

# MESOS

A harsh desert landscape set in the remains of a negligent and polluted society.



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# Introduction

Taking place in the year 2100, the United States of America has collapsed just 50 years prior after a series of catastrophic events drove millions into Canada and Mexico, as well as the biggest corporations that formed the backbone of the economy. Those that were left engaged in conflict with a tyrannical government possessing the conviction to forcibly establish order throughout the country. Destroying the foundations American society had built itself on the last 250 years, this conflict is known as **The Fall** for its mark as the last stone pulled in the nations infrastructure which caused society to crumble into the lawless wasteland it is today.

Soon after the government declared its dissolution, many of the Tech Corporations that left saw an opportunity to take advantage of the disparate labor force and layed claim to many of the remaining cities with visions of technologically superior utopias where executives could shape an entire society as they see fit. With no media coverage to keep their pursuits under a watchful eye, private armies hired by these companies quickly swept through the streets of Urban centers all over the nation, expelling local militias and resistances through any means necessary. Those that were allowed to stay were required to become "International Employees" under the companies, effectively selling their rights away and becoming ensnared in modern day debt servitude.

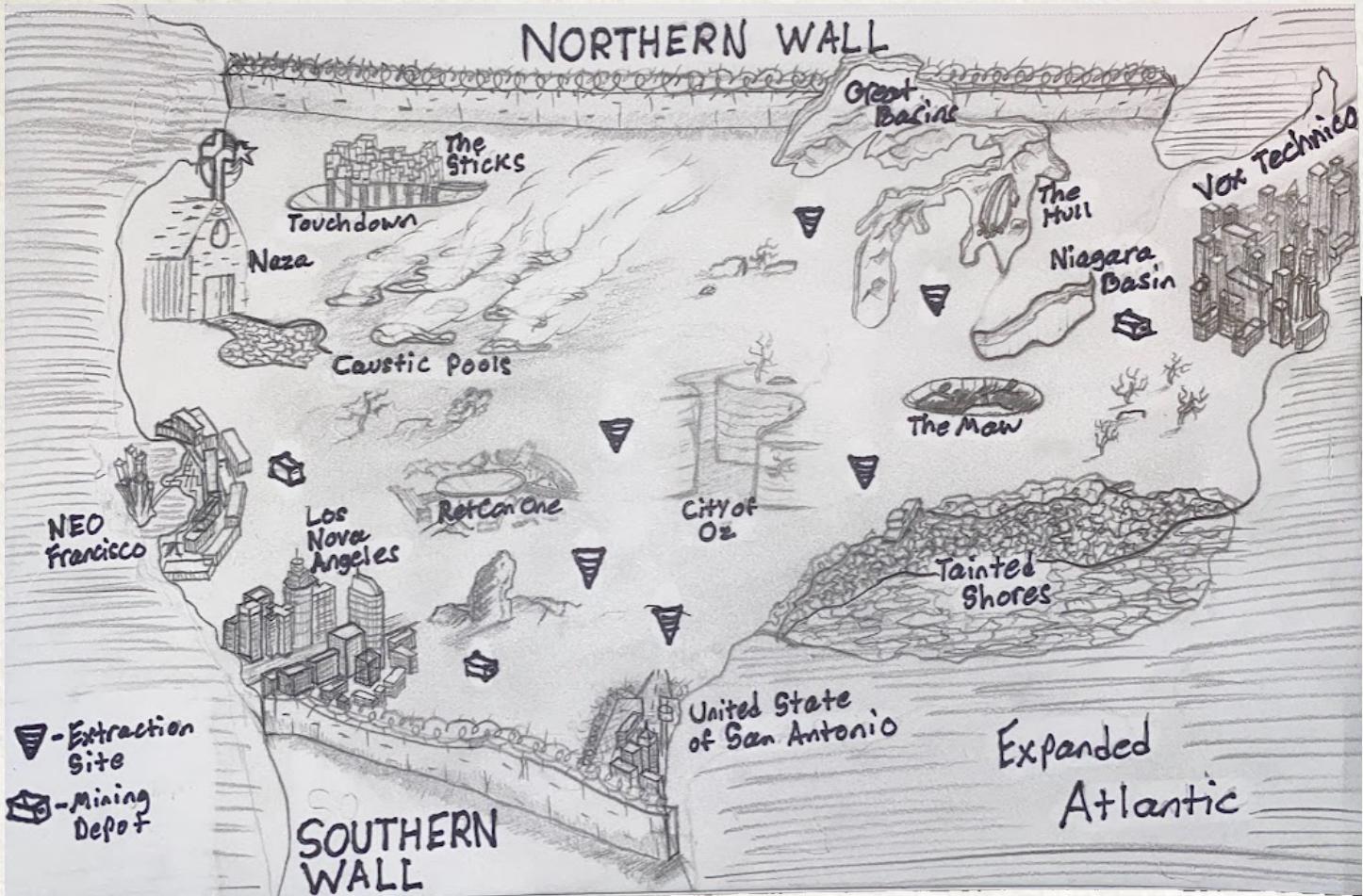
Development quickly took off the day the corporations moved in and the cities that sucessfully resisted local

retaliation become technological marvels of the modern world. Complete with all the infrastructures of Urban society before, citizens felt complacent with the comforts of modern life and were quickly disillusioned into this new lifestyle of totalitarian submission. They live, eat, and sleep according to what higher-up executives declare and those who follow orders are quickly compensated with higher wages, better food, and nicer homes—while those who don't meet these standards are treated as lesser-beings barely scrounging by in the slummy outskirts of the cities.

Outside city walls however, life is much tougher in the polluted wastelands of Meso as violent dust storms move across the landscape spanning hundreds of miles long, intense drought leaves over 2/3 of the terrain void of life and in a sweltering heat, and a depleted ozone layer threatens life on a physiological level. Still, many have adapted to this harsh landscape in their own unique methods while looking to reclaim some sense of society, a common dream for most people of the desert.

This is Meso—a harsh, unforgiving landscape created by the negligence of generations before and it's inhabitants and their stories are those of a people trying to make use of what's left in a polluted and fragmented world.

# Geography



## **Key Locations:**

### **The Craters**

#### **Touchdown + The Sticks**

The biggest of the blast zones, the bottom of the crater sits at 536 ft below surface level. It has a landscape of leveled ground at its center with a diameter of 2.5 miles, which houses a large community called "The Sticks", named after its tall, wooden supports that place the shanty-town at surface level. The only way into the city is from 1 large rope-bridge that hangs at the Eastern entrance and is heavily guarded by its inhabitants. Since it's close to the Northern Wall they built it tall enough to look over into Canada for any signs of life. There's the occasional passing car or two on a lone road in the Woods, but there's

usually no sign of anyone near the border anymore.

#### **RetCon One**

Heavily debated amongst those who were around when the bombs dropped, supposedly this was the first blast site which used to be a city from before called Denver, CO. It was rumored that the estimated death toll from the blast reached 1.5 million in total. Now it remains a large, cavernous crater with no sign of life but the howling of the wind whistling through the surrounding desert.

## **The Maw**

The smallest of the blast sites, the first of the warheads to drop hit a large natural gas reservoir near the surface which had been surprisingly glazed over by the manufacturing companies from before. The explosion ignited the escaping gasses causing the surrounding terrain to ignite and remain lit to this day. While the first of the warheads had caused the ignition, there remain several that lie in pockets of sand that failed to detonate, just waiting to eventually be ignited by the gas emissions. No one knows when they'll explode, but once one catches it'll cause a chain reaction that is expected to erupt the entire reservoir causing an explosion that could range anywhere from expanding the crater a couple hundred feet to potentially igniting a deep pocket extending to the root of the North American plate, causing a global Earthquake that could shift the foundation of the planet.

## **The City of Oz**

A large Salt Mine city complex deep below the rubble of Kansas City that is home to thousands of Mesosrs. Through electricity produced by natural gas, large underground Syno-farmers support the population and an ecosystem of birds, primates, dogs/coyotes, wolves, lizards, and insects that followed the scent of humanity after adjusting to living off of human trash for over a century. Finally away from the harsh life of the upper world; here art, music, and joy flourish during pastime while they work to maintain facilities, improve and expand to accommodate new-comers, and reclaim a sense of order and civility in the hostile wasteland.

## **Naza**

Religious settlement of Idolism founded after the Fall when a Christian and Muslim community joined together to found a new city for people to make spiritual connections.

## **Tainted Shores**

With the island of Cuba almost completely engulfed and the Panama Canal expanded by rising ocean levels, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch began to funnel through the Equatorial Counter ocean current into the Caribbean where it piled along the New Atlantic Coast. It quickly became a naturally made landfill as its garbage washed up shores and now its estimated to have covered some 500 square miles in trash along the Coast. Completely undockable and uninhabitable, it remains the most polluted area in the world and is entirely void of natural life besides scavengers sifting through millions upon millions of pounds of garbage.

## **The Hull**

A cruise ship that used to sail out of the St. Lawrence river into the Atlantic ocean. It was stranded in the Great Basin after an attempt to widen the canal in 2035 to adjust to overflow from rising ocean water had caused a chain reaction of mud slides down its shores after a heavy monsoon season. The river became blocked and with no outlet, the lakes began to flood surrounding areas as they expanded; destroying forests and local farmland in the process and adding to the already devastating famine. With most vessels decommissioned from the Great Lakes at

the time, this ship was one of the very last ones to remain and capsized during the flooding, remaining hidden in the depths below for decades. As the Lakes dried, the ship was revealed and is now a lucrative place for scavengers to explore in search of relics from before. However, the trek down in the Great Basin takes days to reach the vessel from the side wall and is completely void of life, traveling across miles of Dunes on foot since cars can't get down the sheer cliffside.

of pounds of garbage.

## **Climate:**

Suffering from extreme drought and soil erosion after intense farming practices during the **Great Modern Famine** of the 2050s-60s, several concussive blast sites from the North American Divide, and global warming caused by the unchecked pollution from the manufacturing, oil, and tech industries; the "Mid-States" have become a desolate wasteland where the vast pools known as the Great lakes have all dried into large craters and no longer supply farmland with freshwater, pollution has caused inhospitable soil and air to the millions of acres of farmland that supported the population, and eroded soil has caused a revival of the Dust Bowl on a massive scale—enshrouding several thousand miles of land in darkness and ripping winds that could bury a house within an hour. With little-to-no rain year round, temperatures can reach up to 150 degrees during the day and down to 10 at night (although due to the low moisture there rarely any snow in most parts) throughout Mid-State and many animals that were once adapted to the tolerable conditions of the desert slowly

died off from overheating and depleted food sources. When the land is lucky enough to be graced with rainfall (usually coming down from Canada or up from the Caribbean); heavy downpours and flash-flooding from the dry terrain ensue. Unfortunately, the rain does little to nourish the land due to its acidic nature from air-pollution and is usually swept up and dissolved from dust-storms within a week or two.

## **Natural Resources:**

### **Ores and Earth Metals**

Due to the intense impact upon the terrain from the dust-storms, ores within the Earth began to develop at a higher rate from the atmospheric compression. Ores of all nature are highly-valued from the tech companies and extraction is a dangerous yet highly sought after endeavor in the Mesos.

### **Water**

Rare rain-fall from cold fronts from the North or warm fronts from the South.

### **Caustic Chemicals**

Due to the combination of acidic rainfall in the Mesos and underground natural gas pools exposed by the large blasts from the North American Divide, caustic chemical pools made of Lithium, Sodium-Hydroxide, and Chloroacetic Acid begin to form after rainfall. Taking months to dissolve, they release a neon-greenish yellow smoke into the air that acts as a highly-potent tear gas that burns the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Prolonged exposure can result in deterioration of organic tissues and death,

or they can leave long-term side effects such as blindness, deafness, loss of smell or taste, paralysis, brain damage, seizures, and birth defects (large of cause of Mute population). Chemicals are highly sought after by tech companies for their seemingly endless supply that support nearly zero-cost production of consumer products in complement with the increased Ore and Earth Metal production within the Mesos.

## Desert-Greens

The basis for genetically modified strands of vegetables that can survive out in the wasteland, this strand of kale adapted to higher levels of UV light from a depleted ozone layer by producing a compound within their leaves that reflects UV wavelengths—resulting in purple leaves and green stems to absorb natural light and protect it from harsh UV light.

# Historical Origins

## Great Modern Famine (2030s-2040s)

Onset from increasing temperatures worldwide and soil erosion caused by intensive farming practices; struggling to keep up with increasing populations, a global shortage of grains and vegetables set in a place a world wide famine that lasted an entire decade and resulted in the deaths of millions, mostly consisting of those in more developed countries due to the fact that they heavily relied on food imports to support their population. This gave lesser developed countries a chance to negotiate and trade with struggling nations and caused a great shift in the

global power dynamic; putting countries in Subtropical regions in positions of global power as “saviors” who would distribute their personal supplies with struggling nations. **This was the first step in deplatforming the U.S as a leading world power.**

## North American Divide (2034)

During the Great Modern Famine, the U.S had gone back on its word to assist Ally countries during times of need by sharing personal food stores across North America. Furious, Canada and Mexico began to mobilize on U.S borders in an act of aggression to pressure the White House into honoring their word. However, they responded with similar acts of aggression in the self-justification that the U.S would not be threatened—mobilizing troops towards Canadian and Mexican borders to hold a line of stalemate. Frustrated with the blatant negligence by administrative powers in the U.S for decades, Alaska seceded from the U.S and became the “Canadian Province of Alaska”. It was the “Shot Heard Around The World” all over again, and fighting broke out on both sides of the borders. While a majority of Canadian, American, and Mexican citizens all called for an end to the aggression, fighting continued until Canada had been backed into a corner as the U.S began to seize control over major cities. At a standstill, Canada utilized new firepower afforded to them by the previously U.S owned warheads stored in Alaska and fired 3 large missiles which hit what is now known as **Touchdown, RetCon One, and The Maw**—putting an end to the conflict. With millions dead, on top of a global famine, the U.S saw that victory

was not possible and conceded; as did Mexico and Canada. However, because of the violence that transpired between the North American countries, Canada and Mexico began to construct walls to border off the U.S from entering their country (Construction wouldn't be completed till 2050). No trade of food transpired between the 3 countries and each tended to their damages. **This was the 2nd step in U.S dissolution and was the first time the U.S truly understood what it was like to suffer an over-aggressive act of destruction on its soil—sending a shuddered forewarning throughout the nation of bad things to come.**

## The Fall (2050)

With American youth furious at the ignorant actions of the "representative" government which ignored their call for cease-fire, riots began to break out in 2035 after the announcement that walls would be constructed in the coming years to block Mexican and Canadian borders. They were met with forceful opposition by law enforcement and the national guard, dubbed Traitors to their country, and soon after people began to flee the country by the thousands, losing hope that there was a desirable future in the country. With a severe drop in the work-force, this had catastrophic consequences for the economy and fueled the rage of an already furious and outspoken public outcry, and riots ensued for years with more and more organization turning into a full-scale revolution against the existing infrastructure of power. For the first time since the Civil War, Americans were pitted against each other and violence was a common occurrence in the streets as the

Military attempted to put an end to the opposition, even going as far as to use an early prototype of The LANTERN as crowd control. Meanwhile, revolutionaries attempted to stop the construction of the Walls, which would be political death for the country on a Global platform. After fighting waged on for over 15 years, the wall had finally been completed—more as a show that the government was still in power over the people—but both sides had really lost sight of what they were fighting for. In the end, with not much left to save after years of fighting, destruction of the landscape, negligence of the environment, deaths on a large scale, and lack of allies; both sides disbanded and what was left of the government had relinquished its statehood over the United States of America.

Lost and alone, all the remnants could do was adapt to the harsh new landscape their conflict had scarred the Earth with and try to start fresh with the consequences of past-generations' ignorance. This was the Fall of 2050, and it served as the origin point for the strange, new wasteland we find ourselves in during the year 2100.

# Factions

## General Details:

### Trade

Within communities, trade is usually done at local Depots or between neighbors for the sake of sharing resources and bettering the community. While shedding their individual freedom for a social-contract, it's expected that you help your fellow members when they need it—which makes withholding resources and personal effects near-criminal. Doing so could result in disrespect and outlash from the community, excommunication and exile, or even as far as public execution in some extreme cases.

Outside of the dynamics of community, trade is done at large-scale Markets long-established since the Fall where hundreds of suppliers set-up shop early in the morning and pack-up at the end of the day. At these marketplaces you can find various goods and services.

### Goods

#### Food:

- Canned
- Vegetables
- Fruits\*\*
- Game (Rabbit, Fox, Lizard, Squirrel, Boar, Goat, Fox, Birds)

#### Water:

- Distilled
- Freshwater smuggled from Cities
- Wastewater (for Syno-Farming)

#### Car Parts:

- Engines

- Transmission parts
- Alternators
- Roll-Cages & External Cages
- Lift-Kits
- Turbos\*
- Gearboxes\*
- Bullet-proof Metal Window Covers\*\*
- Window Cages
- Solar Panels for EVs

#### Tires:

- A/T 1/2/3
- M/T
- Sand Tires\*
- Passenger & Performance
- Slicks\*
- ATV Tires

#### Vehicle Fuel Conversion Kits:

- Electric - Solar Panel & Battery\*
- Hydrogen Cell - Compressed Chamber
- Auto-Fusion Reactor\*\*\*

#### Tools:

- Power tools, Wrenches, Hammers, Breaker Bars, Sockets, Screwdrivers
- Saws
- Floor Jacks & Jack Stands
- Offroad Jack\*\*

#### Melee & Projectile Weapons:

- Bats, Pipes, Clubs
- Swords/Machetes
- Knives
- Axes
- Handguns
- Hunting Rifles
- Long-Range Rifles\*
- Automtic Rifles\*\*
- Scopes\*
- Extended Magazines
- Stocks
- Hairline Triggers\*

### Protective Armor:

- Sports padding
- Welded-Metal body armor\*
- Bullet-proof body armor\*\*

### Drugs:

- Syno-Cannabinoids
- Moonshine, Rum, Whiskey\*
- Heroin Poppy
- Tobacco Vaporizers
- Tobacco Leaves
- Hookah Pipes

### Medicine/Medical Supplies:

- Pain-Killers (smuggled)
- Insulin\*\* (smuggled)
- Antibiotics
- Steroids/Steroid Creams (smuggled)
- Vaccines\*\* (smuggled)
- Bandages
- Stints
- Casting Cement
- Surgical Tools
- Antiseptic\* (smuggled)

### Clothing:

- Hats, Shirts, Jackets, Pants, Sweaters
- Hoods and Cloaks

### Miscellaneous:

- Analog Watches (old)
- Digital Watches (old)
- Tac-Watches\*\*
- Cameras
- Radios
- Books
- Magazines
- Jewelry
- Home-made Soap & Shampoos
- Toothbrush\*
- Pictures
- Paper
- Canvas\*

- Pencils
- Paint\*
- Instruments\*

\*Uncommon, \*\*Rare, \*\*\*Once in a lifetime

### Jobs:

#### Contract-Mining

Collecting minerals and ores for companies, they find work by going to local "Sponsored Mineral Depots" and fulfilling bounties for whatever valuable ore the companies need. Bringing their hauls back to the Depot, they receive payment in the form of food or currency and will then setup camp and wait for the next job. Mining Depots are where you will find many Contract-Crawler camps, some so large it's as if a small town was built there overnight. No matter what they call themselves, they act as the bottom of the consumer chain, collecting the resources which will be turned into goods for the rest of the world.

#### Trader/Smuggler

Some traders smuggle goods out of the cities to sell in the wasteland. Others might scavenge Tainted Shores or other Junkyards and Landfills for relics and artifacts from a forgotten time. Whichever you meet I wouldn't trust them. They're all looking to make a quick buck, whatever way that means.

#### Syno-Farmer

Setting up homebrew farms in RVs, Mobile Homes, and some communities going as far as to setup large facilities deep within government bunkers and caves in the Northern Midwest, Syno-Farmers conserve water through Syno-Irrigation and grow genetically modified crops (which were originally smuggled out of

the cities) to maximize their yield and feed as many people as they can in such a limited environment. While most farming is done subsistently in the desert, those that can save enough water to support larger endeavors will usually be hired or sponsored by communities to feed their people while receiving protection from raiders in the process.

### **Mercenary**

In the years before the Fall, the U.S had made large investments to expand their military in preparation for a supposed 3rd World War they feared would be provoked by several countries from the East. With all this military might overflowing into the streets and communities of the nation, it was the start of several revolutions and riots which called to demilitarize the U.S. After the Fall, with a huge military and no infrastructure to support it, those that didn't join local militias were left to fend for themselves and thus, there was an overabundance of military-trained soldiers scattered throughout the country. Taking advantage of the wastelands lawlessness, many offered their services to those that could afford it in return for food, money, or community, while others joined local gangs to satisfy their bloodlust.

### **Mechanic**

One of the most valuable trades in the Desert, most of the younger Mechanics learned new skills after the Fall to help survive the harsh wasteland such as welding, software engineering, mechanical engineering, or gun-smithing—which makes them extremely valuable and provides safety in a land where value means little. While expanding, many communities will be in search of Mechanics to maintain the various systems

it takes to live in a settlement. Drifters do the same, however it's usually for the sole purpose of fixing their cars and giving them an advantage over rival factions through weapon development. Older Mechanics that failed to meet this new landscape were often the 2nd choice and don't find work in their profession as much, leading them to other professions to make a living.

### **Creters**

Utilizing a technique developed by Tech companies to quickly erect buildings and restore cities, Creters work with a fast-drying cement compound to build settlements for communities, facilities for Syno-Farmers, and whoever else has enough food, water, or money to hire their services. They often get their supplies smuggled from the cities or make less effective and structurally-safe compounds themselves using whatever materials are readily available to them in the desert. They can mostly be found in communities amongst Landers.

### **Drug Chemists**

As one of the most scientifically advanced societies leading up to the Fall, a majority of the youths from those days who survived found themselves in a large market for escapes from reality.

### **Recollector**

Recollectionists who take up bounties posted in markets and cities to find items for people who need them.

# **Landers**

Ordinary people just trying to live out their lives, usually within the confines of communities to keep safe, and provide for their loved ones any way they can. They are non-violent passerbys who struggle to adjust to the harsh environment of Meso and rely on communities to take care of one another.

## **Language**

Due to the diverse abundance of Landers within the desert, they speak any number of languages including English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, French, Arabic, Korean, and American Sign Language. Communication is the key to survival in communities and thus, this allows them to make a wide variety of connections with people, which is extremely important in these tough conditions.

## **Clothing**

Usually wear ordinary clothing scavenged from remains and trash dumps such as Hats, Jackets, Shirts, and Pants since they don't spend too much time out in direct sunlight in the desert.

## **Skills**

Usually working in the assigned role they're given in their community; this could range from a number of jobs including Syno-Farming, Creter Work, maintaining community facilities and residences, cooking, hunting, Mechanical Engineering, Teaching, and any other role that fulfills the community's needs.

# **Rigs**

Not accustomed to traversing long distances across the desert, if Landers even had a vehicle it would mostly be small sedans or SUVs to get them across sizeable distances or haul cargo. This would vary on the size of their community however.

## **Ethics/Values**

Landers follow the two (2) of the **3 Core Values** in the desert: 1) Above all else, value family and friends closest to them because you can trust them with your life. And 2) Food and water is everything. They are the basis for all life and can drive people to do crazy things. However, it can also bring people together and form close bonds that last them the rest of their lives.

## **Religion/Beliefs**

Most are Athiests, Deists, practitioners of **Propheto** (a blend of Christian and Islamic faiths), or followers of one or the other. With a majority at least believing in something, regular Propheto masses are usually held on Sundays for religious practice and core values are instituted amongst the community; teaching forgiveness, productivity, and thankfulness for the simple blessings in the unforgiving wasteland.

## Settlements

Usually shantytowns built out of wood and/or corrugated steel or repurposed suburbs, there have also been reports of some communities taking shelter within **underground Salt Mines** and running prosperous cities deep below the surface. Because goods are shared amongst members of the community, there is no need for currency to conduct transactions and no markets to do so. However, this can lead to civil disputes for those who refuse to share *everything* they have to offer (including personal belongings).

## Taboos

Generally perceived as dangerous by most Landers, leaving the safety of community walls is allowed but avoided if possible due to the fear of what awaits them in the desert. Additionally, refusing to share with another member of the community is considered an act of treachery and can result in banishment from the community and even public execution in some cases.

## Art

During free time some members taught in the ways of the arts will create sketches and, if luckily available, paintings for their fellow members. Music, while very rare, is also known to attract crowds so that they may be graced with the beautiful hum of man-made sound that has been lost for so long.

## Recreation

Also permitted during free time, many will go to the local bar for a drink, throw darts, host games with playing cards, read books, or just talk with people to kill time.

There's not a whole lot to do in the desert anyways.

## Contract-Crawlers

Nomadic tribes of miners who make a living working contract-extraction jobs for tech companies out in the desert. They're called Contract-“Crawlers” due to the rock-crawling capabilities of their rigs which allow them to scale large boulders and rocky cliffsides with ease, allowing them to extract and carry off big payloads back to mining depots. These tribes are usually comprised of miners and their families, many of whom were pushed out of the Cities after the fall and started picking up these contracts early-on to provide safety to their families. Many hope to one day move back into the Cities and provide a better life outside of the desert for their families.

## Language

Like Landers, Crawlers spoke many different languages before the Fall, as regular miners and excavators back then, so that they may take on jobs from various employers around the world. This continues to be useful today as most Crawler tribes are comprised of families from very different backgrounds and must communicate through several different languages to be coordinated in their work.

## Clothing

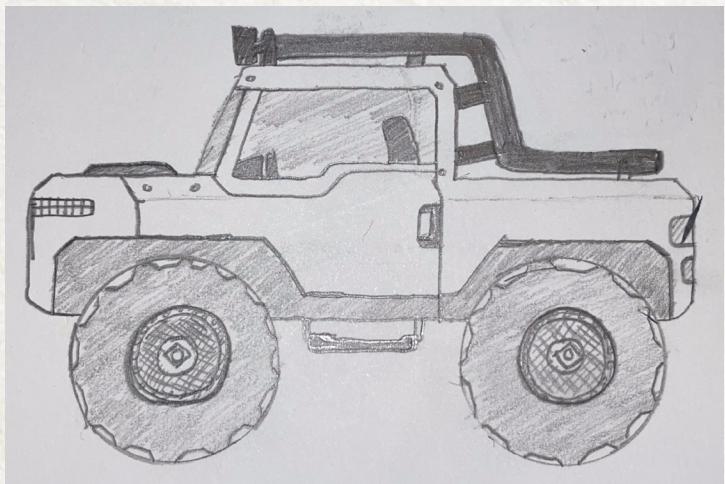
Due to the rugged nature of their work, thick jackets and rugged jeans are basic safety requirement alongside steel-toed boots and hardhats to protect themselves from falling debris, heavy payloads, and dangerous machinery.

## Skills

Some of the most skilled people of the desert, Crawlers are adept at precision-driving across rugged terrains, hauling cargo and machinery, mechanical engineering, mathematics and physics, and automotive engineering. This allows them to be highly mobile and efficient to pick up the next job as soon as possible.

## Rigs

Driving nothing smaller than a full-sized pickup-truck, big-block engines with high torque and 4WD are a must for anyone excavating out in the desert, alongside Mud Tires (M/T) and high lift kits to grip over large rocks and boulders during the trip to and from excavation sites.



## Ethics/Values

Family and Tribe are one and are regarded as above all-else for Crawlers. Nothing matters more than your tribe and the hard work they put in is for each other. As skilled engineers additionally, the problem-solving and operation of complex machinery is satisfying to them and they live for the freedom and thrill of excavation.

## Religion/Beliefs

As a diverse cast of older workers who were around during the time of The Fall, the most popular faiths within Crawler tribes are the big 3: Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. However, religion and faith aren't integral parts of their lives as individualism becomes an internalized aspect of life fighting to survive out in the desert, thus leading more people of faith towards Deism and following the ideas that while there is a God, he doesn't interfere in Earthly affairs.

## Taboos

While a very cheerful band of engineers, they have an extremely low tolerance for those who fail to carry their own weight out of laziness and/or cowardice. The group needs to be working at maximum efficiency on all jobs and those who fail to meet this standard are usually dropped from the group or left behind. However, this is usually for the best of both parties as taking amateurs into higher-risk caverns and sites is a potential risk to the entire time.

## Art

As Engineers, sketching is one of the most common art forms practiced inside and outside of their work and is often done so to capture portraits of their families and tribe members, landscapes, and work-sites they may be on just for the memorabilia. Adept to working with their hands, music is another popular art amongst Crawlers and many enjoy playing stringed instruments and pianos (although the chance of finding a *working* piano out in the desert is slim to none).

## **Recreation**

During down-time between jobs, you can usually find Crawlers tending to one another's needs, grilling, running maintenance on their equipment, playing cards, and dipping into their favored choice of drink—Moonshine.

## **Mining Teams**

Groups of Company-Sponsored miners sent out on high-value excavation missions into the desert. Due to the valuable payloads and expensive machinery they're often carrying, they often come with armed mercenaries with orders to shoot locals who pose a threat to the mission and even the miners carry firearms—protecting the payload is mission priority at all times.

## **Language**

Due to the full-visor helmets covering their faces to protect against UV exposure, they're often seen as noncommunicative to locals. However, the team is highly organized and keep each other up-to-date by radio communications constantly, but they're specifically instructed to keep body language and hand gestures down to a minimum to avoid any spectators getting a sense of their mission.

## **Clothing**

Outfitted with company branded Sol-Jackets made out of a synthetic fiber to store energy during the day and disperse heat through the jacket at night to keep you warm, Mining Teams also sport Cap-Helms, a type of helmet that captures moisture from your breath and stores it in a reservoir within the helmet which you can drink from, conserving water. Most

of the time these helmets brandish their sponsored-company colors or just a plain white to reflect the heat of the sun, while the visor appears a metallic dark blue due to the UV filter keeping the helmet dark inside.

## **Skills**

Highly skilled engineers at the top of their profession, members of these teams are usually hand selected by executives for their reputation as the best. Miners excel in machinery operation and payload extraction methods on land and in the air, while mercenaries carry out protective measures with military precision. Due to their intense presence on sites, Contract-Crawlers that may already be working a site may get into disputes with these teams, offended that they're being pushed off their own claim. However, because Mining-Teams mean business, this can result in the agitated Contractors backing down or risking their entire company being eliminated.

## **Rigs**

With top of the line Extreme-Duty vehicles sporting Auto-Electric Fusion reactors with enough energy to power their machinery ten-fold, these rugged super-trucks are designed to be taken anywhere from warzones to wastelands with solid steel plating that renders bullets and high-caliber shells futile against it. Although highly illegal, on particularly dangerous treks through the desert a LANTERN unit will be installed to ward off attackers and quickly eliminate any disturbances.

## Ethics/Values

With their own necks and reputations on the line, when on an extraction mission little else matters but securing the payload and returning safely to their home city.

## Drifters

Outcasts deemed criminals by a crumbling society, most Drifters are those who were treated as lesser people by social infrastructures in the past who banded together to increase their strength and support one another as outcasts. While seen as killers and thieves, they only do so to survive, protect, and support their own families because they weren't accepted into communities before.

## Language

Much more outspoken and erratic than other people from the desert, Drifters are used to having to speak up to get their word across and have very out-going personalities. This makes them very enjoyable to be around and probably one of the few groups to actually find happiness from the desert.

## Clothing

Most of their clothing is fairly plain, sporting jeans, jackets, shirts, hats, hoods, cloaks, and boots.

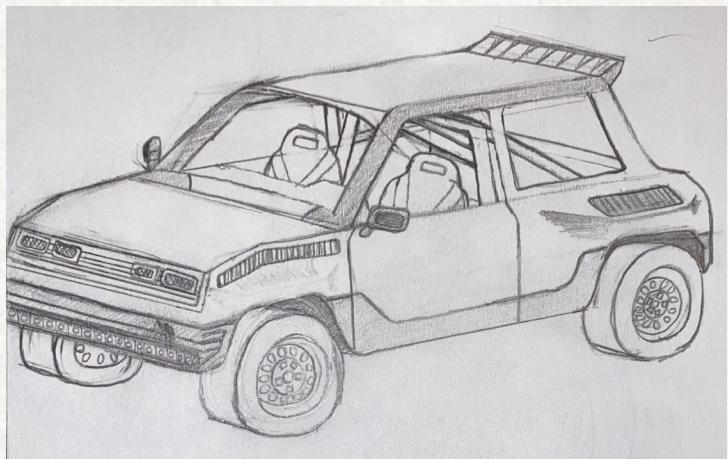
## Skills

Adapted for a highly mobile and fast-paced lifestyle out in the desert, many are skilled in weaponry, combat, racing, fuel manufacturing, mobile Syno-Farming, and tactical combat. In combination, they are a very skilled group of fighters with a bad

reputation given to them from those who antagonize them.

## Rigs

Most drive sleeper cars that look beat-up; restored cars too impractical after the Fall such as lifted Sports cars and Sedans with modded Turbos, open exhausts, and welded diffs. When you see a group riding through the desert, there's usually a few large diesel trucks to carry their gear and supplies with them not too far behind.



## Ethics/Values

Because of their bad reputation, they are often antagonized by others and forced to use violence to protect themselves from communities trying to push them out of areas or Law men who don't understand the dynamics of the desert thinking they are doing a good thing by needlessly attacking them (Lawmen who are often hired by communities anyways).

## Religion/Beliefs

Unlike most, Drifters love the desert and the freedom it provides them and often consider themselves Anarchists in the sense that they enjoy the here-and-now and choose not to waste their time making long-term plans in an uncivilized

environment that no longer requires that kind of thinking.

## Taboos

They see people from the city as "soft" tourists who come to the desert to take advantage of the impoverished people there. This makes anyone from the city a target and they should pray they never come into encounter with them.

## Art

Unlike most groups in Meso, Drifters prefer recycling old analog film by melting it down and remolding it to take new images, to use with their cameras. Some may call it impatient, others may call it ingenuity, but Drifters prefer to take photos rather than draw because it's just easier and affords the mode of color. This isn't to say sketch art doesn't exist within this group however.

## Recreation

Because they manufacture their own biodiesel, one of their favorite past-times is to hold races throughout the desert, sometimes marking a path with trash, to show off new improvements to their rigs and test their skills against the unforgiving terrain of the desert.

## Itinerants

Company-hired hitmen sent to "solve" any problems with locals, investigate issues with ore extraction, and dish out "justice" to locals who've killed people on company-payroll; maintaining their illusion of "safety" for those in the cities and exerting their power over the locals. Ironically, companies might be the biggest contributors to crime in the Desert.

## Language

Only talking when absolutely necessary, these trained, cold-blooded vagabonds are multi-lingual in the common languages of the wasteland, even extending their knowledge to Voiceless signing (a method of communication for a non-communicative nomadic group called The Voiceless).

## Clothing

Normally dressed in muted blacks and grays with their faces covered behind Hoods, Cloaks, Cap-Masks or Helmets, these agents also sport Tac-Watches, a valuable time-piece that runs an OS capable of transmitting and receiving radio transmissions, reading diagnostics through OBD VI ports, and communicating with other devices through installed software. Some are known to wear long-coats, which seem highly impractical in such an intense wasteland.

## Skills

Skilled in most forms of combat involving melee, knives, swords, guns. Additionally, their very skeletons are meshed with protective plates in a process called Osteogenesis, where the metal plates welded to the skeleton to protect organs from high-impact damage to the body, such as bullets, explosions, and vehicle impacts.

## Rigs

Itinerants operate military-grade trucks that run off a Portable Fusion Reactor to power it endlessly. With an unlimited source of fuel, Itinerants often rarely get out of their car when traveling in the desert

and can depend on their vehicles to get them through any and all challenges the desert has to offer.

## Ethics/Values

Due to the dangerous nature of their jobs, they live very cushy lives back in the city. This institutes a value over their lifestyles and a sense of self-importance, which many will pride themselves on as the alteranative is deserted wasteland.

## **San Antonio Militia**

Believing themselves to be doing the Lord's work in purging America of sinners and non-believers, members of the S.A.M are unwavering in their faith and carry out the "will of God" with little concern for human life. While maintaining an image of "peace-protectors" within their own communities in San Antonio, outside city limits they're free to enact their God-like agendas on anyone that doesn't meet their idea of "God-fearing countryman" with brutality and a cold desensitization that comes from the suppressed, primal, urges the wasteland brings out in people.

## Language

A decision from the leadership within the state enacted to homogenize language so that communication is simple across all its people, establishing Spainglish (a blend of English and Spanish) as the standard language in San Antonio. Additionally taught to all citizens, whether they join the militia or not, are also Visual Signals used by soldiers to communicate tactical messages non-verbally during missions.

## Clothing

Most citizens of San Antonio wear clean, new shirts and jeans produced in the City's own textile factories, some of the more important figures within community going as far as to commission a suit to wear for public image.

## Skills

Range from all skills necessary for community upkeep (such as Syno-Farming, Creter-Work, cooking, etc.) to hunting, tracking, tactical combat, and more.

## Rigs

On average, most members of S.A.M drive either personal rigs of theirs (more often than not, highly-lifted trucks with simple mods such as light-bars and large tires) or state-sponsored vehicles such as repurposed cop cars, built for the choppy terrain of the desert, and even school buses repurposed as heavy-load transports.

## Ethics/Values

Instilled from their religiously fervent leader, people are taught that God takes first priority always and if they're not living in his image and studying his teachings "unholy-hellfire will rain down on you" (T. B. Martin, San Antonio Militia leader).

## Religion/Beliefs

An extremely Propheto state, many draw comparisons between citizens of San Antonio and religious cultists from before for their religious fervor and adherence to literal translations of the Propheto Bible (which is a slippery slope and was known to cause

civil disputes and mistranslations before).

## Settlements

Fencing off the entire city with metal fencing, corrugated steel, and barbed wire, the only way in and out of San Antonio is from 1 large Highway extending from the Northern entrance that almost-taunts the desert. However, it's not just a straight shot as thousands of center dividers obscure the way to slow down incoming attackers and give the militia time to see them coming and prepare for defense.

## Taboo

While sin is unavoidable, S.A.M holds people to higher standard of "godliness" and those that fail to meet this standard within their community can face minor to severe punishment, even as far as banishment and even public execution for their lack of faith.

## Art

With a large recycling and manufacturing center that provides for most of the city, one thing that makes San Antonio unique is its readily available art supplies all over the city including Sketch paper, Canvas, Oil paint, pencils, colored pencils, and more.

Aside from visual art, music is also abundant and leaders are always looking to recruit more musicians into the community for their worshipping masses.

## Recreation

With much recreation to do including public theater, live performances, and many bars located around the city, people tolerate the almost incessant religious

standards of the community for a chance to live in a place reaching to maintain civility in some sense.

## *The Voiceless*

One of the first tribes of mutated humans who've adapted to the desert from prolonged UV exposure and air pollution. While unable to produce sound from their vocal cords, their senses are tuned for the wasteland with better eyesight at farther distance, more sensitive hearing, and a heightened sense of smell. They also have a higher resistance to UV light and higher melanin levels in their skin making them more resistant to skin damage from the sun

## Language

Because of their inability to speak they communicate through a system of subtle hand signals they can understand from their accute eyesight and intense attention to detail. This allows them to communicate as efficiently as they can non-verbally, although physical contact or an attention-diverting noise is required to initiate a conversation. Beacuse of the visual nature of the language, they often travel in lines when traversing the desert, with the most experienced members in the front and back passing down communications along the line of people.

## Clothing

Very silent hunters, they wear shoes of soft materials to make as little noise as possible with ambiguous soles underneath to leave prints that don't appear to be human. This allows them to get within range to catch their prey. Additionally, they always wear Cap-Masks or Cap-Helms, Hoods, and Cloaks of sandy colors to blend in with the terrain; making their appearance almost completely invisible against the background of the desert.

## Skills

Naturally skilled at surviving in the desert, they are excellent hunters, stalking their prey while making little to no noise greater than 5db. Skilled fighters as well, while they refuse use guns for their loud noise and unnatural appearance, they carry large swords and knives made of old metals and materials such as bone, wood, and steel. While a non hostile group, they wouldn't think twice to use these to their advantage should they feel threatened.

## Rigs

In-tune with the desert slopes and rugged terrains, they have no use for vehicles.

## Ethics/Values

Valuing tribe above all, they traverse the desert in search of a safe place to settle away from other communities and live in peace—a very difficult goal in the desert.

## Religion/Beliefs

Practicing the wasteland belief of **Suranism**, practitioners usually live in small, nomadic groups that choose to travel on foot and learn to survive off

the small affordances of life the desert provides such as eating small game for nourishment and drinking their blood for hydration. Many are Excellent diggers, as they've learned techniques to dig deep holes with their hands quickly to bury themselves in sand tpand wait out passing dust storms, which has given them a reputation as the ghosts of the desert who can disappear and reappear in dust storms.

## Art

While an intense dedication to survival has left them little time to pursue non-essential skills, some pick up sketch art throughout their travels to capture landscapes and images of one another as memorabilia.

## Recreation

When not traversing the sandscape, youth usually kill time playing simple games out in the desert such as Hunter, a hide-and-seek game to practice blending in with their surroundings. Most of these games were taught to them by their parents as fun ways to hone thier skills that they will one day use to survive out in the desert themselves.

Adults will usually find themselves tending to supplies, talking with one another about travel plans, watching their kids, or reading a book. As an adult there isn't much to do once the priority of survival takes place, which is why parents in the desert work hard to give their kids as much of a childhood as possible.

# **Technology**

## **Syno-Farming**

Hydroponic irrigated crop production using synthetic organic liquids and LED lights.

Forced to adapt to the harsh climate of the Mesos, water conservation and self-subsistence was the difference between struggling and surviving in the desert. Thus, through a process of filtration and moisture management at the root of the crop, Syno-Irrigation was born. Plants are grown in an tightly sealed system (can be anything from tupperware to a shipping container) inside of their own separate chambers and irrigated with any kind of natural liquid (usually initialized with urine) that is filtered through a set of filters manufactured from tightly knit metal wire and charcoal chunks to deactivate toxins and remove debris from reaching the crop. Once the filtered water has flowed to the crop chamber it drains through a holehole into the bottom into the top of the next plant in a vertical layout, till it is caught in a bottom catch reservoir where it is then supplied to the top chamber once more every couple of days. Through this process, almost any natural liquid can be used to grow crops, as long as they are out of the harsh air and UV light of the desert.

## **Syno-Crops**

Syno-Maize  
Syno-Solanines  
Eggplant  
Tomato  
Potato  
Peppers

Syno-Rice  
Syno-Wheat  
Syno-Lettuce  
Syno-Kale  
Syno-Collards  
Syno-Cotton

## **The LANTERN**

An intense beam of charged particles emitted from a portable particle accelerator that ignites thin organic materials on contact in close range and will begin to cook skin if exposed for an extended amount of time. At long range this can cause nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, psychosis, paralysis, and nerve damage.

- Usually used by Mining-Teams who've been sponsored for particularly dangerous extractions to expel locals from coming into contact with them.
- Emits a bright aura of light into the sky to expel excess energy and alert those in range of its use.
- Highly illegal.

## **Syn-Scopolol**

With genetically modified Nightshade crops (Tomatoes, Eggplants, Peppers, Potatoes) yielding higher rates of the chemical Solanine, drug chemists found that they could be used to produce high amount of Powdered Scopolamine, a plant alkaloid that when inhaled in high quantities causes agitation and psychosis or weakness and loss of consciousness. The effects vary person to person but ingestion is extremely easy, most people being inflicted by attackers who blow it into their face. Mainly used by Itinerants for assassinations and Drifters as a recreational drug.

## **Plated Osteogenesis (Plated Bone Growth)**

Adding plates of bone, grown with stem cells, that mesh with the skeleton to act as internal armor against blunt force trauma while being received by the immune system (dodgy surgeries in the desert usually result in patient fatalities from infection and/or blood loss from amateur surgeons)

- Titanium/Cobalt-Chromium plates
- Mandatory procedure for those working in security for companies who travel to Mesos.
- More expensive but protects against high-velocity impacts (such as bullets, explosions, vehicle impacts)
- Must be welded to bone rather than grown to it since the body won't connect with the metal

## **Alternative Fuels**

By popularity:

### **Synthetic-Gas/Biodiesel**

Synthesized from Syno-Crops such as Syno-Maize and Syno-Wheat  
Exclusive to Mesos and cheap and easy to manufacture fuel  
Depending on tank size can go up to 700 miles (requires very large tank)  
Gas-Engine compatible after fixing Gas-to-Diesel conversion problem by adjusting viscosity of Biodiesel with Solanine additives from Syno-Crops to match gasoline (within a 2% margin of error)  
Virtually impossible to convert gas engines to regular diesel before due to viscosity and compression ratio.

### **Hydrogen Cell**

Comes in canisters that you hook up to Gas Chamber and siphon into Used by lower-class citizens in Cities Smuggled from city as luxury fuel Useful for long trips Due to lightweight storage and long-range (around 400 miles per canister)

### **Auto-Electric Fusion (2040-Present)**

Only popular in Cities, used by higher-end cars (which evidently are owned by upper-class citizens)  
Uses Portable Fusion reactor to generate its own electricity  
Can effectively run forever with periods of cool-down so it doesn't overheat and maintenance.

### **Solar Electric (2000-Present)**

Uses solar energy harvested from solar panels outfitted to body to charge  
Slow to charge and requires battery replacements every couple of years  
Battery makes vehicles heavy and offers poor performance, but long range since size of battery charge (around 358 miles)

### **Gasoline (1900-2023)**

Primitive and hard to find  
Offers best performance but often discarded due to Taboo against its use (Generational taboo.)  
Gasoline is a reminder of the selfish-pollution and destruction the generations before them enacted on the Earth.  
Since most cars used in the Mesos were fixed and repurposed, many had to be converted for newer fuel alternatives.  
Some cars may still be gasoline powered and thus conversion kits are a highly-sought after item at markets.