**THE BARRACKS GAP INDEX: for Trainee Groundskeepers**

**The Adventure Kids** [formerly “the Adventure Boys”]

*Whatever is worth uncovering, maybe even in Day Gap, these kids know first. They pry; they take extravagant risks and scrape through; they wear schoolboy caps and shorts and say “Golly!” and “Gee whiz!” They’re the Cozies’ equivalents of the Groundskeepers.*

**The Bluffs**

*Barracks Gap is built against the side of a mountain, or a big rocky hill—it’s moderate in height. But the cliffs are steep, and extend for miles on either side, and the ways up to the plateau at the top are many. The only road leads to the Fort, then weaves beyond it. Both the plateau and the footpaths up to it are worth the exploration.*

**The Boys’ Own Zone**

*A three block neighborhood in the Cozies, threatened by incursions from the Wilds; home to the shrinking pool of Adventure Kids.*

**The Cave Outs**

*A network of tunnels through the cliffs, some winding around to the back side of the mountain. They are difficult to negotiate, and may pass unpredictably through Shadow Gap. A few of the charted caves, including one in the Woozies, have been “claimed” by Day Gap pleasure seekers, but most of this area is little-traveled and little-known.*

**The Cloud Waters**

*At the top of the Bluffs, mid-plateau, there’s a forest of exceptionally tall trees called the Cloud Waters. So named because there are two small, strange lakes in its clearings, and they mirror the sky? Or because of the place where the treetops snag the clouds and stir a kind of third lake out of them, just as lovely and even stranger? Our guess is both.*

**The Cozies**

*Border parts of the Shadows where real world physical laws are substantially applicable, and social and political conditions make it safe for the Groundskeepers to travel.*

**Day Gap**

*The nickname, throughout the Shadows and among Day Gappers themselves, for the “real world” Barracks Gap— an isolated but apparently unremarkable mountain town. (And in many ways—but by no means all—such appearances do not deceive.) The mountains are the Virginia Gingerwoods, in the state’s Northern Triangle.*

**Decency** [aka the Town Without Coffee]

*One forgets that this side-world is in the Cozies; it appears to have only dullness to it. Its schools play sports against the Day Gap schools, and lose big; its businesses struggle along without ambition; at night, its citizens watch TV. Contrary to rumor, coffee and alcohol are available here—there’s just no demand for them. But it does boast a Road Out. And word has it that the farther you travel it, the wilder and darker things get.*

**The Door to the Eighth Day of the Week**

*The Groundskeepers use this as a place of refuge; few others know of it. It’s a portal; it will open for you no more than once a week, but once you’re in, you can leave the normal time-flow for a full day, then go back out to the exact world you left. Inside its walls are doors that lead to four different cities—or to ghost versions of them, since they are quite deserted. The cities are different for different people, except that one of them is always Paris. Somewhere in Paris there is a lost second door, that opens to a Ninth Day. The place is old, dating back to the very first Wordman. The way in used to be inside the Fort, but 50 years ago it moved to the attic of a house in the Nightlife Zone.*

**The Fort**

*In every side-world and rim that the Groundskeepers have visited there exists a version of the Fort. The Fort is older than the town; it was installed at the top of the Bluffs 30 years before a town was thought of. Day Gap’s Fort, at least what you can see of it from the road, is a pretty ruin now. For 20 years, though, it has also housed a government-funded research center—into atmospheric conditions, the official line is. It's run, officially, by the local college. Yes, we do know more. No, we are not yet telling you everything.*

**The Groundskeepers, aka the Ambassadors**

*A loose collective of Day Gappers who move between the real world and the Shadows. We police the borders, trade and smuggle, chart the limits of the Woozies, negotiate a balance. We are self-appointed and self-governing—which is held to be as it should be, since officially there are no Shadows. Other Day Gappers call us the Ambassadors. Your questions about why you are now of our number will be answered later in your training.*

**The LOL’s, or the Little Old Ladies**

*Three sweet and giggly old biddies who live at the edge of Day Gap’s Nightlife Zone. They know everyone; everyone knows them. They are rumored never to sleep; they may be ageless. Most people assume they are really from the Cozies, or even from the Wilds.*

**Lover’s Lane**

*A path that winds through the woods to an overhang of the Bluffs. At some point the way must cross into Shadow, because from the overlooks you’ll see what seems to be a battle of the Civil War, timelessly raging in the valley below. The path may only be taken by accident and inattention; for some reason, it is most often a courting couple who takes it.*

**The Mud Flats**

*In East Park, in the Day Gap suburbs, there is a man-made lake that has mostly silted over and reverted to wetlands. The Mud Flats are a long, narrow swath of it. In the YA Zone, where East Park abuts the Adventure Kids’ territory, the Mud Flats function as a kind of mystical lost and found: small objects wash up there from Day Gap and from Shadow; mysterious writings have been known to appear in the mud.*

**The Nightlife Zone**

*The part of Day Gap’s downtown that comes to a different kind of life at night. Some places here are more like Shadow; others are points of entry into Shadow. And there’s fine dining and there are arts centers—for all the arts; including a few very esoteric ones.*

**The 1-2-4 Dimension**, **aka the Cartoon Zone**

*A neighborhood in the Woozies where, as in an animated cartoon, life is two-dimensional and almost no harm is permanent. Or so say all the Day Gapper legends. There are Groundskeepers who claim to have visited it, but since doing so means becoming two-dimensional oneself, and suffering a periodic memory wipe, not even they are certain. The persistent additional rumor is that the time-flow here is neither linear nor stable.*

**Pocketfish**

*A food fish found plentifully in the lakes of the Cloud Waters, and probably native to the Woozies. If not overcooked, it is a mild psychedelic, and stimulates lucid dreaming. It hides among pockets of rocks and is difficult to catch. According to Barracks Gap legend, there are also pocketfish in the third lake, in the clouds, who talk and grant wishes.*

**The QMVV** [the Quantum MultiVerse Viewer]

*The research center in the Fort is dedicated to a piece of new technology called a QMVV. The dimensions thus far observed are not those known to the Groundskeepers—the real world Barracks Gap seems to be at the center of that whole array, while the QMVV, hard as it is to focus and control, best picks up images from quite other arrays.*

**The QMVV Academy**

*In the near Cozies, in the YA Zone, there’s a QMVV that is manned by teenagers. For complex reasons, it is this version of the research center which is becoming dominant.*

**The Road Out**

*In Day Gap, this is, of course, a real road; but in many of the town’s genre incarnations it is more like a legend. In such zones, the local reality is very circumscribed, and all the known paths lead to Day Gap, to the Wilds, or to the War. Genre residents, except for their local versions of Groundskeepers, rarely travel them. Of our own explorations you will learn when the time is right.*

**The Shadows**

*The collective name for all the "non-real world" parts of Barracks Gap, from the Cozies to the Woozies to the Wilds. And for the transitional places of Day Gap, which at times, mostly by dark, begin to blur and whisper.*

**The Thousand Year War**

*For the citizens of Day Gap, there is no war, not right now, not around here; only the Civil War re-enactors! In every side-world, by contrast, the war is actual, and moving closer. In the most real sense, there’s a battle going on for this territory, one which has been fought for perhaps a thousand years; in any case, for, far longer than the history of any local settlement. And the Day Gappers may not know of it, but it threatens them. Watching the Roads Out to the War Zone is one of our more important duties. Traveling these Roads Out, which it is thought may strengthen the links between us, will not, except in the most dire of emergencies, be countenanced or tolerated.*

**The Wilds**

*Remote, dangerous parts of the Shadows whose social and physical laws are uncharted. The Groundskeepers do not, at any but the most elite veteran levels, patrol these ways. For now, their impact on Day Gap seems limited. But the interdiction on exploring the Wilds is more likely to be hardened than lifted. Patience: you will be told more.*

**The Woozies**

*Parts of the Shadows where real world laws may not apply, but which are considered safe for brief visits, because the changes are pleasant or harmless, or (if the Cartoon Zone is real!) the harm is not lasting or consequential. Mostly they are well-charted.*

**Wordmen** [lower case]

*Loosely speaking, a wordman is one who has mastered the incantations to enter Shadow when conditions are not optimal. More strictly, a true wordman uses language to affect physical changes in the world; such talent is rare. And only once in a generation may one come along whose work proves durable: whose inventions coalesce into a new rim, or side-world, or genre, fundamentally modifying the shared reality that is Barracks Gap.*

**The Wordman** [upper case; aka the Founder]

*In the mid 17th century, the first Wordman founded Barracks Gap. At least one of his creations, the Door to the Eighth Day of the Week, remains central to what Barracks Gap is today. A question that is much debated is which came first: the Founder, or the odd local conditions which made what he achieved possible.*