

Underworld Onboarding Primer

Welcome to the Underworld. This document will go into all the details you need to know in order to play an Underworld focused Character. This will also go into details for those who might want to dip in a toe, but may not want to dive headfirst into the seedy underbelly of the Doomsday universe.

Before we go any further, it should be noted that successful Underworld Characters are likely to be those that pursue their goals, and pursue plot. It is for this reason that we don't entirely recommend starting within the Underworld as a new Player. It does not have the same structure of the IFA, M3, or the Tempest Foundation, where the goals of your Division are clear. For Underworld Characters, very little will simply be given to you. Moreover, many Underworld Characters will ride the line on what is "legal" within the in game world, and if you are caught there are likely to be consequences. Be aware of what you sign up for. We recommend that new Players looking to take part in the Underworld create a Character within one of the other Divisions that can pursue their extralegal activities on the side, you can always increase your activity later.

Underworld Contracts

While you are free to pursue your own illegal activities within the gameworld, it is likely that you will not last long before you are caught. Most questionable activities take place under the auspices of "Contracts". Contracts are jobs that Character sign on for. Contracts often have specific requirements, such as "you need X many people for this" or "make certain to bring along a counselor". Contracts come in a number of flavors.

Mercenary Contracts: Contracts that come from one of the local Mercenary Companies. Several Mercenary Companies have local offices within the system and farm out jobs to the local Mercenary Bands. Not all Mercenary work is illegal, some of it has been sanctioned by the government. So long as you remain within the bounds of a sanctioned Contract, you cannot be prosecuted for anything you do while under that Contact. A fair amount of Mercenary work however is illegal, and if you are caught while on an unsanctioned job, you are very likely to face justice. Mercenary Contracts tend to involve a fair amount of Combat.

Illicit Contracts: These Contracts come directly from criminal organizations, and involve you doing something explicitly illegal. Various groups send jobs through Black Channel, which you can pick up and pursue. While some of these jobs may involve Sanctum, most of them take place outside of the city. An Illicit Contract can be anything from robbing a space train, to having a "nice talk" with a local businessman.

Bounty Contracts: These are open Contracts for the capture or death of individuals or in some cases, specific rare animals. Bounty Contracts also apply to the retrieval of specific items or materials, that might be found or pursued through a variety of means. Many Bounty Contracts are perfectly legal, and go through 100% legal channels. Others, especially those that involve assassination, are explicitly illegal. Bounty Contracts tend to be open world opportunities rather than something you would specifically go onto a module for, as you would Mercenary and Syndicate Contracts.

The Shape of the Underworld

The Underworld exists on a spectrum from the “mostly legal” to the “did you just blow up a planet?”. The basic goal for most Underworld Characters is to rise in the ranks of the various organizations. You may decide to dabble, and become a contract player for a number of groups. On the other hand, you may choose to pursue one group in particular, hoping to gain a position of prominence and power. We suggest dabbling at the outset, then if you desire, press your accumulated influence into a specific organization. Shop around, then decide.

Within the gameworld, there are certain aspects of the Underworld that are sanctioned or ignored by the authorities. You don't make a mess of things, and keep your mouth shut, and the M3 won't come knocking down your door. As one might imagine, there are also aspects which are 100% illegal. Most organizations ride the fine line between the two, with a few screwed heavily toward one side or the other.

Organizations/Factions within the Underworld

As a starting Character whose primary focus is within the Underworld, you may choose one of the following Organizations. You have a Contact within that Faction, as well as Notoriety with that Faction (see the Influence Section of the Rulebook). This will grant you a bit of a leg up when dealing the the various groups. This does not represent the limit of Underworld Organizations, there are many more to be found within the gameworld.

The Elysian Syndicates - All types of Contracts - While the Syndicates are not quite vast Criminal empire they once were, they still hold considerable power within the Elysium and beyond. Each of the Syndicates has their own way of handling things. This means that Contracts from the Syndicates vary wildly. When transmitting Contracts the Syndicates use a single Black Channel account, so that no one is certain where a Contract is coming from, thus insulating the various Syndicates. The Syndicates can be considered the wild card of Underworld Organizations, standing for everything and nothing.

Violet Splendor/M'kai Consortium - Illicit and Bounty Contracts - Splendor is the Underworld arm of the M'kai Consortium. They were created after the M'kai joined the MMU so that the Consortium itself could serve as the legitimate face of M'kai, while allowing "Splendor" to handle all of the underhanded stuff the M'kai could no longer be seen doing publicly. The fact that Splendor is a thinly veiled cover for the Consortium is widely known, but with the M'kai so entrenched in MMU (and now Perpetuum) politics, no one really has the power to do anything about it. Violet Splendor explicitly sends out Contracts that serve the business and political interests of the M'kai. Due to a recent change in policy, the Violet Splendor is in the process of being dissolved in favor of direct rule by the M'kai Consortium. **[Note: Violet Splendor and M'kai Influence are interchangeable]**

Black Channel - Illicit and Bounty Contracts - Black Channel has shifted somewhat in the past decade. While they remain the go to network for shady dealing, some suspect that a growing portion of their Contracts are from Black Channel itself. The Byzantine structure of Black Channel is hard to map, though it is known that their primary role is as a repository of information. Contracts suspected to come from Black Channel itself all have to do with gathering information.

Flags of the Lost - Illicit Contracts - As the M3 licked its wounds following the Titan War, and worked to rebuild the fleet, space pirates began to pillage the newly formed shipping lanes. Eventually a new class of M3 ships was able to subdue the pirate fleet and end the constant threat of space piracy. The space pirates flying under the name "Flags of the Lost" are far more cautious, pillaging shipping lanes between systems, and avoiding engagements. While most criminal groups are tolerated to some degree, the same cannot be said for the Flags of the Lost. Those found colluding with the pirates are dealt with swiftly and harshly. Contracts from the space pirates involve inner system piracy, something that even the Flags of the Lost do not frequently engage in. Those who succeed in 3 suicide missions for the Flags without being caught, are permitted to join the fleet. **[Note: Flags of the Lost should be considered Underworld hard mode. You can pursue this, but if you are not careful it is likely that you may put your Character in a position where they are "kill on sight" and no longer truly playable.]**

The Kindly Strangers - Illicit Contracts - With the Perpetuum forming around the goal of defending the Galaxy against the forces of Entropy, the Kindly Strangers arrived to provide sanctuary through a series of safe houses, for those forces. Not owing allegiance to any single Entropic Being, the Strangers provide aid and support to all who would follow the darker path. They fund their operation through assassination Contracts and have quickly become the premier organization for such contracts. **[Note: This is another organization where entanglement can lead to your Character becoming unplayable if you are not careful.]**

The Hunters Lodge - Bounty Contracts - The Boz are well known for their love of big game hunting. The Hunters Lodge is a Boz organization with a number of open Bounty Contracts for the hunting of rare creatures.

The Chop Shop/Ashen Raiders - Non-Sanctioned Bounty Contracts - Following an investigation from the MMDF it was discovered that the Ashen Raiders, a legitimate Mercenary group sanctioned by the MMU and Perpetuum, were found to be taking non-sanctioned contracts through the Chop Shop (an organization that sells bodies for experimentation), as well as sending any sanction kill they were able to bag up to the Chop Shop to earn a few more Credits. The Ashen Raiders lost their contract with the MMDF, fully joined up with the Chop Shop and now exist entirely outside the scope of the law. The combined organization believes that it is doing good in the world, as the Chop Shop works quietly with private organizations to experiment with vaccines and other life saving innovations. The Ashen Raiders still maintain their speciality as ship to ship raiders, and retain some of their support with the rank and file of the MMDF, and there has been little effort on the part of the military to bring a complete end to the organization.

The Order of the Sapphire - Sanctioned Mercenary Contracts - While the Order of the Sapphire has been sanctioned by the M3, it is only at the behest of the MMU and the Perpetuum who seek to develop relations with the Oniri, and have used the Oniri run organization as a through point for those relations. The Order of the Sapphire specializes in security and protection, and prides themselves on professionalism. Those who handle Contracts for the Order are expected to be clean, well dressed, and organized. While Order Contracts are sanctioned, the nature of the work they do often has them protecting targets the M3 would prefer to eliminate, this tends to lead to political problems, and more than once the M3 has been prevented from moving on a target in order to avoid causing an incident. Note, the Order tends to avoid employing humans, though they have been known to bend this rule for those who have been vouched for by those with good standing.

The Yana - Sanctioned Mercenary Contracts - Of the 3 sanctioned Mercenary Groups, the Yana work closest with the M3 to ensure that any Contract they take, or put on the market is well within the boundaries of what is permissible, so much so that the Yana are considered as provisional allies by the M3. The Yana tend to take contracts that involve brute force, and are the only sanctioned Mercenary Group that can handle large scale operations, coordinating multiple Mercenary Bands toward a single objective. Due to cultural prohibitions, the Yana will usually only deal with female Mercenary Band leaders, and female M3 Officers. The Yana will never take a contract in support of any Entropic entity other than the Nameless, nor will they employ worshippers of the darker Entropics.

The Fischers

Every municipality of size has an organization like the Fischers; a local underworld “society of fellows” that serves as a meetinghouse for various organizations and individuals whose activities are not always legal. The Fischers organization is well known by authorities, and due to a number of backroom deals, the organization and its members are given just enough rope to hang themselves...stay quiet and keep your head down and you won't get arrested, and if you do something illegal, do it where we can't see you.

The Fischers is the through point for most illegal and semi-legal activity within Sanctum. If you are playing an Underworld Focused Character, you have membership within the Fischers. The Fischers does not count as a Faction. You cannot use Influence directly on the Fischers to gain ground in the organization (though you can use it indirectly). You are the Fischers.

While the Fischers lack a direct command structure, they do have a sort of loose pecking order, where one rises up the chain through their extra-legal activities. The “Fischer King”, the honorary head of the organization, assigns points based off exploits. If you gain enough points you move up chain. Only the King knows how many points it takes to move up to the next level. The organizational structure of the Fischers (as well as many other such organizations, is based of the game of Chess). Rising up in the Fischers grants you a bit of social currency with other Underworld groups.

Observer: Outsiders who have not been made official members of the Fischers. If you are not starting as a primarily Underworld Character you begin life as an Observer.

Pawn: The starting point. Contacts cost 1 less Influence.

Knight: You have +1 Influence Per-Event that may be used on Underworld Schemes.

Rook: All Schemes organized by you are reduced in cost by 1.

Bishop: You gain an additional point of Per-Event Influence to use on Underworld Schemes.

Queen: Your influence has spread beyond the Underworld. Influence you gained within the Fischers can now be used anywhere.

King: The Head of the society. There can be only 1. It is possible for a Queen to unseat a king by general acclamation of all Fischer members in good standing.

Onboarding an Underworld Character

Now that you have an idea of what is out there, here is what you need to know to create an Underworld Character.

Choose an Organization/Faction you wish to be part of (or have provisional influence with). You start the game with a Contact within that Faction as well as Notoriety with that Faction.

That is it...

Unlike every other Division in the game, Primary Underworld Characters do not gain Income, you don't exactly have a legitimate job after all. You can gain Income through Skills and if you do eventually gain an Occupation, but you do not immediately start with Income.

Before we close out, we do want to reiterate that while you can start as a Primary Underworld Characters, it is not the easiest path, especially for new Players. If you are coming in with a crew, and you have a strong idea of what you want to do, you will likely fare better than a lone operator.

Onboarding is meant to serve as your foundation, and the Underworld Foundation is a bit cracked and uneven. Where you go from here is up to you.