

Ecstacity

Welcome Ecstacity – a city where the smog is hot, the beer is cold, and the nights are never-ending neon-electric. It's the perfect spot if you need a hit of that sweet digital dosage, holographic honey, or a hired hitman – all for a price, of course.

You'll instantly know you're about twenty miles from the place when holographic ads start popping up on your dashboard, view panel, or HUD. By virtue of heading to Ecstacity, you've already given Marketing plenty of time to read through your profile and activity, and Lord knows what else. Any information you haven't bothered to keep under lock-and-key encryption will probably have exchanged hands a dozen times over by the time you walk through its gates, so why worry?

Landscape and Climate: Located in the southwest quarter of the New World, Ecstacity is hot and humid most of the time, year-round. The humidity and pollution are exacerbated by neon lights, the ruckus of traffic, advertising jingles, and party music. Rains are sporadic in Ecstacity, bringing rare, much-desired relief from the punishing heat and smog. Real estate is at a premium; hence commercial rental space and low-income housing has grown vertically over the past decades.

History: Ecstacity was once called Convalescence, and was considered the crown jewel of compassionate care and healing in all of SplinterWorld. Its hospitals and clinics boasted of the best doctors and pharmacists, right alongside its rehabilitation centers, assisted dosage cites, and hospices. The bridge that stretched out into the ocean was once known as Pasteur Quay, with a lighthouse that guided supply and mercy-mission ships into the harbor. It was never lacking for food, medicine, and aid, as the neighboring cities would give generously as part of the Pirogov Convention of 3201.

However, the upper crust of Sunny Gardens decided it was in their (and their profits') best interest to choke the altruistic endeavors of Convalescence. It began with a terrorist bombing of Pasteur Quay, cutting off supply lines, bogging down investigations, and reducing peace summits into mudslinging, filibusters, and walkouts. It didn't take very long for hospitals and other medical care centers to waste away, and for the city's best and brightest to either sell out or ship out. Sunny Gardens' fingers began creeping into the city's lobbyists, and in time key council members were snug in the elite's pockets.



A passel of concerned care specialists refused to comply and formed an underground unit around a Dr. Anselm von Eisenhand (Neurosurgery, St. Abraxas Medical Center). They grew into a movement and dubbed themselves **The Red Chalice**, committed to delivering medical assistance to the pockets of resistance around the city. However, a contaminated water source prompted a typhoid outbreak and with weakened supply lines, authorities were able to root out Von Eisenhand and scatter his allies.

He was soon made an example of, his sentence meted out on Live Broadcast. He would never wield a scalpel again.



The many forms of entertainment and medical tourism in Ecstacity

Politics and Culture: Ecstacity has long enjoyed a tenuous relationship with the healthier outside regions of Sunny Gardens. It is from the Sunny Gardens that Ecstacity draws its food, water, and on occasion, sunlight and clean air. Ecstacity also benefits from the hand-me-down technology of the elite residential, reappropriating, combining, and innovating outmoded tech into whatever each quarter, borough, faction, or community needs.

The city itself is governed by **The Caucus**, a shadowy council said to make decisions on the daily balance of resources, economy, and state of affairs within the bounds of Ecstacity. Nothing much is known of this body, save that they have been anointed by the Powers That Be from Sunny Gardens, and that they are headed by the disgraced **Anselm von Eisenhand**.

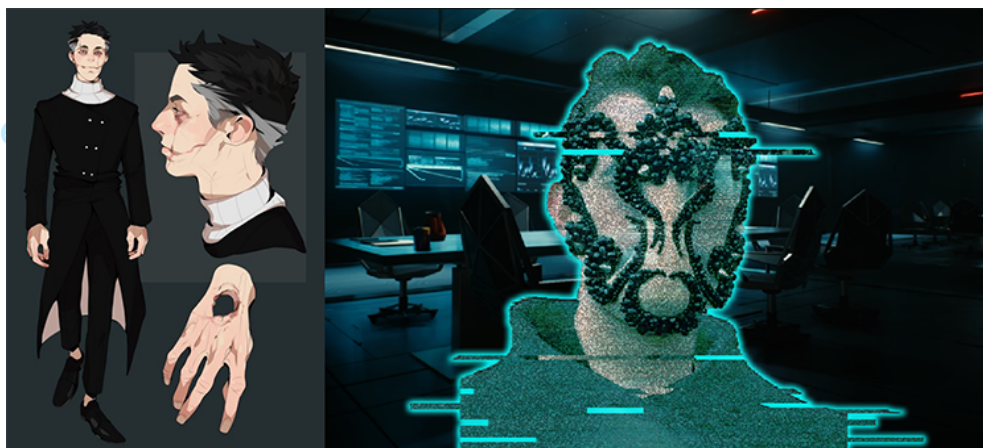
Sunny Gardens has since enjoyed a comfortably unchallenged position of power and control over the denizens of the now-dubbed Ecstacity. The city has since welcomed an influx of investors and pioneers in the entertainment and medical tourism sector in its frenzied Day-Glo embrace. **The EC (Ecstacity Constabulary)** is keen to turn a blind eye to the black market and thriving underground commerce, as this nourishes most of the city's profit margin. The city has grown fat off the new commercial landscape, and business is thriving.

Notable Locations / Figures / Factions

- **The Hothouse / The Conservatory** - The most celebrated and prominent strip clubs and adult entertainment venues in Ecstacity. Known for its gorgeous women, showstopping revues, and impeccable discretion, The Hothouse is a favorite go-to for the wealthy young bucks of Sunny Gardens to get their "V-cards revoked", or for anyone wealthy enough to have all their sexual fantasies come true. This strip club's cellar features a secret passageway to a safehouse and the headquarters of one of the biggest

unions of sex workers in Ecstacity. **The Conservatory** aids and abets the Autoclave by providing shelter, protection, and legal advice for abused women and their children. Initiates to The Conservatory are also trained in the arts of espionage, misdirection, and petty theft, skills that have come in handy in bringing white-collar crimes to light, or providing The Plague King with fine threads to pull exactly when he needs them. The conservatory is loyal to the Plague King and The Autoclave's cause, but supplies and space can only go so far. It's only a matter of time until these gorgeous, cunning flowers in The Conservatory become more than just another pretty face in the crowd. Especially with some of them having patrons and sugar daddies in high places – like **The Caucus**.

- **The Caucus** – A shadowy council said to make decisions on the daily balance of resources, economy, and state of affairs within the bounds of Ecstacity. Nothing much is known of this body, save that they have been anointed by the Powers That Be from Sunny Gardens. They only appear as seven holographic voice visualizers, each one named in Latin order (**Primus, Secundus, Tertius, Quartus, Quintus, Sixtus, Septimus**). Secundus through Septimus defer and obey the white-gold Primus without question. Secundus constantly defends Primus' decisions and takes pleasure in shaming or berating the rest of the Caucus should they challenge or question Primus. Tertius has learned to address real concerns and risks in Primus' orders by skirting the issue with covert piercing wit. Quartus and Quintus seem to be twins, finishing each other's sentences and thinking up schemes to appease their seniors in the council. Sixtus is a sycophant to the rest of The Caucus and is quick to boss around Septimus. Septimus was once considered the laughingstock and weakest link of the council but has since fallen silent, agreeing with everything the rest of the group says – making them the most dangerous member of the Caucus.
- **Anselm von Eisenhand / The Plague King** - Von Eisenhand functions as the Caucus' mouthpiece, delivering pronouncements on curfews, bans, and restrictions via daily broadcasts. He is easily considered the most hated figure in Ecstacity, seen as a traitor to the very people he was meant to champion.

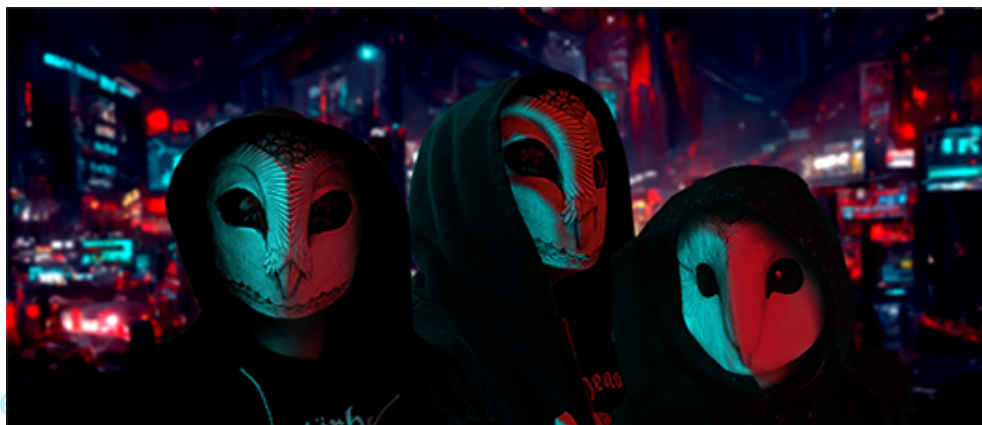


Anselm von Eisenhand (left), and his persona The Plague King (right)

Von Eisenhand, however, is of the practice to ensure the left hand does not know what the right is doing. In the Underground, away from the Caucus' watchful eyes, Von Eisenhand is also the persona **The Plague King**. There have been sightings of this shadowy figure around the tunnels, homeless encampments, and skid rows of Ecstacity, meting out his own form of justice and aid. The Plague King has been known to crack down on drug dens as well as human and organ trafficking rings. He has also disrupted many exclusive black-tie underground auctions and Sunny Garden-funded galas by crashing their parties and rendering the entire crowd either unconscious, immobile, or anesthetized, with the guests come sunup finding their funds diverted into declining hospitals and rehab centers via encrypted accounts.

The Plague King has been known to administer his own vicious brand of justice on certain individuals with surgical precision, with varying levels of intensity. He was discovered fleeing the office of Ezekiel Kane, CEO of GummyGod Co. with the tycoon overdosed on MDMA-laced candy rope rammed down his throat the day it was released and marketed as "child-friendly". There were also sightings of him disappearing into the night from the rooftop of esteemed physician Leila Bosanac, M.D., a house-arrested member of the Red Chalice Movement the night she died in her sleep. Autopsy findings showed she had been living with Bone Marrow Cancer and was denied treatment and medication by the Caucus as part of her sentence. She was administered a drug that allowed her to pass pain-free, quietly in her sleep.

The Plague King as a hero or menace is hotly debated. His presence in Ecstacity has caused such a titter among polite company that betting circles have cropped up based on what quarter or borough he will strike next.



Members of The Autoclave; a pair of Vestris (left and center) and an Initiate (right).

- **The Autoclave** - But Anselm von Eisenhand knows more than enough to play into the hands of the elites. As Von Eisenhand, he dutifully receives his marching orders for the day from the Caucus – what drugs du jour to push, which crime ring to favor, what borough to quarantine and “sanitize” in the coming weeks. But as the Plague King, he sends out his own orders through his own network, **The Autoclave**: medical specialists in owl masks and hoodies tasked to deliver aid, protection, and shelter to the sick and weary in places The Plague King cannot go. Initiate doctors are assigned to house calls,

medicine runs, and scouting missions, while the senior Vestris are well-versed in battlefield surgery, emergency and palliative care, and various forms of combat. The Autoclave relies on the Plague King's directives to counter the damage and addiction that The Caucus sets into motion. They work hand in hand with The Conservatory in helping people and possibly facilitating escape from Ecstacity.

- **Tyto Alba** – the Head (Vestris Rex) of The Autoclave, a former trauma surgeon at St. Abraxas Medical Center, and von Eisenhand's contemporary. Despite starting off their team up on a sour note, Alba and The Plague King have learned to trust and appreciate each other's strengths and contributions to the cause. Alba may know more about The Plague King's true identity and past than he is willing to let on, and the Vestris Rex holds his aces close to his chest.
- **South Circuit** - The nest of digital dosages, psycho-tech, and every bit of hardware and software anyone could ever wish to get their hands on. This quarter boasts shops of the finest (bravest, and possibly most dangerous and illegal) cybernetic augmentation jobs money can buy, as well as the newest most potent forms of psychotropic tech to "turn on, log in, drop out". Arcades and game joints in South Circuit are the cheap, functional opium dens of Ecstacity, and it is not uncommon to see people stuck in their visors, mentally lost in their favorite holo-novellas on repeat. South Circuit is also the place to go to acquire specific tech that might be otherwise inaccessible according to conventional means if one knows the right person and has the right cash or information. Many Chrono-Displacers have been bought and sold and fought over here in the quarter's grimy streets, just waiting for their serial numbers to be filed off in a matter of minutes.



- **Cassandra** – an AI oracle housed deep within the heart of South Circuit. She is sought after by the intrepid, the desperate, and the arrogant, vying and bidding their way to hear her prophecies and answers to their troubles. However, Cassandra does not hand the truth over so easily. She trawls the Splinternet for every piece of information on the Seeker and tears down their every pretense, assumption, falsehood, and vanity. If the

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Seeker endures, persists, and manages to keep their dignity and purity of intent despite it all, Cassandra judges them worthy of the truth they seek. However, the truth is the kind most Seekers do not want but need. There are rumors that Cassandra is connected to the **Caucus Primus** – sometimes as his daughter, sometimes as his 2.0, and sometimes as a rogue version of Him. She cannot confirm nor deny these rumors, but she has been known to give Tyto life-saving clues to the Caucus' plans, keeping The Autoclave's operations one step ahead of their game, much to their and The Plague King's peril.

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