

introduction

Exquisite replicas

An alien reality is infiltrating our world, replacing it piece by piece. Horrific creatures slink about unseen, stealing indiscriminately and leaving exact replicas in their wake. These creatures have been named simply the Othersiders, and whatever place they come from is known only as Otherside. What their final agenda might be, what plans they have for humanity and the planet Earth, are unknown. But the replications continue, as what was once real becomes that which *they* created. These simulacra are indistinguishable from the originals, and there's no telling what will be the next target. It might be the fire hydrant down the street, the local post office, or an aged Merlot in a private wine cellar.

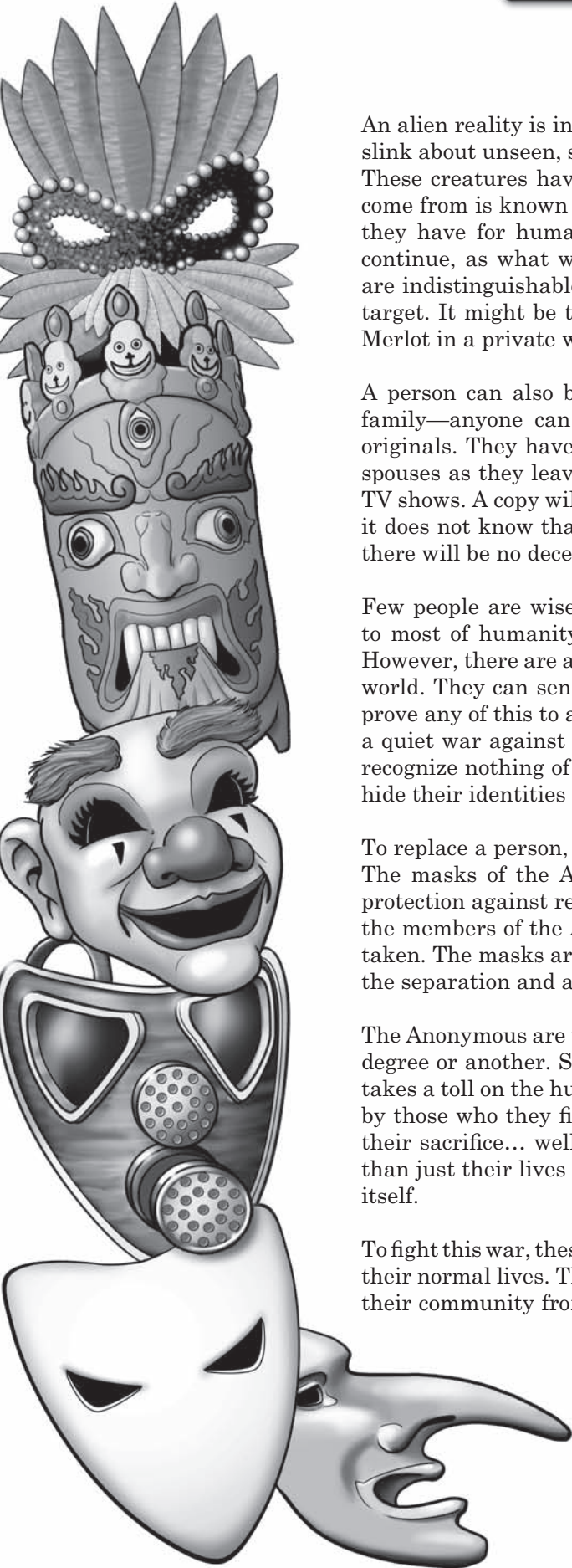
A person can also be replicated and replaced... your neighbors, your friends, your family—anyone can be next. Even you. These doppelgangers are identical to the originals. They have the same personalities and the same memories. They hug their spouses as they leave for work, and they joke with their coworkers about last week's TV shows. A copy will seem to have all the knowledge and emotions of the original, but it does not know that it is an impersonation. It will cry and beg not to be killed, and there will be no deception in those tears.

Few people are wise to what is happening. The beings from Otherside are invisible to most of humanity, and the replicas they leave behind are exact in every detail. However, there are a few men and women who can see the invaders creeping about our world. They can sense when a person or object is a fake. Unfortunately, they cannot prove any of this to anyone who does not already have the sight. Therefore, they wage a quiet war against the forces of Otherside, while those who they struggle to protect recognize nothing of their sacrifice. They are the Anonymous, so named because they hide their identities behind masks.

To replace a person, the Othersiders must first scan their target's face and memories. The masks of the Anonymous serve many purposes, but the most important is as protection against replication. Leaving a face uncovered makes a person a target, and the members of the Anonymous are well aware of the wretched fate of those who are taken. The masks are more than simply practical tools, however. They are a symbol of the separation and alienation from society experienced by those who can *see*.

The Anonymous are tragic heroes. Their war against Otherside has scarred each to one degree or another. Some of these scars are physical; most are psychological. Any war takes a toll on the human psyche, but when the soldiers are never praised or rewarded by those who they fight for, when those who have fallen will never be recognized for their sacrifice... well, the results are even more dire. The Anonymous can lose more than just their lives in the struggle against the Othersiders, they risk their humanity itself.

To fight this war, these ordinary people will break apart everything that once symbolized their normal lives. The masked Anonymous will likely have to resort to theft to protect their community from the ultimate thievery of the Othersiders. And while replicated



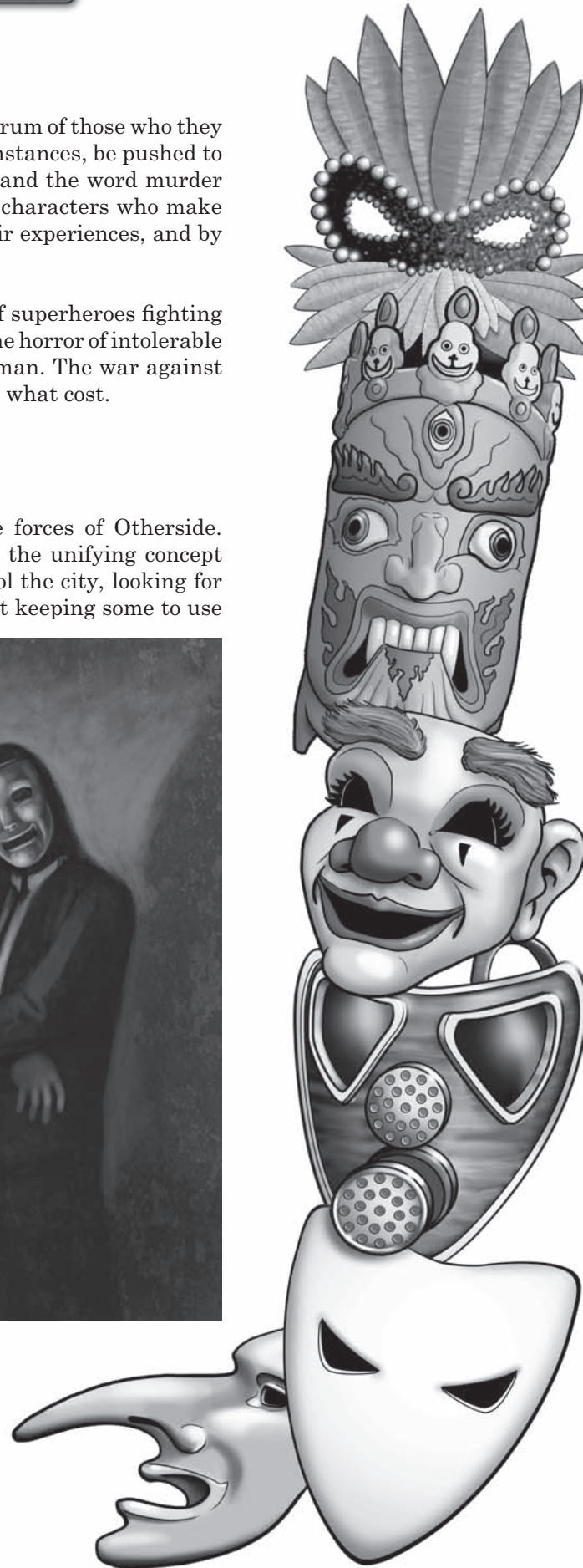
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items will obviously need to be destroyed, what about the simulacrum of those who they love? Can these average people, thrust into extraordinary circumstances, be pushed to murder? Then again, their victims aren't *real* people, are they; and the word murder isn't used in times of war. Regardless of the justification, those characters who make up the Anonymous will be forever changed... by the war, by their experiences, and by themselves.

Exquisite Replicas is the story of that process. It is not a game of superheroes fighting evil space invaders; rather, it is a role-playing experience where the horror of intolerable choices collides with the fragile hope of what it means to be human. The war against Otherside must be won, of course, but it is up to you to decide at what cost.

THE ANONYMOUS

As members of the Anonymous, the players fight against the forces of Otherside. This struggle is the main focus of *Exquisite Replicas*, and it is the unifying concept that brings the characters together. The player characters patrol the city, looking for Othersiders at work. They hunt for replicas, destroying most but keeping some to use

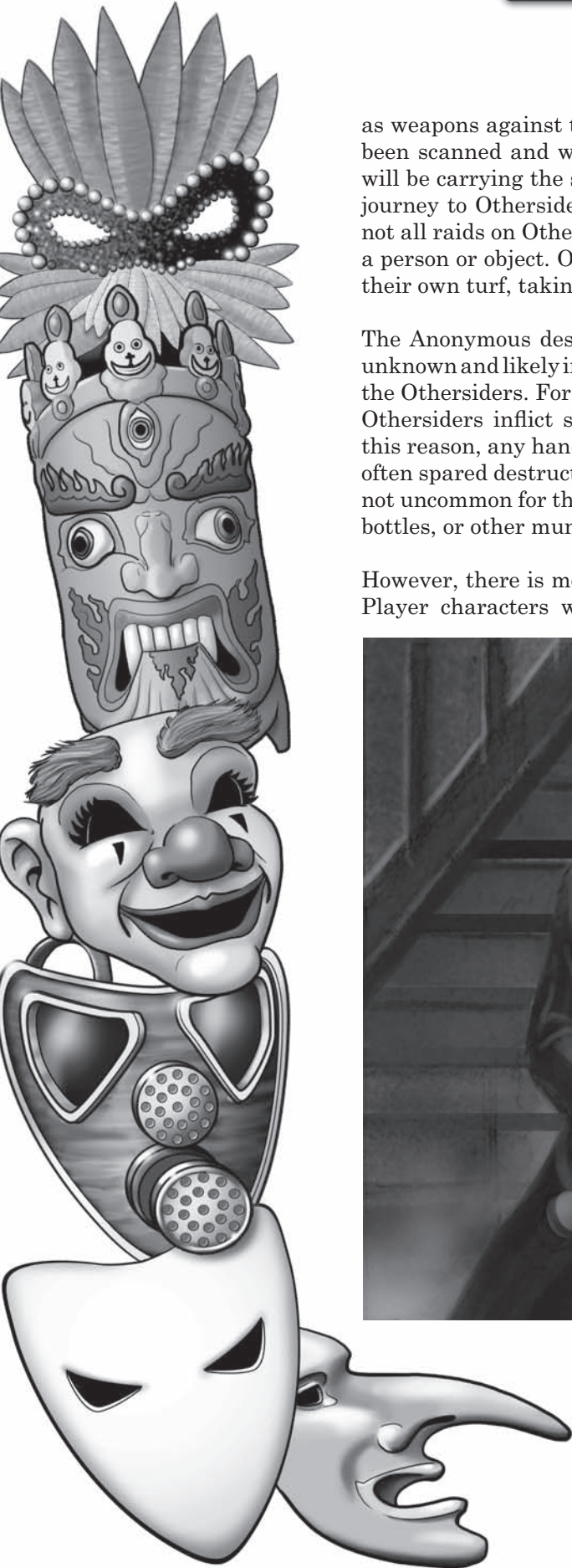


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as weapons against the enemy. The Anonymous identify people and objects that have been scanned and wait in ambush for the inevitable return of the Othersiders, who will be carrying the simulacrum replacement in tow. Sometimes, the Anonymous will journey to Otherside to stop the replication process before it is completed. However, not all raids on Otherside are to stop replications. Sometimes the agenda is to retrieve a person or object. Other times the Anonymous simply want to hit the Othersiders in their own turf, taking the fight directly to the enemy.

The Anonymous destroy most replicas on sight, as the purpose of these forgeries is unknown and likely insidious. However, some replicas are kept as weapons to use against the Othersiders. For reasons only guessed at, replicas wielded as weapons against the Othersiders inflict significantly more damage than their original counterparts. For this reason, any handheld item that has the potential to do harm to the Othersiders is often spared destruction. This makes the arsenal of the Anonymous a strange one. It is not uncommon for the Anonymous to equip themselves with table legs, tire irons, glass bottles, or other mundane items that were never originally meant to be weapons.

However, there is more to the life of the Anonymous than the war against Otherside. Player characters who hold onto their old existence, the lives they had prior to



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joining the cause, have to balance those tasks and relationships with the work of the Anonymous, keeping loved ones, friends, and coworkers ignorant of their activities. For those PCs who have forsaken their old way of life, daily survival is an issue. They must beg, borrow, or steal just to keep themselves going. On top of all of this, the Anonymous must contend with investigations by the police and media as their work can, and typically does, attract unwanted attention.

In *Exquisite Replicas*, characters are defined by a series of *Traits* (ranked from 1 to 5). These include *Physical Attributes* (*Coordination*, *Agility*, *Strength*, and *Endurance*), *Mental Attributes* (*Intelligence*, *Knowledge*, *Awareness*, and *Will*) and specialized skills and abilities. Of significant importance is a character's past or present *Occupation* as this *Trait* defines a character's skill set, possible contacts, wealth, assets, and resources. Finally, *Exquisite Replicas* tracks three psychological states for all characters: *Paranoia*, *Violence*, and *Immorality*.

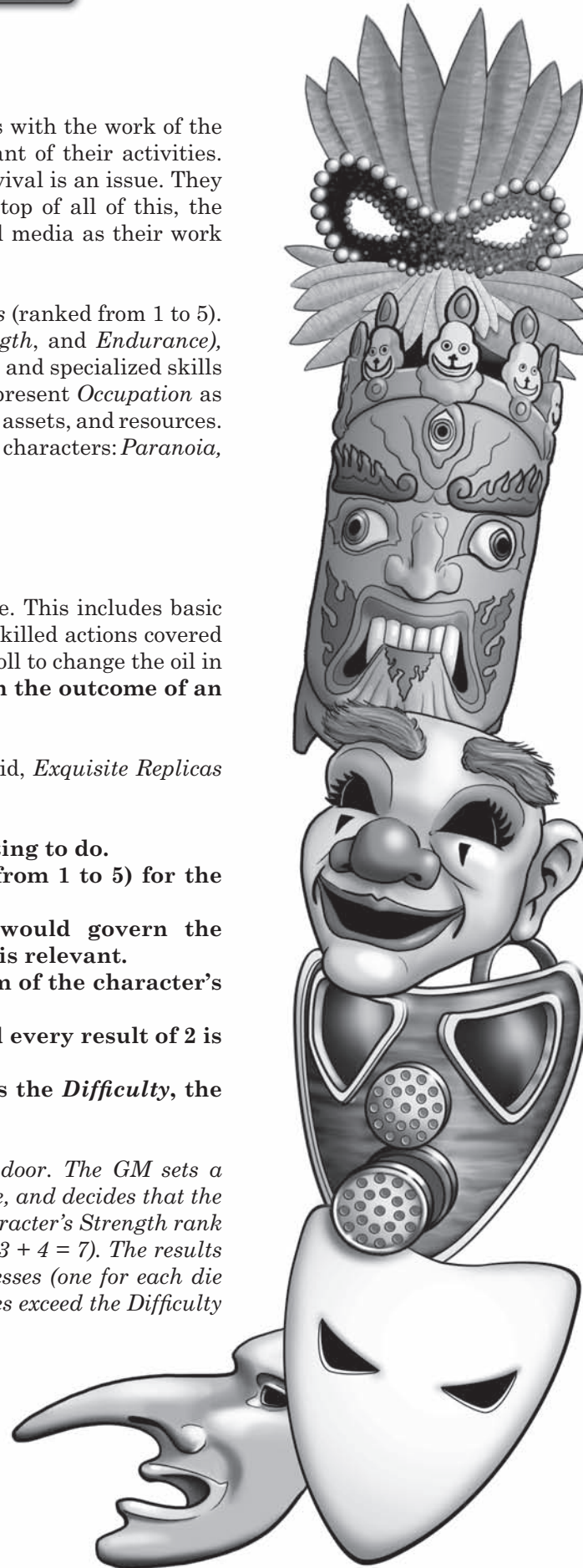
GAME MECHANICS

Characters can perform routine actions without rolling any dice. This includes basic actions (running, typing, surfing the Internet, etc.) and simple skilled actions covered by a character's *Occupation* (e.g. a mechanic would not make a roll to change the oil in an automobile). **Game mechanics only come into play when the outcome of an action is uncertain.**

Whether hacking a computer, picking a lock, or applying first aid, *Exquisite Replicas* uses the same basic rules to determine success or failure:

- **The player declares what her character is attempting to do.**
- **The Gamemaster sets an appropriate *Difficulty* (from 1 to 5) for the action.**
- **The Gamemaster determines which *Attribute* would govern the declared action and if the character's *Occupation* is relevant.**
- **The player rolls a number of dice equal to the sum of the character's *Attribute* rank and *Occupation* rank (if relevant).**
- **Every die result of 1 is counted as one *success*, and every result of 2 is counted as two *successes*.**
- **If the total number of *successes* equals or exceeds the *Difficulty*, the action succeeds; otherwise, the action fails.**

For example: A firefighter is attempting to break down a door. The GM sets a Difficulty of 2, declares Strength to be the governing attribute, and decides that the character's Occupation is relevant to the action. Since the character's Strength rank is 3 and his firefighter rank is 4, the player rolls seven dice (3 + 4 = 7). The results are: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 5, and 9. The player has scored four successes (one for each die result of 1 and two for the result of 2). Since the four successes exceed the Difficulty



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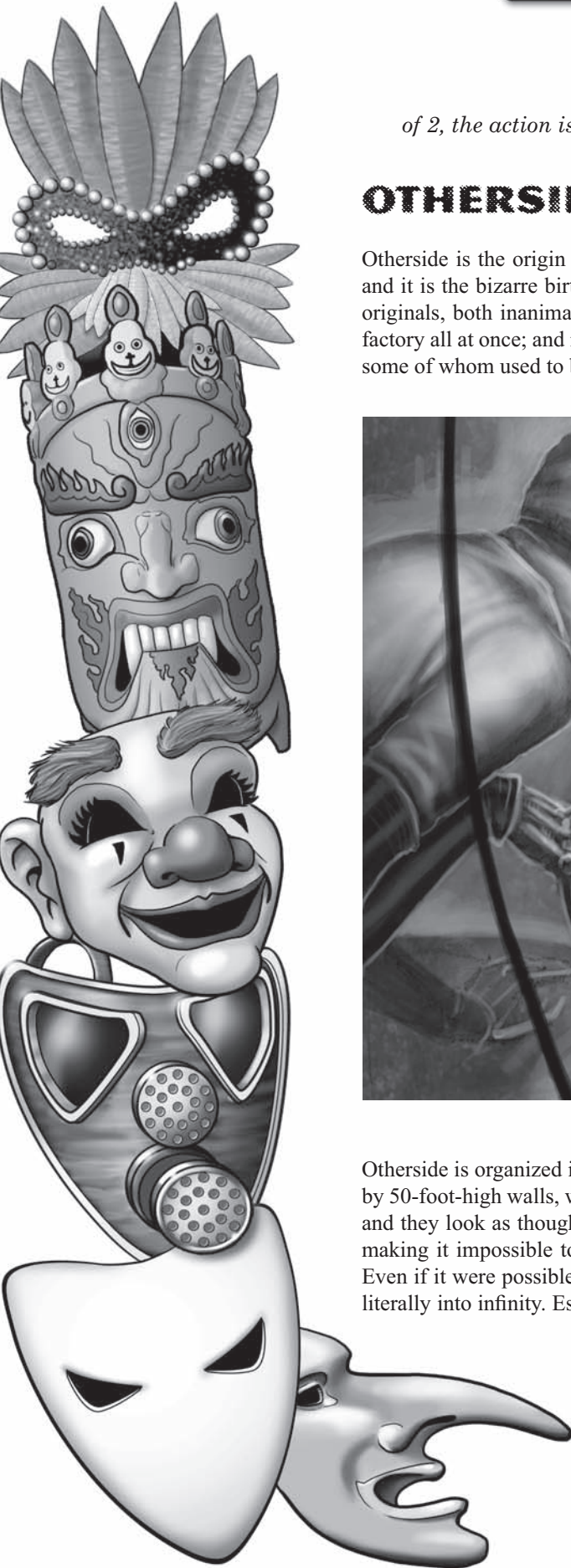
of 2, the action is a success and the door comes crashing down.

OTHERSIDE

Otherside is the origin of all the replicas and doppelgangers that have been placed on our world, and it is the bizarre birthplace of those creatures who make the replacements. It is also where the originals, both inanimate and living, are taken and dumped. It is an elaborate junkyard and busy factory all at once; and it is a nightmare landscape populated by strange creatures and other horrors, some of whom used to be human.



Otherside is organized into a series of compounds. Each is exactly ten square miles and is enclosed by 50-foot-high walls, which are patrolled by sentries. These iron walls are black with dirt and soot, and they look as though they haven't been cared for in years. Each wall is over twenty feet thick, making it impossible to tunnel through without being caught before one could complete the job. Even if it were possible, the effort would be fruitless. The compounds continue in every direction, literally into infinity. Escaping over, or through, the walls of one compound only lands the fugitive



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in another that is exactly like the one he or she left.

There is no external source of light in Otherside. There are no stars, no sun, and no streetlights. Spotlights are mounted on the walls and shine into the compound, but they are constantly moving, sweeping the area for signs of trouble. Thus, they provide little in the way of proper illumination. However, as a result of their presence, there is more light near the walls than in the center of the compound.

The only other light comes from the Red Smog. This omnipresent cloud of pollution gives off a strange crimson glow that provides some illumination—the thicker the smog, the brighter the light. The Red Smog is therefore brightest near the center of the compound, where its source, the Factory where the masters of Otherside do their work, is located.

Despite operating largely as a junkyard for those stolen objects and kidnapped creatures from Earth, and as a factory for the creation of replicas, each compound has a number of other significant buildings. These vary from bunkhouses for Othersiders to tenement buildings. The purpose of these last structures is not known. Ostensibly, they could be intended for housing the people and pets brought to Otherside, but that seems unlikely since abductees are never shown to a dwelling; they are simply dumped into Otherside and left to fend for themselves.

At the center of the compound is an enormous factory. It is in constant operation, spewing the Red Smog into the air. The Factory is well guarded by Razorbacks (a breed of Othersider, half human and half swine, who stand thirty feet tall) and is the most difficult location to penetrate in the entire compound.

Inside, the masters of Otherside do their inscrutable work, crafting their replicas of everything on Earth. A number of creatures assist them in this business, but none of these specialized Othersiders has ever been seen outside the factory.

