THE RUIN AT THE END OF THE WORLD

DARWIN'S WORLD
POST-APOCALYPTIC ADVENTURES

Requires the use of the d20 Modern™ Roleplaying Game, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

d20 system

RPG Objects

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THE RUIN AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Is this the exultant city that dwelt secure;
That told herself, "There is no other than I!"
How she has become a waste, a lair for wild beasts...
– Zephaniah 2:15

Welcome to *The Ruin at the End of the World*, a sourcebook on one of the most iconic locations of the Twisted Earth setting: the ruined city of Los Angeles. Better known as the "Necropolis," this sprawling ruin carpets an entire basin for miles in every direction, nestled against the furthest edge of the known world. Stories of this legendary place are common among the nomadic people of the desert; it is said to be a desolate ruin where nothing lives, where only the ashes of millions of Ancients—incinerated in the Fall—fill the streets. Some claim it is a place poisoned by that ancient war, and to tread there is to court certain death. Others, the few who have actually made the dangerous journey across the San Gabriel mountains to see for themselves, claim it is not in fact dead, but very much alive. This makes it no less dangerous, however, for almost universally these storytellers speak of monstrous creatures holding a terrible grip over the city, waging constant war against one another and killing all who trespass into their jealously-guarded domains.

The Ruin at the End of the World expands upon the Necropolis setting as briefly touched upon in the *Darwin's World 2nd Edition* rulebook (pages 206-216). This setting has a long history with *Darwin's World*, first as a play-by-email game run in the year 2000, and later serving as the archetypical "city of the dead" in the *Darwin's World 2nd Edition* rules, showcasing the fate that befell the great cities of the

world since the Fall. This book brings together the in-game history of Los Angeles with the setting overview presented in *Darwin's World 2nd Edition*. The result is a detailed location which existing parties can visit and explore, or which can serve as the basis for entirely new campaigns which cast the PCs as survivors struggling to make their way in perhaps the Twisted Earth's most legendary place: the Necropolis.

THE NECROPOLIS

It is well known that the world is a great, endless desert, and sand the only thing which holds up all life and all creation. A great rolling sea, the deserts of the twisted earth stretch on forever, from east to west, from the farthest north to the most distant south. Old rivers and great highways of concrete may have once crossed this ugly, godforsaken terrain in the time of the Ancients, but now it is all but a great dust bowl.

But legends sometimes contest that which is common knowledge, and the legend of the fabled Necropolis is no exception—in fact, it is a story known to nearly all who wander the wasteland, as far east as the wind-swept Far Desert, and north into the rugged, bleak territory of the Foundation and their stark mountain monastery-fortresses. Though their litany of somber chanting and pining for Ancient glories drowns out the violent winds between those

northern mountains, this tale is something they, especially, will never forget.

Somewhere to the south, over the San Gabriel peaks—themselves a dangerous barrier, teeming with hostile mutant life—the desolate dry heights give way to a place only a handful have ever seen, a dreamland to some and a horrible nightmare to others. It is said that over the mountains lies a lost city, a dead, lifeless megaplex stretching from horizon to horizon, its towering maze of mile-high 'scrapers covered in a layer of grayish dust, with shadows streaking across hundreds of streets for as far as the eye can see.

Those few who have seen it, have seen it from afar, from the great San Gabriel mountains. By day, the city is often silhouetted by the eastern sun in all its coppery glory; by night, the blue moon casts its haunting cerulean light over the miles and miles of untouchable landscape so far below in the Valley. Observers skirting the mountains say that the city is alive, that noise can sometimes be heard echoing miles within its twisted, glass and concrete heart—echoing hoots, the distant clang of metal, and screams. It is no wonder that outsiders from the wasteland have shunned this haunted place for generations, and let the San Gabriel mountains lie as a virgin barrier to the great ruins beyond.

But it is this place, the great Necropolis, that persists in legends and myths to this day. Stories quickly vanishing into the haze of memory tell of a city that stretches on for days in all directions, confined only by the great San Gabriels to the north, bleak desolate heights to the east, and the beginnings of the dark and ugly sea to the south and west. Here, it is said, the streets and even the buildings themselves, rising leagues into the sky, are coated in a layer of choking, powdery ash—ashes that stories say are the remains of millions of Ancients who once

WHAT THIS BOOK IS - AND WHAT IT ISN'T

While this book covers an entire city and offers a lot of game material on the monsters and other inhabitants living within it, this book is foremost a broad overview of a single, sprawling adventure location: the *Necropolis*. An effort has been made to detail the entire city in as useful a manner as possible, highlighting more than 200 separate encounter areas within, both above and below the city streets. Many of these encounter areas are linked to one or more of the strange factions that vie for control of the city; others are merely places where rogue dangers, isolated hold-outs, or lost treasures and curious finds can be found. As a GM, you will find the city map invaluable in keeping track of encounters and locations.

The level of detail provided for each encounter area varies; this book is not intended to be an adventure *per se*, but rather a sourcebook allowing parties to explore at their own pace, and allowing you as GM to tailor their adventures with a minimal number of pre-set guidelines to restrict you. This sourcebook isn't rigidly structured, forcing the PCs to go one way or another; rather it is open and flexible, sketched out in broad strokes. There is room for you to contribute your own imagination to the mix of encounters and resident creatures; in fact, inspiring your creativity—and thus making each visit to the Necropolis unique—is an integral part of the book's purpose.

lived in the Necropolis, incinerated when the bombs turned the labyrinthine streets and lighted boulevards into a chaos of fire and brimstone.

Whatever the truth, the city is dark, lonely, and forbidding. It is seemingly limitless in size. Clusters of towering skyscrapers, burnt-out, blown-open, and skeletal in their ruined state, stretch in awe-inspiring rows, the dead husks of a lost civilization that sought to reach into the sky and conquer the gods. Beneath them, avenues and roads, some as wide as major riverbeds, lie blanketed in rubble; snaking caravans of abandoned cars from before the Fall; and, of course, all of it covered in that same, unsettling soot.

- From *Darwin's World 2nd Edition*

The Necropolis setting first came to life as a play-by-email game run around the year 2000, in which each player took control of a community struggling to survive in the radiated ruins of Los Angeles. In addition to giving life to what would become a "legendary location" of *Darwin's World*, this early game helped shape what would evolve into two of the major factions of the Twisted Earth. Precursors of the Foundation and the Cartel were among the groups controlled by players of the game, as were other factions that were ultimately considered too Necropolis-specific to include in the eventual release of the *Gazetteer of the Twisted Earth*. Special (and long overdue) thanks go to Alex Kashyrin, original player of the Foundation, whose "vision" for that iconic group also later came to define the *Revenants* sub-faction as described in *The Foundationists*; as well as Chris Covey, player of the Hive (and who coincidentally would go on to lay the groundwork for the *Dark Paladins* faction of the Foundation; he also wrote segments of the adventure *Against the Wastelords* and set the theme for the entire *Wastelords* campaign series, and came up with the idea behind the "Last God"), and Mlado Spasic, player of the

Purist Enclave, whose embellishments on my original designs for those xenophobic *purebloods* have been faithfully incorporated into this work (even down to individual NPC names). The other players of the city's factions also deserve thanks, not only for their contributions which made the game fun for all involved, but for setting the stage for what is presented in this book.

The Ruin at the End of the World presents the Necropolis as it would have looked at the end of the original Necropolis play-by-email game. It is a city that is slowly being conquered by several strong factions, including an "empire" of "beastmen," a vast infestation of intelligent mutant bugs, a rising tide of androids newly created in a factory somewhere near the harbor, a colony of strange aquatic mutants, and a small but persevering community of re-awakened humans holding out in their corner of the city. As these powers rise, others dwindle and vanish; the ghouls are scattered but not entirely eradicated, the Foundationists are now gone (and the Cartel has likewise abandoned their colonization efforts), and the would-be "kingdom" of the raider prince Kruel the Conqueror has been extinguished. And while these groups are gone, player characters have a chance to explore the evidence of each community's extinction, and discover just what happened to them in their ill-fated drive to conquer the Necropolis.

For those few who played in the original play-by-email game, you will notice many major changes. Hopefully you'll recognize that these changes are for the best. A lot has been tweaked and altered not only to fit within the rules of *Darwin's World 2nd Edition*, but also to make the setting more enjoyable from the perspective of a role-playing game (as opposed to a strategy game). Boundaries are slightly modified to reflect what this author assumes would be a natural evolution of the warring state of the city factions;

SECRET NECROPOLIS

There is no magic in *Darwin's World*. Or is there? Throughout this book you may find tiny "Easter eggs" that seem to hint at a supernatural conspiracy that brought about the Fall, as well as the current state of the Necropolis. Certainly nefarious powers were behind events taking place right before the city's destruction (in the form of the enigmatic super conglomerate known as the "Zoogenic Corporation"), but were they otherworldly? Was a prophecy really involved? Maybe yes, maybe no—depending on your particular style of play. *The Ruin at the End of the World* hints at a supernatural-themed alternative to the total nuclear war scenario that is considered the default of *Darwin's World*, but whether or not you choose to make this the basis of the Fall is up to you.

The following areas offering tantalizing teases of what *could* have been, if you think a supernatural-themed apocalypse is something your players would enjoy: *Chemical Plant (#023), Hive B (#027), Whittier Police Station (#039), Institute of Entomological Studies (#042), Cult Hideout (#047), Mission of St. Michael The Archangel (#048), The Harbor (#052), Marine Institute (#067), Great Park (#070), Cyrus' Crib (#120), Biodiversity Studies (#123), Chang's Imported Fruits (#124), The House of Satan (#130), Recording Studio (#152), Los Angeles Times (#153), Murder Scene (#154), Bernard Megaplex (#160),* and *Homeless Refuge (#184).*

in addition, some minor discrepancies that existed in the original game have been fixed to smooth out the setting's "bumps." All in all these changes are intended to make the Necropolis setting more of a challenge and adventure for small groups wandering the ruins in the shadow of the city's major factions.

For those who only know the Necropolis from what has been written in *Darwin's World*, prepare for a change of pace. The Necropolis isn't exactly like the world outside, the Twisted Earth so familiar to regular players of the role-playing game. The original play-by-email game was downright *fantastic* in its theme; consider for example a race of half-man, half-animal beastmen modeling their community after the Roman empire, whose prejudices against humans and humanoid mutants borders on the attitudes of the simians of *Planet of The Apes*. Or envision a race of mutated insectoids that easily manipulate the tools of the long-extinct

human race and breed gigantic beetles to serve as "living tanks" in their seemingly endless armies. It is a city where tectonic activity has created molten lava beds in whose hellish light *mutagons* wander about like dinosaurs on the prehistoric earth. The Necropolis is *intentionally* dramatic and fantastic; it is a light-hearted combination of science-fiction, post-apocalyptic, fantasy, and even the supernatural, in which the city is just a moldering backdrop for a parade of "pulp-ish" factions, communities, monsters, and a buried Satanic conspiracy that dates back to the Fall. The city itself is like the Twisted Earth's version of *King Kong's* Skull Island—a place where the impossible is possible, and where danger lurks around every corner.

HOW THIS BOOK IS PRESENTED

For ease of use, this book is broken down into two main sections: the first presents the adventure locations in numeric order, and the second includes secondary rules that complement the setting, such as rules for new monsters and stat blocks for generic challenges encountered in the ruins.

The following outlines the basic features of *The Ruin at the End of the World*:

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this book introduces the Necropolis setting and explains the context in which it was first developed. It also discusses some of the themes and concepts behind the sprawling city's atmosphere. Here you will also find miscellaneous rules, including rules governing movement through the ruins, a system for randomly determining the contents of a given hex, notes on the city map, and a more detailed look at the three adventure hooks for the Necropolis originally summarized in the *Darwin's World 2nd Edition* rules.

ADVENTURE LOCATIONS

The majority of *The Ruin at the End of the World* concerns the 200+ different adventure locations scattered throughout the city. This section details the various regions of the Necropolis, starting with *The Reaches,* and moving on to *Dead City,* the *Hive, Los Angeles Harbor, Pasadena*, the *Domain of the Flesh Eaters*, the *Domain of the Broken Ones*, the *Enclave of the Lost Children of Man*, *Downtown*, and the

Sewers.

Most of the adventure locations described in this section are general overviews, giving the most important information but leaving the details up to the GM. However, a few areas have been fleshed out to varying degrees of detail (generally one location per city region) to give you something extra to go on, as well as to give life to the most important sites.

FACTIONS OF THE NECROPOLIS

This section briefly summarizes the factions that currently exist in the Necropolis, or which have been driven out in recent years. A few of these factions are no longer present in the city, while others have risen to dominate their particular corner of the ruins like new-age "empires." The communities described in this section include the *Androids, Broken Ones, Cartel, Foundationists, Ghouls, Hive, Purist Enclave, Raiders*, and *Serpent Gods*. Each entry gives a brief overview (more information can be found by reading the 200+ adventure locations), a summary of each faction's general attitude, and where the faction's forces are typically found.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Since a lot of a party's time will be taken up traveling between encounter areas as they explore the ruins, each region of the Necropolis has its own random encounter table. However, the actual description of each random encounter is found in this section, separate from the main text, for ease of reference. This list is by no means exhaustive, and creative GMs should tailor, tweak and add to these lists to keep the random encounters of the Necropolis unexpected and challenging.

RADIO MESSAGES

Briefly mentioned in the text of the adventure locations, this section gives further guidelines for using the strange phenomenon of the Hermit's radio messages during play.

GENERIC STAT BLOCKS

This section presents a large number of stat blocks for creatures and NPCs encountered in the Necropolis, from soldiers of the Broken Ones empire to xeno scouts of the Purist Enclave. *If a given creature referenced in an adventure location is not found in this section, a notation made in the text will show you where the creature can be found (in a different source).*

NEW CREATURES

The *New Creatures* chapter of this book details 21 new monsters that are exclusive to *The Ruin at the End of the World*, with each entry including a description and full game statistics for using them in the game. In addition, a new *template* ("Ogrish") is presented in this section.

SURVIVORS IN THE NECROPOLIS

This section offers guidelines for making characters *from* the Necropolis, instead of using characters who hail from beyond the city. In addition to suggestions for character creation (such as starting at a higher level than normal to allow new characters to survive in the deadly Necropolis setting), this chapter also presents a new system for determining starting equipment for characters who are more like "survivors" than "adventurers."

NEW TREASURE TABLES

Building on the tables originally presented in the *Darwin's World* supplement *Scav's Swag*, this book introduces a number of new tables for randomly determining other forms of post-apocalyptic treasure, such as civilian weapons, rare military weapons, the contents of vehicles, and miscellaneous finds taken from dead bodies.

NEW ADVANCED CLASSES

The Ruin at the End of the World presents three new advanced classes: the *Ghost Raider*, the *Raging Claw*, and the *Xeno Scout*. All of these classes make an appearance somewhere among the various communities of the Necropolis, but these classes are also available to any character who meets their prerequisites, whether they hail from the Necropolis or not.

BEASTMAN FEATS

Since *The Ruin at the End of the World* makes good use of the *Beastmen* supplement (by Charles Rice), a number of new feats have been introduced in this book for use by beastman characters and NPCs.

THE CITY MAP

The Ruin at the End of the World features a number of maps, including a large hex map showing the entire Necropolis. There are two versions of this map: one intended for the GM (which indicates the location of every adventure area detailed in the book using a three-digit number), and one intended for the players (which is essentially featureless except for the hexes).

GM MAP

PASADENA

DOMAIN OF
THE BROKEN ONES

DOWNTOWN

THE
HIVE

DOMAIN OF THE

FLESH EATERS

DEAD
CITY

ENCLAVE OF
THE LOST CHILDREN

LOS ANGELES
HARBOR

THE
REACHES

THE RUIN AT
THE END OF THE WORLD

This city map is intended to serve as a tool for both the GM and the players. The player version of the map will allow players to keep track of their progress and explorations in the city, and make notes on what sites they've encountered, heard about from other inhabitants, or even escaped from. The GM version of the map will help you keep track of the party's movements in the city, as well as reference specific locations should the PCs stumble upon them as they go.

TRAVEL ON THE CITY MAP

Traveling across the city map is not as easy as it might look. Though on average a human walks at a rate of about 3-4 miles per hour, the city's road network isn't what it used to be. Vast regions of rough and uneven rubble, roadways torn up and eroded away, natural sinkholes, highways congested with the rusted wrecks of thousands of vehicles—all of these make progress difficult.

In game terms, the party can move a number of hexes per day equal to a random roll (the random element simulates the varying possibility of finding intact streets, shortcuts through the ruins, etc.). At the start of a given day, the players should not know the result of the roll; only by actually traveling will they realize if progress has been good or bad. *The only exception is if the party deliberately backtracks; in this case the players may dispense with rolling and may instead travel the distance they traveled the previous day, so long as it returns them to the point they were at the day before.*

In addition, travel speed varies depending on which region of the Necropolis the PCs are in. Some areas are relatively desolate, while others (like Downtown) are still highly built-up, making travel slower.

Region	Progress/Day
Reaches	2d6+10 hexes
Dead City	1d10+10 hexes
Hive	1d10+10 hexes
Pasadena	1d10+6 hexes
Los Angeles Harbor	1d10+4 hexes
Domain of the Flesh Eaters	1d6+4 hexes
Domain of the Broken Ones	1d10+4 hexes
Enclave of the Lost Children	1d10+4 hexes
Downtown	1d4+4 hexes
Sewers	1d10+4 hexes

If the characters' movements take them into another region, use your discretion in determining how far they can travel at their current speed. If for example the party moves from *Dead City* into the *Reaches* their progress might quicken, but if they move from the *Domain of the Flesh Eaters* into *Downtown* they will likely be slowed down.

VEHICLES

The movement rates shown above may vary if the PCs manage to acquire a vehicle. If moving by *boat*, for instance, they will find no obstructions to their movement (except perhaps for encounters with aquatic creatures). In such a case the movement rate should be 40 hexes per day. If by helicopter, then barring any interference from the ground (such as city inhabitants firing at them as they fly overhead), the PCs could easily cover the whole map in one day.

More likely, however, the PCs will want to move by ground vehicle—a car, truck, hummer, or even tank. In such a case the movement rate would seem to logically increase, but keep in mind that the L.A.

roads aren't what they used to be. In fact, ground movement with a vehicle might be slower than by foot (as the vehicle is forced to go slow over difficult terrain, gets stuck in the rubble for hours and must be pushed/pulled free once tools can be located, etc.).

For general purposes, consider a ground vehicle to move at the speed indicated on the table above, but roll the variable number of hexes *twice* and

take the *highest* roll (for example, when moving Downtown the speed will be the highest roll of 2 d4s, plus 4 hexes per day). However, for every 3d6 hexes traveled (cumulative, day by day) the vehicle-mounted party will be certain to hit an obstruction (such as a street too congested with wrecks to drive down, a dead end created by fallen buildings, etc.) which stops all movement for the rest of that day.

These guidelines should work well in most cases, but if a situation arises where these rules seem unreasonable (or unrealistic), by all means improvise and determine a daily speed more fitting to the circumstances.

"EMPTY" HEXES

Because of obvious space limitations, not every hex on the city map is detailed in this book. While *The Ruin at the End of the World* details just over 200 separate hexes for PCs to explore, there are times when you as GM will have to determine what lies in a given hex that *isn't* detailed in the text. Though for the most part you can describe these hexes as "devastated ruins" and be confident that your players will want to move on, sometimes the situation will require more information than that.

If the PCs are traveling through an undetailed hex and the situation requires you to make a decision on what buildings/sites are present, roll on the following table to determine just where, exactly, they find themselves. You can use the table below for a lot of things; here are some examples:

- If the PCs make camp for the night, use the table to determine the best spot they can find in the time before nightfall;
- If the PCs decide to set up camp in a given hex to avoid being caught out in a sandstorm, roll on this table to determine the most ideal place

they can find in which to weather the storm;
- If the PCs stumble on a random encounter in an empty hex, roll to determine the specific environs in which the encounter takes place;
- If the PCs are successfully followed into the ruins by forces from a Necropolis community, roll to determine where the PCs are caught when their enemies catch up to them;
- If the PCs are wounded and decide to lay low for a while, roll to determine the safest place they can find to rest for a few nights.

Assume that whatever you roll is the most interesting/secure/ideal/etc. place the PCs can find in that hex; there may be other buildings in the hex, but whatever you roll is where the PCs happen to be when the PCs choose to stop.

You may want to make a small map/sketch of the site in the event of combat, and tailor minor "finds" to fit the nature of the location. It is assumed that most areas will be so badly damaged and/or stripped clean that nothing too valuable is likely to be found by the PCs if they explore within; however, at your discretion any random site could also be the potential seed for an adventure location of your own devising. In this case feel free to populate the hex with creatures/dangers of your own creation, as well as treasure suitable to the location (and its inhabitants, if any).

D100	Setting
01	Sewage Treatment Plant
02	City Dump
03	Rail Yard
04-05	Warehouse
06-07	Junkyard*
08	Auto Scrapyard*
09	Homeless Camp
10	Crackhouse
11	Stripjoint/Peepshow
12	Adult Movie Store
13	Transformer Station
14	Bridge w/ Control House
15	Bus Depot
16	Truck Stop
17-18	Industrial Park
19	City Jail/Detention Center*
20	Small Airport
21	Rooftop Heliport
22	Slaughterhouse
23-24	Factory/Assembly Line*
25	Foundry
26-27	Highway Overpass
28	City Park
29	Impound Lot*
30	Bottling Factory
31	Computer Factory
32-33	Bar
34	Video Arcade
35	Fish Market
36	Antique Store
37	Bookstore
38	Nightclub
39	Motel
40-41	Fast Food Restaurant
42	Open-Air Market
43	Water Tower
44	Repair Shop
45-46	Convenience Store
47-48	Home Improvement Superstore
49	Skater Park
50-51	Sprawling Parking Lot
52-53	Gas Station
54	Playground
55-56	Apartment Building
57-58	Abandoned Post-Fall Campsite
59-60	Barren Ruins
61-62	Private Home*
63-64	High School
65-66	Elementary School
67-68	Church

69-70	Strip Mall
71	Post Office
72	Trailer Park
73-74	Parking Garage
75	Athletic Field
76-77	Office Building
78	Sporting Goods Store
79	Department Store
80-81	Grocery Store
82	Ethnic Restaurant
83-84	Movie Theatre
85	Community Library
86	Fire Station
87	Upscale Boutique*
88	Auto Showroom*
89	Robot Dealership*
90	Museum*
91	Courthouse
92-93	Bank*
94	Highrise Hotel*
95	Cosmetic Surgery Clinic
96	Commercial Laboratory*
97	Convention Center
98-99	Huge Mall*
00	Mansion*

* Locations marked with an asterisk (*) may still have security measures in place (at the GM's discretion), so PCs hoping to explore the site may have to contend with potential dangers such as alarms (alerting any creatures nearby or living within), automatic locking doors, or even robot sentries, depending on the specific location.

In some instances the PCs may not like their environs and will want to move on. If the PCs are hoping to set camp and don't like the results of the roll, for example, you can allow them another roll (or two)—but keep track of time. You can use subtle pressure, such as a hastily-approaching dusk, to get them to settle with what they've got. Alternatively, you could call for Fortitude saves to avoid fatigued if they keep looking for another place. Don't let the PCs exhaust the table by rolling over and over until they find a place they like; sometimes they'll just have to make do with what's in the area.

BALANCE

One of the key issues in d20 role-playing is balance, an aspect of design that can often make or break an adventure. When it came to writing *The Ruin at the End of the World* a decision had to be made: whether to scale the adventure for a particular range of character levels or remain true to the material accumulated from the play-by-email game. In the end, staying true won out.

As a result you will find that the adventure locations in *The Ruin at the End of the World* run from low-level challenges to those better suited for entire parties of epic level. Since the Necropolis is an open setting, rather than a story-based adventure that requires the PCs visit every site to solve a mystery or defeat a particular enemy, this works well. The PCs will hopefully learn through trial and error to be stealthy, and to explore carefully, instead of barging onto every location they stumble across. Many dangers can (and should) be portrayed as too difficult or too dangerous for the party—at least until they gain more experience (and better gear). The city is supposed to be a deadly place, where legends of quick death are indeed quite true.

But don't use the chaotic maze of varying Encounter Levels as an excuse to kill the party off; as with all adventures, you as GM must be ready to ad lib and adapt the material herein to avoid catastrophe as the game progresses. Trying to create an environment of "danger around every corner" is different from letting the PCs wander onto a "landmine encounter" that kills them all. Ultimately, don't forget that everyone at the table is here to have fun—not to get their characters killed off by an encounter they had no chance against.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The *Darwin's World 2nd Edition* rulebook sheds some light on the Necropolis setting and offers three generic hooks for using the fabled city in your campaign. Since this book is just a neutral portrayal of the city, its inhabitants, and possible adventure locations, a lot of the background on *why* the characters are involved in the Necropolis is left up to you. However, here are some suggestions that may help in concocting an overarching plotline.

ADVENTURE HOOK #1

What was listed as an "adventure hook" (described on page 216 of *Darwin's World 2nd Edition*) could be a whole campaign in its own right, suitable for characters of virtually any level—and with prospects of advancement not only in terms of experience, but also in the eyes of the PCs' particular faction.

In this long-term adventure idea, the PCs are sent along with a contingent of colonists to try and start a new settlement among the ruins of the Necropolis. Sure, others have tried and failed, but not every Twisted Earth faction has learned the hard truth that it may just be better to leave well enough alone in the Necropolis....

The plot of this campaign involves not only crossing the mountains (either the San Gabriels or Santa Anas), but also finding a place among the ruins to build a stronghold for the fledgling colony. In the early stages of the campaign, the PCs will engage in various missions and adventures such as scouting

ahead of the pioneers, dealing with monsters living among the mountain trails, and finding fresh water sources for the colonists as they make their perilous journey. Rockslides, avalanches, and dust storms will threaten the colonists as well; the PCs must to guard them and make sure everyone makes it through alive.

Once they reach the city, the dangers only increase. If the PCs have made a name for themselves already, they may be asked their opinion on a good site for the community, and invited to help plan its defenses. This gives players a chance to help design the community's compound, choose their own quarters, put thought into its defenses, and bring to life other often-overlooked details of community building. Once its layout is established, construction will begin. Like settlers in the pioneer Wild West, the colonists are of course be on edge, afraid of every strange sound coming from the ruins, and desperate for heroes to turn to and follow.

At this stage the PCs will be enlisted to scout the ruins, deal with rogue dangers (such as wandering monsters that threaten the construction of the colony's compound), and find possible sources of food and water. They'll also have to deal with local denizens discovered living nearby, so that settlers can begin small-scale agriculture among the ruins. Slowly the PCs will develop a sense of camaraderie with the colony, and develop friendships/relationships with the civilians who rely on them for protection. There is much opportunity for role-playing throughout this campaign arc, so play it up! This will also be the ideal time to begin introducing the other faceless inhabitants of the city, even if only subtly at first (momentary sightings of Ratmen scurrying through the night, the distant buzz of giant insects that remain eerily unseen, etc.), to build tension and hint at the wonders and horrors waiting just beyond the colony's walls....

From here you can take the campaign in a number of directions. Individual colonists might go missing, and the PCs are asked to go out and find them (they may have been eaten by a monster living nearby, or simply got lost in the ruins), giving the PCs a chance to explore more of the colony's surroundings. Or perhaps strange sightings of "creatures" cause enough concern that the colony's leaders charge the PCs with investigating—possibly leading to encounters with one or more of the city's established factions. The results could either be friendly (i.e. leading to a meeting with the Ratmen, or discovering the holdouts living in Den or Sanctuary), or terrifying (stumbling onto the Androids, triggering their armies into action again).

Perhaps instead the colony suddenly faces a calamity: an unexpected blight has claimed the colony's food reserves, or a fungus has tainted the water brought with them over the mountains, or a strange new disease is popping up among the colonists themselves. The PCs are called in to help, which means going out into the ruins in search of a way to solve the problem. The PCs will be outfitted with whatever the colony can muster and sent off to face the ruins alone... with the colony's fate hanging in the balance.

Eventually, once the colony manages to come together, it will come into contact with one of the bigger factions. Once they realize what they're up against, the colonists will face a crisis of determination. If they've done well, made allies, or made significant gains (including finding caches of weapons, recruiting native tribes to join the colony and bolster its ranks, etc.), the colonists might decide to stay and fight despite the odds against them. When the existing groups of the city, such as the Hive or Broken Ones, realize that a new faction is rising in their midst, they'll turn to face this new threat and

challenge it in open battle. In this city, more than anywhere else on the Twisted Earth, a community's right to exist is based solely on their ability to fight for their lives. Facing a grave new danger, the PCs will have to rise up as leaders of the colony and wage war for their very survival. The climactic conclusion of such a campaign couldn't be more epic!

ADVENTURE HOOK #2

Adventure Hook #2 doesn't have the long-term implications of *Adventure Hook #1*, but with the right effort and planning it could certainly give it a run for its money in terms of adventure. In this story seed, the PCs are hired/enticed to go to the Necropolis to track down a previous expedition that recently vanished; the lost expedition could be a group of colonists, an intrepid explorer and his entourage, a scientific team looking for lost technology, a merchant and his followers seeking to make contact with native inhabitants, or even a group of pilgrims/prospectors seeking some fabled site within the ruins (such as the *Lost Corium Mine* or the *Palace of the Ancient Kings*). The PCs might be motivated by offers of monetary reward or perhaps loyalty (perhaps the expedition was composed of people belonging to the same factions as the PCs, or perhaps loved ones of the PCs were a part of it). In any case this should seem a daunting task—cross over the radiated mountains and venture to a city only mentioned in legend, to find a lost band of explorers in a ruined metropolis that stretches as far as the eye can see.

For this adventure seed, the party will need to be experienced and self-sufficient, as their journey will be long and arduous. The PCs must be up to the challenge of crossing the mountains and then holding their own in a city that at all times seems hell-bent on the destruction of trespassers. Strange creatures are everywhere, and powerful adversaries live in

entrenched cells throughout the ruins, always wary of rivals. The PCs, comprising just one small band, seem insignificant in comparison.

But it is their small numbers that will keep the PCs safe… for now. Moving "under the radar," so to speak, the PCs should be able to find where the expedition went and where it vanished without attracting too much notice from the city's major factions. Eventually finding the site where the expedition last made camp, the PCs find signs of an attack and a struggle—and tracks leading off into the ruins. From here it becomes a hunt that will lead the PCs on a wild goose chase across the city. Following the trail, the PCs enter the territory of the Hive, and meet the monstrous denizens thriving there. Fighting their way through the infested ruins they must penetrate deep into a Hive bughill, using stealth to slip past countless masses of monstrous insectoids. Finding many bodies in the bowels of the bughill, they fear the worst—but manage to find one or two expedition members still alive in a cavern deep under the earth. The survivors have been driven mad by the horrors to which they've been subjected, but the PCs learn from them that others in the expedition escaped when their Hive captors came under attack by "bestial mutants" (the Broken Ones). Though not all of the captives were freed by the attackers, some did, and there is still hope that they can be found alive.

With this knowledge, the PCs strike out across ghoul territory tracking down the Broken Ones raiding force that took the Hive's captives with them. Eventually they must enter the Domain of the Broken Ones and do epic battle against the terrible dinosaur-like mutagons living there. Even worse, they must infiltrate the *City of the Broken Ones*, only to find that most of the captives are to be fed to the animals in that degenerate city's great arena!

Hatching an escape, or leading a direct raid, the PCs gather what they believe is the last of the expedition, only to learn that one or two important members (the expedition's leader, or perhaps a loved one of their own) were spared the arena, only to be taken to be sacrificed to the mysterious Serpent Gods. Escaping the *City of the Broken Ones,* the PCs must venture to the *Temple to the Serpent Gods*, and from there, venture into the forbidden region known as "Downtown" to find the last members of the expedition!

ADVENTURE HOOK #3

The third adventure hook suggested in the *Darwin's World 2nd Edition* rulebook offers a new campaign idea altogether, in which the players play characters who are natives of the city. Survival is the theme of the entire campaign, living each day one step ahead of certain death. The Necropolis is the perfect setting for such a feral fight for survival; the *Survivors in the Necropolis* section of this book offers more in-depth ideas for bringing this idea to life.

GETTING INTO THE CITY

Unless you're playing with the option put forth in the *Survivors in the Necropolis* section (in this book), you'll have to figure out how the PCs came to the Necropolis. There are potentially three separate ways of reaching the city proper, as explained below.

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

Though not explicitly detailed in this book, the San Gabriels (and the Santa Monica mountains directly to the west) have typically been portrayed as the primary barrier separating the rest of the Twisted Earth from the Necropolis proper.

In the Twisted Earth setting, the San Gabriel mountains are a foreboding mountain range guarding the northern approaches to the city, separating the Necropolis from what was once known as the Mojave Desert. These are the tallest mountains in the region, and even during the time of the Ancients suffered from a poor road network and miles of unbroken wilderness. Long after the Fall, the old roadways have been completely lost to time—buried in sandstorms, hidden beneath the rubble of countless yearly avalanches, etc. As a result the mountains are generally considered impassable by larger parties from the wasteland, though routes can sometimes be found by persistent and daring explorers during certain times of the year.

PCs making their way to the Necropolis through the San Gabriels will end up either in *Pasadena* or along the northern frontier of the *Domain of the Broken Ones*. But they face the toughest trek of all, over treacherous mountains and through miles and miles of barren peaks and forests as dry and dead as ages-old kindling. Those beasts that cling to a miserable existence high in these mountains are true monsters, radiated "things" that have crawled out of the Necropolis to live on the fringes of that place. Sample denizens of the San Gabriels might include packs of *rad wolves* and *ravening hounds,* and (emerging from caves only at night) small bands of *screamers* and *night terrors*.

SANTA ANA MOUNTAINS

The Santa Ana mountains border the vast ruins of the Necropolis on their east side, presenting a formidable obstacle to those who would venture there. Unlike the San Gabriels, which are known for the creatures that infest them (and prey on

would-be mountaineers), the Santa Anas are mostly desolate. Though there is little life to be found in these mountains, stories abound of radiated *hotspots* (fallout from the Fall, when winds over Los Angeles carried radiation to the east) that make the range deadly to those who would travel among the peaks. These hotspots do still exist, but a party properly equipped (as the Cartel were; see elsewhere in this book for details) might be able to cross the mountain range with little difficulty to reach the Necropolis beyond.

Any group passing over the Santa Ana mountains will enter the city via the *Reaches*.

SAN FERNANDO

The ruins of old San Fernando snake their way into the Necropolis from the north. This ruined city is not detailed in this book due to space limitations, and in fact the exact nature of the city is left up to you. In general, however, assume San Fernando is not just abandoned and desolate, but dangerous as well. Considering that groups have chosen to traverse the San Gabriels and Santa Anas instead of using San Fernando's road network to reach the city, there is certain to be *some* threat there to convince travelers to go around. Some possibilities might include deadly radiation, an unusually large population of native *ghouls*, widespread rumors of a strange new disease, or hordes of *plague zombies*.

If the PCs enter the Necropolis from this direction, they will begin play in the northeastern part of the *Domain of the Broken Ones* (near the border with *Pasadena*).

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