

LOCALE: ORK UNDERGROUND

Max paused again, and put his fingers to his nose, bringing up the ARO for his nasal filtration system and slinging his rifle. As he did, he subvocalized, “Biter, hold up.” His partner paused, and looked rapidly up and down the passageway, stretching his thermographic vision to its limits. He held an AK-98 at ready position.

“What’s wrong?” popped up on his AR as he kept trying to adjust the filters. The smells of decay, stale urine, and black mold were all creeping through and overwhelming his senses. Max felt his throat swelling and his gorge rising in reaction to the stench. His eyes had been watering for what seemed like hours and he was afraid his AR goggles might fog up.

He sent a quick message to Biter’s commlink. “My filter system isn’t working right—one size fits all doesn’t mean dwarves—and now this place smells like ork.”

Biter snorted back at him as Max, in exasperation, rebooted the filters. Moments later his commlink chimed that a new device had been added to his PAN—the nasal filters. Max relaxed his brow as he realized he couldn’t smell anything. He unslung his rifle and nodded towards Biter.

They resumed their slow trek through the tunnels. When Max came up to his knees in yet another puddle, he grumbled, “I don’t know why the damned orks can’t get some decent airflow down here.”

Biter paused to fix him with a glare. “You expect an ork to do a decent job of engineering? I told you not to trust Butch on those filters. She’d rather sell you cyber.”

Max nodded and shook of his head, then paused to check the tunnel map ARO—obtained

from a friend in the Stonecutters Guild. So far the map had been accurate. They’d made it safely through the drainage pipes at the Sound and were approaching the outer edges of the Underground, just a few hundred meters from where their contact had agreed to meet them.

Biter raised his left hand in a fist, then raised his assault rifle. They stopped.

“Movement ahead, probably rats.” Max knelt and aimed his rifle forward, double checking that his audio dampers were engaged—gunfire in the tunnels would be deafening. He barely made out the small heat signatures ahead.

After a few moments, Biter lowered his rifle sent. “I didn’t get a good look at ‘em. Might be devil rats. They headed down the cross tunnel. Looks clear now.”

The two continued forward for a few more minutes and around several turns. The map showed the meeting site should be just ahead, and a dim light reflected around the corner.

With rifles at the ready, the pair crept around the corner. Their contact—an ork in his well worn fatigues—lowered a bottle from his lips. “Nish of joo to shew up,” he slurred at them. It seemed he’d been sampling the wares. “One crate, sheven bottlesh.” He set down the bottle

to hold up fingers. “25 year hurlg right from the Black Foresht dishtillery.”

The dwarves lowered their weapons, too shocked at the wobbly ork’s state to even respond.

He went on, “Figgered ja’d wanna tesht it firsh,” then held the open bottle out to them. When they didn’t take it, he said, “Useta be eight, but ...” He trailed off with a shrug.

Max yanked the filters out of his nose and grabbed the bottle. A quick sniff confirmed that the stuff was genuine—and completely overpowered all of the other smells of the underground. Between the alcohol, the nutmeg, and the hops, there was no mistaking it.

“We sent payment for eight bottles.” Biter fixed the ork with a glare and gestured with his assault rifle.

“Had eight. Waited an hour. Had to do shumthing to pash the time—no shignal down here.” The smuggler gestured with his commlink. The rifle pointed at his chest didn’t seem to bother him. Judging from the way he wobbled, it seemed unlikely anything would bother him.

Max grabbed the cork off the crate, carefully plugged the bottle, and put it back in the padded crate with the seven others. The two dwarves each grabbed a side of the box, turned their back on the ork, and began to retrace their route.



although mostly vat-grown, but keep in mind that at Damian's "well-done" tends to mean "charred enough to shatter if dropped" and order a shade or two rarer than you usually do.

- I guess once Royce Stoddard, the owner of Damian's, lights something on fire, he has trouble putting it out: you know, steaks, crosses... Ol' Royce has been involved with the Humanis Policlub almost as long as there has been one in Seattle, and has spread his racist poison to his whole family. In his misspent youth, he racked up quite a list of charges of assault, vandalism, and incitement to riot. These days he mainly spends his time treating metahumans who come into his place like shit, funneling money to Humanis causes, and talking about how proud he is of Governor Brackhaven and how he's going to "clean up" Seattle.
- Sounder
- RJ (that's "Royce Junior") Stoddard is a bitter ex-Lone-Star cop who refused to sign on with Knight Errant, but instead started up Stoddard Security, a small-time private security firm that's backed up with some money from Big Daddy Royce's fiends. Stoddard Security (you gotta love them initials) is basically made up of professional legbreakers who take any and all opportunities to hassle metahumans on behalf of their clients.
- Star Loner

DANTE'S INFERNO

Fifth Avenue & Madison Street

Perhaps *the* premier nightclub in Seattle, Dante's Inferno has earned its place at the very top with a long history of devotion to the motto "nothing succeeds like excess." One of three sister-nightclubs (the other two in London and Hong Kong), the Inferno takes the theme of "Nine Circles of Sin" quite literally, having nine levels. The first seven are associated with the Seven Deadly Sins; guests enter at the topmost level and descend to the increasingly select and rarified depths, weeded out by the Inferno's door-staff and the wishes of the club's manager and its owner, Dante Passini.

At the lowest levels are Purgatory ("where there's a promise of getting into Heaven") and Hell ("where you forget all about Heaven"). These are invitation-only, open to Dante's favored few and the rich and famous of the Seattle nightlife scene. A ticket into Hell is a sure sign you have truly arrived in the Emerald City. With fantastic AR displays complementing transpex floors and spiral staircases, and full-service bars and menus on each level, there's more than enough sin at Dante's to go around, so pace yourself!

- You have to hand it to Dante. The Inferno—like a snooty French restaurant—makes being discriminated against part of the experience, but they do it in style. For example, a fantastic wrought-iron staircase spirals around the outside of the club so guests enter from the top floor and make their way down, meaning the lowest floors are the most exclusive. So, if you have to stand in line for hours, you might as well do it with a great view, right? The stairs have a canopy, so Dante's can accommodate much longer lines than other clubs, and people are willing to go there just to be seen waiting in line!
- Khan-A-Saur
- Dante himself is an increasingly rare sight at the Seattle Inferno, as he prefers his townhouse in London and spends more of his time there. The nightly affairs are in the well-manicured hands of the manager, an elf named Alessio; always dressed sharp enough to cut you in the latest designer suits, his bald head covered with animated tattoos of hellish

torments and delights and his solid black cybereyes reflecting the hot glimmer of flames, even when there are none present.

- Ethernaut
- The Inferno sometimes rents out Purgatory and Hell for private parties, which include a very nice security package, making them ideal for those get-togethers where nobody wants to be disturbed, or have their image captured.
- Danger Sensei

BRACKHAVEN INVESTMENTS

3rd Avenue & Union Street

It's not on the local tours, but the downtown offices of Brackhaven Investments are tied in with the lifeblood of the metroplex: namely financial data. BI manages a wide range of investment portfolios and provides financial information to its clients. The place often seems a bit out of sync with the rest of the city just because it is so attuned to the activities of the world markets, with so many people working literally in different time zones for most of the business day.

- Mr. Bonds
- BI's location puts them close to some other downtown skyscrapers and high-rise hotels (in which they often put up visiting clients and consultants). Those high hotel windows provide a great vantage point for the BI offices (and vice versa, so watch out).
- Pistons

THE EDGE

Ninth Avenue & Denny Way

This first-class elven restaurant offers an exotic mix of vegetarian Asian, Native American, and fusion cuisine in an open, airy atmosphere with lots of planters and terrariums providing a feel like a forest glen. Outdoor patio seating is available in good weather, and an extensive wine list is available.

- The all-elf waitstaff is also renowned for a surly attitude that would be the envy of any high-class French restaurant. This is the place to come if you want to have elves both wait on you and look down their noses at you all at the same time.
- Khan-A-Saur
- The Edge used to be fairly in, but that hasn't been the case for several years now. Efforts to get them back on the map have fared poorly due to a declining interest in all things elven.
- Tarlan

ELLIOT'S

Pier 60

A first-class French restaurant on the waterfront, known for its choices of both soy and meat items. Don't overlook the soy choices, some are so expertly prepared, you may like them better than the real thing! The views of the waterfront and the Sound are spectacular, particularly at night, with the tables lit by candlelight, making this a great spot for a romantic dinner.

- Pier 60's fortunes improved considerably after Tom Cantrelli bought the place a few years ago and brought in chef Sooki Dulane, who works wonders in the kitchen. Cantrelli also replaced a lot of the staff, and their undeserved snobbery, making his establishment considerably more inviting.
- Khan-A-Saur

