

EPISODE 1

Welcome to Echoes of Eschaton, a solo play Degeneration podcast that lets the dice rolls tell the story, leaving everything up to fates of bouncing ivory. Whether you're a novice to roleplaying games or a seasoned pro with a full sourcebook library, you'll find the gripping narratives in this apocalyptic setting unfold before your very ears. You'll hear stories of loss and injustice, redemption and hope. A miasma of gloom drifts across the barren wastes while nightmarish beasts roam and terrorize cities and settlements. Only mankind's inexhaustible will to survive offers the faintest glimmer of hope on the horizon. The echoing shades of the bygone peoples lingers on the wind and on the lips of survivors in this hell on Earth. What stories will they tell?

Two cloaked figures stood just outside the Alcove, stray beams of buzzing light dancing across the plastic sheen of shoulder and elbow pads as well as their floor length rubber capes. The underground tunnel had wires and pipes of various lengths and gauges from floor to ceiling and ran as far as the eye could see into the darkness ahead. A large display screen showed yellow-green text crawling from end to end. The text was reflecting in the goggles of the figure holding a small electric pad while the other figure looked over their shoulder with folded arms. A squelching voice, compressed like a damaged amplifier spoke harshly:

"Dammit Multithread. You're overdue at the Central Exchange 1 minute and 6 seconds ago at your post."

The figure shifted their weight, and the smooth circular disks embedded into their cape produced a rolling shimmer from the buzz light overhead.

A similarly compressed voice replied through the tinny microphone under the full face mask

"Apologies for the runtime error. The Newest task feed has been uploaded and i am ready for relocation"

The tinny-voiced figure nodded sharply at the other who impatiently waved their hand over a small terminal nearby. A small chime sounded and in a few seconds a moving platform emerged from the darkness before coasting to a smooth, silent halt in front of them. The Chronicler Multithread stepped aboard the platform and was whisked away into the darkness toward Exit Level D -2

Multithread's eyes had only just adjusted to the darkness of the tunnel and the faint whooshing of thick cable junctions settled him before the platform began to decelerate. He looked out across the boarding platform and some movement near the exit of the

alcove caught his eye. Another chronicler, seamlessly blended into the surrounding plate metal and dingy buzzlight, broke their camouflage and stepped out. The trolley crawled to a stop at another platform, where large pneumatic clasps clamped down to hold it in place. Multithread hopped off the and their eyes went directly to the disguised figure's machete held in one hand, then to the digital pad in the other. Perfectly in sync, the pair raised their pads aloft and a soft chime pinged from both.

"Identity confirmed, multithread 309. Location: Forecourt Alcove, Task:Artifact Trade Access Level: Agent"

"Affirmative." Multithread replied

The machete-wielding chronicler stepped aside into a small dark spot, allowing multithread to move through the alcove. Multithread walked up the ramp toward the staircase landing stopping briefly to check behind him. The other chronicler had already merged back into their shadow, a deadly chameleon waiting for unauthorized intrusion. *Shutters [LORE] give everyone a shiver, best not to dwell on it.* He thought, as he headed up the long stairwell toward to his post at the Forecourt.

Everybody in Central Exchange bore the signs of the hot summer day that permeated the air. Dust rags were grimy and foreheads and armpits were slick with beading sweat. The din of traders and rolling carts were just as stifling as the heat, as each vendor competed with each other to lure in buyers to their ramshackle stands.

"The best wares in Justitian can be found here!"

"No, no, I've got the best wares! Fully charged e-cubes to light your home when the Chroniclers shut off the grid!"

The high volume of foot traffic and shoulder-to-shoulder movement made Multithread's throat tighten. This wasn't the Chronicler's first time in the Central Exchange, it was their first proper taste of handling social interaction and commerce on their own. A kiosk built into the side of the massive, single story framework [page 156 TRF] was shuttered closed. A neon blue barcode glowed above the shutter window.

Multithread was given a decent-sized berth by the crowd as he approached the kiosk but his progress was halted by a trio of Clanners throwing knuckle bones against the base of his stand. The Clanners were large, brutish looking thugs and seemed to pay no

mind to the Chronicler approaching behind them. It was Multithreads first test at the market and they hadn't even opened the trading stand yet. They weren't about to let a negative interaction and further tardiness to open the shop affect the chances of rising up through the Chronicler ranks. Multithread adjusted the volume and gain knobs on the Vocoder until a squealing feedback pitch filled the air. The voice modulator in the Chronicler's mask morphed an other wise small voice into a raspy, animalistic snarl. "Disperse!"

They just hoped it was enough of an intimidation to work.

[ROLL SCENARIO]

The difficulty of this roll is set at 2 successes (or 4s and above on the dice roll)
Multithreads dice pool creates an Action Number of 3 dice which combines the PSYCHE attribute and domination skill on the character sheet

First roll of the game: 2S!

4 5 1

The brutes quickly swiped up the burnished knuckle bones and left the vicinity, but not before eyeing down the Chronicler and spitting at the feet of them. Multithread breathed a sigh of relief their hot breath washing over their cheeks. and proceeded to open up shop. The magnetic lock was undone and the shutter rolled up. The Chronicler entered through a swing up counter and began logging commerce information at the kiosk display.

A line had already queued as he connected the e-cube charging station to the main outlet and unshackled the chains that bound the display case of precious metals and artifacts. Multithread looked up to see sun-leathered faces clutching various oddities and treasures in hands, spilling out over a gunny sack, or piled on top of a sheet metal sled. A well-dressed patron holding a leather satchel in hand, called out to the Chronicler from the front. "Hurry it up, we've got other places to be besides...here," she said disdainfully looking over their shoulder at the others behind the line. The Chronicler connected the vocoder to the amplifier speaker and spoke in a friendlier tone

that he used with the thugs, “Trade Kiosk 7 is online. Multithread Interfacing. Thank you for your patience citizen.”

The impatient patron, a brunette woman in her 30s, stepped up and undid a leather cord wrapped tightly around a thick paper envelope. She presented a stack of small, rectangular sheets of paper bearing a barcode and number series on the shorter sides. Thin, iridescent lines on the bills quivered in the breeze as she passed them over the counter along with a larger sheet of paper stamped in red at the bottom.

It was a tax payment summons from Uptown, and a very easy first customer transaction. “It may not be such a bad day after all, what was I worrying about?” thought Multithread

In the Black Lung, the dust clouds roll swiftly over small steppes, large stretches of barren dunes and across low grassy plains. Settlements are spread far and wide across old central Europe with the well-worn routes leading to the seat of civilization and order in the Borcan region: the city of Justitian. The breadth of the city spans miles...from the aqueducts on the west side of town to the Scrapper encampments outside the city walls to the east. The city proper is comprised of two main districts — Uptown and Downtown. The Central Exchange is located in the Forecourt, and is the nexus of commerce and trade for thousands. The seemingly endless rows of open-air market stalls are situated at the base of the Uptown elevator – a massive steel platform that raises and lowers travelers with the correct paperwork from The Forecourt in Downtown to the illustrious and pious Uptown where the righteous fist of the Judges and senate reside. Justitian is home to a variety of cults: Clanners, Chroniclers, Scrappers, Anabaptists, Judges, Jehammadans and Spitalians all have a presence in the city, though the Chroniclers are among the most prolific across the sprawl. The lower-ranked Chroniclers, like Multithread, receive daily orders from their Stream alcove to monitor and catalogue items, events and people around the city, collecting data. Although there is a technological divide between the Stream-savvy chroniclers and others, the socioeconomic divide is the greatest threat to the social order in the enormous dust-choked City. The poorest of the poor live in the bottomlands, Defiler Streets, in the dumps, and shit pipes of the city. The ultra wealthy come and go as they please from

their palatial manors in Uptown from the Great Houses in Downtown. Somewhere in the middle is the average Justinian who is able to bathe regularly and buy occasional meats and vegetables. Their wooden and sheet metal homes, though sparsely-adorned, don't often leak and provide shelter for 2-3 generations of family.

Multithread heard the whining feedback shut off from above and the electric circuits power cycle down. The Chronicler had just finished with the 2nd to last customer who deposited the bill of sale of several heads of swine. They were left staring at an elderly man as the last in line. He was bent and old (70 winters by Multithreads estimation) with crooked fingers and a hitch in his step as he closed the distance to the kiosk counter. The elder was drenched in sweat, drained from the heat of the day. Multithread held up his hand in front of the man to signal a halt. Any trading done past the evening announcement was prohibited in the markets and was met with fines or being jailed as punishment. Multithread certainly didn't want any marks on his first solo trading day, but he also knows that late payments can bear just as great a fine as trading after hours. It was this memory, this heuristic, this *concept* that appealed to the Chronicler. They...He... embraced every bit of techno-jargon and memetic device he was required to, but he still remembered what it was like to feel...the aching woes of humanity.

[ROLL SCENARIO]

Multithread is a highly empathic individual. Chroniclers steal children and recruit social pariahs to their cult and Multithread was, unfortunately the former. He managed to survive in the Underground and made a few friends along the way. He is now looking to move up the hierarchy himself. He's got to know when to play his cards right. He's adding an Empathy skill to add to the dice pool with his Instinct attribute. His combined Action number, or dice roll, is 5 dice. Pretty good chances for success.

Difficulty - 2S

AN - 5D

5S, 3T

6,6,4,4,6

Multithread looked briefly over each shoulder wary of any Judges that would be passing by to reprimand him. There wasn't a law keeper in sight, and so he quickly waved the man over. Multithread grabbed a summons and filled it out quickly, passing it to the elder as he stepped up.

"Here, report tomorrow at any time after market opens and you'll be the first in queue."

"Oh, thank you sir. I admit, I don't think I could stand out here all day again..."

The Chronicler nodded curtly and called to a passing Judge to sign the summons.

"Lucky you, old-timer. Front of the line pass." said the judge as she spit a wad of tobacco into the dirt.

"Don't cause a ruckus with this thing. People will shiv you for one of these"

The old man nodded graciously and mixed in with the crowd exiting the markets.

Multithread began shutting down his terminal when he heard the tobacco-chewing Judge behind him.

"Mighty nice of you to help out that old-timer, freak. I thought you lot were all about kicking a man when he's down."

The remark went right through Multithread. He knew to rise above the barb, he'd need to keep his composure around the law.

[Roll Scenario]

Multithread gets a fairly high dice pool in Conduct but since this is a city judge, the successes needed is getting bumped up.

Difficulty - 3S

AN - 6D

3S, 1B

1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4,

He was successful, but just barely. He felt especially tired enough to snap at a city judge if he hadn't kept his cool.

"No City Judge Gau. We leave all true punishment up to the Senate and their officers.

Chroniclers seek reconciliation and unification, not blood and bitterness."

The judge just chuckled and shook her leather trench coat so that a brown dusty mist was knocked loose from the hem. "Sure, but that's what you're supposed to say for the Hive Mind or something, right?"

Multithread replied calmly "Null and void. *The Stream* encompasses all. There is no hive mind, we're not insects."

"Eh whatever." the Judge replied lazily. She'd obviously lost interest in harassing Multithread.

The Chronicler worked quickly to lock up the terminal kiosk before leaving for the Alcove, walking down nearby through streets bathed in darkness. An enormous shadow was enveloping the Forecourt and the Uptown elevators ever since the sun passed it's zenith. Multithread rounded another street corner, weaving between horse drawn carriages and Scrappers pulling their custom sleds laden with sand-crustured treasures and junk. Only the Scrapper pulling the load knew it's true value. A bottleneck had formed further ahead, some poor saps cart had tipped over and strewn its grain and mill contents across the dusty path. Rather than deal with a cramped crowd, Multithread headed down a side alley that would serve as a decent short cut to go around the fray. The Chronicler was alone in this alley, a rarity in the city. Wind blown trash and refuse piled up in the corners of the buildings surrounding the alley. In the shade of the buildings, the Chronicler saw movement and he quickened his pace. Plenty of people, citizens and Chroniclers alike, were found beaten and robbed in these hidden pockets but usually at night. Daytime assaults were much less common, but anything could happen. Multithread could see a sharp left up ahead that would take him back to regular pedestrian streets around the overturned cart and he hustled to make the turn as he could sense a presence behind him. A dirty older male dressed in leather rags with a feather earring stepped from around the corner, halting Multithreads dead in his tracks. The Chronicler spun around and saw what he had sensed through the shadows - 2 large figures, a familiarity in their stone cut faces as the brutes that had been throwing bones at the kiosk earlier in the day. The pair smiled menacingly and cracked their knuckles as they took a few steps forward. A voice behind called out and said, "Looky

here. A Bit with no bite. My boys tell me you ran them off today in the middle of a game...is that true?"

Multithread was certain this was all pretext for a beating, but perhaps he could distract them enough to make a hole to run through. He responded flatly, registering no distress or emotion.

"Gambling of any sort is not allowed on the premises around the Forecourt. Your cohorts were let off without reprimand or punishment. They were lucky enough."

The feather earring swayed back and forth as the man leaned back his head to laugh.

"You hear that boys? You were lucky enough says the freak."

[ROLL SCENARIO]

Multithread is going to try and use his vocoder like he did before to shoo off the thugs.

However, this time, he is going to crank it up to 11, so to speak and aim his sonic weaponry at the older male clanner directly in his path. The Difficulty will be the defender, or older male's PSY Attribute + Willpower Skill for a dice pool of 3d6.

The Attack will be Multithread's combo roll of INT + Engineering to tune the vocoder and PSY + Domination to modulate his voice for a dice pool of 8d6. Pretty good odds

Now the roll. Multithread's 3 versus the Clanner's 0. Don't worry too much if you don't understand the rolls as of yet, I'm working through this system myself and will try to stat track behind the scenes for updated blog posts. Back to the action...

"You hear that boys? 'You were lucky enough' says the freak."

Multithread took these precious moments to square himself facing the howling clanner, cock sure in his intimidation of the Chronicler. A faint whine from the chest mounted vocoder turned into an echo-ing crescendo and the wall of sound blasted across the alley and rebounded between the brick and mortar walls, shaking dust and birds nests loose from the rafters above. The man clapped his hands to his ears and dropped to his knees. Small rivulets of blood came from beneath his wrists where his ear drums had popped and Multithread darted past the incapacitated Clanner. The sonic blast would've surely gotten the attention of any nearby Judge protectors but they could be a minute or

two away – long enough to get throttled by the bruisers. He could hear the heavy footfalls of the two brutes behind him who hadn't been in direct line of sound from his sonic blast. If he got caught he was certain to be unmasked and beaten, most likely to death. He turned the corner, his tattered cape billowing out behind him; he recognized this spot as a Stallion Street intersection. 50 yards ahead, the large metal pylons and metal cage of a Safe Island lay in wait for panicked Chroniclers to hide in.

"You're dead meat for the Knacker's Office tin-head!" one of the brutes called out from behind. Multithread made a beeline for the Safe Island, tripping over a bundle of sand-caked cables peeking out from below. He scrambled to his feet and up the small ramp that lead across the pit to the island suspended in mid-air by tension cables and copper coils. The island swayed gently under the weight and just as Multithread reached out for the switchboard, he felt his right boot heave backward from a large, sturdy hand.

"Pull his ass down and throw him over!" the supporting brute yelled.

[ROLL SCENARIO]

Multithread is being pulled from an elevated position by someone below him. It will be a contest of wills, and could mean the difference between his escape or his beating. I'm going to rule that a -1D penalty will be applied to the attacker, in this case, the clanner brute. This means that both belligerents will have the same 2D dice pool for their BODY attribute + Athletics skill

Attacker - Two botches (or 1s on the die roll)! All the defender need do is not roll any botches to succeed

Defender - 4, 3 = 1S!

Multithread rolls his entire body so that the brute's wrist is pinned between the metal grating and his rubberized sole, and the brute lets out a yelp of pain and let's go.

Multithread unhitches his source module and connects it to the main power node on the switchboard. He can hear the pair below start to beat feet back down the ramp to escape the island and pushes a large green button with his palm. Just before the lead brute takes his last step to freedom from the ramp, a terrible buzzing din fills the air and

he is locked into sprinting pose. His face contorts and his eyeballs immediately bulge from their sockets as small flickers of blue light discharge from he and his mate's skin and fingernails. The clanners fidget into wild convulsions and fall onto each other as flesh begins to smoke and sear from their arms and faces. A fierce blue bolt arcs out from the nearby pylon and ignites their tattered leather rags and cloth boots, setting them on fire. After a few more seconds a smoldering pile of burnt flesh and bones waft through the air, causing shocked passerbys to wretch at the scene. Multithread uncoupled his module and releases the safety island from it's voltage. He looks up to see a judge on horseback rear his horse and call out, "What the fuck happened here Chronicler?"

"Their luck ran out" the hooded figure replied atop the electric trap.

Dusk had settled along the streets of Justitian, and Multithread could hear the fading voices of the Cluster Speaks pouring from the speakers in every corner of the city. Multithread could smell his sweat stink and remnants of burned flesh from the heat and events of the day. But he dare not take off his mask for any fresh air. Not when he was so close to an Exit Level Alcove. He descended the steps under the stone archway vestibule and entered the railway tunnel yet again. A familiar voice from the shadows held out a scanner for Multithread to register again.

"Well well, busy day at the market?"

Multithread stayed silent and simply held out his arm to be scanned.

"Debrief and reboot. Tomorrow is another cycle" the voice said flatly.

Another cycle, Multithread thought. Just the thought of another instance of running for his life made him even more weary.

If patterns are to repeat, how can i be expected to maintain any sort of mental quality before I glitch out? I should compare experiential data with Sudo when I arrive at the Cluster.

Multithread had enough time to finish his thoughts about his Cluster buddy, Sudo, before boarding the moving platform that whisked him away back through the darkness.