

MERCHANTS of The JUMPWEB

Heralds of a Forgotten Past

The nobles and the Church may vie for the leadership and minds of the Known Worlders, but the merchants own the stars. Without their high-tech savvy and the loans from their coffers, travel and commerce would grind to a halt. Herein are detailed the histories and modus operandi of the Merchant League guilds, from the free-wheeling Charioteers, weird Engineers and savvy Scravers to the tough Muster mercs and stately Reeves.

Also included are: freelancers; minor guilds (such as the Purgers and Wordwrights); the Academy Interatta; a comprehensive costs of goods list; the laws of crime and punishment in the Known Worlds; and a look at L'Gaheim, the high-tech wonder world of the guilds.

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Emblems:

The emblems on the front cover represent some of the new character roles presented in this book. They are: Academy Interatta, Brewers, Bureaucrats, The Oubliette, Purger, Rewards

Pilgrims:

Beware the sin of Republicanism! That you believe all sentient beings are free and equal is a sign of ignorance. The Pancreator raises some above others, and for right purpose. The merchant is a necessary evil; do not mistake his station for one of glory or liberty. Deny his honeyed words when he says that you, too, are free to do as you will. If all acted upon such a thought, the universe would be mightily different indeed.



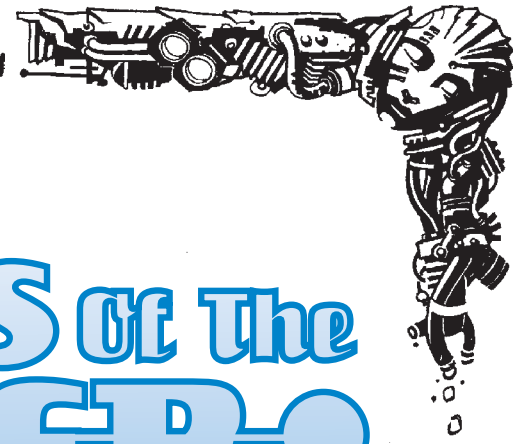
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Contents

Alustro's Journal: Blink	4
Introduction: Risky Business	8
Republican Idyll	10
Fellow Travelers: Clonoteers	20
Welcome to the Machine: Engineers	36
Survival at Any Price: Scravers	54
Strength, Muscle & Jungle Work: The Muster	68
Lawyers, Guns & Money: Reeves	84
Minor Guilds	100
On the Edge: Yeomen (Freelancers)	112
Leagueheim: Den of Iniquity and Freedom	120
Appendix: Costs of Goods & Laws	130





Sample file



December 17, 4997 (Holy Terra calendar)

I had always heard about Leagueheim and its decadent ways. By what my Church instructors taught, I was lead to believe it was a veritable Gehenne of sin. I believed that once I could see it for myself, such an overblown reputation would, like so many other Church fallacies I had been taught, crumble.

I was strangely right, although in a way I never expected. Even here among the smooth ceramsteel and flashing lights I found a spirituality of sorts.

We arrived here in time to catch one of Erian's al-Malik allies before he left on some undisclosed mission. Before leaving, he provided us with information on an unknown lost world where the answers to our quest may await us. I will write nothing of it here, until we are closer to our goal.

In his absence, he allowed us the use of his suites. We have used this needed rest to make some additions to our new starship, the Resurgent. Julia demanded a neutrino sensor array, but the prices we discovered were outrageous. We voted against it. That's when she revealed that she knew a place where we could find one cheaper, but she would have to go there in person to arrange the sale. We all thought it promising and agreed.

"I want Onggangarak to come with me," she said. "In case of trouble. And Alustro, too."

"Me?" I said. "I know nothing of commerce. What can I do?"

"Even the most desperate thugs think twice about hitting a priest. You're my insurance against... hasty opinions."

"Wait just a minute," Erian said. "This trip is dangerous? Why didn't you say so in the first place?"

Julia rolled her eyes. "Everywhere on Leagueheim is dangerous, Erian! This is just... more so."

"Then I forbid it. I will not have Alustro put into unnecessary danger."

"Hold on, now! He'll be fine. Like I said, he's just there to sooth bruised egos and such."

"Erian," Cardanzo said, "They will be fine in Julia's care. We could really use that array."

"Then I'm coming too," Erian said.

"Oh no you're not!" Julia yelled. "They'll know you for the royal brat you are the second you step off the lift! You're staying here."

"How dare you! I can go wherever I want. Whenever and with whomever!"

"Not here you don't. They'll jack the price up at least three times more than it's worth when they smell your privilege."

"Please," Cardanzo said, "there is no reason for raised voices. Julia is right, Erian. You and I must stay here and let them do their work."

"Why do you stay?" Julia said, looking surprised. "I could use you there."

"A bodyguard does not leave his charge," Cardanzo replied. "Besides, Ong is more than capable of providing all the muscle or threat you may need."

Julia looked annoyed but nodded. "All right, then. Let's go, you two." She picked up her belt, loaded with her blaster and all manner of tools, and headed for the door. Ong and I got up to follow.

She lead us through a dizzying maze of sidewalks, escalators, tubes and cargo lifts until we reached what I believe was the ground level of Leagueheim. At least, it seemed like the ground. It was dark even though slight patches of daylight shone through openings in the soot layer above and innumerable fusion signs from hundreds

Sample file

