

NEW AMSTERDAM: 2015

A MARVEL TO MAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

A VERITABLE UTOPIA...

...AS LONG AS YOU'RE LOOKING UP.

A pinnacle of civilization. A modern tribute to humanity's struggles against nature. A tale to be told for centuries after its fall, like Rome, Carthage, or Paris.

A stale cesspool of crime and detritus. A clearinghouse for the trade of illegal materials... both drugs, and people. A story of mankind's struggle against nature, and its ultimate failure to triumph.

New Amsterdam is all of these, depending on where you happen to be.

The under-city, a system of sewers and transit tunnels under the ground of the city which maintains its subway systems and utilities is a mess. You can find almost anything you are seeking there, the police don't even bother to glance that way anymore. They don't have the manpower, equipment, or will to shepherd what can simply be hidden beneath the streets.

Street level. Ground floor. Shops, stores, businesses, apartments, homes, churches... everything you would expect in a modern city. Trains run just over the streets, carrying the passengers to jobs they hate, dealing with people they loathe, and back home to a family they love. Some are happy, some are sad, some have hope, and some have given up. While it's the most 'normal' of the city, the construction of Tierside has cast a dark gloom throughout the city.

Tierside. The pinnacle of New Amsterdam. Streets built above streets. Houses built above houses. Businesses above businesses. Both literally and figuratively. Private property, privately owned, privately policed, privately restricted. Airships carry the elite of the city around to sunny building top pools, high class shops and financial institutions, and even a building top golf course sits within Tierside. The American Dream. You can't get in without being a resident, or having 'official business' and a sponsor. But once you're there, hey, you deserve it, right? You earned the right to be part of the elite of the world. You deserve the best.

Then, there's the Hab-Plex. Built outside the Tierside area, a totally enclosed habitat. Its own power, its own transportation, and its own utilities. One of the main investors is a company called Progressive Dynamics, whose tag line is, "Making the world progressively better, one dynamic at a time." A corporate philanthropist sponsor, controlling nearly every aspect of the resident's lives, from their entertainment, to their food, to their utilities. That couldn't possibly go wrong.

The year is 2015. New Amsterdam has been on cruise control for nearly a decade. The rat race is in full swing, and the corporate ladder has people clinging on for their very lives. The city has been built up on the blood of those who came before, and has hidden the rust and decay under a layer of paint and chrome.

Ten years of change: Society has progressed in several ways over the past ten years. Some noticeable achievements are listed below:

Easy Pay chip: Credit and debit cards now come with an 'easy pay' chip that will automatically charge the owners account without the need to take the card out of their wallet! Easy pay reduces the time on line, allowing patrons to have more time in their busy days! As an added bonus Easy Pay chips also have all of a card holder's pertinent health information like height, weight, blood type and body fat, as well as R.E.P pass information stored within it. The card is thumb-coded and, when linked to a data pad has several security features that prevent the use of the card from unauthorized citizens.

The Federal Health Act: The F.H.A was passed in order to stem the rising cost of Total Health care by giving citizens an incentive to stay healthy. Each citizen is given an allotment of dietary points that they use whenever they purchase foods that are less than healthy with their EPC's (easy pay cards). Junk food, fatty and salty foods and anything with a caloric intake that has been deemed a 'dietary point cost' is subtracted from the Citizen's monthly health report. Going over ones points means an additional tax payment at the end of the year to offset the future medical costs that an unhealthy lifestyle will eventually burden society with. Companies like 'Live-Well', Health First and 'Nutri-dyne' have created balanced meal programs that in some cases could actually remove points that have accumulated over the year!

Universal Language Monitors: Uni-Lang technology is an application that has been integrated into virtual signs, billboard and any public source of information so people can understand the language even if they don't speak English or Spanish! The application works like this: The device that is used to translate the information will download it from any information source that it is near at the prompt of the citizen. That information then is translated into their language for easy understanding! This technology is usually found in Cell phones and Data pads, though an experimental type of glasses is being tested to allow the citizen to see the text on a scrolling marquee at the bottom of their glasses! All they have to do is look at something with Uni-lang technology and they are instantly informed.

A tale of two cities: The advent of Tier-side and Hab-plex living has created a distinction between the citizens that live and work in the top tiers of the city and the majority of citizens that remain below.

Subways still exist to fill the need of 'grounded' commuters. Some stations are privately owned and still are maintained with a modicum of cleanliness. City run stations have, for the most part gone into disrepair. Limestone deposits within the cracks of tunnels and water seepage when it rains is a common site. The tunnels are in desperate need of repair, though there hasn't been a major collapse in three years.

The Tier-side monorail is an altogether different story. It takes much less to maintain and has an abundance of funding from a commuter base that is willing to pay top dollar to both commute in comfort and think better of themselves as they look down at the 'grounded' citizens below. Some monorails even have reserved dining cars for passengers with a VIP membership. There are plans to connect the transit systems of several adjacent cities which would draw commuters from as far as Boston to New Amsterdam in high speed monorails that boast reaching their destination in a third of the time it would take conventional mass transit.