

THE ULTRAVIOLET GRASSLAND  
&  
THE BLACK CITY  
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a  
stratometaship point-crawl sandbox for WizardThiefFighter  
AND SUNDRY OTHER ROLE-PLAYING GAME SYSTEMS  
by

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*a Patreon special*

## THE GRACEFUL CATS OF THE VIOLET CITADEL

**WEATHER:** *The sun rises through a violet haze, slowly, as though reluctant to give up the shimmering phantoms of pre-dawn to the dusty day.*

**MISFORTUNE:** *Unlucky visitors picked up the (1) running blues, (2) tendril tapeworms, or (3) an infected sore on the muddy road through the Blue Lands. Others were (4) pick-pocketed, (5) fell in love with a swamp wisp, or simply (6) ruined their nice shoes in a deceptive bog.*

**THIS IS THE END OF THE ROAD.** *Humanity's dominions wind down in the purple haze that wreathes the sunrises at this western reach.*

*No roads, but caravans brave the Ultraviolet Grassland into the eternal sunset of the Black City. Porcelain Princes and Spectrum Satraps oversee great herds of biomechanical burden-beasts that bring the odd fruits, the black light lotus, the indigo ivories, the rainbow silks, and the sanguine porcelains so popular among the meritocrats of the Rainbow Lands.*

*Violent mechanisms take many voyagers, others are eaten by the vomes, but nobody talks of those lost to the ultras.*

**WEST:** *both the Low Road and the High are ruttled jokes. Both lead to Porcelain Throne, the neutral hole at the edge of Viomech 5 territory.*

**OFF TRAIL:** *flocks of cat-eared sheep and the odd transplanted limey nomad clan makes this area of the UV Grassland relatively civil.*

"Soyez tranquil," murmurs the dead-eyed lady in P.T.'s mind. Horned cats creep from hazy alleys and examine their baggage. The citadel looms, eerie and obnoxious, beyond the haze layer.

Finally, a black cat nods, and the lady steps aside. The townships beckon and the party strides into the stall-strewn streets.

1. Green-blood shock-peddler Mencia pays for tales and pictures of the "Wonders of the West" (double exploration XP for well-written, illustrated accounts)
2. Woger de R.F.D., a reputable mustachioed adventurer-merchant, is taking a free caravan of vampire wines and livingstone bricks to the Last Serai to trade directly with the Spectrum Satraps (200 XP and cash on safe arrival).
3. Natega the Kind sells original ointments, shoddy shoes and downright dangerous gear at reasonable prices, but her Red Cat meows *Charm Person* at travelers (her supplies deplete on a 1-4, but cost only 8 cash per step).
4. A scared urchin runs into the street, shouting "a cat tried to worm into my mouth!" She will integrate into society and become a cat pet soon. Her name is Uda, for now.
5. A sunburned man with pink hair staggers out of an inn, cruelly stabbed, sprays crimson bubbles and groans "a behemoth's pearl for dear Cubina." He clutches an incomplete, but correct map leading to the Behemoth's Shell (see Handout 1). Vorgo can be healed with difficulty. Who knows who stabbed him. It was dark, he was drunk. If healed, he makes for a shifty, cowardly, but loyally incompetent henchman.
6. In Charming Square carriages cram into a meowing mob as confiscated traveler dogs are thrown into pit fights against trained sewer rats. Bookies take bets to 10 cash per bout (check Charisma to win). Saving a lucky dog costs 1d6 x 50 cash. Cheering the dogs draws glares from cat people.

## SCUM OF THE WEST

P.T. leaned out of navy coach, “What do the woolly critters want? A handout? Scram!” A wave of his axe, and the coach rumbled forwards on its six-foot steppe wheels.

They stopped. P.T. sprang out in front of the crowd of slack-jawed cat-proles, “Hello, cat lovers! We’re here to make you as rich as us now, and us much richer. So who’s in for it? Shares and cash, we’ll bring back so much black-light, the vampire merchants’ banks are gonna fold!”

The cat-people were impassive, but a traveler stepped forward nonetheless. Twenty cash a week, they asked:

1. Roderigo sin Mesas, the gallant preacher of anti-tableist Yellow order. Boasts of *Cure Light Wounds*, *Curse Table*, *Inspire New Hope* and *Grow Cactus*.
2. Valda d’Oranje, travelling quarterling entertainer and snake oil salesman, looking to get a scoop for Mencia.
3. Lumbar and Grap, the ill-determined big guy and the little guy. Certainly not Blue cannibals on the run from the Champions of Justice Inc.
4. Confused Keliha, former vampire merchant thrall, now newly free and hoping to create a new sparkling vampire.
5. Near Moon Nelly, determined and grimy child-woman with stilettos and tall tales of a half-cracked moon in the grasslands. Cat-folks hiss at her in amusement.
6. “Ratman”, the overweight mildly-bourgeois Metropolitan who *will* become a hero. Offers 20 cash a week for an adventure and training in the manly and martial arts. Has a necromancer-lawyer for when things go wrong.



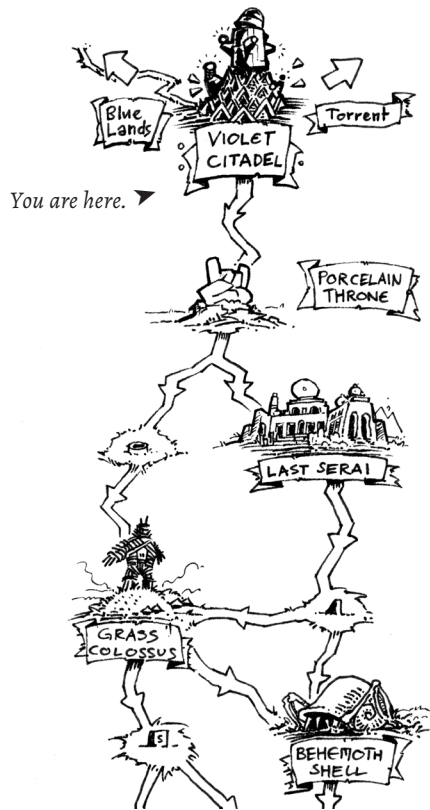
### CATS, CATS, CATS

*HORNED CATS* silently monitor the townships around the Violet Citadel and all the townfolk treat them with great kindness and respect.  
AC 13, HP 2 (1d4), +1 Claws 1,  
Powers: Feline Telepathy, Ventriloquism,  
Spells: Enthrall Human.

*BLACK CATS* are the silver-tongued mistresses of the townships and carry serpents in their tails.  
AC 13, HP 2 (1d4), +5 Serpent 1, narcotic DC 10.  
Spells and abilities as horned cat.

*BAD CATS* are rumored to be half-glass, able to walk through corners and curse with a purr.

*Cats* are the priests of the Purple God(dess). The high magi of the University of the Citadel are changeling cat-people. They eat traveler babes. There are hidden horned rat masters who secretly dominate the cats. The cats have little, manipulative human hands.



**ENCOUNTERS:** twice every leg of the journey.  
 Three times if making haste. Roll 1d6:  
 1 encounter,  
 2-3 traces, remains,  
 4-6 the solitude is overwhelming and still.

If an encounter or traces are found, roll 1d6 on the main caravan trails, 1d6+3 off the trails.

(1) A wrecked burdenbeast, the egg-matter is intact, or is it just a trap? (2) Hostile Porcelain Princes who'd be rid of you. (3) Township traders and bandits of opportunity. (4) Violent leftover worms hunt with failing machine hunger. (5) Ultraviolet wisp storm and severe skin burns. (6) A stately blimper herd floats across the grassland, leaving the smell of ozone behind them. (7) A flock of blue herons, blinded by a freak UV flash. (8) The torso and head of a vome, still hungry and alive in its half-machine way. (9) A half-visible dragon, majestic yet translucent (100 exploration xp).

## EIGHT WEEKS AND MORE: TRAVEL AND SUPPLIES

D.W. was inscrutable. Poncho looked peeved.

"We're going to the Black City and we don't care if it's supposed to take eight weeks, we'll make it in four and bring enough black-light to set us all up. Now, how many horses will you loan us?"

The Black City is really far away. Too far for regular hexcrawling, so point-crawling is the steppe to take. Every leg of about a week takes one roll of a supply die per party member that isn't a quadrupedal ungulate. On a roll of 1-3 the supply die is depleted and moves down the chain. A depleted d4 means someone starves.

D12 -> D10 -> D8 -> D6 -> D4 -> STARVING (deplete on 1-3)

SPEND A WEEK FORAGING and check survival skills to skip the supply die that week and increase supply dice by one step.

MAKING HASTE gives a +1 to the supply roll, but also forces an additional encounter check.

Each die step of supplies purchased in the Violet City costs 10 cash and requires some way of transporting them:

d4	backpack, sack, wineskin (10 cash)
d6	porter*, pony, donkey, mule, camel (50 cash)
d8	burdenbeast, 'phant, steppe wagon (200 cash)

Intelligent enemies target pack animals, rather than armored murderhoboes. The steppes kill just like the spears.

A human counts as d4 supplies. Just in case.

"Mount up! There's wonders and silks and chem stims on that ultraviolet road!" P.T. shouted.

**HANDOUT 1: VORGO'S RELIABLE MAP**

"She's a beauty, she is, and her father a chief, she says. A pearl is the bride gift he asks, she says, a pearl chiselled from a behemoth's oyster parasite. So here I am, with my chisel and hangover, ready to enlist with the Princes as far as the Sarai, then on to the Behemoth ... I'll manage somehow."

*In Vorgo's wound is a sliver of silver. Does he smell a bit of wild beast?*

*Street urchins and purple cabbagewives would say he'd come to the township with a dog cage, but where is the dog?*

*Would the satraps stab somebody just to stop them from reaching their territory?*

*None of the cat people seem to care much about the map, they treat it as a joke. P.T. and the party would drop this annoying side quest here.*

*If pressed, the folks will ask, why go there? Only death and blindness await in that grassland.*

*Pushed further, they'll mutter about two mutilated travelers in the Rue des Oiseaux et Morgues.*

*At this point Violet detectives with fine white cats will start asking probing questions of strangers poking their whiskers in their jurisdiction.*

*After all, the bodies were just travelers, hardly citizens. But foreigners bothering the cat folk?*

*Yes, the doctor of mortices may have noticed the odd, parallel daggers used to mutilate the bodies.*

*Could those have been teeth or claws? Hah, only if someone had teeth like daggers!*

*Here, the trail would go cold for now, nothing to indicate that any fantasy of vomes and ultra possession could have any basis in fact.*

*VORGO THE WERE-PUG is shifty, cowardly, and foolishly loyal. But, the truth is out, he also turns into a scruffy pug. This does not improve his combat or breathing abilities.*

*AC 13 (11 pug), HP 3 (1d6), keen smell, bug eyes. Is Vorgo possessed by an ultra scout beetle?*

*This is part 1 of 8 of the first patreon-supported Stratometaship expedition, more here: <https://www.patreon.com/wizardthieffighter>. The risk die concept taken from Macchiato Monsters by Eric Nieudan, also thanks the Black Hack by David Black for the usage die. The rest of the document assumes familiarity with role-playing games, and particularly, y'know, the old, big one.*

