

Skies of Glass Macro Setting

Introduction

The macro setting of a role-playing game defines the people, places, and things that are prevalent throughout your universe or have a great deal of impact on it. Below are some examples for Skies of Glass. For more information on developing the macro setting for a new game, download episode 32 of Fear the Boot.

I. People

The people worthy of mention in the macro setting are those that have had some major influence on your game's world. This could include military leaders, politicians, religious figures, or the founders of major social movements.

Admiral Paul Kellerman

When the nuclear war began, Paul Kellerman was a young Ensign serving at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida. His wife, infant son, and parents were all residing in Indianapolis.

When it became clear Jacksonville had been spared the fate of most American cities, the forces of the Naval Air Station were dispatched to assess the nation's damage and secure vital resources located nearby. During these operations, Kellerman demonstrated a true soldier's professionalism, stepping forward to lead even as superior officers cracked.

As rescued military units filtered into Jacksonville, they were integrated into the newly-created Combined Arms Force of the Naval Air Station. Because of his outstanding service record, Kellerman was steadily promoted through the structure of this new force, becoming its highest ranking officer decades later.

There is a palpable sense of confidence about Admiral Kellerman. He rarely needs much time to make up his mind, and once he has done so, it is nearly impossible to shake him from his course. His speech is equally eloquent and commanding. However, he is not physically impressive, and many people are surprised by his short stature, slight build, slow gait, and gentle smile.

Since learning that Indianapolis was nuked, Kellerman has shown little interest in building a new family or developing close friendships. He lives a quiet and lonely life inside the Naval Air Station, focusing every waking thought on his role as defender of the last refuge of pre-bomb civilization. He only grants himself an hour of free time a day, almost always spending it reading history books and praying.

II. Places

When thinking about places, there are two categories that are worth mentioning: sites and locales. Sites are small areas that figure prominently in the minds of the people in your game. Examples include great cathedrals, memorials, corporate headquarters, tourist destinations, or political buildings. Locales, on the other hand, are typically much larger, consisting of places such as the cities, states, nations, or planets that have played a major role in your game's history.

Jacksonville NAS

Not every major city was struck by the nuclear missiles. In the case of Jacksonville, Florida, the U.S. missile defense successfully defeated the warheads aimed at the city and its neighboring military bases. As most of the world sat in stunned silence, the Mayor of Jacksonville and the commanding officers of the Naval Air Station Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport mounted a swift response. Realizing they couldn't save the world, they focused on saving their own city. Police and soldiers enforced martial law, keeping the panicked masses off the streets, and within a matter of days, a cordon was formed to protect the city from the growing tide of refugees.

Military teams were dispatched along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, stripping military and industrial sites of useful materials. Anything too large to be moved was put in one of three categories. Necessary items -- such as oil rigs -- were secured for later use. Dangerous items -- primarily weapons -- were outright destroyed. Everything else was left for local scavengers.

Due to the resourcefulness of the leadership, Jacksonville remained miraculously close to its pre-bomb state. Within very short order, utilities had been restored, hospitals were functioning normally, and a new daily routine was arising amongst her citizens.

Realizing they couldn't maintain the cordon forever, military engineers began construction of a defensive frontier that roughly encircled Duval County, morphing to include valuable resources and defensible

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positions. Though it started only as a handful of troop positions and earthworks, it was gradually improved until it was a multi-tiered perimeter, complete with walls, guard towers, and electronic sensing devices.

Today, Jacksonville has reestablished its democracy with an American-style, three branch government, with a two-chamber legislature replacing the role of several city boards. Its executive branch is still headed by a Mayor. All of the remaining Federal government branches have been shutdown in favor of the surviving state and local counterparts, even though Federal laws are still generally enforced by the new agencies.

The military resources have been consolidated under a joint command housed at the Naval Air Station. Their structure is kept distinct from that of the civilian city; everything within the civilian populace is dictated by the civilian government, while all military operations (including the defense perimeter) are handled exclusively by the armed services. The relationship between the Mayor and top officers is respectful and cordial, but unlike in pre-bomb America, the military is not under the control of the civilian government.

Jacksonville currently maintains its isolation, neither helping nor hurting the outside world, despite constant pleas to intervene. However, they are keenly curious about the events going on beyond their walls. Agents are regularly dispersed to blend into the general population, keeping up on events and searching for valuable military, industrial, or agricultural salvage.

The Mayor recognizes that certain resources simply cannot be produced internally or secured nearby. Therefore, the city maintains an active trade relationship with passing caravans, exchanging medicine, machined tools, and luxury items for food and raw materials.

As most of the important military or intelligence doctrines are developed by the commander of the Naval Air Station -- the only aspect of Jacksonville the outside world sees -- the city is typically called Jacksonville NAS, Nasjax, or even just NAS by non-residents.

IV. Things

The final segment of your setting is any object or technology that is significant in the lives of your realm's citizens. Common weapons, spells, and animals, or larger objects like famous warships, are all worth fleshing out.

Genetic Constructs

During the Resource Wars, many nations sought to leverage their biotechnology and abundance of arable land to overcome their lack of industrial resources. This gave rise to lines of genetically engineered organisms. At the popular level, these creatures are called GCs (for "genetic constructs"). However, few people remember the word's status as an acronym and render it, "jeesy".

GCs were created for a variety of consumer and commercial purposes, including beasts of burden, transportation, security, entertainment, and companionship. The exact modifications they underwent depended on their intended purpose. In most cases, the animal may have been changed in size, intelligence, or physical capability. However, to avoid public revulsion over "unnatural beasts" mingling in society, most of the creations were still recognizable as a member of a parent species

Despite the improvements in lifespan and survivability granted these animals, they still die. Rather than treat death as the loss of a resource, the GC designers opted to make it a moment of profitable harvest. Most GCs are edible, and their strong bones can be used for a variety of purposes. A handful of species have traits beyond simple edibility, possessing glands that produce chemicals with potent medical or cosmetic applications. The knowledge of which glands are in which species is somewhat limited in the wastes.

Many GCs take quickly to simple instructions and learn words faster than the brightest (natural) animals. However, it is said some models are born with certain commands already programmed in their memory. Decades of wild breeding have confused these traits, but a select few still know the commands understood by a purebred specimen. People in possession of both a purebred animal and its command words have a valuable resource indeed.

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Deadman's Gun

The Deadman's Gun is not a particular make or model of gun, but instead a slang term for an entire category of weapons.

It is difficult to deny the lethality of a firearm, however, modern weapons and ammunition are difficult to construct. As a result, craftsman in many localities have developed guns that are incredibly simple to build, load, and maintain. These designs typically consist of a 1" diameter metal tube, wooden stock, flash pan, and flintlock. Powder is sold in wax paper containers that double as wadding. Metal shot may or may not be included, and if absent, the weapon is loaded with gravel, small bolts, or other available debris.

The Deadman's Guns are highly lethal at close range. However, they quickly lose their potency over distance, are slow to reload, and prone to misfiring. Anyone that can find and afford a better weapon would likely do so. Therefore, these guns are only wielded by the desperate masses that are "as good as dead" anyway -- an observation that is the source of the weapons' name.