

# Carnival



A Shadowrun Adventure

by

Khadim Nasser



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*Thanks to Scope47 for the initial suggestion of a fun fair in Shadowrun 2070, Meriss for some further suggestions and all the rest of the folks at Dumpshock who took the time to comment on it.*

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## Prologue

*On the Tacoma air - so often laced with heavy metals, the acid tang of refineries, assembly lines and the vapours of the sluggish Puget Sound - another scent had overlain itself. Cotton candy, crepes and toffees mingled with the industrial air, making it sweet and cancerous all at once. A wide lot, vacant yesterday and long ago bulldozed empty of anything but tarmac and the memory of jobs, was now filled with tents, trucks and temptations for children of all ages. The Carnival had come to Seattle, nestling itself in the city's empty spaces as it had once settled itself in farmers' fields, unheeding Time. A few beefy trolls manhandled the poles of the last tent with ease and a dwarf with grease paint forcing a permanent smile on his face jammed fliers under the wipers of the cars crawling past in the slow rush hour traffic.*

*“Come to the carnival,” they said. “An experience you'll never forget.”*

## How to Use This Adventure

The meat of this adventure is the setting and the characters. Whilst a usable plot is provided, it is a relatively easy matter to detach it and use the carnival as a background for any number of other plots or as supplementary villains. Some suggestions are made in the Adventures section.

There is also quite a quantity of characters in this adventure. If the GM needs to tone things down, then it should be easy to drop characters as needed.

The GM should note that the carnival and some of the characters within it, can be very dangerous. Horror is the soul of this setting and horror requires a deep and powerful evil so that is what the carnival hides. This does mean an obligation to the players to provide some warning however. It should be clear that a guns blazing approach will not work well. The best way to do this is to conceal from the players who and what their enemy is. They won't go to war on a carnival if at first they think their enemy is merely someone present in the area.

## Character Descriptions

### *Harlequin*

**Image:** An elf of medium height (approx. 5'10), with a sparse wiry build and an easy way of moving. His face is white painted like a classical theatre clown, yellow lozenges over the eyes and dark, narrow red lips like a slice with a razor blade. He wears a motley of colours, ill-assembled and shabbily worn whilst a sword dangles in a leather scabbard from his waist. He looks for all the world like a lost theatre performer. Or a madman. His eyes are dizzying and seem to reflect all the chaos of the ages.

**Role-Playing:** Dark, sardonic and mercurial. The clown prince of magic slips easily from gentle humour to sinister outsider and back before anyone realises the change. Capable of nearly any feat of magic, there is little in the Sixth World to restrain Caimbueul's impulses, whether light or dark. The most consistent character trait, if he has any, is an impulse toward paradox and contradiction. The most immediate example being how the most powerful hermetic mage in the world is slumming in a 20¥ carnival sideshow. If questioned by someone who knew his true identity, he would probably explain that he wished to surround himself with the mundane and normal for a time. A holiday, if you will.

**Motivation:** The question of Harlequin's motivations is not an easy one to answer. He is involved in events on a global scale that may affect all mankind. For someone who is almost the archetypal irresponsible joker, this is a weighty responsibility. Characteristically, Harlequin seems to have decided to take a holiday on the basis that he's not being paid enough (or indeed anything) to be saving the world all the time. In his own words, "if people don't like wars, they should damn well stop showing up for them." For the most part, the Clown Prince of Magic can be seen sitting in a deck chair sketching, brooding moodily over Fate, refusing to talk to anyone or entertaining small children with feats of magic that would drop the jaw of any professor of magic at any university in the world.

*N.b. GM's may wish to have Harlequin encountered without his make up and trademark motleys, as an idle elf. For long term players, the putting on of his face paints and the realisation of who he is, can be a dramatic surprise. Harlequin's grand Getting Off of His Ass moment, should the players snap him out of his current introspection, may make a defining moment for the adventure.*

### ***Laylah, the Jewel of the Tehran.***

**Image:** An middle-eastern girl of indeterminate age, but pretty and graceful with egyptian dark eyes, soft dark hair pulled back and an attractive figure beneath the silk abaya (robe). She wears old fashioned make-up, deepening her eyes with khol and gold and darkening her lips with bloody red. The dark cloth she wears drips with little golden jewels and rubies. As you look at her, she turns and hooks a thin veil across her face, leaving only the remarkable eyes visible, watching you.

**Role-Playing:** Subtle, yielding and dangerous. Laylah has been around for over forty years and certainly intends to be around for much longer.

**Background:** Billed as the sole survivor of the great dragon Aden's attack on Tehran in 2020, Laylah tells a terrifying tale of the destruction of one of mankind's oldest cities, filled with horror and loss of life. Shows are usually given two or three times a night, a couple of hours apart. Note that Laylah is an accomplished storyteller, describing the experience with little embellishment but much detail, drawing in her audience completely. With such a terrible tragedy, it takes little drama to stir up strong emotions, yet Laylah finds opportunities to mingle in a subtle sadness and need in her demeanor which appeals to a certain kind of man. It is seldom that someone does not seek to offer her some comfort after one of her performances. Such a one as Laylah is seldom without someone to protect her.

### ***Rebus, the Ringmaster***

**Image:** Horribly tall and with such a build and face that it is impossible to tell if this is a man or a woman or both. (S)he is impeccably leathered in boots, gloves and a showman's red velvet jacket. Hir voice is a light baritone, silky-soft and slightly husky. Hir bald pate is exfoliated smooth and topped by a glossy black top-hat,

**Role-Playing:** Rebus's manner is sinister, controlling and ambiguous. Quite willing to simply vanish and deal with PCs one at a time if there is confrontation. Highly intelligent, utterly depraved. In the worship of hir dark forces, Rebus does things that there probably aren't even names for. Nor is Rebus necessarily inimicable to the PCs (at least not obviously). Those PCs that show a leaning toward evil may find an insidious mentor in the dark ringmaster.

### ***Delphine, the Oracle***

**Image:** A ragged girl of maybe twelve or thirteen, dark skinned and bone thin. She has milky cataracts in her eyes, her skin is slightly scabrous and her nails and teeth curved and sharp. You

strongly get the feeling that she is aware of you despite blindness.

**Quote:** “Like yer fortune told, mister? Just few cred for all your future. Love, failure, all written out for me to see. Want I read it to you?” “Smart man. Don't believe what you can't see. But I can see it. I got eyes, me. I'm blind. You're blind. But we ain't the same blind, mister. Only 30¥ for you - your future's an easy one... No, too late. I'll read somebody else's.”

**Background:** Originally born in the slums of Paris, Delphine is an outcast child with a freakish ability to predict misfortune. Where else could she find a home than in this dark carnival of horrors. Telling fortunes from her little tent, she gives her customers a thrill that no horror trid show can ever really match.

### ***Thunderball and Hotfoot.***

**Image:** A dwarf and an elf; the former a small doughnut of muscle, the latter a spare framed whip of energy. The dwarf is caucasian and sports a firey red mohican, a bristly ginger moustache and beard. He has no neck and four-hundred press-up arms. [Typically] He is shirtless and wears only dark blue jeans and boots. The elf is his opposite in both colour and style, 6'5" to 6'6", smooth and dark with thin threaded dreads and a slim, handsome face. He [typically] wears fine cut trousers and a neat dark shirt, or else a silk jacket over bare, toned muscle. He moves with power and a great deal of grace.

**Combat:** Both adepts will attempt to close quickly with their opponents and if this does not look possible, will attempt to avoid combat, though Thunderball can throw the axes that he uses on stage very effectively. Ideally, they will engage their opponents in conversation until they are safely in striking distance. Thunderball fights like an expert boxer and will normally use his elemental blast effect to knock enemies prone and repeat again and again until his opponents are beyond resistance. Hotfoot uses the elven art of Carromeleg which is similar to capoeira and involves much flipping, spinning and unexpected kicks. He moves at incredible speed and as his fists and lower legs wreath themselves in fire with every whirl, he is capable of causing tremendous damage very quickly.

**Role-playing and Background:** Thunderball and Hotfoot (stage names) do not have a great deal in common in background, but both are aggressive, violent and interested in little else than pursuing their martial arts disciplines to ever greater levels of refinements. Thunderball is a blunt, racist, thug, lifted beyond that only by his tremendous focus and ability. He speaks with an american mid-west accent. Hotfoot is a little more cultured and comes from Brazil originally. Nevertheless, he has a hot temper and has killed more than one person over a perceived slight.

### ***Balamohan, the Flesh Artist***

**Image:** A dwarf with a freakishly enhanced body. Indian in origin, his dusky skin is adorned with mirror-bright studs in rows over the crown of his smooth head right down his neck and spine. His broad fleshy lips part to reveal a double row of sharp teeth. His eyes are horrible protruding things, like a little tube protruding from the socket about a centimetre. The pupil extends not only on the front of the tube but around onto the sides, top and bottom which must give him wonderful peripheral vision. He's made further practical enhancements to his body, no less disturbing, which you can't help but notice because he's naked. Catching your glance, he grins even wider and says in accented English: “Two heads are better than one, yes?”

**Role-playing:** A salesman who is completely comfortable and in fact proud, of the steady “improvements” he has made to his body. He adores the art of body modification and is in fact quite talented. After inflicting some of his modifications on unwilling people though, Balamohan is found guilty in absence in several jurisdictions. But with his enthusiasm for regularly re-modelling his body

and the contacts and mobility the carnival provides, he hasn't been having too much trouble avoiding capture.

### ***Piotr, the Illusionist***

**Image:** 4' of dapper style. Piotr is the classic, that is to say stereotypical, magician. Knowing his target audience well, this impeccably groomed blonde dwarf with the golden goatee and silver-framed AR glasses, is pure theatre. A golden baton-like wand hangs from a silver chain on his waistcoat and a flash ruby pendant inscribed with alchemical symbols hangs around his neck.

**Role-playing:** Ham it up. Elegant, galant and tricky. Of course, it's all an act. Piotr is a very sharp character indeed, and has no soul whatsoever.

**Background:** He long ago traded his conscience for power under the tutelage of his master, Rebus. Unlike his master and Laylah, Piotr is the visible face of magic in the carnival. He is not a powerful mage, though he aspires to be one as his training progresses. But the fact that the carnival can boast a genuine magician is one of its big draws and Rebus keeps him on as a useful, though contemptible apprentice, feeding him spells and theory in dribs and drabs.

### ***Fabergé, the Vory.***

**Image:** A man in his early twenties, who looks like he's lived forty. Lean, grim with an anachronistic scar down the left side of his face which must be the reason for the single steel grey cybereye. Not bulked up with muscle, nor laden with visible cyberware, he still has the look of a killer about him. He wears expensive casuals and a flashy comm, that belies the sallow, gulag cheeks and haunted eyes.

**Role-playing and Background:** A little cold and a little aggressive. Fabergé has had more than one person killed for getting in his way or not being co-operative enough. A few of these people he killed personally. He is very intelligent and smart. He is also the product of the Russian prison system and has the viciousness and tenacity to prosper as a mid-ranking Vory.

Fabergé has two particular roles in the Seattle Vory. The first is as a talented hacker who has a hand in keeping Vory systems secure and simultaneously penetrating enemy networks. The second is as a criminal entrepreneur in his own right. Chiefly Fabergé involves himself in arranging smuggling jobs and sourcing buyers for hot goods (in quantity).

He is not especially one for close relationships but has developed an attraction for a couple of the carnival girls. Rebus is encouraging the girls to keep him sweet. For his part, Fabergé regards the darker aspects of the carnival as an unknown quality, but not a threat.

### ***Gangers.***

Tacoma is not Bellevue. It's part of the industrial heartland of Seattle and the only glamour it has is the gritty *film noir* kind. That makes it a cheap area to set up a carnival and it also means that inevitably it will be in the turf of one gang or another. In this case, the gang are the Ragers, a metahuman gang of mainly orks, with a few trolls. They're not big league, but they know their turf and they can put the muscle on the street when they need to. Ragers, in their gang colours of black and grey can be seen loitering around the carnival in groups of three or more generally loitering, leering and looking bad. The Ragers have mostly thrown in their lot with the Mafia in recent years, but the Vory have been sniffing around looking for in-roads into Seattle's lucrative dock areas.

Alternately, if it suits the GM's campaign better, the gang can be replaced (or even mixed with) the Cutters. A much larger, Seattle-wide gang that already has substantial smuggling and fencing

operations going on. They are increasingly dealing with the Vory these days and are likewise willing to work with the Carnival and it's unpleasant side activities. This gang will include a larger number of humans and they might be provided with a slightly higher number of decent weapons and even the odd spot of armour (in their trademark green and gold, of course).

## ***Assorted Carnival Entertainers and Workers***

In addition to named NPCs above, the carnival is home to numerous others. The GM should add in humans, dwarves, ageing orks and a smattering of trolls to fill out the carnival ranks. These individual set up the stalls, run sideshows or are prostitutes and pickpockets. Use standard statistics modified by race as normal with a few extra appropriate skills (mostly Con). Most of the carnival workers are mundane, but many of them are in thrall to Rebus and the dark forces that he is aligned with. Acts of petty sadism are common, as is theft and sexual abuse. The carnival is a miserable, violent home to these people as they complete their slow circuits of the UCAS and CAS.

Wherever the carnival goes, it usually picks up the occasional runaway. Some of these remain with the carnival and become part of the work force. A lucky few escape. And others disappear to become prey for Laylah, fodder for the ghoulish child, Delphine or a sacrifice in one of Rebus's sinister masses.

In addition to the resident workers, the carnival by night will usually have a fair few gangers roving around. In Tacoma, typically Ragers or the ever-present Cutters in their green and gold gang colours. The GM should use the standard ganger statistics in the SR4 main book. Should Rebus feel a need, s(he) should find it quite easy to turn any present gangers on the PCs and the GM should make sure to mention their presence in advance.

## ***Dark Spirits***

### **Spirits of Air (Black Magic)**

A crow with wings as wide as your shoulders beats through the air. It's not an animal, the mercurial way its ill-defined form blends in and out of the shadows, it's a spirit. And though small, the red-rimmed black eyes watch you hungrily.

### **Spirits of Man (Black Magic)**

A perverse little imp of some kind. It has baby pink skin and monkey-like proportions, but no face at all. Nor do its hands end with jointed fingers, but rather thick, worm like appendages, each one ending in a tiny hungry maw. It jumps, and is gone amidst the carnival tents.

## **Character Statistics**

### ***Rebus, Black Magician***

*Human, Initiate Grade 3*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
3	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	6	3	6	8	1	11

Skills: Arcana 1, Assensing 4, Conjuring Skill Group 4, Dodge 2, Influence Skill Group 4, Perception



5, Pistols 1, Shadowing 2, Sorcery Skill Group 4  
Gear: Sustaining Focus (3), Shielding Focus (3)  
Language: English, Arabic, Latin, Greek, Pheoneican  
Qualities: Magician, Mentor Spirit (Worm),

Spells: Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, Detect Individual, Detect Magic (Extended), Mind Probe, Night Vision, Decrease Willpower, Increase Charisma, Heal, Hibernate, Interference, Nutrition, Agony, Bugs, Control Actions, Control Thoughts, Influence, Mana Bind, Mist, Shadow

Metamagics: Absorbition, Geomancy, Shielding

Tactics: *Rebus is very dangerous but weak against physical violence and limited in harming multiple opponents. He will attempt to avoid such confrontations arising, instead relying on his powerful social skills, ability to inspire menace and to targeting vulnerable individuals alone.*

## **Laylah, Succubus**

*Force 4 Shadow Spirit*

Materialised

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
4	6	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	11	2	11

Movement: 10/25

Skills: Assensing 4, Astral Combat 4, Con 4, Dodge 4, Leadership 4, Perception 4, Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Astral Form, Banishing Resistance, Compulsion (Lust), Desire Reflection, Influence, Energy Drain (Karma, LOS, Stun Damage, plus addiction - see below), Magical Guard, Materialisation, Mutable Form, Realistic Form, Sapience, Spirit Pact,

Language: Persian, Arabic, Greek, English

Energy Drain: Laylah's energy drain (see *Street Magic*, pg. 148) functions only when she can lure her victim into acts of passion. Not merely that, but acts of violent and debased passion. Her energy drain power is addictive and characters affected by it will need to make a Willpower (2) test in order to avoid gaining an Addiction (Mild) to being drained by her.

## **Delphine, Black Magician**

*Human Ghoul, Initiate Grade 1*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
4	3	5	3	1	4	3	5	1	3	5	9	1	11

Movement: 10/20

Skills: Arcana 5, Assensing 4, Dodge 1, Enchanting 3, Infiltration 1, Perception 4, Spell Casting 1, Counterspelling 1

Language: French, English, Latin

Qualities: Magician

Metamagic: Divination

Spells: Clairvoyance, Death Touch, Stabilise

Tactics: Run. Hide. Scare.

## **Thunderball, Adept**

Dwarf, Initiate Grade 1

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
7	4	4(5)	8	3	3	3	4	6	3	6	8	2	12

Skills: Athletics Group 3, Close Combat Group 5, Dodge 4, Etiquette 2, Juggling (Heavy Objects) 3, Leadership 1 (Entertainment), Pistols 1, Thrown Weapons (Axes) 2.

Language: English

Qualities: Adept

Powers: Critical Strike (4), Killing Hands, Elemental Strike (Blast)\*, Mystic Armour (2), Improved Reflexes (1), Power Throw (4)

Gear: Leather Jacket (2/2), Throwing Axe (3): Reach 1, Dmg (Str/2+2)P, AP -1, *Power Throw bonus of 4 to STR for power and range when thrown. Resist with Impact Armour.*

*\*Elemental Strike adds Blast secondary effects to unarmed strike. Knock down effect must be resisted against Damage Inflicted + Force. Force is determined by Magic rating.*

## **Hotfoot, Adept**

Elf, Initiate Grade 1

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
4	7	6(8)	4	4	6	2	3	6	3	6	14	3	10

Skills: Running 3, Gymnastics (Tumbling) 5, Unarmed Combat (Carromeleg) 6, Dodge (Melee) 5, Etiquette 3, Leadership 2 (Entertainment). Shadowing 1.

Language: English, Portuguese.

Qualities: Adept

Powers: Critical Strike (6), Killing Hands, Elemental Strike (Fire)\*, Improved Unarmed Combat (1), Improved Reflexes (2),

Gear: Leather Jacket (2/2)

*\*Elemental Strike adds Fire secondary effects to unarmed strike. Damage is resisted with half-impact unless upgraded with fire resistance. Objects struck may ignite. Make a damage resistance test of Armour x2 or armour for flammable items to determine if they have caught fire. Burning items continue to inflict damage.*

## **Balhamoran**

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
3	3	2	3	1	3	3	2	1		5	1	10

Movement: 10/25

Skills: Cybertechnology 3, Dodge 1, Etiquette 2, Medicine 1, Perception 2.

Knowledge: Biology 3, Pharmaceuticals 2.

Cyberware: Cybereyes (w. lowlight, vision magnification, image link), Skillwires 4.

Gear: ActiveSofts (Medicine 4). StreetLine Special.

## **Piotr, Black Magician**

*Dwarf*

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
4	3	3	3	3	2	3	4	2	2	6	5	1	10

Skills: Arcana 2, Assensing 1, Counterspelling 2, Dodge 1, Influence Skill Group 2, Perception 2, Pistols 1, Spellcasting 3, Unarmed Combat 2.

Gear: Fetish (wand), Sustaining Focus (2)

Language: English, Polish, Arabic, Latin

Qualities: Magician, Aspected Magician (SorcererAspect)

Spells: Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, Phantasm (Fetish), Trid Phantasm (Fetish), Invisibility, Entertainment.

## **Fabergé**

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
3	3	4(7)	3	3	3	4	5	3	2.3	10	2	10

Movement: 10/25

Skills: Athletics Group 2, Blades (Cyber-Implant) 2, Clubs 2, Computer 3, Cybercombat 4, Data Search 3, Electronic Warfare 2, Hacking 3, Software 1, Con 3, Dodge 2, Etiquette 3, Intimidation 3, Negotiation 3, Pistols 2, Shadowing 1, Unarmed Combat 3

Cyberware: Datajack, Sim Module (Hot Sim Modified), Cybereyes (Smartlink, Thermographic and Flare Compensation), Wired Reflexes I, Cyber Spurs (right arm), Reaction Enhancers (3),

Gear: Commlink (Hermes Ikon: Response 4, Signal 3, Custom Iris Orb O/S: Firewall 3, System 5), Certified Credsticks (2,000¥ total), Armour Clothing (4/0), Eurocar Westwind 3k,

Programs: Analyze 3, Armour 4, Blackout 3, Browse 3, Exploit 4, Scan 3, Stealth 4, Track 4.

## ***Dark Spirits***

### **Force 1 Air Spirit**

Materialised

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
1	4	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	2	9

Astral INIT/IP: 2,3

Movement: 15/75 (flight)

Skills: Assensing 1, Astral Combat 1, Dodge 1, Exotic Ranged Weapon 1, Flight 1, Perception 1, Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Accident, Astral Form, Concealment, Confusion, Engulf, Materialisation, Sapience, Search

### **Force 1 Spirit of Man**

Materialised

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	9

Astral INIT/IP: 2,3

Movement: 10/25

Skills: Assensing 1, Astral Combat 1, Dodge 1, Spellcasting 1, Perception 1, Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Accident, Astral Form, Concealment, Confusion, Enhanced Senses (Low-light, Thermographic Vision), Guard, Influence, Materialisation, Sapience, Search

## ***Gangers***

### **Human, Professional Rating 1**

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	ESS	Init	IP	CM
3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	6	5	1	10

Movement: 10/25

### **Ork, Professional Rating 1**

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	ESS	Init	IP	CM
6	3	3	5	2	2	1	2	6	5	1	11

Movement: 10/25

### **Troll, Professional Rating 1**

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	ESS	Init	IP	CM
7	2	3	7	1	1	1	1	6	5	1	11

Movement: 15/35

Skills: Clubs 2, Etiquette (Street) 3, Pistols 1, Unarmed Combat 1.

Gear: Streetline Special.

*Supplement some of the above with Leather Jacket (2/2) and Colt America L36.*

## **The Carnival**

### ***General Atmosphere***

The GM should do everything possible to play up the creepy and surreal atmosphere of the carnival. A bunch of dwarves walk through the group wearing clown face paint and making crude jokes. A hall of mirrors shows reflections of dead team-mates whilst the distorted faces of strangers seem to mouth silent messages of despair, These same people always seem normal and oblivious if caught up and questioned. The general impressions should be that strange entities and forces are constantly moving through the carnival and the people within it. Laylah is capable of taking any form and doing so realistically so feel free to split the PCs up and send a double back to one of the groups in their place. For skilled role-players, the GM may even clue a player in and have them take on an imposters role. Remember that bound spirits for the party will be far weaker here, and the GM should describe their reduced potency as a weakness and despair on the part of the spirit. If viewed from the astral, characters should receive unnerving impressions of blood long shed and more recent too, occasional glimpses of small spirits (toxic watchers) crawling through the carnival and with a good assensing roll, perhaps an unsettling impression that the people and animals and even the canvas tents themselves breathe and move together in some arcane pattern as one dark entity.

Use of a spirit's concealment power and judicious application of the Influence spell can even prevent the PCs from finding their way out, causing them to wander lost amidst the tents unable to work out why or how all paths seem to lead back upon each other.

The carnival is somewhat different during the day, but then it doesn't open till the mid-afternoon so the players will have limited time to take advantage of its less supernatural periods.

However, as with all horror, hidden at the heart of it there lies something good. Harlequin has been indulging his grim mood amidst the dark carnival and burns like a painful light as far as Rebus is concerned. But there is nothing that Rebus can do. If somehow the players can battle their way through the horror and restore Harlequin to a better humour, then everything might change. Or the carnival will continue, but certainly the players will have achieved something and hopefully gone beyond its reach themselves.

### ***The People***

There are two groups of people in the Carnival. Those who work in it, and those who visit it. The majority of the former are ordinary people, though most are participants in Rebus's foul rituals. They should be portrayed as rough people, vaguely sinister. Remember that the art of the con and the extraction of money is their life. They vary in age from bitter and mean-spirited older people to sharp-witted and cruel-mouthed children to sultry teenage girls and proto-gang member boys. On the surface, the people of the carnival of sugar sweet. Break the shell and you may find they're very rotten in deed.

The people who come to the carnival are a wide variety. Part of the frisson of the carnival is the friction of such varied classes and beliefs all rubbing shoulders at the nukitt-burger stand. For the most part, they will be blue-collar factory workers from surrounding Tacoma, but a Carnival in 2070 is a novelty and there will be people from all places and walks of life. Here you might see a young

corporate couple from Bellevue with a grim bodyguard tailing after them. Over there, you might see a knot of soldiers from Fort Lewis or a bunch of wild kids whose parents don't know they're here and don't frankly care. But always, there's a weird charge of energy as people of all kinds take in the sights, shock, surprise and scare themselves.

## **History**

A small fun-fair, struggling along in the world of television and the Internet in the early parts of the the twenty-first century, toured across the small towns of North America. The owning family of Russian immigrants had a son, born into a world that was just awakening. The child was cruel and as he grew, he developed a strong predilection for esoteric learning, fascinated by the world of magic that was opening up around him. Sometimes the fair seemed it would be closed for good, the rides and the tents lying covered in tarpaulin in lockups and yards while the family struggled along and performers came and went. But ultimately it wandered on, with the surly heir quietly soaking in his education in small town libraries wherever they drifted. In the chaos of the awakening, the collapse of the United States and other traumas, the fair ironically became more successful as people sought any unusual distraction from the unrest about them and the law became ever less consistent in its enforcement. During all this the world progressed and so did the family's sole son who became not only an accomplished magician but, increasingly in control of the business, a successful smuggler, conman, pimp and other disreputable occupations. The show became not only a cover for a wide range of illegal activities, but a gathering of paranormal exhibits, unregistered magicians seeking a place to hide away and other fugitives from normal life. In amongst all that, the son's parents died (naturally or otherwise) and the son underwent gender reassignment, emerging months later under the single name of Rebus and undisputed master of carnival.

Now, Rebus splits his time between advancing his magic to ever greater levels and involving himself in any number of illicit activities through his Vory contacts. Not least of which is the abduction and corruption of the weak of spirit. (S)he is older than his tailored face admits and (s)he can feel his mortality keenly. The dying of the light, and the knowledge (or belief) of what may wait for him beyond death, spurs him to ever greater acts of depravity and corruption, hoping to snare the attention of some dark power that will prolong his existence if (s)he can feed it enough despair and souls.

For this reason, (s)he hates his latest "guest" above all else, but has no power over the immortal Harlequin, who seems content to brood and ponder untouched by the darkness about him.

## **Magical Effects**

The entire location of the carnival counts as having an aspected background count (Street Magic, pg. 118), i.e. a *Domain*. The aspect is toward the Black Magic tradition, though a GM may choose to expand this toward other kinds of sinister magic and should probably include Shadow Spirits in the aspect as well as spirits summoned via the Black Magic tradition. The background count is rating 4. GMs may reduce this to accommodate weaker teams, but it's advised to keep it as is. In practical terms, the aspected count means that Black Magicians (or other magic conducted for an evil end that is approved by the GM) gain a dice pool bonus of four dice for purposes of Skill tests based on the magic attribute and for drain resistance. Magicians and Adepts of traditions other than Black Magic suffer a reduction of their magic attribute by 4. If a magician's magic is reduced to 0 then they are no longer able to perform magic. Adepts must choose four power points worth of powers to forfeit whilst their attribute is reduced. Likewise spirits, foci and sustained spells that are not of the appropriate tradition (i.e. summoned by a Black Magician or a Free Spirit of a suitable nature for spirits or created / bonded for spells and foci) suffer a reduction of Force by 4. Spirits reduced to 0 are disrupted. Foci and quickened spells are temporarily suspended.

Yes, all of this is very nasty. However, it is intended to be. Whilst it may seem to disadvantage magical characters unfairly, GMs should remember that mundane characters are already disadvantaged in many ways by the highly magical nature of their opposition and the fact that the entire location is teeming with people and the Carnival can easily bring Lonestar down on anyone spotted carrying weaponry. For Samurai without cyberweapons, this means they're operating on minimum firepower.

## ***Psychometry and Astral Perception***

In astral space, the carnival's tents and stalls still appear, more real than most modern buildings though still grey shadows in comparison to the shimmering auras of the crowds. The mana here is rich and powerful, much more so than most places, and it flows in unusual patterns, swirling like a dark river through channels you cannot see. Working magic may be difficult here. Something has stamped its mark on the astral plane in this place and it may not look kindly on you.

If a character possesses the psychometry metamagic (and they should be rewarded for taking such a non-direct option), then they can try to assense the aura of the carnival itself. The usual -2 dice pool penalty for targeting a place applies, but the player receives a +3 for the powerful emotions that run through the site. Results are as follows:

**1 net hit:** A rapid rush of visions too fast to really follow, but the character catches snatches of dark magic and rituals and an innocent death. It is disturbing.

**2 net hits:** An unpleasant vision of dark magic and foul rites being performed takes place in the character's mind, against a backdrop of canvas and ropes. The presence of a dark spirit is sensed, though it's nature is concealed. People have died here and their suffering lingers.

**3 net hits:** There are passing images of an ageing figure, uncertain if male or female, engaged in some dark rite, a beautiful woman with a dark spirit within her and a strong, overpowering sensation of worms crawling over you, small lipless mouths sucking at your body. The dark energy glistens like slime over every tent and every attraction and the entire carnival seems like a temple to some foul creature.

**4+ net hits:** You see a slight, effeminate boy, reading in the back of a bouncing truck, squeezed amid painted circus crates. It seems long ago. The book is called "Leylines of Europe." The boy looks about eight. It's later, years maybe. A woman or a man, the boy from before, possibly older and altered, standing in a wide circle in a vast tent lit with torches. There's something at his feet. It might have been a child. Something breathes in the darkness above him but you cannot bring yourself to look up and see it. There's an impression of more travelling, reading and studying, an arab woman of breath-taking beauty with a dark soul and a sense of something growing amidst it all, needing feeding and becoming hungrier and more impatient each year. It is large now, and powerful. You can smell rot, and corruption and you feel unmistakably worms crawling on your body, waiting to feast. As the vision passes, the physical impression fades more slowly, making your skin tight with revulsion.

Note that Rebus has the Geomancy metamagic and makes strong use of it.

## ***Specific Locations and Map Key***

A. Entrance Booth: RFID chips, deposit cred balance, etc. tracking throughout the carnival.

**B. Delphine's Booth:** Here in this tent of night-blue nano-fabric, set with slowly drifting constellations, Delphine, the Oracle plys her trade. For 10¥ you get a quick telling. For 30¥ you get a proper reading. Note that Delphine's dual nature and considerable skill in assensing and arcana, means that she actually provides her clients with a good service. This is an excellent opportunity for the GM to foreshadow campaign events.

**C.** This trailer contains the security system for the carnival. See the Matrix Presence section for details.

**D.** Here Balamohan holds his body modification stall. The dwarf will either be sitting on a chair at the front or working on a customer. The stall is fairly open so passers-by can get a view of him at work and he is happy to continue a sales-pitch whilst doing an operation. Around the walls of his stall are ever-changing trid-images of nano-tattoos and sealed clear bags of fleshy organs and implants that customers may want. Examples include secondary or replacement penises in various sizes and sports logos, horns for humans and orks, stylised replacement horns for trolls, elf ears and ork teeth for poseurs, rape-prevention devices (the ever popular "Slice and Dice Honour Defender" models), virginity restoration and a wide range of hair-types from rainbow-shimmering optical fibre manes to faux-medusa scalps with bio-simulant snakes. Prices range from 200¥ to 5,000¥ depending on the task whilst procedures can take from half an hour to two hours.

**E. The Big Top.** Able to seat almost three-hundred people if tightly packed, this is the site of various shows, run two or even three times an evening. Rebus will be in his role as ring master and showing off his talent for showmanship and banter. Thunderball and Hotfoot are one of the main acts, but others include some of the freaks, some comedy (a worker with a chipshot and a knowsoft comedy routine subscription) and a magic show by Piotr, "student of magic under the great dragon Schwartzkopf in Budapest." Admission is 10¥.

**F.** The carnival holds dog fights here later in the evening, some nights. Also, if in a foul enough mood, Thunderball will take the ring and offer a purse of 500¥ for anyone who can go three rounds with him. (Naturally, there is no armour and no weapons involved). Those who are proud or drunk enough to take him up on the offer usually get a pretty fierce pummelling. Hotfoot considers the whole thing beneath him and believes fighting below his level will blunt his focus.

**G.** Laylah's long, low tent is where she offers private audiences with her occasional unlucky suitors. Typically, these are people who have approached her after her show.

**H.** This is a power generator for the carnival. Though most of the stores have their own power-cells, a lot of the carnival is hooked up to this generator via a spaghetti bowl of cables across the site. If it goes down then there will be a temporary failure of the signal poles and a lot of the carnival lights, but the staff will soon be able to hook everything up to the engines in the big trucks if need be. It might provide the characters with a distraction if they need to get away, however.

**Assorted stalls:** There is a wide range of stalls that make up the carnival. Note that there can be more than one stall of a given type. A handful of them are actually local traders and entrepreneurs selling gew-gaws, foodstuffs and such. Of course the carnival takes a commission. These stalls consist of (along with anything else the GM can think of):

Test your strength games (win bottles of synthahol)

Target shooting (infra-red gun and target, not real, rigged, win animatronic toys or knock-off trid and SIM shows.

SIMsense suites (large tents). Couches and trodes provided, slip the attendant 10¥ and she'll hook you up with a jacked up hotsim set, instead giving you five minutes of super-sex or violence or tranquility. Wide range of "urban myth" SIMs (mostly fake) such as a survivor of the Cernak blast who was



recording at the time, or the 'is it fake, is it real,' Nadja Davier – Holly Brighton recordings.

Candy-floss (cotton), crepes and other sweet foods. Note that this is real food and characters unused to this may experience side-effects such as enjoying eating.

Nukit-Burger stall (for more traditional fare)

Selection of NERPs (sold out of green).

SIMsense recording booth (make a message of how you're feeling to the future, try out your emotional range and see if you've got what it takes to be a SIMstar, use the bed and toy set to make a SIM of you and your partner having sex to play on future anniversaries years from now, send a copy to his Ex).

Trid booth. Record yourself in your own adventure. Send it to your friends so that they can see you as Neil the Ork Barbarian or be edited into one of the classic Euphoria trid shows.

Games of chance (not rigged, but stacked). Dice, Heaven and Earth, Preying Mantis fights, etc.

## **Matrix Presence**

### ***Researching the Carnival***

Any character can make a Data Search + Browse (open-ended, 1 minute) roll to track down information on the Carnival. There is not a great deal to get hold of however. Allow players to continue rolling until they reach their cap for the number of rolls, glitch or wish to stop. Information obtainable is as follows (each new result includes the previous ones):

3 hits: The carnival does not have a large Matrix presence. Very little at all, really. A search can reveal a public site displaying little more than some bright colours and a short, out of date itinerary. There is a matrix address for enquiries and bookings, however.

8 hits: The Crash has wiped out much of the history of the carnival, but you find references to it dating back some way and seems to have been registered as a business at least as early as 2009. The earliest owners were a Mr. and Mrs. Pavlak though they must probably be dead by now. It has toured through much of UCAS, the CAS, NAAN and also several European nations.

16+ hits: The current owner is listed only as Rebus. There's a trid picture of an androgynous person with fine, white-blond hair which at a glance looks like a woman, but with a longer look, is impossible to say for certain. There are several charges made against the carnival or its workers in various jurisdictions for prostitution, theft and racketeering, but only minor convictions ever made. There are also a few oblique references to missing persons cases in areas where the carnival was present at the time, but you're unable to find any more information on these.

### ***Hacking the Carnival***

The carnival has a single node, run from a system in one of the travelling vans. This node manages the basics of the carnival such as tracking visitors and keeping a running tab on their account. However, there is a link to another node off-site that contains a lot more interesting data. However this node belongs to the Vory organisation as Rebus sensibly entrusts his most secure information and transactions to this rather more secure third party. Dotted around the carnival site are signal posts erected for the duration of the visit. Visitors are register their comm code at the gate when they enter, or else are given a disposable RFID tag to stick on. This identifies them as a paying visitor. If they give a valid account number attached to a legal SIN when they arrive, then all the stalls and shows simply charge that account as needed. Otherwise, a person can transfer a set amount to their ID on entering or at any point during their stay and reclaim (minus a transfer fee) any remainder when they

leave.

## Signal Posts

These posts detect movement and key them to RFID signals or commlink IDs and don't have much functionality beyond that. Whilst they have a 400m signal range and it's just about conceivable to navigate through the carnival without crossing the detection area of one, it's more or less inevitable that a character will come within range. If that happens and the character has a valid RFID or registered commlink ID, then there is no problem. If the character does not, or if the character's RFID or ID has been tagged as a security problem, then that character's presence will be immediately reported to the carnival's security system. Some of the carnival's enforcers will likely show up soon after. Note that the signal posts have micro-cameras attached, as might be expected, and a snapshot of anyone without an ID will quickly be taken and transmitted to the security node.

**Signal Post.** Device Rating 3, Signal 3

Possible Actions: (*User Level Access*) Receive camera feed, (*Security Level Access*) Ignore particular RFID or commlink code, report location of other RFID or commlink code if currently in range, shut down cameras, (*Administrator Access*), Shutdown.

## The Carnival Node

The carnival node receives information from the signal posts and sends instructions to them. It also keeps track of the current registered list of visitors and last recorded locations. Most of the carnival workers and the admissions booth at the gate are subscribed to it. In VR, its matrix iconography is a giant not very carnival-like robot spider and in fact looks familiar from somewhere. And then it falls into place that this is an unmodified off-the-shelf renraku package for store management from a couple of years ago. This isn't to say that hacking it will be easy – Renraku make quality systems - but it is to say that these people probably aren't overly interested in their computer systems.

A successful hack will be VR-represented as boarding the spider and entering the cockpit in its big steel head. In the meantime, it's glittering hyper-real chrome legs skitter back and forth over the web of data flowing to and from it.

**Carnival Node.** Response 4, System 5, Firewall 4.

There is an IC program running on the carnival node which will activate if an alert is triggered. It's tactic is to remain concealed and trace the physical location of the intruder. It will simultaneously contact carnival workers (including Rebus) of the security breach. The matrix iconography of the IC is again, off the shelf Renraku and has the appearance of a chrome, robot fly.

**IC.** Rating 3, Analyze 3, Stealth 3, Track 3.

A successful Matrix Perception check (2) will reveal the encrypted information going to and from another node elsewhere on the matrix. This connection can be followed through the matrix if the hacker wishes with a Computer + Track (5, 1 initiative pass) test.

## Vory Node

Significant data, such as financial records are not stored in the Carnival system, *per se*, though Rebus

keeps copies of some of the information he needs on his commlink. The physical location of the node is probably meaningless in the distributed nature of the matrix. However, it will be closely linked with other Vory nodes, so the GM can use this as a lead in to Vory scenarios and information.

The matrix iconography of the node is that of a large, silk-red cube with a stylized brown bear lined in gold on each face. There are no visible entrances or exits or signifying information of ownership or function.

A Data Search + Browse (14, 1 minute) search can trace ownership of a node to a Vladivostock shipping company (a Vory front), but that's all. Details of this are beyond the scope of this adventure.

The node has the following qualities:

**Vory Data Node:** Response 5, System 6, Firewall 5

Two IC programs reside in the node, both on continuous activation. One has the iconography of a cybered bear with dull red eyes (*black*). The other appears as a faceless, featureless man in a dark suit (*grey*).

**Black IC:** Rating 5, Armour 5, Blackout 5, Medic 3.

**Grey IC:** Rating 5, Analyze 5, Stealth 3, Track 5.

Both IC are mobile and capable of pursuing an attacker into another node. Most likely only the grey IC will do this, using Stealth to conceal its presence from the intruder.

## Events

### *Provoking Harlequin*

Harlequin is the GM's reset button. There's almost no situation that Harlequin can't undo, redo or change completely at a whim. For this reason, he should not be used without player instigation. That is to say, that the players are the driving force of any story and whilst Harlequin is capable of great feats, the motivation to do so needs to be stimulated by player action, lest their actions be overshadowed. Harlequin is currently in something of a funny mood. Which is not unusual. GMs can provide opportunities for players to alter Harlequin's attitude in the following ways (these are examples only):

Impassioned and effective speeches on the part of the players about the importance of saving people, the capacity of the world for redemption, all that sort of thing. Note that Harlequin is currently quite pissed off at the way people keep beseeching him for aid, and the player will have to be pretty darn persuasive in the GM's mind to get the immortal elf to help out. Suggestions that it is the elf's **duty** or any other use of the word is likely to backfire. However, this could be a face character's chance to really save the day. How often are the enemies defeated with a Charisma + Leadership roll?

A second approach, perhaps more likely to succeed, is to engage Harlequin's sense of humour. If a character can draw him in with humour or wit, then this might go some way to interesting him in the current events in the carnival.

Trickery. The players are unlikely to pull off any subterfuge that would take in Harlequin, but he may appreciate the effort as a master appreciates the student's work.

And finally, Harlequin may be moved by the player's own attempts to defeat the evil that surrounds them. Of course, they will have to demonstrate a true determination and refusal to give in before their efforts will really inspire Harlequin. Perhaps the best way to inspire Harlequin is to act to protect an innocent themselves. If the player's demonstrate a willingness to risk their lives to save some poor victim of the carnival, perhaps a child, then they will effectively be in Harlequin's situation. In

intervening to help someone in danger, less capable than themselves, Harlequin himself might be willing to do the same for them. This last approach is the recommended one and fits with the adventure “The Rescue” below. It may not suit all groups, however.

## **The Surreal**

The GM should strive to maintain an uneasy atmosphere throughout the carnival. Rebus is a cruel person and will enjoy tormenting the PCs. The following incidents can be used to add flavour, some but not all of which may be significant.

### **The spirits**

Rebus has several low-force spirits bound to him with many services. These spirits are malicious creatures and can be glimpsed hanging around the carnival. Fleeting glimpses of these things can lend a sinister sense of the other world to the setting. If the GM wishes, they can also use the team work rules with their Confusion and Concealment powers.

### **Trid illusions**

The Carnival itself is well-supplied with Holo-projectors and three dimensional creatures and phenomena stalk the carnival. These range from child-sized clowns who giggle at passers by before running through them or sinking into the ground, to ferocious hell hounds that leap out at young couples near some of the more adult entertainments. The carnival workers have control over these illusions and several of them are in on Rebus's little games. The GM should feel free to spook the players with holograms that catch them by surprise and more macabre designs from the carnival catalogue. It won't take long for a carny with a bit of software and security footage to stick a PC's face on a corpse on a gibbet, glanced momentarily where no other patrons happen to be looking. Likewise, PCs will not be sure what aspects of the carnival are supernatural and which are technological. Whilst holograms are usually easy to distinguish from reality, it always takes that moment of inspection before you can be sure.

### **Mind Games**

Rebus is powerful enough to meddle with the PCs minds and he is certainly willing. Whilst Rebus is unlikely to take immediate and overt action, s-he may well plant a suggestion or strange memory in a character's head. Ideally, s-he will get one of the characters alone to do this. Splitting the party up shouldn't be beyond hir, but does give the players a chance to discourage hir from trying this if they can avoid it. The following are a few possibilities. Note that performing mind control magic on the party *mage* is a sure way to unnerve the group.

**Can't find the way out:** Using *Influence* and *Alter Memory*, Rebus turns the Carnival into a real maze. The character will not be able to locate the exit. Though they can hear the traffic of the nearby road, they will be unable to see or approach the exit itself. This can also be accomplished by spirits using Concealment if the GM prefers. The affected character will be helpless to follow directions and onlookers will perceive the character turning any which way but toward the carnival boundaries. Unless they were able to resist the magic, their only real hope is to close their eyes and let someone lead or carry them out. Carefully played, this can drive players batty.

**Doppelganger:** A player is convinced that there is a double of himself somewhere in the carnival. A simple glimpse of his or her own face staring back at them across a crowd with a look of utter hatred should be enough to do the trick. The GM can then have fun trying to split and re-unite the party and stimulating utter distrust by passing folded notes to one or more of the players. These can be either

blank or contain hints that one of the *other* characters is in fact the doppelganger.

**Dead comrades:** To add a little more spook to the game, the GM can have the “ghosts” of fallen team-members appear in the carnival. For added creep, make them appear only in mirrors, window panes and other reflective surfaces where they mouth silent messages or scream endlessly, pounding against the other side of the glass. Skimming memories from PCs minds should be within Rebus's power.

## Plot Suggestions

There are a number of storylines that can be run in the Carnival setting. The below is a collection of ideas, though only one is fleshed out as an actual runnable mission, at present. However, the events section later can be combined with any of the adventure ideas to pad the plot out more fully.

### ***The Rescue***

The Carnival has a sinister reputation for those PCs who dig long and hard enough. A trail of missing individuals, both adult and child seems to have been left wherever it's been. And now the latest victim is a the son of a local Triad boss. Craig Kwong visited the carnival two nights ago and hasn't been seen since. In fact, he was the victim of Laylah who seduced him and got her spiritual claws well and truly into his soul. The shell of the youth, now hangs around the carnival desperately trying to win Laylah's affections. His father sent several of the gang in there last night to “apply a little pressure and find his son.” Things went badly wrong however. The enforcers returned confused, scared and in some cases mentally debilitated. The triad *wujen* assensed the carnival and reported things very wrong there. This has unnerved the triad boss more than he will admit as there is clearly something very dangerous hiding within the carnival. Rather than call in reinforcements from the triad to deal with something unknown and which could potentially cost valuable lives, he is calling in Shadowrunners to do his dirty work. Their task is to go in, find what happened to his son, rescue him if he needs it and is alive, or kill those responsible if he isn't or if, as his father fears, he is no longer the son he knew.

### ***Other Adventures***

#### **Smuggling Investigation**

The characters are hired to bust a Vory smuggling ring by a mid-ranking Seattle councillor who is unable to go through Lonestar due to internal corruption within the corporation. A large consignment of telesma poached from paranormal animals in Salish-Shidhe lands has been brought into Seattle using the carnival as a smuggling vehicle. The Salish-Shidhe council is privately upset and the return of the stolen telesma would be a very positive thing for relations between Seattle and the Salish-Shidhe Council. Of course the players could get near 20,000¥ fencing the goods themselves, but hopefully they will appreciate the opportunity to make a valuable contact in the Seattle government (and do a good deed). The mission is to infiltrate or sneak through the carnival, locate the contraband and steal it back. This will create no end of trouble for the Vory and their reputation and hopefully cause them to abandon the now exposed smuggling route.

The contraband is in a smuggling compartment beneath Rebus's cabin. Of course contraband might be the least of the things the PCs find in there.

#### **Drive the Carnival Out**

Rumours start spreading about the carnival. People disappearing, coming back changed, a spiritual

blight spreading through the astral where the carnival is encamped. Concerned citizens or a local shamanic group or the corporate father of a child who was found dead the last time the carnival came to town two years ago, hire the PCs to put a stop to the carnival's visits for good. The players are paid a sum of money to put a bullet through the carnival's owner and ringmaster, the sinister individual known as Rebus. Naturally, they are to minimise other casualties and they should be reminded that the carnival is packed with innocent people. Okay, it's Shadowrun, they may not be entirely innocent but certainly they shouldn't be slaughtered with high explosives. This is a straight-forward infiltration job.

Of course, once they are in the carnival, they may find that Rebus and his cabal are very much aware of their presence and getting out is not quite as easy as getting in.

## **Laying Low**

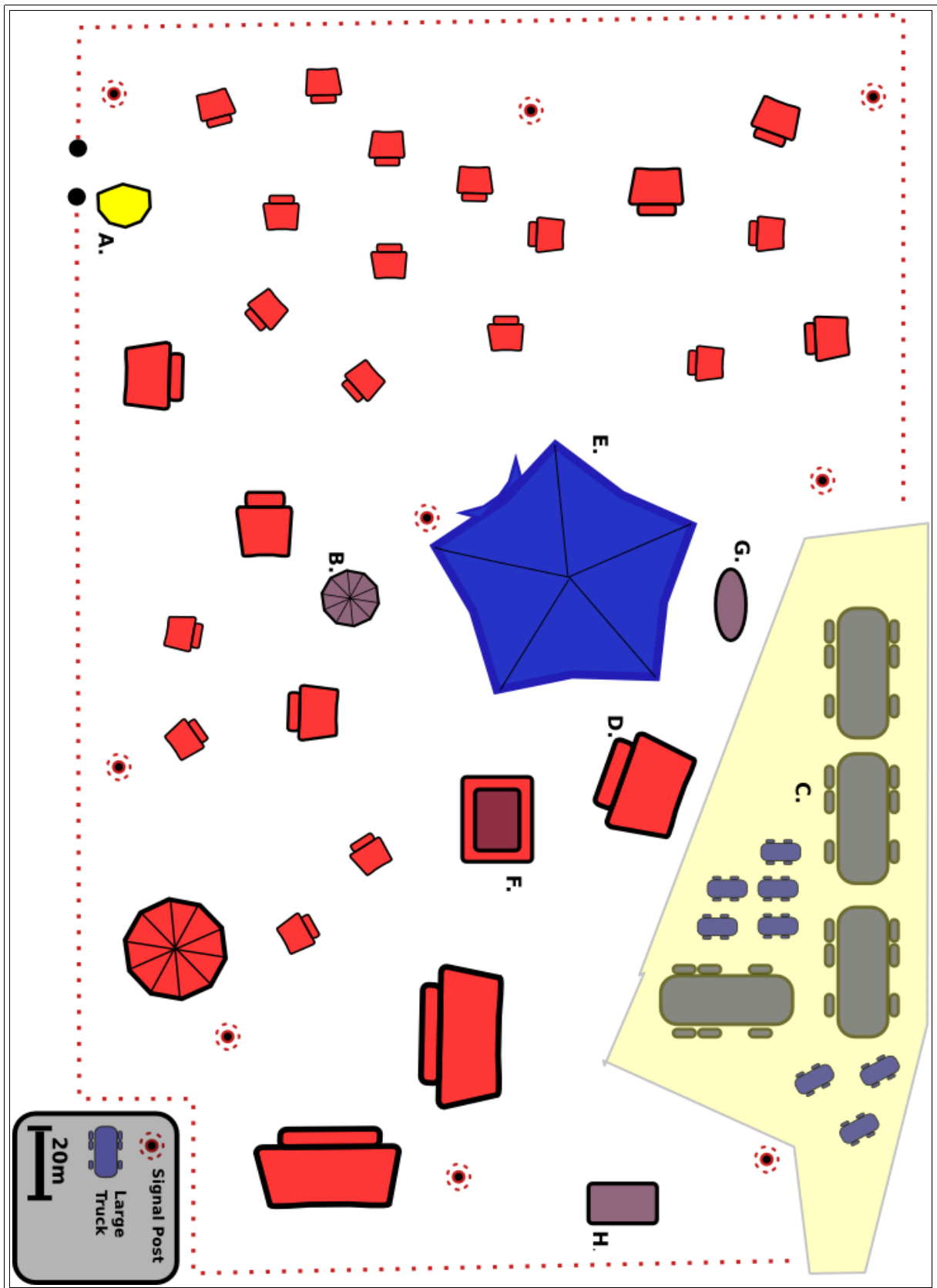
One of the best uses of the carnival, if it is appropriate to your campaign, is for the players to travel with it for a short time, or else lay low there. This can arise when they need to either hide from those pursuing them and they are offered it as a safe place to stay. This can especially happen if they have Vory contacts who they approach for hiding. Alternately, if they need to cross borders or smuggle themselves out of the city, the carnival could be a useful method as they are well used to such activities.

This provides the players lots of role-playing opportunities to meet the carnival characters and even join in, in the carnival work. Shadowrunners are likely to have lots of saleable skills that Rebus can make use of in the shows. Of course, sooner or later, the players will be confronted with some of the dark practices that Rebus and his cabal engage in, at which point the players may find it a lot harder to get out, than to get in.

## **Carnival as Johnson**

Shadowrunners are always a useful resource and Rebus is not one to turn his nose up at an opportunity. It is quite possible that he may recruit the players to engage in some minor illegal activity on his behalf. Possibly breaking in and stealing some useful trinket or dealing with a troublesome detective. Of course, if the players have an ounce of morality about them, he will mislead them as to who is the real villain of the piece. By the time the players work out just how genuinely evil their employer is, they should be involved up to their eyes. The best way to tie them to Rebus (and Rebus well knows this) is to make them profit from his actions. For example, the runners pay is derived from the sale of the stolen item to certain large and evil parties. They may find this out, but the choice of whether to wait for the payment to come through once they find out, can mitigate plans of revenge.

# Carnival Map



# Appendices

## ***Worm Mentor Spirit***

Worm thrives in all the dark places and feasts quietly and unnoticed. Ultimately, worm devours all things, whether kings or paupers. Even mighty dragons will one day be consumed by his million tiny maws. Worm learns all things in the end - magicians following this spirit gain +2 dice to any detection spells. However, Worm does not like the bright daylight and magicians suffer a -1 dice pool to *all* tests in bright light. (note not during the hours of day, but only when exposed to the Sun itself).

## ***Harlequin Statistics***

*Note: Many GMs will not want statistics for Harlequin. For those that do however, the below is suggested. This still makes Harlequin an incredibly powerful magician, but maintains some degree of plausibility and avoids GM fiat. Theoretically, the players could gain the upper hand over Harlequin, though the GM should play him with the tremendous cunning and foresight that has preserved him for so very long.*

Elf, Initiate Grade 12.

Real Name: Caimbueul

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E	ESS	Init	IP	CM
4(9)	7	6	2	8(12)	8(14)	7(11)	6(9)	16	7	7	20	4	13

**Skills:** Arcana 6, Archery 6, Armourer 2, Artisan 6, Assensing 6, Astral Combat 6, Automatics 3, Automotive Mechanic 2, Blades 7, Climbing 5, Clubs 6, Computer 4, Con 6, Counterspelling 6, Data Search 3, Demolitions 1, Disguise 6, Diving 3, Dodge 6, Enchanting 6, Escape Artist 5, Etiquette 6, First Aid 6, Forgery 6, Gymnastics 6, Hacking 4, Hardware 2, Heavy Weapons 4, Infiltration 6, Instruction 6, Intimidation 6, Leadership 6, Locksmith 3, Longarms 6, Medicine 6, Nautical Mechanic 1, Navigation (Stars and Sunrises) 3, Negotiation 6, Palming 6, Perception 6, Pilot Aircraft 2, Pilot Ground Craft (Motorbike) 6, Pilot Watercraft (Sail Boats) 5, Pistols 6, Ritual Spellcasting 6, Running 4, Shadowing 5, Software 3, Spellcasting 7, Survival 4, Swimming 5, Throwing Weapons 4, Tracking 5, Unarmed Combat 6

**Qualities:** Magician, Lucky, Exceptional Attribute (Intuition), Exceptional Attribute (Logic), Ambidextrous, Aptitude (Blades), Aptitude (Sorceror), Aspected Magician (Sorceror).

**Spells:** All

**Metamagics:** Centering, Cleansing, Masking, Shielding, Absorbition, Extended Masking, Filtering, Reflecting, Flux, Unknown Metamagic (GM Special), Unknown Metamagic (GM Special)

**Notable Gear:** Force 9 Weapon Focus Rapier.

**Quickened Spells\*:** Increase Attribute (Logic), Increase Attribute (Willpower), Increase Attribute (Charisma), Increase Attribute (Body), Increase Attribute (Intuition), Increase Reflexes, Physical



Mask, Astral Armour, Deflection, Area Thought Recognition, Combat Sense

*\*All spells at Force 11 and quickened with double karma for dispelling purposes. It can be assumed where relevant that maximum hits have been obtained, through the use of Edge, spirit aid and the opportunity over 5,000 years to make plenty of attempts. Note that with Extended Masking, Harlequin is able to conceal up to 12 quickened spells or foci.*

**Anchored Spells:** Heal. Trigger: Extensive physical damage.

**Powers:** Immunity to Aging, Immunity to Toxins, Immunity to Disease.

**Notes:** In the module “Harlequin,” he demonstrates the apparent ability to teleport. Whether or not this is actually the case, it is possible that one of the metamagics is something along these lines.

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Image of Harlequin Mask © Vladislav Gurfinkel - FOTOLIA

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