

ZENO CLASH

by mythSSK; v1.0

*We were called xenos
the foreign, the strangers*

*We named our land
Cenozoic
which means
new life*

*Zenos and Zenozoik:
Don't forget where that came from*

--

Welcome to Zenozoik, traveller.

This is a surreal land of punk fantasy, a wide preservation encircled by barriers on all sides designed to keep the inhabitants contained. While there is a wider world beyond Zenozoik itself, almost nothing is known of it or its people beyond their highly advanced technology.

The people of Zenozoik are a savage, uncivilised lot without any concept of law or justice, who settle their conflicts and disagreements through brutal hand-to-hand combat. Despite this, some semblance of order can be found in the land's only major settlement, Halstedom, which ekes out a contradictory existence in the remains of an ancient, once-proud civilisation.

Three days from now, Ghat will return from his time with the Corwids and 'kill' Father-Mother before fleeing with his companion Deadra. If you do not interfere, they will make their way to the End of the World over the next several days and free the Golem there before returning to Halstedom.

You will be staying here for the next 10 years.

You have **1000 cp** to spend.



ORIGIN

Choose an origin.

Drop In [free]

You simply appear in your starting location with no prior history in this world.

Child of Father-Mother [free]

An ancient creature, one of the oldest in Zenozoik, Father-Mother watches over her brood of mismatched children from their base of operations in Halstedom. The children of Father-Mother appear to come from a variety of stock, human and chimera alike, but all are united in their love and support of their singular parent. Father-Mother dotes on each and every one of her children, using their strong familial bonds to grow the clan's influence and strength.

Corwid of the Free [free]

The Corwid of the Free are a forest-dwelling people who believe in an idiosyncratic philosophy of self-expression called the Focus: each individual Corwid pursues a singular interest at all costs, even if it may threaten their well-being.

Most outsiders consider Corwids insane, but they would argue that they are truly free—they are not slaves to common sense, morality, or even their body's needs. A Corwid is a being that has reached ultimate happiness by neglecting its needs in favour of fulfilling its wants. Most are not hostile to outsiders unless their Focus is in danger of being interrupted or requires them to harm others. The most dedicated Corwids will often starve themselves or otherwise allow themselves to come to harm or ruin rather than neglect pursuit of their Focus, but many will take breaks to wander aimlessly or frolic gleefully together.

Golem [200 cp]

The outside world has isolated Zenozoik for hundreds of years, placing barriers around it to contain the chimeras within and assigning golem guardians to each of the cardinal directions to ensure that none could escape. An age ago, long enough that the memories of your original life have faded to dust, you were a human who volunteered to undergo the procedure that would turn you into one of these golems.

You can choose to replace the dead/dying West Golem or you can be an unknown fifth Golem, placed in Zenozoik as an additional failsafe by those that control the outside world.

FORM

Choose a form.

You may freely choose your gender and starting age.

Human [free]

Technically, this is some far-future version of Earth, with Zenozoik itself being located in Chile. Accordingly, though they are a minority, there are still a scattering of relatively ordinary humans living in Zenozoik.

Chimera [100 cp]

The majority of Zenozoik's population are half-human hybrids—some with knowledge of their origins might call them chimeras. There are no distinct species or races, and while many individuals can only be described as bizarre there are certain families that are distinctly based on or hybridised with specific animals, such as rodent-chimeras, elephant-chimeras, bird-chimeras, pig-chimeras and more.

As a chimera, you have animalistic features that give you an edge over a baseline human, such as razor-sharp claws or teeth, scales or tough hide, tusks, fur, or similar.

Golem [Golem only; free and mandatory for Golem]

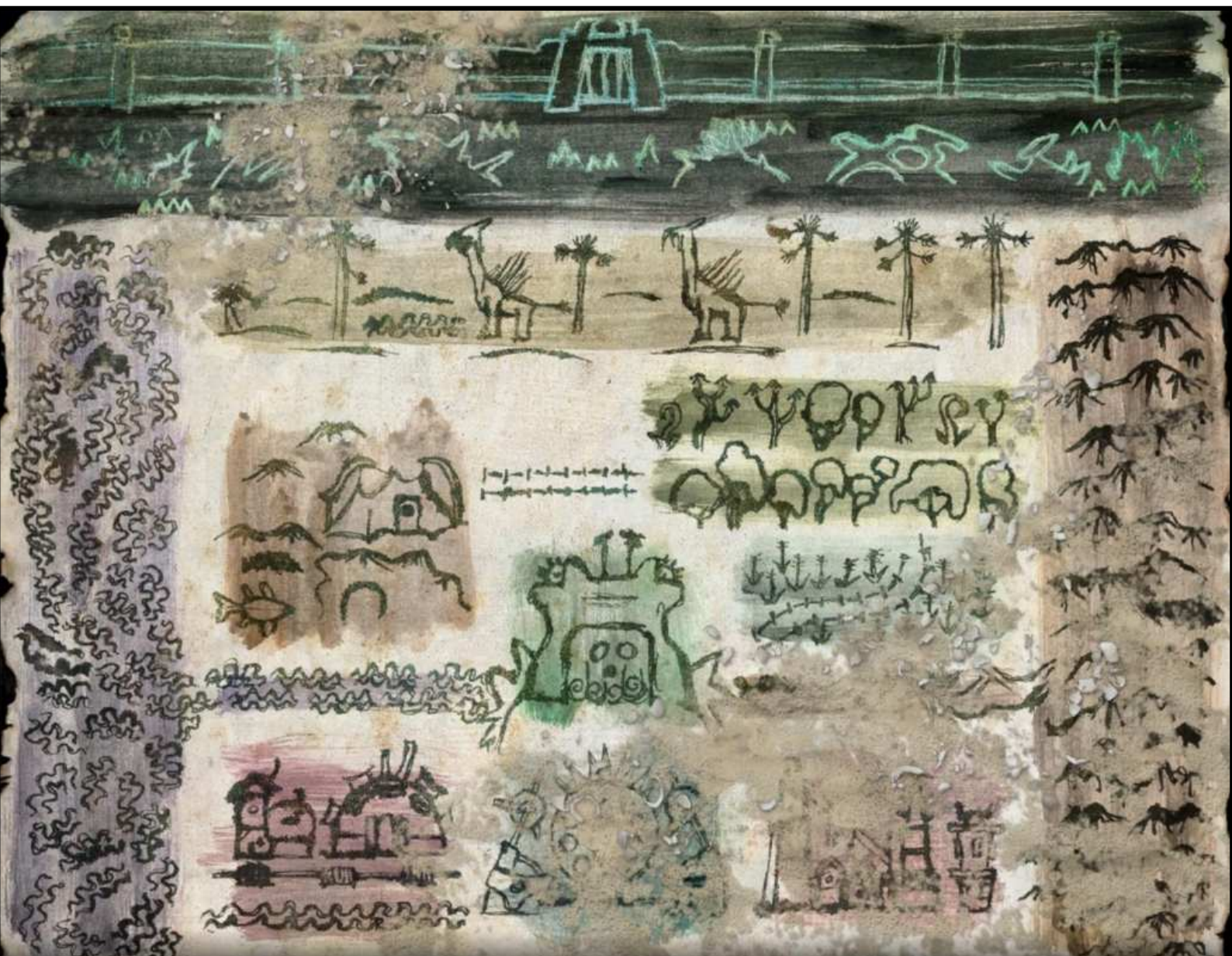
You have beyond-human strength and durability, with a body formed from organic-appearing metal. You need neither food nor drink, being sustained by the environment's ambient energies, and though you have no mouth you are still (somehow) capable of speech. Your organs are able to be swapped out and repaired when they are damaged and your body does not age, theoretically allowing you to live forever.

LOCATION

You may freely choose any location listed below to begin the Jump in.

You may optionally choose to roll 1d6 to randomly determine your starting location.

- 1. Halstedom.** Situated on a large, coral-like formation, Halstedom is the only major settlement in Zenozoik. Despite this, it has no formal government—all who live here do so at the pleasure of Father-Mother's Clan and the Northern Gate Gang, each of which run part of the city.
- 2. Corwid Woods.** The lightly forested areas outside of Halstedom are the home of the Corwid of the Free and a wide variety of exotic plants and animals.
- 3. Avedusa Shore.** This sandy stretch of coastline near Halstedom is scattered with unusual rock formations. The land is relatively fertile and the ocean is rich in fish and crabs—should one not wish to live in Halstedom proper, they could do worse than make their home here.
- 4. Rath-Bird Fields.** A wide region of grassy hills, dotted with trees that blow bubbles, giant pelicans, and strange structures leftover from the fallen Zeno civilisation.
- 5. The Desert.** This harsh and unforgiving landscape is mostly barren, with only occasional scrubs and small animals. Enormous Mucalosauruses, gigantic dinosaur-like creatures with long necks and vague elephantine features, roam the region, and the termite-like Tiamte infest the sands.
- 6. End of the World.** A desolate region of shadow, where it is difficult to tell night from day, this is what await those who venture too far north. The omnipresent fog here bites into the flesh of living beings like teeth, and swarms of amorphous metallic shadow creatures seem determined to keep people away from the large structure at the very edge of the world.



PERKS

100 cp perks are free for their matching Origin.
Other perks that match your chosen Origin receive a 50% discount.

Beat 'Em Up [free for all]

You know the basics of quick and dirty brawling, gained through experience rather than training. You know how to throw or block a punch, how to keep yourself properly focused on an opponent, and—most importantly—how to take a hit and keep powering through. Fighting doesn't stress you out and you can avoid flinching back from inflicting or taking hits.

Heavyweight [100 cp]

Your body is unusually large and heavy, significantly far beyond the norm for a creature of your chosen form. Thick layers of muscle, fat, and/or fur render you nigh-impervious to the basic punches, kicks, and other hand-to-hand abilities of ordinary folk—for those below your weight-class, weapons or special techniques will be needed in order for them to inflict any damage on you whatsoever.

DROP IN

Legacy of Metamoq [100 cp; free for Drop In]

While you sleep, you can enter a semi-lucid dreaming state where you may train your skills. This inner-world training does not tire you in any way—in fact, when you awaken from a dream training session you feel energised and well-rested. While training in your dreams, you advance your skills at twice the normal rate. You do not gain any special access to outside information while training in your dreams.

VERSUS [200 cp; discounted for Drop In]

You gain the ability to mark up to two willing allies by touching them. You can change the marked allies at any time, simply by touching a new person you wish to mark in their stead. If you initiate a fight with someone or they have initiated a fight with you, you may immediately summon one or both of your marked allies to your side, ready to aid you, regardless of distance.

Your marked allies are automatically cleared at the end of a Jump.

Bottomless Barrel [400 cp; discounted for Drop In]

When wielding a gun or other projectile weapon that could run out of ammunition, you'll find that you just... don't. As long as you go through the required motions of reloading, you'll always somehow pull out a fresh magazine, bundle of arrows, drum, clip, or shell for your weapon. This only provides standard ammunition, not specialised types.

Cutscene Bullshit [600 cp; discounted for Drop In]

If you are physically capable of defeating someone, but are about to lose to them in a one-on-one fight anyway (e.g., due to poor tactics or planning, if they manage to surprise you, etc), you can choose to immediately turn the tables on them, reversing your positions and states of injury and potentially claiming victory.

You can do this even if there were more than just the two of you initially involved in the fight—all that is required is that at the end, when you are about to lose, it is just you and them. However, should they have a further ace up their sleeves, this does not prevent them from turning the tables on you once more.

CHILD OF FATHER-MOTHER

Eclectic Weaponsmith [100 cp; free for Child of Father-Mother]

You have mastered the local technology and are able to use simple, crude materials to craft firearms and similar inventions. A couple of sturdy sticks and some dried tendons will let you make a powerful crossbow, some metal piping and other crude components will let you craft a musket or basic shotgun, a careful mix of various plants tossed into a spare skull will let you make a short-range grenade, and so on.

Violence Solves Everything [200 cp; discounted for Child of Father-Mother]

You can choose for any of your attacks to deal completely nonlethal damage, even if it would not normally make sense for you to be able to do so with the weapon you are using. The worst thing your attacks will do to

their target(s) is knock them unconscious, and they'll wake up an hour or so later, no worse the wear except for a few bruises and a headache.

If you choose to use this ability, enemies will subconsciously realise you are fighting nonlethally and—unless they really, *really* want to kill you—will adjust their own attacks to similarly inflict nonlethal damage on you, preferring to knock you unconscious than kill you (though this won't stop them robbing you or taking you captive).

Never Outnumbered [400 cp; discounted for Child of Father-Mother]

You have an uncanny gift for fighting multiple opponents at once, and can never be overwhelmed solely through sheer force of numbers. If you could beat each individual one-on-one, you can beat them all together as a group. You also have near-perfect situational awareness in combat, able to keep track of dozens of opponents and allies all moving and fighting around you without getting distracted.

The Trick with the Bomb [600 cp; discounted for Child of Father-Mother]

You are immune to explosions, so long as you were the one to set them off. You could stand at the heart of a nuclear detonation and, as long as you were the one with your finger on the trigger, you'll emerge unscathed.

CORWID OF THE FREE

Corwid Focus [100 cp; free for Corwid of the Free]

Choose a singular, specific action as your Focus. While pursuing your Focus, reality seems to conspire in small ways to aid you, with things falling into place in a manner that allows you to keep pursuing your Focus.

Your Focus must be a very specific action or very clearly defined set of actions, not a broader goal (*example Focuses from known Corwids include: training others in hand-to-hand combat, crafting a particular type of item, playing music on a specific instrument, walking in a completely straight line, etc*).

You can redefine your Focus once per Jump (or once every ten years, whichever is sooner).

Relentless Focus [200 cp; discounted for Corwid of the Free]

While actively, directly pursuing your Focus or another similar obsession you are fixated on, you cannot get bored, your bodily needs are eliminated (you do not need to eat, drink, go to the bathroom, sleep, or breathe), and you can only be distracted or otherwise have your attention drawn away from your Focus/fixation if you wish to be.

Woodsdweller [400 cp; discounted for Corwid of the Free]

You are completely comfortably in all climates and never suffer negative effects from purely environmental sources. You could go buck naked in the arctic and only feel a very mild chill, go frolicking through the woodlands and never be so much as scratched by thorns or branches, and you'll never suffer from sunstroke, snowblindness or anything similar.

Undeterred Focus [600 cp; discounted for Corwid of the Free]

While actively, directly pursuing your Focus or another similar obsession you are fixated on, any negative consequences that would normally result from continuing are reduced to a small fraction of their original severity. If following your Focus would injure you, the severity of your injuries will be less than one-tenth what they would otherwise be. This includes other kinds of consequences as well, not just physical one (e.g. social consequences, if your Focus would normally make people view you negatively).

GOLEM

Force Field [100 cp; free for Golem]

You have a built-in, green-tinged defensive force field you can activate with a thought. When activated, it explodes out from you in a five-foot radius, hedging out and knocking back any physical threats, and remained active for five seconds. While active, nothing can penetrate the shield unless you allow it to. Once used, the Force Field must recharge for 30 seconds before it can be used again.

Object Telekinesis [200 cp; discounted for Golem]

Like Xotl-Teh, the South Golem, you have the ability to move objects using only the power of your mind. This telekinesis is strong enough to move anything you could move with your own physical strength. You have exceedingly fine control of this ability, allowing you to manipulate items with extreme precision.

Despite the strength of this ability, you cannot use it to directly manipulate living beings—if a living will pushes back against your telekinesis, they are able to immediately overcome it.

Golem's Eye [400 cp; discounted for Golem]

Simply by looking at someone, you are able to peer into their mind and have their identity laid bare before you. You immediately learn their thoughts, hopes, motivations, and their history and actions they have taken up until this point (from their perspective, at least). If you're well-versed in psychology, you may even know them better than they know themselves.

Synchronization [600 cp; discounted for Golem]

Like Kax-Teh, the North Golem, you have the ability to link living creatures to your body. To link with a creature, you need only touch them. You can break your link with a creature with a thought, and re-establish the link by touching them once more. There is no upper limit to how many creatures you can be linked to.

Once linked to a creature, any physical damage you suffer will simultaneously be inflicted upon them. This ability takes your durability into account, but not that of linked creatures. If you take a hit with no damage, you will not transmit any damage to those you are linked with. If you are injured, however, that injury will be copied across to linked creatures regardless of whether they could have withstood the attack that injured you. Linked creatures do not benefit from any regenerative abilities you may have.

COMPANIONS

A Gang of Your Own [50 cp each; or up to eight for 200 cp]

You may import up to eight companions to accompany you. They each gain an origin and 600 cp to spend on perks.

Canon Character [50 cp each]

Provided you can convince them to join you, you can take one of the locals with you as a companion when you leave.

Shadow Elite [200 cp]

The inscrutable South Golem, Xotl-Teh, has gifted you one of these creatures as a servant for his own mysterious reasons. It counts as a pet/follower rather than a true companion.

This creature is made from solidified shadow—seemingly a flowing black metal—that has approximately a humanoid form. A marble mask, similar in appearance to a Greco-Roman statue, is the only part of it not formed from this pseudo-amorphous material. It is significantly physically stronger than an ordinary human, respawns within six hours if killed and, though it has little to no personality or thoughts of its own, it has a basic understanding of anything you say to it and will follow your orders unquestioningly.

ITEMS

100 cp items are free for their matching origin.
Other items that match your chosen origin receive a 50% discount.

DROP IN

Torch of Blue Fire [100 cp; free for Drop In]

This metal rod has a fist-sized faceted crystal at one end. When touched by a source of fire, the crystal glows with an eerie blue flame for a time. As well as making a solid melee weapon, while lit the torch can be used to catch and fling the orbs of fire used as weapons by the shadow creatures that infest the borders of the world. Shadow-aligned creatures are extremely vulnerable to blue flame, with even a glancing blow being enough to completely disperse weaker shadows.

Sun-Moon Harvester [200 cp; discounted for Drop In]

This ornate bracer has a pop-up targeting reticule. If aimed and triggered at a prominent celestial body visible from your current position, such as the sun or moon, it focuses and concentrates any power or energy that the target is emitting a thousandfold. For a normal target (such as a regular star or moon reflecting light from one), this triggers a cascade of concentrated light as a series of small but intense explosions. Once used, the Harvester must recharge for 30 seconds before it can be used again.

Golem Hand [400 cp; discounted for Drop In]

With a gesture, this set of glowing finger-armour allows you to link two creatures or objects together, such that any damage inflicted on one will be automatically and unavoidably inflicted on the other. This linkage is fragile, lasting less than a minute at most and breaking if the targets move more than 20 metres away from each other. Once used, the Hand must recharge for 30 seconds before it can be used again.

CHILD OF FATHER-MOTHER

The Chain [100 cp; free for Drop In]

This sturdy length of steel chain isn't flashy, but it does reasonably good damage, has better reach than any other melee weapon you'll find in Zenoziok, and can easily be flicked out in wide sweeps that can stagger large groups of enemies at once.

Arsenal [200 cp; discounted for Child of Father-Mother]

A full suite of local weapons, including a sword made of strapped-together bones, an anvil-headed hammer, a pair of handguns crafted from fish-like shells, a crude rifle, a two-shot crossbow, a snub-nosed shotgun, and a grenade launcher. Weapons from your arsenal that require ammunition will never run out of basic ammo, needing only that you go through the motions of reloading them.

New Gang on the Block [400 cp; discounted for Child of Father-Mother]

Well now, it looks like Father-Mother and the East Gate Gang have some competition. Your personal gang starts with about two dozen members that are as loyal as family to you, entirely willing to do whatever you ask of them.

Here in Zenoziok, your gang holds a decent amount of territory—choose for them either to hold a third of Halstedom, putting you as peer to the existing gangs in the city, or otherwise a significant chunk of a notable location outside of Halstedom.

Your gang will appear in future worlds, though different characters take on the roles each time.

CORWID OF THE FREE

Mask of the Free [100 cp; free for Corwid of the Free]

This mask—made of wood or crude iron—represents your identity as a Corwid of the Free, covering most, if not all, of your face and marking you as a friend to other Corwids (unless their Focus says otherwise). While worn, the mask protects you just as well as a reasonable set of armour made of the same material would. Most

Corwids tend to eschew all but the simplest, barest minimum of clothing and other trappings of civilisation, save for this mask.

Shrooms [200 cp; discounted for Corwid of the Free]

These three large, bulbous mushrooms are ready to burst. Striking them will cause them to explode and fill the nearby area with a cloud of spores for several minutes—anyone hostile to you caught within the cloud will hallucinate anywhere between one and five copies of you, which will promptly attack them. These hallucinations are capable of inflicting real physical damage on those they attack, though they are much more fragile than you are and can be dispersed with a few solid strikes.

Chneero's Backpack [400 cp; discounted for Corwid of the Free]

This backpack consists of a large drum and other attached instruments that are rigged to play themselves as the wearer moves. Any of the wearer's allies who can currently hear the "music" made by the backpack cannot be knocked out, killed, or otherwise incapacitated—they may be knocked down or injured but, as long as the music continues to play, they will be able to find it within themselves to just get right back up again. This effect does not extend to the wearer.

GOLEM

Mysterious Cube of Rubik [100 cp; free for Golem]

You have a small item or memento of your choice that has made its way into Zenoziok from the outside world. The chosen item must be small and light enough that an ordinary human could easily lift it with one hand, and it cannot be a weapon.

Golem House [200 cp; discounted for Golem]

You gain a fortress similar in scope and design to the Pink Tower, the sea fort on the Avernum Islands, or the one at the northern End of the World. If you have chosen to replace the West Golem, you can choose to have his sea fort instead.

If anyone hostile to you approaches or enters this property, shadows will spawn in small groups to defend it. Though relatively weak individually, there is a limitless amount of them available and they will continue to spawn until the invader is overwhelmed. However, they cannot venture very far from the property, crumbling to dust if they leave its grounds for more than an hour.

In future Jumps, you can choose a location where your house will appear, or you may add it to your warehouse as an attachment.

Titan [400 cp; discounted for Golem]

This massive, autonomous construct was likely built to siege cities. It stands on two large legs and its body primarily consists of a massive, statue-like head and face. The Titan's primary armament is a limitless supply of delayed-blast bombs, which it can lob in any direction in a small area around itself, and it is nigh-invulnerable to conventional weapons. While it is not intelligent, it can be set to guard or attack an area, and will follow your simple instructions to the best of its ability.

DRAWBACKS

You may choose as many drawbacks as you wish.

Father-Mother's Foe [+200 cp]

You have done something to draw the ire of Father-Mother, and can hardly go anywhere in Halstedom without being accosted by her children or their allies, the East Gate Gang. Even outside of the city, Father-Mother's children will occasionally manage to track you down to attack you.

You're unlikely to be attacked by groups of more than five at once, and all are relatively baseline humans and chimeras, with a few heavyweights thrown in. While the constant low-level threats may be annoying, if you choose to escalate, things will only get worse, and they may even hire the Hunter to go after you.

Gentle Soul [+200 cp]

You find yourself completely incapable of killing sentient beings during your time here. Any attack you make will always be nonlethal. Even if you simply set someone up to fall into a death trap they will still survive. This even extends to your companions and others who you might try to hire or order to kill someone—none of it will work. Not only that, but if you try to permanently incapacitate or imprison someone, they will inevitably manage to escape (somehow).

The Hunter [+300 cp]

Your existence has been marked by the Hunter, a mercenary and bounty hunter who revels in the Most Dangerous Game. He has decided that you would be an extremely worthy prize, and has decided to dedicate his time to hunting you down and ending you, permanently.

Although he is ostensibly blind, he has trained his sense of hearing to the point where he can navigate through the incidental sounds made by his prey, and he prefers to snipe foes from a distance using his trained squirrels as targeting aids. The Hunter has access to the full set of Drop In and Child of Father-Mother perks and a seemingly endless supply of bullets and explosive squirrels.

Bug War [+400 cp]

The Tiamte are a collective of near-identical insectoid humanoids that are hostile to all other intelligent life. Though they make their home in the desert, they are more populous than the rest of Zenozoik put together, and they breed extremely rapidly. Normally, the Tiamte threat is relatively contained, though there is some concern that they will eventually come into major conflict with the rest of Zenozoik.

With this drawback, the threat is fully realised and the Tiamte are preparing for imminent, all-out war with the rest of the region. If nothing is done to stop them, not even the golems will be able to contain the expansionistic insects, and once they crush Halstedom they will boil out of the borders of Zenozoik and eventually consume the rest of the world.

THE END

Your ten years in this world are now complete. Choose one:

Stay

Over the last ten years, you've grown fond of Zenozoik. There's still so much for you to do and see in this surreal, alien world.

Return

That's quite enough. Time to retire and go back to your original world.

Move On

Zenozoik is but one world. You intend to see many more before your journey reaches its end.

NOTES

This document is based on *Zeno Clash* and *Zeno Clash II* for PC.

I have not yet played the third game set in Zenozoik, *Clash: Artifacts of Chaos*. When I do, I may update this document to include options from it or create a second one for that game.