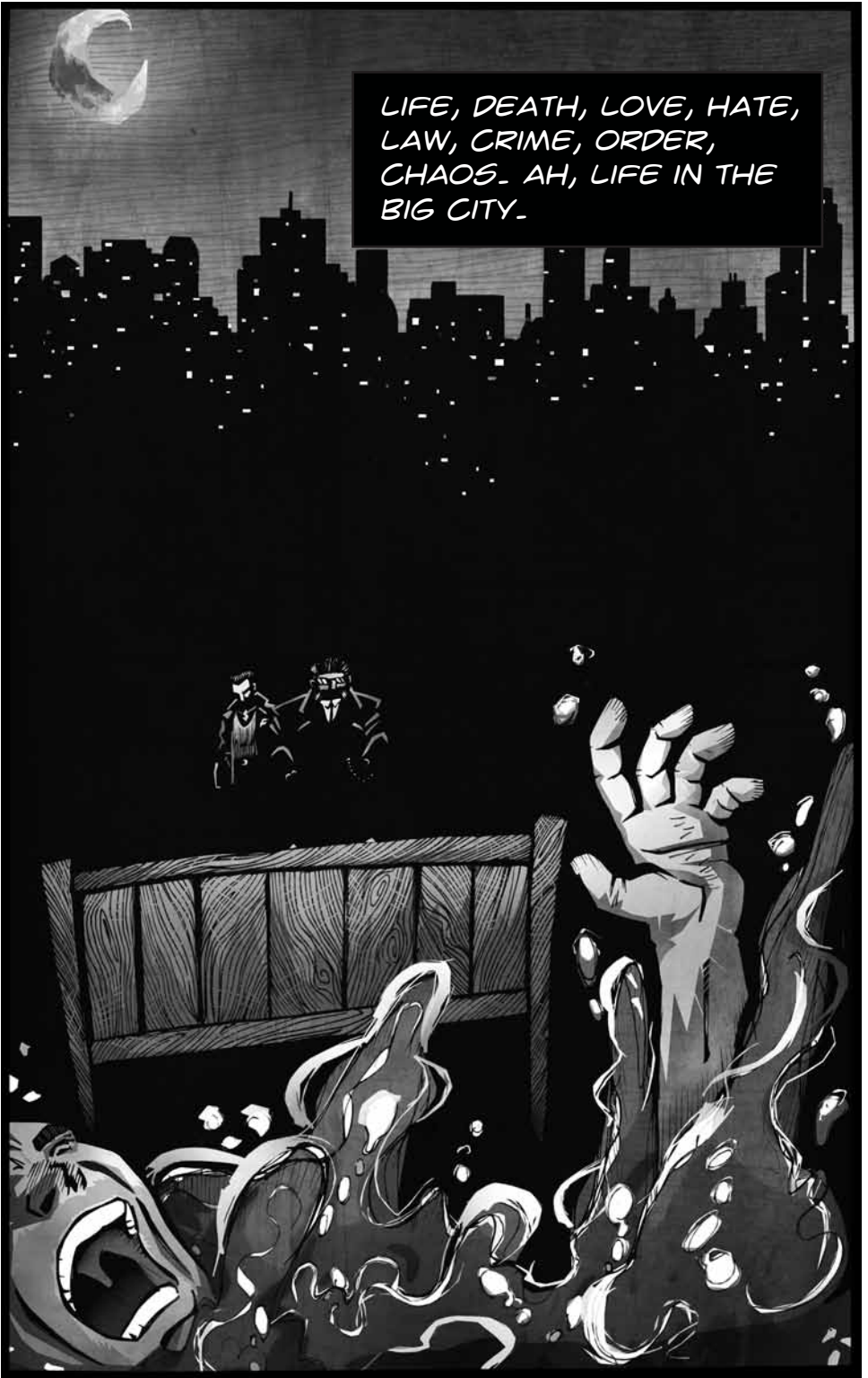


LIFE, DEATH, LOVE, HATE,  
LAW, CRIME, ORDER,  
CHAOS. AH, LIFE IN THE  
BIG CITY.





# LIFE in the BIG CITY

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## WHAT STREETS OF BEDLAM IS

Streets of Bedlam is a cinematic ultraviolent neo-noir crime setting in the vein of Sin City, Boondock Saints, Reservoir Dogs, The Godfather, Assault on Precinct 13, and numerous other dark cinematic gutshots. The people, events, places, and abilities within sometimes border on the over-the-top but only to serve the larger goals we're going to lay down below.

This book details Streets of Bedlam as a roleplaying game setting using the award-winning (and incredibly easy-to-learn-and-play-as-well-as-fun) Savage Worlds setting.

## CINEMATIC

Music plays when a major character enters the scene. Film grain and cigarette burns pop up on-screen. The jerks and shakes to highlight the speed and danger of a car chase and everything almost comes to a still when one of those cars goes off the edge of a cliff. Stories begin in the middle of the action, forcing you to run if you want to catch up with it. Scenes start and end on big beats. Themes repeat through multiple episodes. Sometimes a plot initiated in one session doesn't resolve until ten sessions down. Characters aren't aware of the roles they play in the story but the players are—and use that knowledge to good effect.

### **ULTRAVIOLENT**

Fists punch through faces, embedding thirty strange teeth into freshly-shredded flesh. A hundred bullets whip through the air—and a line of thugs—spraying cement walls with gore. Passengers fly through windshields as their car comes to a sudden stop. Their faces scrape against a shard-studded web of safety glass before their bodies thud against the hood, roll down the highway, and just keep rolling toward the vanishing point. Teeth fly off when a solid jab lands just right. People are beat to within inches of their lives, left hanging, bloody and battered or tied to stakes, bobbing in the drink. It's an ugly messed-up world where folks take more damage and dish out more pain than is humanly possible. Blood loss is measured in gallons and the worst job in the world is the guy who cleans up crime scenes.

### **NEO-NOIR**

Nothing is black and white in Bedlam. Motives are muddy and trust is as hard to come by as it is foolish to entrust. Reasons exist behind reasons all obfuscated by half-truths and the sheer curtain of authority. People do what they have to do to survive, and some merely ride the wave. Those you meet often have long histories full of bad deeds, big mistakes, old debts, and enemies. No virgins, no angels, just demons with white wings.

Seems everybody has someone looking for them. But someone's looking for you too. You may not know it—you may never see it until a barrel's in your face—but they are. One day, maybe they'll find you.

### **CRIME DRAMA**

This is a world about crime: committing, solving, covering up. Cops, criminals, politicians, profiteers, pushers, vicars, and whores are our heroes here. Those who aren't directly involved in crime have some angle toward it. We tell stories that explore desperation and the darker side of fight-or-flight. Scorned lovers, innocent bystanders, ambitious lawyers, gang initiates, kids looking to get made, and everyday people pulled into bad situations are our heroes and our villains.

### **SAVAGE WORLDS**

On top of all those things, Streets of Bedlam is also a Savage World. More than just marketing speak, this setting uses the award-winning Savage Worlds rules system published by Pinnacle Entertainment. The rules in this book have been optimized to match the Savage Worlds Deluxe iteration but you can use previous editions if you like—just be aware there are some changes and a couple of the systems in here rely on concepts introduced in the latest version.

## STREETS OF BEDLAM

### WHERE YOU ARE

You're in Bedlam. At least, that's what folks call it. When you're talking about Bedlam, you're talking about two different cities, really, each broken into a multitude of districts, precincts, and warzones. Looking at a map, you got Bedford on the left and Lamrose on the right. Between them, running jigjag from bottom left to upper right is the Artifice River.

Bedford is the seat of power. Big Church is based out of here. Not only is it where the money is but where control of the whole thing is as well. Lamrose is the forgotten city, where the blue-collar industry used to be before the suits shipped it south and overseas.

Bedlam is a mix of Los Angeles, New York, Detroit, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay rolled into a Rust Belt knot and powdered with a bit of Vatican dust. It doesn't really matter where Bedlam is geographically. Pick a place. One's as good as any.

The thing to keep in mind that is folks come into Bedlam from other places. Most of the folks in Bedford started as out-of-towners come into the big city for fame, fortune, whatever. Lamrose is the opposite: folks who live there are



HE KNEW THEN AND  
THERE, HE SHOULD'VE  
STAYED AWAY FROM  
HER.

## **INTRODUCTION: LIFE IN THE BIG CITY**

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generational, the sons and daughter of the sons and daughter of the original population. Or they are cast-offs once Bedford has chewed off their dignity and pride.

### **WHEN YOU ARE**

All this is written from the perspective of Bedlam in 2012. I don't know when you'll be reading this, person in the future, so maybe your games will take place in your present. 2013. 2030. 2305. Provided we haven't blown ourselves to hell first.

This game assumes modern technology for the time: smartphones, airplanes, orange-scented protein stain remover, and all those other everyday miracles.

Still, whenever you want is fine. Maybe your time is the past. Bedlam in the Jazz Age, maybe, or maybe you'll paste gears and leather on everything and run a "Steams of Bedlam" campaign. Go crazy.

Could be your Bedlam is a patois of time zones and anachronisms: rotary cell phones, prop planes with wi-fi, men in hats and women in moonsuits. Whatever makes your group happy works for me.

Just remember to keep to the core: ultraviolent neo-noir. Everything else is just dressing.

### **WHO YOU ARE**

You're a person with a past and an aim to do good. You've made mistakes that have cost you, chased dreams that ran faster, put your trust in people who didn't deserve it, and gave your heart to those who didn't know how to carry it. You're caught up in something that is bigger than you, bigger than itself some days, and it just might pull you under if you can't muster up the strength to fight.

In the play of life, you're center-stage of your own story so act like it. You win, you lose, you bleed, you cry, you take a punch to the face and get back up because you do. Not. Back down.

### **WHAT YOU DO**

You right wrongs. You track down bad guys who are protected from on high, the men and women nobody else dares to touch. You hunt down the scum of the earth. You rescue the lost, protect the vulnerable, and shepherd the weak.

You navigate the maze of crime, corruption, and cover-up to get to the ugly truth at the heart of the matter. Then you decide whether to expose it, and let it wither in the harsh light of day, or expunge it, putting a quiet bloody end to the matter.

## **STREETS OF BIDLAM**

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You are, despite all appearance, one of the good guys. You may look like a walking meat tank, an S&M superhero, a dingy street rat, a crooked cop, an alcoholic dick, but you're on the right side, most of the time. Just because you ain't a Nature Scout doesn't mean you can't help an old lady cross the street, right?

You use the tools you have, the history you've accumulated, to do what's right. And hey, maybe your motive isn't the squeaky-cleanest. Maybe you're doing it for money, for revenge, for the love of a bad woman, to exorcise some personal demon, but at least you're doing it.

That's a lot more than most folks in the city can say.

What do you do? Whatever needs done.

## **HOW YOU DO IT**

By any means necessary. You kick doors, you chase leads, you push punks into corners and dangle them above their own grave, you find ways to get the information you need. You sit outside houses waiting for the right moment to move in, keep away from those who can stop you, exploit favors, get into trouble, and run face-first toward powerful enemies to get what you want and what you need.

## **WHY YOU DO IT**

Everybody's got a reason as unique as their shoe size. Revenge is popular, as is redemption. Greater good looks nice on an epitaph but, really, it's usually the singular good that serves as motivation in this town. Opportunity is often mixed in there somewhere, either left open for you or you kicked the door down and made your own. Misguided justice goes around like the common cold, a domino effect of chalk outlines and crime scene photos, as blood goes after blood and an eye is taken for an eye is taken for an eye.

Sometimes, you do it because you're the only one who will or can.

Why do you do it? Maybe that's for the shrinks to figure out. And for G\*d to forgive.

## **WHO YOU ARE UP AGAINST**

Besides everyone?

The people in power. There's a status quo, a way things are done, and it all rests precariously on a finely-woven web of lies, deceit, betrayal, injustice, and spin. If certain indiscretions, predilections, and skeletons were to tumble into the light, a lot of powerful folks would have to answer some pretty embarrassing accusations.

And not a one of them is keen on letting that happen.

## **INTRODUCTION: LIFE IN THE BIG CITY**

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You're up against old acquaintances. The people of your former life maybe, or bad debts that have stuck around well past their welcome. Everybody in Bedlam has baggage, even those that just got off the bus. You're no exception. Sometimes those you'd rather forget come out of the woodwork. Sometimes things long-buried rise up in the flood.

Your own demons are always peeking around corners at you, as well. Addictions, fetishes, impulses, voices in your head, emotional scars, a deep-seated need for revenge all put you in places you would rather not be—or in situations you had best be careful in.

Finally, frankly, sometimes people just don't want to be rescued. Sometimes folks don't realize the hole of shit they've crawled or fallen into. Not every damsel is looking for a white knight to come riding in on his noble-fucking-steed. Sometimes the maiden prefers the dragon. Sometimes you rescue them anyway and deal with the fallout.

### **HOW THIS GAME TO BE**

This book may have been created without the support of the Kickstarter backers but I wouldn't have written it with as much enthusiasm and joy knowing there was an audience waiting for this world. I cannot thank you all enough for your faith in me and this project. I hope you like what you see and that you enjoy your time in these streets. For those of you who came to Streets of Bedlam after the Kickstarter, know that the 200 folks who put money where my mouth is are the reason this game is available for you to read.

Almost every single one of them can be found in Chapter Four. Use them as you wish.

