone-clad basement of the Tower of Roots (note the bundle of roots hanging from the ceiling in the top right corner). The stairway leads to Hawk's quarters at the summit. The staff is one of the Defensive Magicks of Everway. It fires energy bolts at airborne attackers and also allows access to the Peril Bells.

The Schoolmaster (V11)

Master *Didact Billows* is a spherewalker from Why's home sphere of Mansun who has settled as a teacher in Strangerside. He runs a successful school despite being blind. His effectiveness as a teacher is enhanced by his astonishing oral memory and his ability to create diagrams in mid-air (here he is illustrating one of the floating pots which are a speciality of *Sparkling Clay*, a realm where there are veins of magical earth and the magicians cast spells in pottery. Either that or it's a sex lesson). The children come from the richer families of Strangerside (Didact's fees are not cheap). The dark haired boy on the right is *Tenner Calloushand*, the tenth and youngest child of a refugee from the Glorious Empire who is a farm overseer on the Mudbank estate (he only has five brothers and sisters, the others having died). If given the opportunity (which sadly is unlikely), he will become a great composer.

Woman in Headress with long Fingers (53)

The woman is *Mother Immortal Joy*. As with all the Mothers in the Immortal bloodline, she has undergone the process of *Zeyuk-han* in which a set of clamps is used in the first three years of life to stretch the fingers to twice their natural length. This is almost unimaginably painful, which makes the judicious use of pain-killing herbs a uniquely effective way of instilling obedience. It is written that there will one day come the *Dwaama*, a Mother who will cast off the shackles of *Zeyuk-han* and disobey. This will signal a time of re-birth in the Mother family). *Zeyuk-han* gives anyone surviving the process the ability to take on another's pain simply by laying hands on them.

The woman in the background is a Stranger assassin, *Swift Surcease*. This is because Immortal Joy has gone completely insane and thinks herself to be the *Dwaama* (which in a way she is, of course). Immortal Joy is showing her the spirits of her ancestors in an attempt to motivate Swift into killing the other senior mothers.

Man and Woman in Blue with Dead Body (V1)

These, of course, are Tenders who are preparing a body for burial. The man is his Deepness *Embalmer Tender* and the woman is her Subtlety *Morgue Tender* (his cousin, and a daughter of Buryer Tender). They are preparing a corpse according to the rituals of the *Green Mountain Warriors*, whose chief, *Great Axe*, has just died of joyberry poisoning. This has created a civil war within the Warriors living in Strangerside (they were hired as mercenaries to fight against the armies of Earthshaker and have lived there ever since), and one of their number, *Horse Whipper*, is under sentence of death (in fact the chief was poisoned by the Motley at the instigation of Ulrich, who was worried that someone might ask the chief about joyberries). The ritual requires that the chief be cremated seated in an ornate coffin like a barrel. The blue liquid is to ensure that the flames rise hundreds of feet into the air, carrying the chief's spirit to the hunting grounds of the afterlife. Embalmer has his doubts about Buryer but has so far kept them to himself.

The Dancing Woman (V29)

This is *Silly Me*, dancing because she can. There is no one on the street because the inhabitants think that she is mad and a witch (she released prisoners, a couple of Basahn that the Keepers had caught, by giving them the key). The village is *Open Harvest*, one of the sleepy hamlets that surround Everway and which supply some of its food.

Two Women Embracing (V46)

These are *Facet* and *Plane*, the illegitimate daughters of Horizon Emerald's younger sister *Lustre* (Sly Mask: "Lustre by name, Luster by nature"). Morningstar is their half-brother. No-one knows who Facet and Plane's fathers were but it is widely assumed that they were prostitutes in the Street of a Thousand Kisses with whom Lustre was wont to consort - Garnet claims that he and Lustre never slept together after the birth of Morningstar, so Facet and Plane cannot possibly be his. Lustre insisted that Facet and Plane be brought up in the Emerald household (hence the rich clothes) but they were ostracised by the rest of the family. Facet has grown into an unpleasant, shallow, bored woman with no love for her family (she rails against the fact that Everway women cannot marry out of their family). Plane is more sweet and innocent but has been corrupted by her sister. It is rumoured that the relationship between them is more than sisterly. A clever person could easily use Facet to foment trouble within the Emeralds by suggesting a plan that amuses her.

Woman with Child on Shoulders (v10)

This is *Orange* of the *Rainbow Traders*, a group of merchants who ply the length and breadth of Fourcorner. She is looking out for her husband *Blue* who is acting as rearguard for the caravan while it travels through the Blacksand Desert. They trade in a wide variety of goods including the huge longbows produced by Keep in the Woods and life-sized marionettes from the Civil Kingdom that are used in puppet shows at the Theatre of All Worlds. The Rainbow Traders are little trusted by the Everway authorities as they are thought to act as spies - Orange is concerned that her son *Purple* will be questioned by the Watchers as they pass through the city gates.

Cat-eyed Woman (no. 12)

She is *Gentle Dew*, mistress of a troop of exotic dancers living in Strangerside. To explain her unusual appearance, she claims to be from the realm of Ambergris, which does not in fact exist (knowledgeable trades folk will spot that her armband is from Serpent's Coil and her headdress is from Festival - both were purchased in the Bazaar). She is quick and feline in her movements, and has an air of vulnerability which is entirely at odds with her determined nature.

In fact she was born in an outlying area of Fourcorner and is a Cat-Human hybrid from the same stock as Fish Trader's people. Gentle Dew has less control over her changes than Fish Trader and finds her eyes are impossible to keep human this close to the Pyramid. The village in which she grew up knows of the Shift. If Fish Trader is not personally acquainted with his fellow peace warriors in Everway, he may mistake her for a fellow soldier, and/or fall in love with her. The most important thing to her is her troupe of dancers, which specialise in entertainments for rich folk. Gentle Dew herself performs a belly dance that is whispered of in awe amongst the rich men of Everway, as she uses her shape shifting ability to enhance the sensuousness of her movements.

Woman with Book and Strange Creature (V42)

The woman is *Olive Sadsong* of the town of *Waterfall* in Merrybright. She is taking her dragonelle, a small semi-sentient dragon-like creature, for a walk in the Gardens. She is the wife of *Leaf Sadsong*, the Merrybright ambassador to Everway. Olive has nothing to do in Everway (women are not as good as men at the boisterous games played in Merrybright and so have second-class status) and is extremely bored. She met Trader Gold in the Gardens and has started an affair with him. The entire story is in her diary (the book has her family sigil on the front) which she carries with her and which she writes up while the dragonelle is exercising. If the book got into the wrong hands, things could turn very unpleasant... She also knows Morningstar Emerald, whom she has met flying his hawk, but hasn't succeeded in seducing him yet.

Meal in Tent (V13)

The people are the *Ten True Merchants*, a spherewalking caravan which came originally from Remnant. A cheerful bunch, they prefer to camp outside Everway rather than live in Strangerside. At their communal meal (which includes a plate of *ickly grubs*, disgusting-looking but plump and delicious, in the foreground) they are discussing what they are going to buy and sell in the Bazaar next morning. Perhaps they have something that the heroes need, and perhaps the heroes will have to do them a favour to get it. Their leader is *Laugh-out-Loud* (the woman on the left).

Kids on the Wall (V33)

These two scamps are *Woodbeam* and *Carat Digger* and they are playing a prank on their uncle *Moneybags* as he sleeps in the garden next to the Digger tower (note the tunnel-like circular doorways, a feature of Digger architecture). They are brother and sister, the children and the despair of *Goldring Digger*. Carat is next in line to lead the Digger family, but she finds this way too much responsibility and has made a pact with Woodbeam that they will remain "children forever" (their rallying cry). They have stuck to this, despite the fact that both are now technically adults. Moneybags is a suitable victim, as he is involved in a very shady money-lending scheme to enable the Masks to expand their less salubrious business interests (a loomhouse in Strangerside which produces appalling cloth but has implausibly well-muscled employees). They lead a group of like-minded youngsters from other families

who call themselves the Nippers. *Plot*: Carat disappears. Goldring thinks she has been kidnapped and calls the heroes in. Perhaps Carat really has been kidnapped - or maybe she and Woodbeam are playing a prank.

Individual Character Plottines

Flame

The book which she cannot read is of course written in Cleacun. It belonged to Spheremaker and described experiments to make new spheres. Someone (Cunning?) will try to steal it. Flame will be mistaken for a member of the aristocracy because of her provocative manner of dressing. How will she cope with one (or more) hopeful young men courting her?

Rathgard

Agents of the Copper Duke will attempt to assassinate him. People loyal to the former queen will try to find him to inform him of his inheritance.

Walker

Contacted by *Slide Moondance*, a lowly member of the family who sweeps the streets near the Pyramid. He has an allergy to magic that is so intense that he cannot leave the surroundings of the Pyramid. He is in contact with Anubis and will try to befriend Walker, if necessary revealing that he knows about Walker's visions. Later he will betray him to my Lady of Pain (Gracious Mask) and the Smilers.

Jayson

Hears rumours of more White Scorpion people from Slight's home realm. May be able to persuade members of Chamber Platinum to mount an expedition. Someone (The Twelve most probably) tries to kill the heroes by sending a fireball through the sewers. Jayson gets warned by the fleeing rats.

Slight

Meets up with Cunning, who attempts to use him for something? Marriage sub-plot - needs to meet up with Flag Mask and his daughter Gaity.

Why

Meets up with Tranquil. Red hair - must be the Copper Duke's men, trying to eliminate Rathgard's relations. Hate will come after him and Rathgard. Tranquil knows about Hate and will tell Rathgard if they ever meet.

Fish Trader

If Fish Trader has fellow spies in the city, ensure that he meets them / has to rescue them from Watcher or Keeper custody. Going near the temple is going to make keeping up his disguise extremely difficult. Have him find out about the existence of the Shift and their involvement in the origins of his people.

Wrath

The "demon horse" comedy sub-plot.
Going to Chamber Platinum will unlock many strange memories...

2. History

See history document.

Main events:

A long time ago...

Creation of the 1000 spheres, the Labyrinth and the Ambasahn. Shadows of the Amber royal family are created with ability to shadow-walk. They are less powerful and their personalities are less well-formed than their Amber equivalents, with the result that human belief on the spheres they visit shapes them into the Avatars.

Later...

The Titan drives the Ambasahn out of Fourcorner, forming the Basahn. A few people come to live in the ruins.

Later still...

Silly Me creates the Fortune Deck and gives it to the now degenerate Basahn. The "canonical" avatars are massively strengthened.

About 3500 years ago...

Spheremaker splits the Death avatar, creating the Walker and imprisoning Anubis at the centre of the pattern in a chair made of Midianite. The Walker starts collecting blocks of Midianite to wall Anubis in.

Spherewalkers come through the gate and intermix with the natives. They found various villages in the vicinity of the growing Pyramid. One group, the Moondancers, change their religion and found a cult of the Walker.

0

The Walker sets off to find the capstone.

c. 30

Ares Farwander conquers Everway. Crookstuffs arrive.

c. 100

First Library of All Worlds founded.

c. 150

Library of All Worlds destroyed, along with all records of early Everway.

c. 250

Library of All Worlds re-founded.

649-656

Bloodless Monarch. Battle of Heroes' Shades. Sacnoth.

903

Serpent plague defeated by Snakerings.

1805-1890

Plague Years

2088

Invasion by Remnant defeated by the Mudbank Sacrifice.

2149

Invasion by the Whiteoars. Council created.

2218

Civil war. Rule of the Council.

2259

People's Revolt. Limit Stranger chosen as king.

2325-2342

The Ruby Sunset war, which Everway is generally seen as having lost.

2346

Emeralds become ruling family.

2401

Earthshaker's invasion foiled by Ulrich Crookstaff.

2473

Present day.

3. Climate

Everway has a mediterranean climate with short wet winters and long hot summers. Average temperatures range from -5 wheelbits (5 degrees centigrade) in winter to +25 wheelbits (40 degrees) in the summer (wheelbit - an angle equivalent to a thousandth of the angle at the centre of a circle - temperature is measured by the deviation from the midpoint of strips of copper and iron bound together. This device is made and calibrated in the Civil Kingdom.). It is warm enough to sleep outside for eight or nine months of the year.

Winter

The skies are generally cloudy and there is occasional light rain, which becomes heavy during the months of the Water Carrier and the Fishes. Winter storms are uncommon but not unknown.

Spring

High tides accompanied by strong westerly winds. Flooding of the Sunset River into the surrounding farmlands is common as the snows start to melt in the mountains.

Summer

A succession of long hot days relieved by the occasional thunderstorm and a cooling breeze (known as the Fishers' Wind) when the wind is in the north east (it is an old joke to claim that this breeze smells of fish). An occasional hazard is a blackstorm, when the town is covered in dust from the Blacksand desert. The occasional waterspout migrating up from Gateway Isle can pose a hazard to shipping

Autumn

Still warm and sunny but with chillier nights. Towards the end of autumn, the Fisher's Wind becomes the Fisher's Blow as it turns icy.

4. Geography

Fourcorner

The sphere of Fourcorner consists of one major continent (also called Fourcorner because of its shape), a smaller continent (Middleland) to the south west and Blue Glass Island far to the north east.

Fourcorner is approximately 3500 miles long and 1500 miles wide. It is situated in the northern hemisphere with its centre at the approximate position of the Mediterranean on earth. The southern tip is arid desert, the northern areas temperate forests. A high mountain range divides it from north west to south east.

The main realms are:

Wineland: As its name suggests, the chief preoccupation of the inhabitants is viticulture.

The Sea Lords: A Viking-like culture, mostly peaceful. Occasionally a leader emerges who foments raids and piracy. The Whiteoars were originally Sea Lords.

The Stinking Lands: An area of sulphurous springs, geysers and boiling mud. No large settlements, but some people make a living trading minerals and diamonds from the mountains.

Keep in the Woods: Founded by the *Pikes*, an Everway family that was banished several centuries ago for high treason. It has developed as a secretive feudal realm ruled by a knightly caste, whose leader is Baron *Visarme Pike*. The *Pikes* are traditional enemies of Everway but have not engaged in open warfare. They supported the Whiteoars by providing wood for their fireships.

The Fisherlakes Kingdom: Peaceful people who make their living from fishing. Salted fish are traded with Everway along the Fish Way.

The Civil Kingdom: An old, proud kingdom that still considers Everway to be a recent ill-bred upstart. Its capital, *Highspire*, is widely regarded as the most beautiful city in the whole of Fourcorner. There were several attempts by the Civil Kingdom to invade Everway early in its history, but all failed, the most recent (after the Blood Plague) because the army was set upon by Blacksand Desert People. As a result, the Civil Kingdom has been covertly supporting the Firewind Nomads in their occasional raids.

The Civil Kingdom is a highly stratified society overseen by a ruling class. There is a caste system controlled by a priests of the state religion (based on the idea that only the elements of fire and water are important as they give rise to life-giving clouds). There is a heavy emphasis on culture, the arts, literature and science (in a religious context).

The other main feature of the Civil Kingdom is the importance it attaches to politeness, proper modes of address and speech and social behaviour. Anger and passion are absolutely taboo amongst the ruling class, and are regarded as a sign of ill-breeding (the custom of addressing people by the proper honorifics in Everway arose when an early king heard of the courtly behaviour in the Civil Kingdom and decided to follow suit).

The Firewind Nomads: A wilder and more extreme version of the Blacksand Desert people, with whom they have constantly and sporadically been at war. Everway has occasionally sent soldiers to assist the Blacksand tribes in fighting them off.

Blue Glass Isle

An icy and remote land, ruled (reputedly) by barbarian giants. The people of the Fisherlake Kingdom are the recipients of their occasional trading missions, where they trade their beautiful and delicate blue glass for exotic foodstuffs from the south. The blue glass is an extremely expensive, rare and high class item in Everway -when the king gets out his blue glass dinner service for a visiting dignitary, it is a sign of special favour.

Middleland

Another mysterious culture which sends trading ships manned by heavily armoured and armed black-skinned warriors. Everway has an uneasy relationship with the Middlelanders who are fierce and gruff. From time to time, Middleland invades islands in the western ocean and its borders are slowly approaching those of Everway. There is some trade, mostly indirectly through intermediary islands, with iron being traded for tropical fruits.

The Circle Sea

The Circle Sea is a 500-mile diameter ocean located in the western central part of Fourcorner (it was formed by a huge meteorite strike). Its rim is surrounded by mountains, and it contains a number of islands (known as the Islands of the Ring). The sea connects with the western ocean through two ten-mile wide straits separated by Gateway Isle. Everway is located in the north-east of the Circle Sea and the realm of Roundwander consists of the lands surrounding the Circle Sea and the islands within it.

The major states are:

The Lands of Everway: This includes the Sunset river valley and the coastal strip around the northern Circle Sea as far west as Gateway Island. All this area is administered by the Emeralds, using factors in each town. *Earthbank* and *Snakehead Harbour* are the two nearest large towns.

The Blacksand Desert People: Tribes of nomads. Some raid caravans taking the path to Fissure Lake, others try to stop them. Everway has an alliance with *Golden Fox*, the nearest the tribes have to a high Queen, who is one of the good guys.

The Islands of the Ring: Windswept islands in the centre of the Circle Sea with a strange shamanistic culture. They mostly welcome Everwayan merchants but occasionally attack them for no discernible reason. Some say it is linked to a religious artifact which supposedly tells them "the will of the gods". The high priest, *Open Vessel*, is on good terms with the king and has a defence pact.

Gateway Island: Populated by the Zephyr Monks, a group of ascetics who arrived on primitive hang gliders (the island cannot be reached by sea due to strong currents). They worship the element of Air in all its forms (they are inured to fart jokes) and over the centuries have developed a number of flying devices, including hot air balloons, dirigibles with windlass propellers and magical flying stones (these don't work in Everway). The Zephyr Monks are peaceful and refuse to allow their creations to be used for military purposes, much to the annoyance of the Crows. The monks like to feel the wind against their skin and often go naked.

The Nine Cities: A mediterranean-style culture based on the shores of the southern Circle Sea and the mountains just inland, mostly agrarian and peaceful. The political setup generally emulates Everway's - King *Brightfeather Shieldarm* is the current leader.

Wavebreak: See the scenario for details.

The Gates

The majority of the seventy-three Gates of Everway are found in a set of rocky foothills about 2-3 miles north of the town. The Gates are placed apparently at random about 100 yards apart. Each has a stone lintel incised with a complex swirling abstract design.

Around each gate is a circular enclosure generally 30 yards in diameter and 20' high (the size varies depending on the amount of traffic). Some have been enclosed with a roof but the majority are open to the elements (the Keepers have loaded crossbows to shoot down any flying thing that tries to escape). The enclosures have a single entrance by which is a table where the assessor sits with their sniffer hound. A passageway runs for about 20' from the enclosure to the exit - a cage containing a watch-sprite is placed about half way along. The

reason for this arrangement is to prevent the watch-sprite from being disturbed by the assessor at one end and the guards at the other. The passageway ends in a watch gate containing two or more guard posts for the Keepers and a portcullis that will quickly seal the enclosure if trouble occurs.

Strangers arriving at a Gate must come forward one at a time to be assessed. This can be a lengthy process. They are questioned as to their reasons for coming to Everway and, if appropriate, the Gateway Tax of one silver heft is levied. Proscribed weapons and magic items are confiscated - the assessor will laboriously write out a receipt if requested. The sniffer hound is extremely good at detecting concealed magic, weapons and (of course) cheese (skill 5).

Once the necessary formalities have been completed, the stranger can walk down the passageway. If the watch-sprite fails to sound, the Keepers cross their spears and the portcullis comes crashing down. The assessor has a bell that can be sounded if there is trouble within the enclosure itself.

Outside the enclosure, paths of varying width and state of repair lead to the imperial way. Watcher barracks are built at strategic locations allowing a platoon to reach an enclosure in seconds if there is trouble. A system of bells alerts all the other barracks in the area. Watcher children act as runners between the enclosures and the barracks and can frequently be seen rushing to and fro.

Watch-sprites

Small creatures about six inches high with homunculous-like bodies and large membranous wings. The head, which is large in proportion to the body, appears to be that of a bald human with large sunken sad eyes, a sharp nose and a wide flat mouth with protruding lips. Shrunken human-like arms are used for feeding - the rear legs are for perching and are permanently bent into a crouching position. The torso has a protruding breast bone necessary to support the wing muscles and an iridescent crest that runs from the nape of the neck down the back. The join between the crest and the back and the area of the chest where the wing muscles connect to the breast bone are covered in blue-green reptilian scales. The head, limbs and lower torso are covered in hairless brown-orange skin.

Watch-sprites are bred by the Keepers and are an essential feature of each gate enclosure. They have an uncanny ability to detect Basahn - if a normal human or pack animal goes by they twitter in alarm and flutter around their cage, bashing against the bars and ceiling, but if a Basahn passes they go quiet. This has prevented Everway from being invaded by Basahn posing as normal humans. Watch-sprites do not live for very long (six months on average) and despite appearances are not apparently intelligent or conscious. They will eat anything humans eat. Although they breed readily, the young will die unless hand-reared (the females do not have breasts due to the presence of the wing attachments).

It is a well-known secret that watch-sprites were stolen from the Basahn themselves who use them to detect non-Basahn approaching their caravans. A less well-known secret is that a fully reptilian version of the watch-sprite inhabits the forests of Middleland (the Basahn created the watch-sprites by using a needle demon to sew human foetal body parts onto the reptilian version).

Strangerside

Strangerside is approximately half the size of Everway but contains about the same number of people. It is bounded by the coastal marsh to the west, the Sunset river to the north west and north east and by fields to the east - the south is kept open to allow for future expansion. The old town is on a 100 foot high promontory overlooking the river - the rest of Strangerside is more or less flat, and is liable to flooding during storms. Its major areas are:

The Old Town

The most gentrified area, the old town promontory is chiefly covered by estates belonging to the more established and well-to-do Strangers and Outsiders. Prominent public buildings can

be found here, including the Council House, the Outsider's University, the Judiciary, the Barracks and Didact Billows's school. The Old Town is surrounded by the remains of a crumbling wall. Many of the houses are built on extremely ancient foundations dating back three thousand years or more.

Beggartown

This, as its name suggests, is where the poorer members of Strangerside make their homes. It is full of the shells of ancient stone houses now reduced to little more than crumbling walls, which are used by the residents as supports for wooden lean-tos and tents. Conditions are dirty, disease-ridden and squalid - fires and crime are frequent. An army of beggars awaits the opening of the Dusk and Mercy gates at dawn each morning.

Crafters' Quarters

The artisan class lives here in stone and wooden houses of various sizes. The crafters can afford to pay beggars to keep the streets clean and dispose of nightsoil so the streets are clean and well lit at night. A variety of shops can be found here, including the Heroes' tavern and the Pawnshop.

Dark Alley

On its south east edge, Beggartown shades into Dark Alley, a sinister area of narrow streets and close-packed houses. Its inhabitants are one up from those of Beggartown but are still extremely poor (think of it as a thieves kitchen in Victorian London). The eastern end is a little more gentrified, consisting of labourers working in the Snakering and Plume estates to the east of the city. The Snakering workers live around Serpent Square, which contains a statue of Grandmother Snakering flinging the serpents into Shimmermoon Bay (another masterpiece by Chisel Stonebreaker). There are frequent fights between the Snakering and Plume workers.

Talespinner's Square and Gold's Gardens

Talespinner's Square is the nearest that Strangerside has to a social centre. Talespinner was an unsuccessful Masterteller who cleverly decided to come to Everway and gather tales from the immigrants. This he did by setting up Talespinner's Tavern (with a little help from the Gold family). People flocked to it and told him their stories, which made him rich beyond the dreams of avarice in Tales. He used the labour there to make and buy goods which he sold in Everway, and became wealthy there as well. When Talespinner died, his wealth was used to set up an endowment to maintain Talespinner's Square and the tavern. In the spirit of competitive mercantile endeavour frequently found in Everway, a number of other taverns and places of entertainment have also appeared on Talespinner's Square, including the Lavender House, the largest brothel this side of the Street of a Thousand Kisses. Male Everwayans can often be found here as most of the prostitutes are women.

The attractive gardens that border the square were the result of an endowment by Maverick Gold, a merchant who had the good fortune to bring *Bacchus' Root* to Everway. In memory of her ancestor, Shine Gold, who came to Everway as a Stranger and lived in Strangerside for many years, Maverick bought the land around Shine's house and turned it into a garden. When she died, the garden was opened to all the inhabitants of Strangerside to give people a place where they could plan how they too could become full Everway citizens. Both the Gardens and the Square are patrolled by Plume mercenaries, making them relatively safe.

Arena

Similar to the arenas in Everway proper, staged fights of every description take place here, as well as public punishments decreed by the Judiciary. The public entertainments are not circumscribed by the same rules as in the Everway arenas, and Everwayans seeking something spicier than the bland entertainments available there can frequently be found lurking incognito. It is relatively safe, as most pickpockets and thieves are put off by the threat of being caught and used in animal combats or as gladiator bait.

Everway

Everway is built on a rocky promontory about 300 feet high with the Pyramid at the top. The ground slopes down to the Sunset river to the south east, to Shimmermoon Bay to the south, to fields to the west and less abruptly to the north, where most of the Gates are found in a set of rocky foothills about 2-3 miles away. The city is surrounded by a fifty foot high black basalt wall penetrated by gates, which enclose a space about 1 x 1.5 miles. The land around Everway is mostly rich farmland. Approximately 100,000 people live in Everway.

The Pyramid District

Pyramid Square

Actually a circle, dominated by the 300' high pyramid at its centre. The houses around the southern part of the square form an extensive complex belonging to the Moondance family, including their grand Central Temple in the south-east, an imposing square edifice built on the same ground plan as the Pyramid itself with four onion-shaped turrets and roof-to-ground windows surmounted by crescent moon-shaped skylights. The opposite part of the square is dominated by merchants' palaces built to allow easy access to the bazaar. The remaining houses belong to the Mask, Smith, Crow and Snakering families. Five major thoroughfares lead from the square - Walker's Way, which becomes the Imperial Way outside the Palace, to the north, Councillor Street to the north east, Mercy Street to the south east, Marshal Street to the south west and Library Way to the north east.

The Bazaar

Located a short distance to the north west of Pyramid Square, the Bazaar is a rectangle about the size of two football pitches divided into row upon row of trader's booths. The Tax House at the west end is where the Gold family collects the payments made by the traders. The Cart Way leads to the Mask area to the west, Scribbler's Street (a continuation of Library Way) to the Scratch headquarters and the Library to the north west, the (Trader's) Shortcut to the north east (so called because the Moondancers insisted that it be built after the bazaar became successful) and Library Way to the south east.

Snakering family HQ

A large square fortress-like building with turrets at each corner on the Walker's Way just to the north of Pyramid Square. There are numerous windows and small entrances. The interior is impossibly maze-like, with numerous hidden doors. Only the senior Snakerings are thought to know all the passages in the building.

The Entertainment District

The Gaming Houses

The Gaming Houses are domed buildings that occupy an area that was abandoned after being burnt down during the Walker Statue riots of 1821. They are the only places in Everway where gambling is legal and are given over to casinos of differing levels of sophistication. Various other entertainments can be found here, including the infamous Street of a Thousand Kisses, which is reputed to contain at least that many (mostly male) prostitutes.

Mask HQ

The headquarters of the Mask family lies on Festival Square, where the Cartway crosses Old Wall Street. It is a square building with a central atrium surmounted by a huge central dome covered in shiny blue stone. Rehearsal rooms and family quarters lead off it.

Theatre of the Thousand Spheres

A recent addition to the Gaming House quarter is the Theatre of the Thousand Spheres, situated at the conjunction of Old Wall Street and the Street of a Thousand Kisses to the north of Festival Square. It is similar to the Elizabethan theatres, being circular in design with a central stage (productions are done "in the round", though a section of the circle is walled off to make a backstage area and changing rooms). The roof is wooden and has sliding sections which allow natural light to be let in and focused as needed. At night, the stage is lit by huge chandeliers.

The Library District

The Library

This area is dominated by the Library of All Worlds, a sprawling mass of stone towers, chambers and courtyards. The grand entrance is at the north end of Library Square where steps lead up to a huge reception hall inlaid with marble. There is usually a long queue of people waiting to enter Chamber Silver. Other discreet entrances lead to offices and passages to Chamber Gold and Chamber Platinum. The whole complex is surrounded by a grey stone wall marked at regular intervals by statues of famous benefactors, which is patrolled by Plume guards and the Librarians Militant.

The Scratch Family Quarters

To the south east of Library Square, on Scribbler Street, is the Scratch meeting house (a square building with a peaked roof surmounted by a striking statue of a hand holding a quill pen [the family sigil]), behind which are the plain and frankly shabby facades of the Scratch schools.

The Crookstaff Covens

To the north of the library, hard on the city wall, are the covens of the Crookstaff family. These are large, old defended houses with a central courtyard. Most have magical ornamentation appropriate to the school of magic studied within - the Deadwalk coven, for example, has alcoves containing mummies that stir to life as you approach them and the Green Hand coven is entirely covered by (and is in fact now made of) twisting vines.

The Palace District

Emerald Family Residence

The Emerald headquarters is an impressive domed pentagonal building faced with pale green marble with onion towers at the three rear corners. This houses a grand meeting room used for family conferences and some state occasions and numerous offices for Scratches, Snakerings and other bureaucrats concerned with Everway's external affairs. Apart from the King, his sisters and their immediate families, the Emeralds live in well-appointed mansions behind the meeting hall, hard against the city walls. Low walls patrolled by Plume guards stretch from the HQ to the Imperial Gate and the Ladyhorn Tower, sealing off the complex from the rest of the town.

The Great King's Palace

This large but unsatisfying complex of buildings suffers from having been added to over the centuries by architects with dubious tastes. A formal garden adjoins the Imperial Way (think of Aranjuez) with a central drive that leads to the main entrance, a surprisingly austere hemispherical arch in a pale sand-yellow wall. Beyond is a jumble of towers with pointed roofs housing the King and his immediate family. Many are covered with coloured tiles and elaborate stonework, but the different styles of each one fail to meld into a satisfying whole. A high wall surrounds the palace, patrolled by Plume Guards. A small entrance at the back leads into the Gardens.

The Host Building

Situated opposite the Palace, the Host building is essentially a giant hotel for visiting dignitaries. It is built around a large central courtyard, entered by a wide arch from the Imperial Way. Two large towers mark the corners adjacent to the road and a third tower rises up in the centre of the rear side. There are small glass windows allowing light into the many guest rooms. The walls are white-washed and the side facing the palace is covered with vines which put forth pretty mauve flowers in the spring and turn a spectacular red-orange in the autumn. Beyond the main courtyard are the kitchens, stables, sculleries and other buildings needed to tend to guests' every need. This area is open to Host family members only and guests trying to enter are gently but forcibly turned away.

Watcher family HQ

This small and unimpressive building acts as a joint headquarters for the Diplomatic, Royal, Parks and Magical septs. Other Watchers use it when attending trials under the City or King's Justice, as it conveniently located for both. There are two entrances, one for pedestrians and

one for carts containing prisoners. The pedestrian entranceway leads into a reception room where past Watcher family heads gaze down from tapestries on the wall. From here there are exits to the cells, the magistrate's court and the Watcher private quarters.

The Council House

By contrast to the Palace, the Council House benefits from having been built by a single architect. It is based on a square design with four curving supports leading up from the corners to meet at the centre of a dome covered in lapis lazuli. Moveable slats in the dome allow sunlight into the parliament chamber below - further light is supplied by small windows high up in the walls. A shady walkway with large openings to the square runs round the four sides, and two minarets contain bells which are rung at sunrise and sunset (when the Council supposedly starts and finishes its day).

The Council House sits in the centre of the diamond-shaped Council Square. Four streets lead off from the centres of each side - the Councillors Way leads to Pyramid Square to the south west, Featherhelm Street goes past the Plume headquarters to the south east and then down to the Stonebreaker family house, Blossomdrift Street north east to the Gardens (so called because it becomes covered with white blossom when the Fisher's Wind blows in the spring), and Rascal Street heads down to the Walker's Way to the north west. The courthouse complex where trials under the City Justice take place lies off the square to the south and the remaining sides are taken up by bureaucrats' offices.

Plume family HQ

A tall fortress-like building with impressive 30' high doors opening on to Council Square. The living quarters are shorter adjoining buildings on either side. A large enclosure behind the fortress is used as a parade ground - shouted orders and tramping feet can be heard all day long.

The Garden District

The Gardens

A large octagonal park situated behind the Palace, this was once the private property of the King. During the rule of the Council it was opened up to all Everwayans and when the King was restored, only a small area adjacent to the Palace was walled off for his personal use. The Gardens are surrounded by a tumble-down wall covered with ivy, roses, wisteria, clematis and other climbers (easy to scale), and gates manned by Plume guards restrict access - although theoretically open to all Everwayans, only those of highest status will be let in unchallenged, and lower class types are likely to be refused entry due to "pressure of numbers".

The Gardens are semi-formal in design, with lawns, fountains and flowerbeds interspersed with wilder areas. A number of nature cults have temples, grottos and sacred groves here as it is the only significant natural area in Everway, but the small size of the Gardens (they are only 400 yards across) means that they are kept small.

The Gardens are tended by members of the *Gardeners*, a minor family that is an off-shoot (no pun intended) of the Mothers. Each Gardener has an area of approximately 200 yards square to take care of. The Gardeners are very close to nature and can often be found sleeping in the area they care for. They also spend much time elsewhere in Roundwander and on neighbouring spheres, looking for new plants to grow (one of their less successful acquisitions formed the basis for the Tower of Roots). There is a considerable rivalry between the Gardeners and members of the Greenhand coven, which the King has had to sort out. The Greenhand coven is only supposed to place general spells of fertility and growth on the Gardens as a whole and not cast spells on individual plants. In return, it gets samples of any new plants the Gardeners find.

Digger family HQ

This complex to the north of the Gardens is dominated by the round Diggers Tower, a fortified building where the family treasure is reputedly kept in underground vaults. All the windows and doorways in the tower and the surrounding buildings are circular in memory of the Digger's origins as miners. There are reported to be extensive underground chambers dug

over many centuries.

Stonebreaker family HQ

This building is a riot of decoration - almost every inch is covered with scrollwork, swags, gargoyles and statues in niches (it is a Stonebreaker tradition that anyone who joins the senior council must prove their mastery by adding a new decorative feature to the building). The roof is covered with row upon row of statues in different coloured stone, but these can only be seen at a distance as the hundreds of gargoyles lining the gutter obscure them close up. The exterior is dominated, however, by two giant half-human creatures, one with a walrus' face and the other with a wolf's, seated over with arms raised over the east and west entrances. They are immediately recognisable as the work of Chisel Stonebreaker.

The interior is equally impressive, with a spectacular great hall where great tree-like columns in different colour rock support a delicate grey filigree roof and the walls are lined floor to ceiling with niches containing sculptures and statues. The central courtyard is a sculpture garden and more statues line all the corridors, making it difficult to negotiate.

The building is set in the centre of Stonebreaker Square and is at its most impressive when approached from North Root Street or Old Wall East Street. Matching fountains to the north and south of the building spray water 30 feet into the air. Many Stonebreakers live in the elaborately carved buildings that border the square.

The Temple of Mercy

The Tower of Roots

This 150 foot high structure consists of a fleshy green bulb-shaped dwelling supported on a column of six huge gnarly grey twisting roots. These emerge from the ground up to 50 yards away in neighbouring streets and pose a considerable barrier to traffic (a common grumble amongst Everwayans) as they rise to a height and width of 12 feet by the time they join together at the base of the tower. There is no obvious entrance to the tower (it is a small trap door in the lee of one of the roots and is concealed with a spell).

The tower is situated at the centre of Star Square (named for its shape). North Root Street leads to the Stonebreaker HQ, Nurturer Way leads to the Mother HQ, and South Root Street leads to the Temple of Mercy.

Mother Family Buildings

Small whitewashed houses arranged around a central circular plaza containing two fountains and a 50' high statue of the Nurturer, a mother suckling her child (making her, according to Sly Mask, the woman with the biggest breasts in Everway). The houses are one-storey, plain, almost peasant hut-like affairs, covered with climbing plants and each with a small sheltered garden. These are for the main members of the Mother family only - the other Mother members live in a complex of small buildings and gardens between the Nurturer and the Temple of Mercy, with small paths leading through the gardens to the temple. From the plaza, the only road leads northwest to Star Square.

The Temple of Mercy

This is Everway's main hospital and was built by the Mothers during the Plague Years. The main temple is a circular structure surmounted by a mushroom-shaped dome. Inside is a central area dominated by a circular altar on which is a statue of the Goddess in her healing aspect. From here patients are taken into side rooms (chapels of healing) where the Mothers do their work. The temple also contains offices (on the first and second floors) where paperwork relating to the Temple is dealt with.

Patients are housed in white-washed towers that surround the main temple according to the illness that they have.

The Temple is situated on the south side of Sufferers Square, from which roads lead to Star Square (South Root Street), the Mercy Bridge (Healer Street), the Pyramid (Mercy Street) and the Gold residence (Three Horse Way). There is also a back exit from the Temple which leads to the Tender residence and the Houses of Dusk - for obvious reasons, this is known as

Corpse Street.

The Houses of Dusk

Tender Family HQ

Austere white houses with characteristic curving roofs (rainwater feeds into a complex guttering system and is stored underground for creation of the Waters of Death, a poison that is given to those who wish to die). The Temple of Endings is a larger version marked out with a spiral over the door. There is a central worship area and steps down to a crypt in the form of a giant spiral. Those wishing to commit suicide walk or are carried along it, discarding their possessions and clothing in alcoves as they go. At the centre is a slab where the Waters of Death are administered.

Dark Secret: The Waters of Death are in fact opium mixed with diluted cockatrice poison, which corrupts the victims insides rendering them a putrescent mess (the Tenders keep a number of captured cockatrices in the sewer system, a fact known to the Stinking Ones. *Plot idea*: "one of our cockatrices is missing..."). The best that can be said for this form of death is that it is quick and the opium makes it relatively painless. The corruption has to be arrested before the exterior of the body decays - this is done by sprinkling it with dust taken from the Pyramid (the Tenders have an arrangement with the Moondancers, of which Slide and Lightfoot do not approve). Even so, sloshing sounds have occasionally been heard from the coffins of people who have walked the Spiral... Recently the Tenders have become concerned that Waters of Death are becoming less effective - this is because of the capture of the Hooded Councillor by Shadow and his use in the Black Mist spell.

The Houses of Dusk

Four square buildings at the corners of a bare square (Wailers' Square) with a blackened pit where cremations take place. The windows are tiny and the interior is cool and dark. The dead are embalmed in crypts (there is a back entrance with stairs down where the corpses go when they first arrive) and are brought up to rest on slabs. The majority of bodies are kept in the public central area, but for payment of a small fee the body can be moved to a relatively private side room. The embalming fluids give the place a chemical reek that some find overpowering. The air is hazy due to cold vapours that pour out of holes in the wall and from small copper censers suspended by chains from the ceiling (the vapours are produced by incense that is enchanted so that it burns when cold. The Tenders claim that its purpose is to encourage the soul to leave the body so that it can be reincarnated - needless to say reports of seeing ghostly apparitions of loved ones in the mist are frequent - but more prosaically it helps to keep flies and vermin down (*Plot note*: when the Mist reaches Everway, the vapours will turn black). Junior members of the Tender family are employed to lead grieving relatives with a lamp to their loved one. The muffled ululations of the Wailers can usually be heard - they are not allowed into the Houses and instead perform their rituals in the square outside.

At dusk, the funeral rites begin. These vary depending on the customs of the deceased's family, but most usually a procession passes along Catafalque Street (so called because of the elaborate tombs which line it) to the Dusk Bridge, from where the dead are launched into the Sunset River in small boats with a light burning in the prow. Generally, between five and ten such boats are set adrift each night (many fetch up in the marshes, where any valuables are stripped by the Mudbanks).

Other exits from Wailers' Square lead to the Temple of Mercy (Corpse Street) and the Court of Fools (Leathern Street). The Wailers striking HQ lies to the south west.

Wailer Family Headquarters

The main Wailer temple is a 200' diameter dome made of flint, surmounted by a 50' carving of a human skull that faces onto Wailers' Square. Senior members live in the two white towers that flank it. The rest of the family live in small square tomb-like buildings with rounded tops. Larger buildings are used for making the garments and other regalia required for the ceremonies at which the Wailers officiate.

The Court of Fools

This is Everway's main centre of public entertainment. It is a large plaza some 200 yards

across surfaced with stripes of pink- and sand-coloured stone. At its centre, water jets from a fountain in the shape of a capering woman into a large pool (the model for this statue is Silly Me, which is one reason why she likes to visit Everway). The plaza is surrounded by trilothons of white stone. During the day street entertainers of varying quality can be found here. At night, the square is dominated by food stalls, snake charmers, story tellers from Tales, fire jugglers and marionette shows, each surrounded by a circle of attentive punters. The square is at its most magical during the Festival of Paper Lanterns, when coloured globes hang from the trilothons and magical lights swirl around the central statue.

The north-east side of the square runs parallel to Motley Street, which leads to the Gold residence and the Walker's Ark. From the east corner, Leathern Street goes to Wailers' Square and Adamant Street to the ruins of Hardhand Tower via the Mudbank headquarters.

Mudbank Family Headquarters

Most Everwayans will tell you that the Mudbank family home stinks to high heaven but in fact the main smell is of well-cured animal skins. It is a complex of small, plain buildings in keeping with the family's low status in Everway. The main meeting hall is a smoke-blackened square-sided domed edifice with small towers at opposite corners. The interior walls are covered with skins and a fire is kept constantly burning to warm the workers as they come up from the sewers or in from the marshes. A second fire heats the water for the communal bathing area right by the door.

Adamant Street passes by the front door and leads to the ruins of Hardhand Tower, where a hole in the city wall enables the Mudbanks to reach the marshes (*Plot point*: if the heroes need to get into Everway at night, this is one way they could do it).

Weaver Family Residence

The Weaver residence lies to the south-west of the Court of Fools. It is pyramid-shaped (the Moondancers consider this to be aping the Pyramid and therefore blasphemous, which is one reason for the enmity between the two families). Following a series of attacks, the doors have all been blocked up and entry is only possible via three ladders, one of which goes through the top-most part of the roof. Hoists are used for goods and those incapable of climbing the ladders. The interior walls are covered with rich tapestries.

The area round the Weaver residence consists largely of storehouses. The Weavers sometimes rent these out to other families. One or two have been occupied by the Motley and other low-lives.

Gold Family Headquarters

As might be expected from the richest family in Everway, the Gold headquarters is lavishly decorated. The chief exterior feature is a series of 50' high statues of major family members, carved so as to appear to support the building and covered in gold. Alcoves in the wall shelter golems (bought from the Crookstuffs) and Plume guards. As an additional protection against thieves, there is only one small entrance and no windows in the exterior wall except for a series of small barred openings just under the eaves. Inside is a large, airy courtyard with a beautiful garden with a fountain. The interior fittings are the best that money can buy.

The same, alas, cannot be said for the houses that lower status members of the family live in, which are noticeably shabby.

The Walker's Ark

This massive crumbling ruin, built of grey stone and covered in lichen and grasses, lies in an ill-maintained square off Three Gods Way (the continuation of Motley Street beyond the Gold residence). It takes the form of an ark about one-third buried in the ground. An entrance in its side leads into a series of dark rooms, passages and staircases which fill its interior. Although structurally dangerous (large chunks have fallen out of the roof and several rooms are missing floors) it is a favourite place for down-and-outs and children. The Nippers have their headquarters here.

The favourite story of the Ark is that the Walker built it to retrieve the first stone of the Pyramid

from *Brimstone*, a realm consisting of volcanoes in a sea of lava. After retrieving the stone, the Walker created a gate to Everway but let through a tidal wave of lava which solidified when it hit the sea, creating the bluff on which Everway stands (some people think that the gate to Brimstone is buried in or around Everway). A glance at the Ark itself will reveal how fanciful this story is - around its base the shattered remains of waves carved into the rock can be seen, and the Ark does not continue below ground level. It is in fact a grandiose folly built by Aric Whiteoar to celebrate his conquest of Everway and victory over the realm of Wavebreak.

Smith Family Headquarters

A dome-topped building lying between the Gold residence and the Pyramid. It has a massive arched entrance gate made of wrought iron. Shields and iron and copper decorations are inset into the walls and the area in front of the building is fenced off - the railings are bent into representations of fantastical and mundane creatures.

The buildings around the headquarters are mainly smithies with large open workshops where furnaces burn all day and night. Massive stacks of wood and coal are used interspersed between the buildings, covered in dampened tarpaulins to prevent fire.

The Pump House

This is the most important of several buildings which are responsible for supplying the city of Everway with water. A cylindrical edifice about 100 foot high located near the Smiths, the top part consists of a large reservoir which acts as waterhead for the fountains in the highest part of the city close to the Pyramid. The water comes from inlets at the edges of the reedbeds near the Red and Sunset rivers. These are maintained by the Mudbanks and serve to purify the water entering the city. The inlets lead to an underground pool 300 feet below the Pump House, from which a bucket chain is used to raise the water into the top reservoir.

Traditionally the bucket chain is powered by horses (at one time slaves were used), but the Stonebreakers who maintain the system have been experimenting with steam power, much to the disquiet of the locals. With the help of the Smiths, a beam engine has been fitted over the top of the building (its central pillar goes straight through the centre of the reservoir), and its wheezing and hissing can be heard at all times of the day and night. There are smaller pump houses dotted around the city but these continue to use horses to raise the water.

The Arenas

A series of large circular areas faced with stone. The main arena is surrounded by a ring of trilothons which are used as the anchor points for crowd-restraining ropes when staged fights are taking place. A concentric circle of columns supports a few rows of seating for high-ranking family members. Views from the plebeian areas are not good and people often climb onto the trilothons (and often fall off).

The main arena is used for military marches and mock fights, both melees and gladiatorial. Wrestling and boxing matches are also common and popular (animal fights are no longer held as too many bystanders were being gored to death - these now take place in the arenas in Strangerside). The side arenas are used as outdoor gyms for military and sporting training.

Crow Family Headquarters

Originally this consisted of a watchtower in the old city wall that the Crows took over and extended. The majority of the family live in low barrack-like buildings that extend for a considerable distance from its base. The entire complex is surrounded by a wall which extends from the remnants of the old city wall leading to and from the tower. The city wall divides the complex rather awkwardly in two, but numerous entrances lead from one side to the other and some two- or three-storey houses have been built against it. The outer wall is topped with crenellations and the gates are made of wrought iron with a spiky motif.

5. Economics

Fuel

Wood for cooking comes from two main sources: the Sunset Valley, from where logs are floated downstream some twenty miles, and from the sphere of *Rainbow Jungle*, where huge rainbow trees (their leaves act like prisms) are cut down and chopped up by slaves (iridescent bipedal flying reptiles whom the slavers catch in nets and render flightless by clipping their wings) and carried on donkeys through the gate to be sold at the Everway bazaar. This questionable trade is run by the Golds, and spherewalkers can always get a job escorting the mule trains through the gate.

Oil and tallow for lamps and candles are produced locally from various sources including olives from the Nine Cities and the Islands of the Ring, fat from cattle grown locally, and blubber and spermaceti from whales in the Western Ocean which are caught by the Sea Lords.

Living flames from the Crystal Caves are just starting to be used for the smelting of metal as they can increase the temperature to previously unheard of levels.

Food

Fruit, vegetables and wheat grow on the fertile plains around Everway and are stored at Earthbank. Fruit is mostly imported from the Nine Cities with more exotic fare such as coconut from the Middle Lands and the Civil Kingdom. Fresh fish are delivered daily from the fishing fleet based at Snakehead Harbour and are supplemented by smoked kingfish from the Fisherlake Kingdom.

Beef, chicken, eggs and pork are produced on the farms around Everway (though not milk or cheese, which farmers gave up producing after the notorious cheese tax introduced by the Council in 2255 to finance a fleet to protect against Middleland. This was one of the causes of the people's revolt in 2259). Cheese is imported from the Islands of the Ring and from the Nine Cities. Icemilk (a mixture of milk and ice to which flavourings are added to make a dessert) comes through the gate from Midlands.

Sheep are herded in the Whitetop Mountains and their meat and wool come down the Red River.

Spices grow on Ruby Sunset Island (now owned by the Middlelanders) and on the islands of Wavebreak.

Salt

Salt is extracted from sea water in huge salt pans near the city of Soda, one of the Nine Cities. The salt pans are flooded once a year during the spring tides, and the salt harvest takes place in early summer. At other times of the year salt can be difficult to obtain in Everway (Fourcorner is deficient in salt mines) though it can be imported from most spheres.

Building Materials

The most common building material is pale grey granite which is mined in the Red Mountains by members of the Stonebreaker family. Prisoners from the House of Repentance are sometimes used as forced labour. Various other stones used for decorative purposes are imported from a number of spheres, including a deep purple rock from the Glorious Empire (where it is so common that it is seen as a workers' colour), a black and white veined marble from Skystone and glowing crystals from Granite.

Wood is used for decoration and as basic structural support, but is frowned on because of the fire risk. The Mother family insists that its houses are made of it.

Wrought metal is relatively uncommon but is used for decoration on Crow and Gold buildings. The Stonebreakers disapprove of it.

Pottery

The indigenous pottery of Everway consists of utensils manufactured from red clay produced by mines in the Red Mountains. These are decorated with elaborate black geometric designs or pictures made from blacksand. The heyday of Everwayan pottery was some two centuries ago when the Artisans were in power - the facades of the Council House and the City Courts still have the characteristic red and black friezes that Limit Stranger ordered to be put up all over the city. The quality of pottery declined markedly after the Emeralds took over as the potteries were confiscated with other Artisan possessions when they were stripped of their citizenship - by the time the potteries were re-established, they found themselves in competition with cheap sandware from the Nine Cities and never regained their former glory. Most good quality pottery, including the fabulous blueware which makes a perfect complement to the products of Blue Glass island, is now made by Artisan exiles in the Civil Empire. The Glorious Empire has developed a roaring trade in cheap copies of traditional Everwayan designs (easily distinguished as the red colour is painted on and gradually fades away), also assisted by Artisan exiles.

The very finest pottery is made by the Basahn and cannot be shown openly in Everway. However, items of Basahnware have been known to appear at certain discrete and exclusive dinnertables.

Clothes

Cloth

Cotton grows in the Civil Empire and along the coast to the west of the Blacksand Desert. Flax for linen grows along the shores of the lower reaches of the Chatterfish River and is imported from the Hawk Empire.

Wool

Wool comes from the Whitetop Mountains via the Snake river.

Skins

Skins for leather are produced locally. The Sea Lords supply seal skins (not much in demand locally, but useful for spherewalkers visiting colder climes). *Glitterscale* is an export of the Fisherlakes Kingdom, being the dried skin and scales of the fish of the same name, which is found only in northern waters. It is used by the Mask family for spectacular festival costumes.

Dyeing and Tanning

The Mudbank family has a number of dye works located in the marshes to the south of Everway, where the noisome raw materials are readily to hand and the stench of their preparation is not so noticeable. The Mudbanks are also responsible for much of the leather that is used for belts, shoes and armour as it runs tanneries on its various estates around Everway.

Spinning, Weaving and Tailoring

The main manufacturers of clothing are the Weavers, but weaving, spinning, tailoring and leatherworking are frequent occupations in the Craft Quarter of Strangerside (for some reason, weaving is considered to be the occupation of choice for unmarried men, to such an extent that the euphemism amongst some Everwayan women for going on the pull or visiting a prostitute or a lover is "shopping for cloth").

Iron

This is mined by the Smith family in the Red Mountains.

Precious Metals

Copper

Copper is produced from Digger-owned mines in the red mountains.

Silver

Silver comes from hills in the Blacksand People territory. The Diggers have an agreement with Golden Fox to mine it.

Gold

Gold has to be traded for with the people of the Stinking Lands. Some gold comes from the Civil Kingdom which has mines in the Lion Mountains to the west of Highspire. There is never enough gold in Everway with the result that gold hefts are hard to come by. This has resulted in the increasing use of paper money for high value transactions (see later).

Platinum

The only on-world source is Middleland.

Pasheen

A mirror-like metal which doesn't exist (really), despite its appearance in the most well-known children's story (Little Wolf and the Pasheen Palace). The existence of pasheen is a story parents tell their children (like Father Christmas), who claim that just a small ingot will make you rich enough to live in luxury for the rest of your life. Mercury (extracted from sulphur-rich deposits in the Stinking Lands) is sometimes mistaken for it and is frequently used to gull naive off-worlders.

Herbs and Magical Ingredients

These are mostly obtained off-world. Everway has no significant stores of magical ingredients as the deadening effect of the Pyramid drains the magic out of materials.

Magical materials native to Fourcorner include:

Burning Bloodstar, a scarlet daisy-like plant found in the Sunset Mountains to the east of Everway. The plants can be boiled and filtered to produce a red-brown liquid which can be absorbed through the skin and is extremely effective in reducing fever. Unfortunately the tincture causes a painful allergic reaction.

Chatterfish - from the river of the same name, these (now extremely rare) fish, about four foot long and the shape of fat salmon, are semi-intelligent. They surface and jabber rapidly to each other in a language that no one has been able to decipher. Catching them is extremely difficult (they can use sharp rocks, for example, to cut through nets), but their powdered brains, dissolved in wine, is said to increase intelligence temporarily.

Bluegrow - a sky blue powdery mildew that grows on dying bellflowers, large clumps of which can be found in caves in mountains to the east of Fissure Lake. A pinch added to dough causes it to rise in a few minutes and makes delicious bread. It has the same effect on female and male genitalia, and is used as a recreational aphrodisiac (mostly illegally, for it is taxed) and a cure for impotence. Bluegrow has to be harvested by children as adults find it too distracting. Extended use of bluegrow, especially if applied atopically, can cause the mildew to take root in the skin, slowly rotting it and leaving the sufferer in a permanent state of arousal that is easily mistaken for Libertine's Itch. Sadly it also deadens the nerves, so relief is not pleasurable.

Lungstones - found only on the shores of lakes in the Fisherlakes Kingdom, these strange creatures (they look like stones but are alive) absorb and emit gases on a regular cycle, which the Crookstuffs have found a way of controlling. They have been used to enable breathing underwater, as a protection against poison gas (and, conversely, as a means of assassination) and as air fresheners.

Glowdust - The powdered bark of the rare glowtrees found in the forests north of Keep in the Woods, it absorbs light and re-emits it as an eerie blue-green glow at night. Used as an ingredient of light spells, and in lamps found in the Crookstaff and Mask parts of the city.

Shiftblood - Unbeknownst to most Everway inhabitants, there is a race of magical shapeshifters living on Fourcorner (these creatures can interbreed with humans, and the Body Doubles and Fish Trader's race are two results). Their blood, sprinkled on any object, causes its outlines to become wavy and indistinct.

Paper and Books

Paper is manufactured from reeds that grow by the Chatterfish River by the Scratch family. The Scratches are also responsible for most of the books to be found in Everway, which are in the Library of all Worlds. The Civil Empire discovered printing a couple of centuries ago, but this has been kept out of Everway by a combination of secrecy (the Civil Empire considers printing technology to be top secret) and resistance from the Scratches.

Ink comes from squid caught in the Circle Sea. The Mudbanks also manufacture a runny dye that can be used as ink, but it fades on exposure to bright light and is generally only used for temporary documents.

Pens are made from goose feathers. The Islands of the Ring make a superior pen from hollowed out twigs tipped with a metal nib and filled with squid ink.

Luxury Goods

Items produced locally include:

Red-spotted Agate

An extremely rare rock sold by the Stonebreakers. It is mined in the Whitetop Mountains.

Blueglass

Made on the island of the same name. The glass is as thin as eggshell (and about as tough) with a pale blue tinge. The glassware has a characteristic spiral design (it always twists to the left).

Heavenroot

Found only near the sulphurous springs of the Stinking Lands, the roots of this extremely rare plant (thick green leaves, pale green rose-like flower), when dried and chewed in the mouth, produce a feeling of euphoria. The beneficial effect is said to last for months, imperceptibly fading. Too much heavenroot taken at once causes violent vomiting, which helps to prevent it becoming too addictive.

Engraved Fortune Decks

The Fortune Deck has a dubious reputation in Everway society because of its association with the Basahn. This has not stopped games of chance using the cards from being developed, in particular the game of *Godlike* (a gambling game similar to poker except that all players place a card face down and place bets on particular card combinations appearing in the facedown cards. The rules are extremely complicated as certain cards can substitute for certain other cards in certain combinations). It is common for elaborately decorated and embossed decks, usually made of horn or ivory with a gold and silver surround, to be found in the sitting rooms of wealthy Everwayans. The Artisans were responsible for the most elaborate sets and so the best Fortune Decks now come from the Civil Kingdom and the Glorious Empire. Local sets are made by the Golds.

Portraits

Oil and watercolour painting techniques have arrived in Everway from other spheres and a number of artists ply their trade in the crafts quarter of Strangerside (no family in Everway has specialised in painting). Their wares are, however, generally considered inferior to the spectacularly detailed portrait tapestries produced by the Weaver family using threads as fine as spidersilk (dyed by the Mudbanks). The Masks take an interest, commissioning artists to produce rapid pictures of festivals and theatrical productions to sell as mementos.

Sculpture

A speciality of the Stonebreakers, sculptures of prominent citizens in coloured stone form a valuable revenue stream. An family offshoot, the *Chippers*, produce cheap knock-off copies of the more well-known statues in Strangerside.

Confectionery

The citizens of Everway and the surrounding lands have a sweet tooth and several confectioners make their wares locally and sell them in the bazaar. Some Everway

specialities include:

Lantern Cakes: Ricepaper lanterns containing a mixture of nuts, raisins and honey, sold during the Festival of the Paper Lanterns.

Horns of Plenty: An idea borrowed from Plenty - pastry cornucopias filled with kuful or custard (cheap version) containing bluecurrants (small sweet blue berries that pop in the mouth when chewed on).

Orange Drops: Small solid orange spheres, made and sold by confectioners but not actually sweets (they taste disgusting). They give out a rich orange citrus odour and can be sewn into the clothing to act as a pomander, or rubbed on the skin as a woman's perfume (the smell of lemons is the male equivalent, but no-one has mastered the art of encapsulating it in drops).

Glow Eggs: Translucent eggs which glow from inside in different colours (traders usually claim that they are the product of the fabulous Phoenix of Light that lives in the Glowing Forests of Middleland). When cracked, the glow flies around the room for a few moments and a rich perfume is released. The shell (a thin sugar enamel) and the contents (a sweet nougat-like substance made in the Firewind Desert and similar to Turkish Delight) are edible. Eating an egg without cracking it first is a really bad idea - the glows give you appalling indigestion and your faeces glows for a week.

Drinks

Wines from Wineland are justly much in demand. Distillation has been invented in the Blacksand Desert and is used to produce a bitter, unpleasant liquor that is mostly alcohol called *Camelkick*. *Gingersharp* is a non-alcoholic drink with similar properties.

Taxes

Gateway Tax

Strangers leaving or Everwayans entering the enclosures surrounding Everway's seventy-three gates must pay a tax of 1 silver heft, plus one silver heft per pack animal. The tax need not be paid immediately, but the Keepers will prevent anyone who has not paid from using the gates until they have done so (fortunately, interest is not levied). The fee is waived if the traveller can prove that they are on family business. Most enclosures contain a money-changer who will exchange goods for hefts (at extortionate rates) or lend money for a binding and witnessed contract. Keeper children are used as runners to ensure that the list of current debtors is kept consistent between the gates. The Keepers will not accept payments in lieu unless the value of the object being offered is at least 2 silver hefts in the bazaar. Personal bribes have on rare occasions been known to work, but most Keepers are extremely resistant to persuasion (Resist Bribe 4)

Stallholders' Tax

The only place in Everway where trading is officially sanctioned is the bazaar (trading in houses or on street corners is otherwise an arrestable offence, prosecuted under the Common Justice), which requires use of a stall. Anyone using a stall must pay a daily fee at the Tax House of 12 beads (£24) or about 2% of the day's likely takings, whichever is higher. The likely take is assessed by roving groups of Gold assessors who dress in characteristic magenta robes with gold chains of office and white hats shaped like the nib of a pen (common street slang for them is "pen heads"). These are accompanied by Watcher bodyguards who also come after any recalcitrant payers. Newcomers to the bazaar tend to get off relatively lightly in the assessments until they become established. Certain goods which officialdom frowns on, such as wines, smokeweeds and weapons, attract a higher rate of tax.

The one exception to the no trade rule is basic groceries, which can be bought in officially sanctioned shops throughout the city. These too have to pay Stallholder's Tax.

Gamblers' Tax

The quid pro quo for the Mask family being able to open the Gaming Houses was that a 10% tax should be levied on all takings. This has been extended to include other forms of pleasure such as theatre, concerts, brothels and restaurants. The effect has been to drive much of this trade into Strangerside.

Cheese Tax

This bizarre tax (50% on all cheeses made in or imported into the Lands of Everway) is still on

the statute books and is still enforced. This has made cheese a luxury item. Local farmers will not produce it and the majority of Everwayans have learnt to live without it, but cheese smuggling (despite the obvious difficulties) has become an increasing problem that greatly exercises the authorities. Watchers at the city gates have cheese hounds trained to sniff out contraband goods. The most popular smuggled cheeses are *Chatterfish Red* (mild, pinkish and sausage-shaped), *Wineland Ancient* (stilton-like, matured in the same cellars as the wine and a perfect complement to them), *Nanny Ebonair* (a tangy soft goat's cheese from one of the Nine Cities - also the heroine of a number of folk tales poking fun at authority) and *Middleland Glowcheese* (extremely foul-smelling and sharp-tasting, very much an acquired taste - when cut, the cheese has a network of green lines which glow faintly).

City Tax

All inhabitants of Everway must pay an annual tax which is used to fund the defensive, protective and health functions of the city. Taxes are allocated to individual families by the Great Council, based (at least in theory) on the family's size and income. Families are required to submit the requisite number of gold hefts to the King's Treasury by midday of the first day of the Month of the Scales (the autumn equinox). Failure to do so renders the family liable to prosecution for debt by the Emerald family. The main burden falls (much to their annoyance) on the Gold and Mask families. Strangers and Outsiders holding property in Everway are taxed in the same way.

Lands in Roundwander are under the protection of the High King of Everway and must also pay an annual tax for that protection. This must be paid on the last day of the Month of the Scales. The tax is collected and submitted by the ruler of each realm.

Coinage

24 copper beads = 1 silver heft

24 silver hefts = 1 gold heft

1 bead pays for a meal with meat (say £2). 5 beads is the cost of a night's lodgings. Beads can be cut into quarters and eighths - a loaf of bread is one quarter-bead.

One quarter-bead= 50p

1 bead=£2

1 silver heft=£48

1 gold heft=£1152

The currency is manufactured in the Everway Royal Mint by members of the Gold family under the auspices of the Diggers. All coins and beads from the Royal Mint have a complex design on them incorporating the Walker's Pyramid, the Emerald family sigil (a precious stone with the Goddess curved protectively around it) and the seal of the council which is supposedly unforgeable. [fairly open secret: genuine coins have a magical dweomer added by the Crookstuffs]. This design wears off in time and a common mistake among traders new to Everway is to accept counterfeit coins made to look well-worn.

The Diggers are the official money-changers - exchange rates with other realms and spheres are fixed, being set by the council (this is used a bargaining tool during diplomatic negotiations). There is also a thriving black market in money-changing especially in Strangerside.

Silver and gold hefts are uncommon due to the difficulties in obtaining large quantities of the base metal (see above). Lack of change is a common problem in the bazaar - the Stonebreakers will change beads into hefts or vice versa, but charge an extortionate fee. The absence of coins is one reason why barter is still a common means of exchange.

Since the discovery of the secret of papermaking, paper money has become increasingly popular as a means of making up for the lack of coins. The paper is an IOU which the Royal Mint promises to redeem for the specified number of coins "when said coins become available".

6. Religions

The Goddess

An earth mother religion adapted to city life, the Goddess is the family god of the Emeralds whom they and the Mothers have worshipped since before their arrival in Everway five centuries ago. The Emeralds are the only family to have retained their family god and this has caused considerable friction with the Moondancers, who have however been unable to displace what they see as the upstart because of the introduction of the Mother family and the subsequent improvement in city health. The Emeralds regard the Goddess as the Mother of the state of Everway and the Walker as the Father, although officially they do not claim any relationship between them. Unofficially, there are numerous tales of the relationship of the Walker and the Mother and of their divine and semi-divine children, largely derived from stories of the Zeus/Hera and Jupiter pantheons. Needless to say, the Moondancers strongly disapprove of these, as do the Emeralds to a lesser degree.

The high priestess of the Goddess is currently Wall Emerald. Emerald family members must attend various rituals which take place in a huge cave below the Emerald family manse. It is rumoured that there is a passage to the Palace to allow the King to attend discreetly.

The Walker

The Walker's cult is the equivalent of the Church of England - most inhabitants of Roundwander would say that they believe in the Walker, but few take it seriously. This is largely due to the obfuscation of the Walker's nature by the Moondance family. The general perception is that the Walker is a benevolent deity who watches over Everway even when he, she or it is not there. It is the responsibility of the people of Everway to take care of the city while the Walker is out of town. As no-one knows the nature of the Walker for certain, there are no moral prescriptions as such - however, Everway traditions dating back from the time of the Walker's last visit, such as matriarchy and rule by the King, must be preserved (this is a cause of the Roundwander fault of Stagnation). The Pyramid itself is a sacred site and must be protected, and some sort of observation of the festival days in honour of the Walker should be made, but in most people's minds there are no requirements beyond this.

Numerous folk-tales about the Walker exist - although the Moondancers disapprove, their refusal to come clean on the nature of the Walker has robbed them of the authority to suppress stories which might be regarded as heretical. The majority of these are clearly adaptations of other myths (such as the tale of the Walker and the Firestone, which bears more than a passing resemblance to the tale of Prometheus), though there are several unique ones which speculate on the purpose and nature of the Pyramid. Most people think that the Walker is a shape-shifter, which is why no-one can agree on his/her/its form.

The Cult of the Walker displaced a much older belief system based on the concept of reincarnation as another human after death (the gods [Frostweave, Flamehair, Zephyr and Stoneshaper] were shape-shifters and were constantly fighting each other - they reincarnated their followers in different forms depending on the nature of the battle being fought). This has become attached to the Walker and many believe that the Pyramid is involved. Some common beliefs are:

- The original gods of Everway are imprisoned in the Pyramid. When the capstone is found, the battle will end, the cycle of reincarnation will cease and the world will be perfect.
- The Pyramid is a storehouse where souls await their next body. The capstone is required to prevent the occasional escape of souls, which dissipate and are never reincarnated. This is more likely to happen if your soul is lightweight, which can be avoided by doing good deeds in life.
- The Pyramid covers the entrance to hell. When it is complete, the way to hell will be blocked and no-one need fear death again.
- The Pyramid will be the Walker's judgement hall. When it is complete, the Walker will judge all the souls of Everway, living and dead, and consign them to heaven or hell depending on their karma.

The Cult of the Watcher

A strange religion with a fortunately small following, this is the Everway equivalent of a

Cthulhoid cult. Its members believe that outside the Thousand Spheres there lives a Watcher, a being of immense but utterly alien power, almost completely beyond the ability of normal humans to understand. This creature created the spheres and all the beings within it and will one day destroy everything. The cult's rituals are particularly brutal as the cultists believe that a victim driven to the extremes of madness and pain becomes a vessel for the Watcher (if, as often happens, the victim/sacrifice dies, this is a sign that they have become one with the Watcher).

Dark Secret: Mad people are particularly favoured as victims by the cult. There is a lunatic asylum outside the city walls run by the Mother family, from which people regularly disappear. The Mothers turn a blind eye to this as looking after the mad takes resources.

The Cult of Fortune

Particularly favoured by frequenters of the Gaming Houses, its followers believe in a curious mixture of fatalism and anarchy. Human life is governed by the Goddess of Fortune (portrayed as a blind young woman with a pack of cards in one hand and a pair of dice in the other). Morality has no meaning as unexpected events invalidate every ethical decision you might make. This means that human beings are free to do as they choose without having to consider the ethical implications. The gods, of course, work on a different system of absolute determinism - no human being can stand against them as the innate randomness of human nature defeats any plan they try to make. There is no formal religious setup as this would be self-defeating. Compulsive gamblers find this philosophy a handy excuse to justify their time at the gambling table.

7. Government

The Duties of the King

- Chief Justice for trials carried out under the King's Justice. The king himself or his appointees must be on the jury.
- Head of the Great Council of Everway. Acts as chairman and casting vote when decisions are made affecting relationships between Everway and the rest of Fourcorner or other spheres. The king has no say in matters deemed to be city-wide only, unless they are related to the defence of the City.
- Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The Keeper, Crow and Plume families report to him directly, at least in theory. In practise, the Council is always involved.
- Guardian of the Pyramid. The King must swear an oath on his accession that he will guard the Pyramid until the Watcher returns. He is also expected to attend the Foundation Day ceremony, where he must renew his vow. Failure to do so can constitute grounds for his removal. [Plot: The King disappears the day before...]
- Chief host when Stranger and Outsider dignitaries visit. He is expected to put them up in the Palace, though their retinues are generally housed in the Host Family HQ opposite the Palace.
- Member of the Inner Chamber Platinum.
- The King and his family are responsible for the disbursement of the funds allocated them by the council for the defence and foreign policy of Everway and for the maintenance of the Library of All Worlds.

The Duties of the Great Council

- Responsible for the City Justice. Council members are required to act as jurors on cases tried under the City Justice.
- Law-making - new city laws are determined by the Great Council.
- Tax-raising and budgeting - the Great Council is responsible for determining the amount of taxes received from each family and the proportions to be spent on defence, foreign relations, public order, weights and measures, sanitation, public festivals and the upkeep of the public buildings such as the Library of All Worlds.
- Responsible for public order within Everway. The Watcher family reports to the Council directly. Also includes spying and surveillance of Stranger and Outsider activity within the city that could pose a threat to it (done by Mask body doubles and the Smilers)
- Responsible for maintenance of the city walls.
- Responsible for the organisation of public festivals (mostly delegated to the Masks).
- Property sales: Property within the walls of Everway that is held by Strangers or Outsiders reverts to the Council when they die (this is a result of the contractual law of Everway, which causes all contracts made with an individual to lapse on their death). The Council is responsible for selling off the property to the highest bidder. The profits are fed into city funds.

Policing

Within Everway, this is done by the Watcher family. See the Everway Law document. The Keepers are responsible for maintaining order around the Gates. The Watchers are responsible to the Council (and are paid by them) but in minor matters are a law unto themselves.

The Keepers' first priority is the safety of Everway. Most of the Gates have walled enclosures with a single gate manned by a handful of Keepers. Barracks (36 people) are dotted about so that a large force can be assembled quickly in case of trouble. Keeper justice tends to be rough - if there is any hint of a threat to Everway, they will do whatever is necessary to stop it. Keepers are also responsible for applying customs policies - certain articles, such as obviously explosive or destructive items, will not be allowed in (at least, not without a considerable bribe). Animals must be quarantined.

Foreign Policy

All foreign policy is the responsibility of the King and his advisors. The Council cannot directly block him if they disagree with his decisions but can, for example, prevent him from receiving the necessary funding to carry out military endeavours.

Roundwander

Towards Roundwander, the King has a laissez-faire policy. Most states have mutual protection treaties whereby Everway agrees to come to their assistance if they should be attacked militarily. As Everway is the only state that is rich enough to afford a large standing army, a "Pax Everwayicus" reigns throughout Roundwander. Most families trade with various states in Roundwander and Everway contractual and property laws are generally followed.

Fourcorner (Continent)

Everway is currently at peace with all the other realms in Fourcorner and, to be honest, has been little troubled by them for several centuries. Only Keep in the Woods and the Civil Kingdom pose a significant military threat.

Middleland

The Council and the King are becoming increasingly concerned about Middleland's encroachment on its territories. Numerous diplomats, amabassadors and spies have been sent into the various realms that make it up, but little headway has been made. Politically, Middleland has a federated structure with people regarding their allegiance to Middleland itself as just as strong as their allegiance to their home realm. This, combined with a xenophobia which appears to be innate, has made it next to impossible to exploit differences between states to diplomatic advantage. One other notable feature of the Middleland life is the relative absence of religious belief - there is no religion with a central organisation, although cities, towns and villages all have priests of one sort or another.

8. Families

There are 20 major families in Everway, forming about half of its population (the rest consists of the 50 or so minor families such as the Motley, the Toothpullers and the Chippers). Most major families consist of around 500-5000 people.

Brief descriptions of the interests, functions and chief characters of the main Everway families.

INTELLECTUAL

Crookstaff

Dedicated to mysteries and magical ways. Studies magic in all its forms, provides magical protection to Everway.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Ulrich, Redoak, Soulseeker

Scratch

Scholars, bureaucrats, responsible for the Library of All Worlds

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Codex, Mark, Blemish, Sigil, Verity

MILITARY

Crow

Provides Everway's standing army and officer class. Responsible for military training and technology. Organises gladiatorial combats and other military shows at the Arenas.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Render, Morrigan, Victor, Freedom

Keeper

Guardians of the Gates, collect Gateway tax.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Blackshield

Plume

Imperial guards. Also responsible for the security of the Library of All Worlds.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Straightback

Watcher

City guard, police and magistrates. Maintenance and manning of the city walls. Bodyguards, Firefighters.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Faithful, Keensight

MERCANTILE

Digger

Moneylenders, mine owners.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Blackface, Goldring

Gold

Makers of expensive and luxury goods (over 1 gold heft - approx £1000). Experts in jewelry and the working of precious metals. Also run the bazaar and collect the Stallholder's Tax.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Saffron, Trader

POLITICAL

Emerald

The royal family. Responsible for relations with other realms / spheres and ceremonial functions, and for disbursement of funds allocated for foreign affairs and defence.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Horizon, Bitter, Lustre, Morningstar, Facet, Wall

Host

Providers of hospitality to Strangers and Outsiders visiting Everway.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Opendoor, Warmhearth

Snakering

Diplomats, courtiers, spies.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Grey

ENTERTAINMENT

Mask

Organisers of public festivals, runs the Theatre of All Worlds, the School of Entertainers, the Gaming Houses and the brothels.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Riddle, Gracious, Dealer

RELIGION

Moondance

Maintainers of the Pyramid, promoters of the cult of the Watcher, organisers of religious festivals.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Glimmer, Gleam, Serpent

Mother

Run the Temple of Mercy. Healers and midwives.

Faction: King

Chief Characters: Immortal Joy, Immortal Sorrow, Living Water

Tender

Undertakers and embalmers. Runs the Houses of Dusk.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Buryer, Morgue, Embalmer

Wailer

Ceremonial specialists. Dancers, singers.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Gyre

CRAFTS

Mudbank

Responsible for Everway's sewage system. Leatherworkers and dyers.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Redder, (formerly) Bitter

Smith

Metal workers, armourers, weapon makers. Responsible for equipping the Everway army and the Keepers and Watchers.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Curlicue

Stonebreaker

Architects, engineers, stoneworkers, quarryers. Responsible for civic planning and fountains.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Mason

Weaver

Weaving, spinning and miscellaneous trades.

Faction: Council

Chief Characters: Lambskin (or Lamb's Kin as Sly Mask refers to her)

9. Customs

Family Secrets

Marriage between families can be a fraught business, particularly in families with secrets to hide. This has resulted in considerable prejudice against men as they are the most likely to leave.

A variety of approaches are adopted to prevent people in the know from leaving the bosom of the family - these include the following:

- Men in senior positions are never allowed out of the family HQ (Moondance)
- Men must obtain the permission of the family before being allowed to marry (several families).
- Senior members must sign a contract that they will never reveal secrets to non-family members (Digger, Gold)
- Men are never elevated to high status (Mother)
- Revealing family secrets counts as high treason (Emerald, Crow)

The only family with a totally open policy are the Weavers.

Same Sex Marriages

There is no bias against homosexuality in Everway - about one in ten of Everway's kings has had one or more male consorts, and this is generally regarded as a good thing as there are unlikely to be illegitimate children who might seek to complicate the succession (this has occurred in Everway's distant past). Nor is there any objection to same sex marriages; it is not uncommon to see wedding processions in which both the main participants are the same gender. However, an old belief in "the family blood" held by many families complicates the logistics of such unions. This is the belief that women carry their family identity in their blood and bestow it on their children and on their spouses.

For male / male unions, the chief consequence is that both men lose their family membership and must therefore leave Everway unless one of their families agrees to take them in. As no dowries are required to be paid, taking in a same sex couple is quite common as a new contributing family member is effectively acquired for free. A contract between the families concerned is generally required to formalise the arrangement. However, amicable arrangements are not always reached and there are a number of couples living in Strangerside who have been forced out of Everway proper.

Female / female unions are much more fraught. The question is whether a woman can renounce her family identity. A common view is that she can't - it's in her blood, and marriage (or more precisely consummation of the marriage) transfers her family identity to her spouse. The more traditional families (Moondance, Wailer, Mother, Emerald, Snakering) take this to the logical extreme and ban female / female unions on the grounds that the "conjoining of the bloods" involved would imply that the two families had merged into one. More liberal families (Crookstuffs, Scratches, Weavers, Mothers) argue that this is based on an outmoded view of childbirth where the mother provides all the material for the baby and the sperm simply acts to start the process. Children, they point out, generally look like both their parents and so the sperm must be doing more than just firing the starting gun (as it were). This makes the concept of the "family blood" nonsense - family membership is conferred by usage and custom, so there is no reason why women should not change families.

Greetings

10. Scenarios

The Demon Horse

Wrath turns up, apparently without Tempest. At about the same time, a number of the horses at the local stable start being killed and eaten, one by one. Wrath's increasing discomfort may lead the heroes to investigate, in which case a certain black horse may seem familiar, at least to Jayson... Heroes have to figure how to get rid of Wrath or find a way for Tempest to eat without attracting so much attention.

The Mother Murders

Senior members of the Mother family are murdered - the heroes are asked to investigate. Several suspects - junior but ambitious male members of the family, a member of another family seeking revenge for the Mothers allowing his/her grandfather to die, a secret arrangement to provide corpses to the Deadwalk coven that has come unravelled. The true culprits are Swift Surcease and Mother Immortal Joy.

The Box of Feelings

Hawk Crookstaff is suggested to the heroes as a way of getting entry into the Library of All Worlds. They enter his tower to find him in a terrible state - he put his feelings in a box [why?], which has been stolen. He won't do anything for them until they get it back. His box was stolen by Redfox, who lives in a maze of mirrors somewhere in Everway (though heroes may not find him here - too obvious that he's a mirror mage).

Silly Me

20/09/2006