

Sub

Liminal

City

WHAT IS THIS?

Subliminal City is a metrocrawl for the Liminal Horror role playing game. In this module, PC's will be traversing the tunnels and stations of future London's abandoned underground system, engaging with terrifying "monsters" of inexplicable origin, ruined and otherworldly environments, and the outcasts of society.

THEMES

The Underground is

- infrastructure beneath city (metro, water and refuse, storm drains)
- structures and remains from the city's history
- individual or social unconscious, including its repressed histories of violence
- name for the networks of radical political actors who see to overthrow the existing system
- art, music and culture that exists outside conventional norms and distribution channels. Art that has been banned.
- the mythic underworld, a maze filled with danger and treasure

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London Tube Map, Transport for London:
<https://content.tfl.gov.uk/standard-tube-map.pdf>

Axonometric Station Maps, Ian Mansfield:
<https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/articles/3d-maps-of-every-underground-station-ab-14630/>

MODULE NOTES

- This module was written for *Liminal Horror*
- Stress: "+ stress" = 1 stress (or see optional rules below)
- Deprived and Fatigued: PCs make a control check if they spend 24 hours in the tunnels. The first time they fail, they are deprived. Each subsequent time, they take 1 fatigue.
- Travel through tunnels: takes like 2 hours from station to station.

OPTIONAL RULES FOR STRESS

- Write down 5 **Traits** for your character
- These can be defining personality traits and core memories/relationships
- Instead of lowering your Hp and Control, Stress immediately adds Fatigue to your inventory
- Normal: 1 Stress ; Extreme: d4 Stress
- Fatigue taken in this way requires 1 week of rest
- When your entire inventory contains only Fatigue, remove one Trait and replace it with Fallout

THE FUTURE HORROR OF LONDON

Subliminal City is set in a future fantasy London. While it contains aspects of the futuristic and otherworldly, this fictional London is also deeply familiar: a center for finance and information and marked by ever-deepening class inequality and apartheid-esque segregation.

THE CITY

- The wealthy have retreated further into enclaves within the city, gated via an extensive surveillance and police apparatus that serves to protect their interest.
- They own the streets, as existence in the above-ground world becomes subject to innumerable, expensive memberships and tolls.
- Anyone working in information industries work from home or from offices outfitted with homes, while working class jobs are increasingly performed by AI-controlled machines.

THE SLUMS

- The vast majority of people who are not part of the ruling class or working directly for them live in formalized slums
- Their movement is strictly controlled, and they cannot traverse the city without special pass cards indicating their purpose for travel.
- This state of affairs developed gradually over time. Ironically, the many who are starving, confined, and pushed to the brink still yet think the system might yet work for them. After all, there are several examples of people who made it out of the slums to become managing directors or football players or famous singers.

THE LONDON UNDERGROUND BEFORE

- Overtime, the underground infrastructure of the city became more a nuisance to the wealthy.
- Fewer people used it due to improvements in telecommuting, and so stations, particularly in the wealthier areas, started to be closed, their exits concreted over or locked with strong, reinforced doors.
- In the end, the entire Tube was closed off and shut down, a relic of a previous age of industrial progress.

THE UNDERGROUND NOW

- Rain and other liquids started to seep into the stations and tunnels
- The Underground is dark, but phosphorescent fungus grows, sometimes providing dim light
- Remnants of its former life—advertisements, shops, trash—can be found throughout

THE MONSTERS

- However, the underground was still there, just beneath the feet of London's well-heeled.
- Urban legends arose of kids sneaking or falling into the tunnels somehow, only to be consumed by horrific, otherworldly monsters. Some said you could even hear the monsters sometimes from the surface! Stories to scare the younger kids, right?
- The monsters are real
- They are biomechanical creatures, made by a security firm known as Smile, intended for war and to help police the population

THE OUTCAST

- The underground was also a refuge for others—people who still found themselves without housing, and with no excess money or prospects, or for whom the above-ground world was violent and hostile to who they were and wanted to be.
- Others dreamt of fighting for a better life, and needed a place to plot its arrival.
- All these individuals took shelter in the tunnels, braving whatever “monsters” and other dangers might be down there for a chance to live a bit more freely. In some stations, small communities formed among these outcasts.

TRUTHS FOR THE FACILITATOR

- The monsters of the underground are real. They attack those who do venture down into the tunnels. Only a few have resurfaced to tell the tale.
- The monsters are sentient biological weapons, developed by Smile Corp to efficiently police and eradicate or expel the “excess” population of the city.
- The city government does not want anyone entering the tunnels, and periodically sends teams of militarized police to clear the underground of its communities of intention, in particularly focusing on the threat of revolutionaries
- Humanitarian groups also send teams of volunteers into the underground to locate and retrieve unhoused individuals, runaway children, and others from what they consider to be certain death
- The underground also has “otherworldly” aspects that seem to be either magical or the effects of a technology more alien and more sophisticated than anything produced on Earth. Or is just that the darkness and eeriness of the stations and tunnels cause people to lose their grasp on reality?

QUESTIONS FOR THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

- Who are the PCs? Why are they entering the tunnels
 - they are volunteers for a humanitarian group (what is that group’s name?)
 - they are part of a revolutionary group (how will they overthrow the government?)
 - they are investigators, seeking to know more about the underground “monsters” (what is their technical expertise, if any?)
- Where do they start their journey? How do they get a key to one of the locked entrances?
- What happens if the PCs are arrested? Can they convince the police to let them go?
- What is magic and what is technology?
- What unexpected, traumatic horrors in the underground cause the PCs to possibly suffer stress

BANK / MONUMENT

ominous, mysterious, eerie, haunted

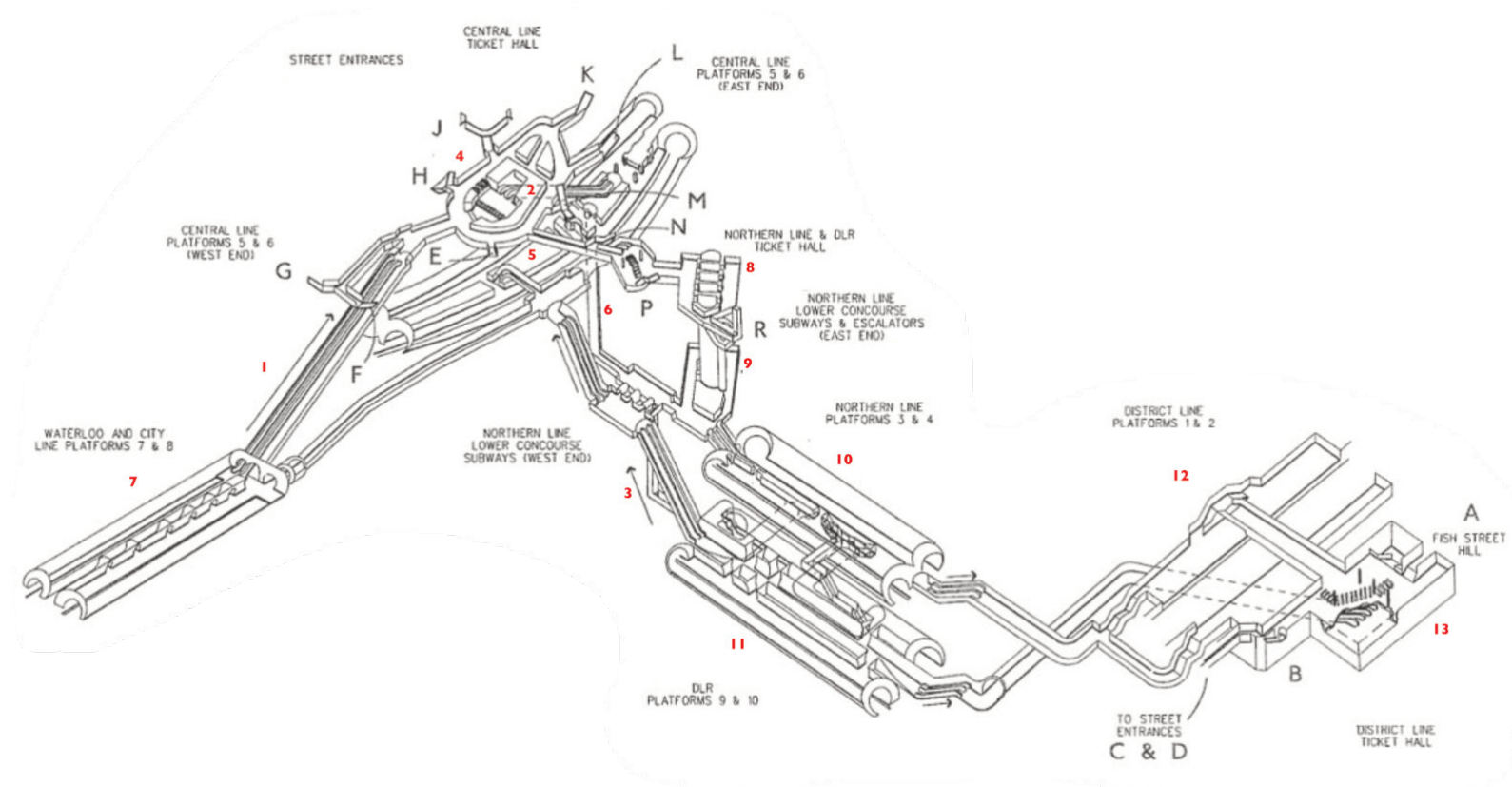
1-3 Escalator Mimics (4 Armor, 15 Hp, 14 Str, 6 Dex, 18 Ctrl)

- 1 Haru: Hungry. Wants to eat you. d8 dmg + stress
- 2 Cindy: Playful. Eats then spits you out at the bottom, covered in grease. D4 damage + stress
- 3 Apsar: Lonely. Wants to trap u 4ever. 1d4 stress
- 4 Central Line Ticket Hall
 - Ticket machines will still dispense tickets for £2.70
 - When ticket is retrieved, room becomes an eerie, sealed church crypt
 - Coffins contain 2d6 skeletons that do not want to be disturbed
 Skeletons 3 Hp, 8 Str, 8 Dex, 10 Ctrl, d4 dmg + stress
 - After 10 minutes the room reverts to normal
 - Tickets are necessary to use elevator at 5

- 5 Lift
 - Requires ticket from 4

- 6 Central Line Platforms (*humid, wet, dark*)
 - Rainwater drips from above, seems to seep through concrete walls
 - Searching, you find
 1. Soaked Newspaper from 12 January, 1941 (headlines about bombs)
 2. Toy action figure
 3. Quality flashlight, some battery life still left
 4. A cell phone with a defunct battery

- 7 Waterloo and City Platforms
 - Water pools on the platform and on the tracks
 - If you stare into any of them, you become lost in a psychic whirlpool
 - Must reveal secret from past or take 1d4 stress



BANK/MONUMENT

- 8** Northern Line Ticket Hall
- Brightly lit with copious glowing fungus. It clings to places where there used to be lights and exudes purple florescence.
- 9** Stairwell
- Cao (*tired, unresponsive*) sleeps in this stairwell. If you manage to wake him, he is too afraid to either wander the tunnels or return to the surface, where he lived a precarious life.
- 10** Northern Line East.
- Four AI robotic bank tellers sit here. They will follow the characters around trying to give them debt tokens, crowding them and getting in the way. They are obviously rejected models.
 - Robot Bank Tellers 3 Armor, 2 Hp, 10 Str, 6 Dex, 11 Ctrl, d3 dmg
- 11** Northern Line West
- A red orb pulsates on the wall above the tracks. It seems to ooze some kind of otherworldly energy, like a wound
 - If touched: control check or 1d4 stress
 - Also: one spell gained (random)
 - The orb pops, spilling out a red ichor. Sticky.
 - Walls seems to start to 'heal'
- 12** District Line Platforms
- Bio-mechanical walking fish monstrosities prowl these tunnels (2 in 6 chance of encounter)
 - Aggressive and hostile, but not to the wealthy
 - Tunnel Fish - 3' long walking fish creatures with metallic razor teeth
 - 1 Armor, 4 hp, 12 Str, 12 Dex, 12 Ctrl, d6 dmg + 1 stress, d8 appearing
- 13** District Line Ticket Hall
- This area contains a spectral fire,
 - As hot as a real fire
 - It shrinks, expands, and moves unpredictably
 - Dex save or take d4 dmg

ST. PAULS

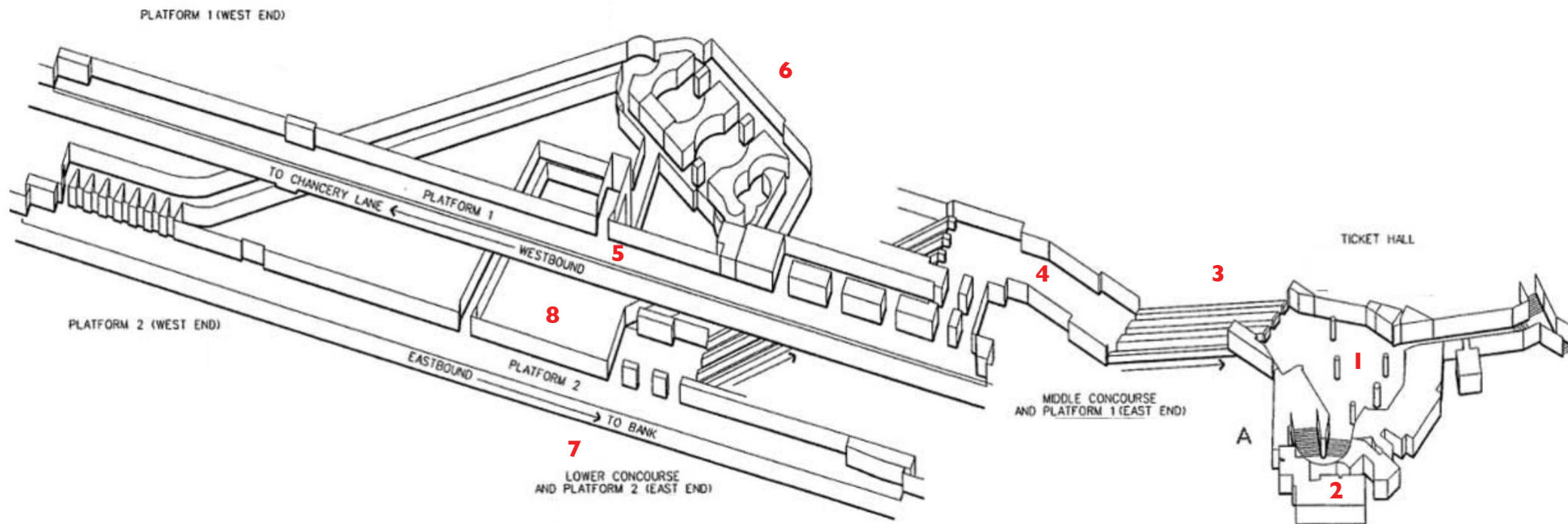
trapped, surveilled, ultraviolence

The Claws

- Gang that uses tunnels to move a synthetic drug known as “squeak”
- Squeak: enhanced damage for one hour (d12). After: deprived, ctrl check or stress

- 1** Guard Room
 - d6+2 guards
 - Playing table, projected image on wall
 - Accepts packages to take downstairs
 - no one unfamiliar gets through
 - Guards: 1 Armor, 3hp, 12 Str, 10 Dex, 8 Ctrl, d6 Dmg (mixed of melee and ranged)

- 2** Noodle Shop
 - Front for the Claws
 - Gus - hefty “server” - 6 hp, 14 Str, 8 Dex, 10 Ctrl, d6 Dmg (cleaver)
- 3** Escalator Barrier
 - Escalator has swirling blades that will cause d8 damage to anyone in the area
 - Switches at 1 and 4: either must be held down to disable the blades
- 4** Squeak Room
 - Stacked boxes, plastic parcels of squeak within



ST. PAULS

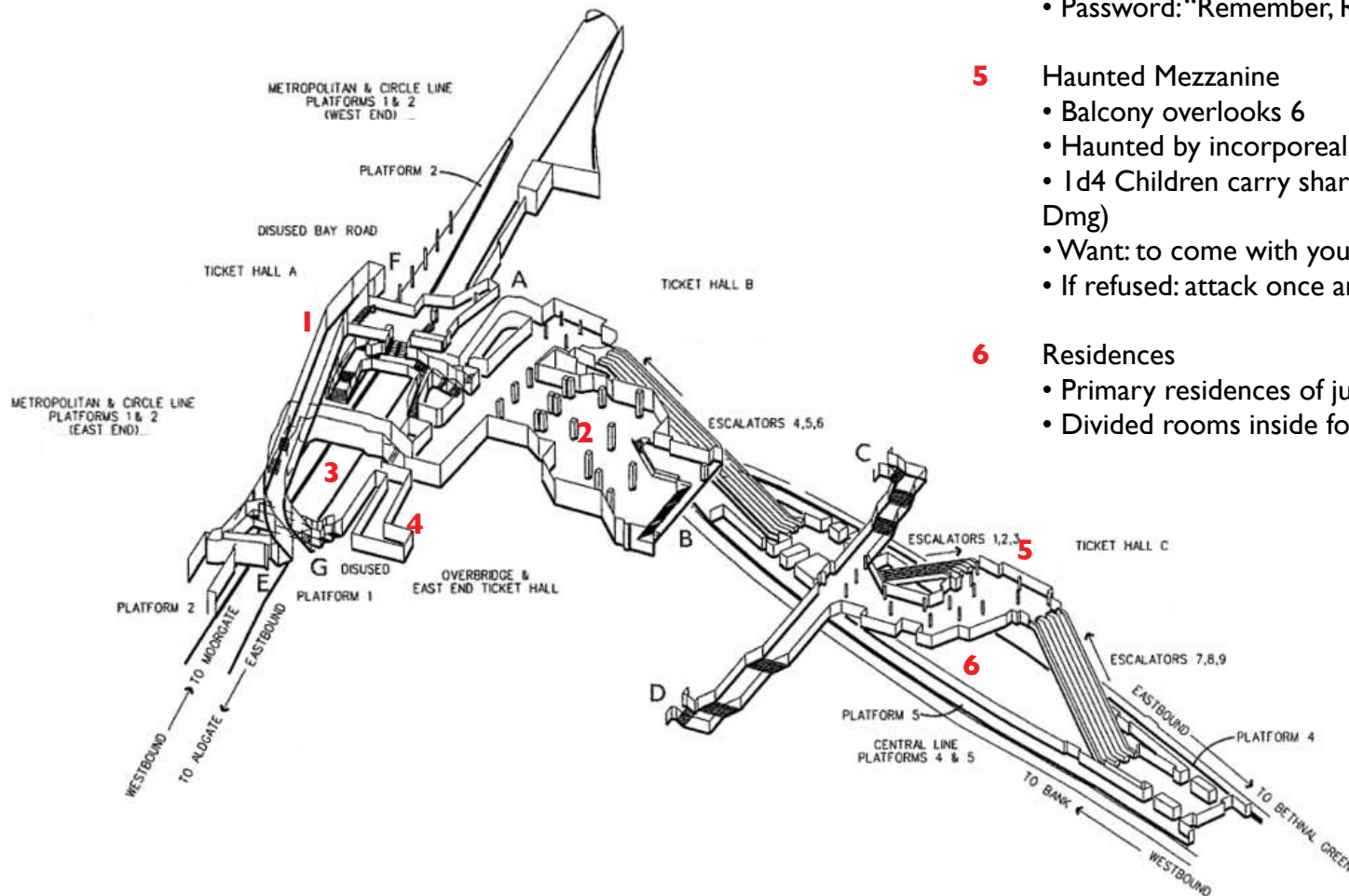
- 5** Platform 1: Armory and Workshop
- Edgar (*technician, tinkerer, taciturn*) works on drone spy equipment
 - Claws keep basic and advanced gear here
 - Searching, you find
 1. Sawed-off shotgun (d6 blast, bulky)
 2. Gas mask (protects against airborne toxins)
 3. Bottles of common medicines
 4. 1 d4 Grenades (d8 damage, blast)
 5. Blow torch
 6. Portable Ram
 7. Mechanical toolkit
 8. Spray paint

- 6** Mazes
- Trial of self: area transports entrant to psychological maze
 - Must defeat the beast of the maze; success raises ctrl score by 1
 - Death in the maze is not real; instead, failure lowers Ctrl by 2.
 - **The Beast of the Mazes:**
 - 2 Armor, 12hp, 16 Str, 10 Dex, 14 Ctrl,
 - Dual d8 damage + stress (claws)
 - A horned terror; can move on two legs or four
 - Gaze: invokes terror
 - Critical damage: will haunt and hunt you until the end of your days

- 7** Platform 2: The Mule
- Manually operated train car
 - Festooned with an array of weapons—massive rotating blades and screws that can pierce and tear metal
- 8** Lutyens' Office
- Lutyens (*chaotic, cruel, unreformed*)
 - Boss of the Claws
 - Office mix of expensive rugs and furniture and trash
 - Many half-filled bottles
 - Lutyens likes to destroy objects for fun
 - Escape hatch to 4

LIVERPOOL STREET

- 1** Lookout
 - 2d4 guards, aged 5-15, keep watch here
 - They are hesitant to fight, but will alert everyone at 2
 - Wary of outsiders, but will let some pass
- 2** Marwood Combs' Lair
 - Small community of about 30 runaway children of various ages
 - Led by Marwood Combs (aged 17, deliberate, careful, bitter)
 - Marwood is a bomb-maker who wants to overthrow the system
 - He sends children to the above-ground as suicide bombers
 - Does not care about civilian targets



juvenile, industrious, traumatized, close-knit, wary

- 3** Workshop and Staging Ground
 - A sort of informal school for the children
 - Children conduct small experiments with explosives and other technology here
 - Used books, old equipment, idling kids
- 4** Armory and Equipment Room
 - Explosive material and mundane electronics
 - 3 in 6 chance to find something simple but useful
 - Secret door: At end of room, a doorway acts as a portal to 6 with the right password
 - Password: "Remember, Remember"
- 5** Haunted Mezzanine
 - Balcony overlooks 6
 - Haunted by incorporeal ghosts of children who occasionally appear
 - 1d4 Children carry shards of glass that are very real and very sharp (d4 Dmg)
 - Want: to come with you
 - If refused: attack once and then disappear
- 6** Residences
 - Primary residences of juvenile community
 - Divided rooms inside former shops and food stalls

GREEN PARK

uncanny, magical, wild

I Atrium

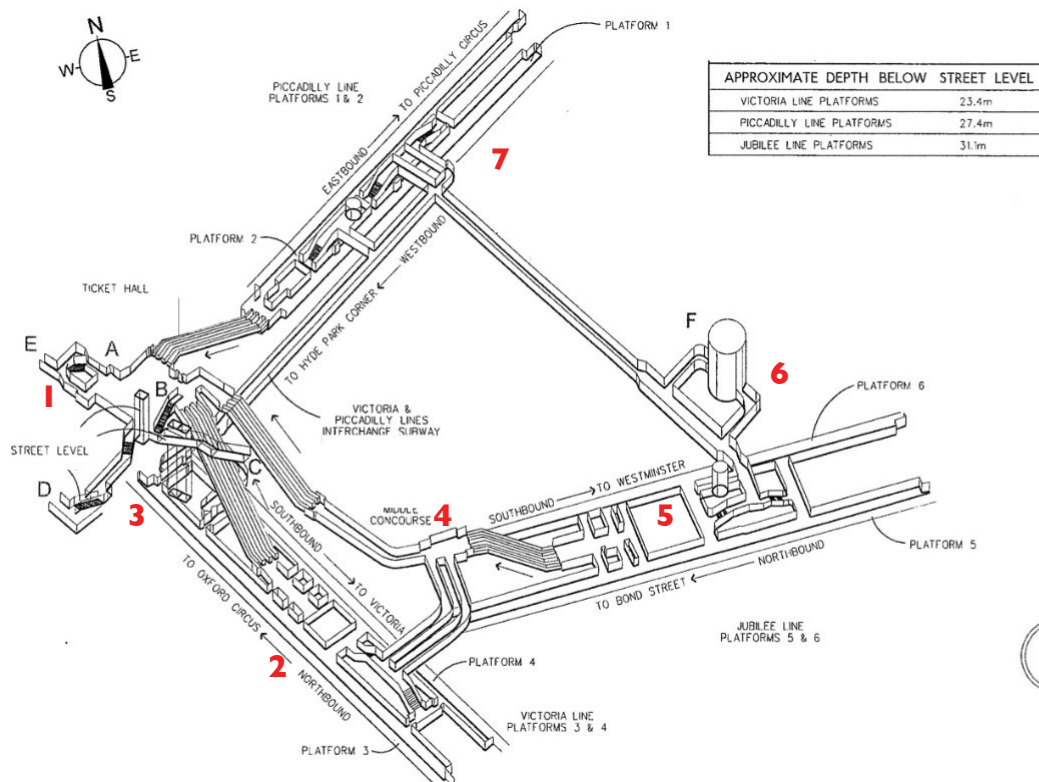
- Water drips in, but no sunshine.
- Still, atrium has copious glowing fungi and wild plant life
- Creeping vines: entangle
- Entrances to escalators covered by roses; Dex save or be pricked and bound to the station
- Baneberry plants: their eyes are watching you

2 Victoria Line

- Magical and poisonous herbs and fruit fill this platform

3 Lift

- Will operate if given fresh berries, shoved into area where lift buttons should be

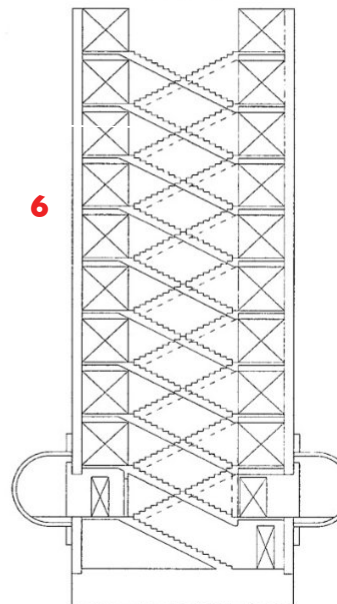


4 Transitional Tunnels

- Two investigators, Caixia and Rani, are stuck bound to the station after getting pricked by the thorns in I
- They sit here with makeshift instruments singing about woks and parakeets
- Must get a pardon from the roses, but they do not know how to communicate with plants

5 Jubilee Line: Govind of the Wild Underground

- Govind (druidic, implacable, protective) sits here
- He has long, braided hair, and is swaddled in layers of clothes
- He protects the parakeets in 6, helps plants to grow in station without natural light
- Can see whole station through baneberry clusters
 - Govind: 10hp, 12 Str, 9 Dex, 16 Ctrl, d6 Dmg (staff), speak with plants and animals, control plants (vine entangle)



6 Parakeet Stairwell

- Wild London parakeets roost here
- They fly through the locked gates leading to the street
- They are reincarnations of the ancients

7 Piccadilly Line: Mutant Gator

- Wet and Swampy, water almost floods in from ceiling
- Shops with still-good snacks, candy bars and crackers loaded with preservatives
- A mutant gator lurks 3 Armor, 8hp, 16 Str, 10 Dex, 8 Ctrl, d6 Dmg/turn (bite), grapples and drags into tunnels

EUSTON

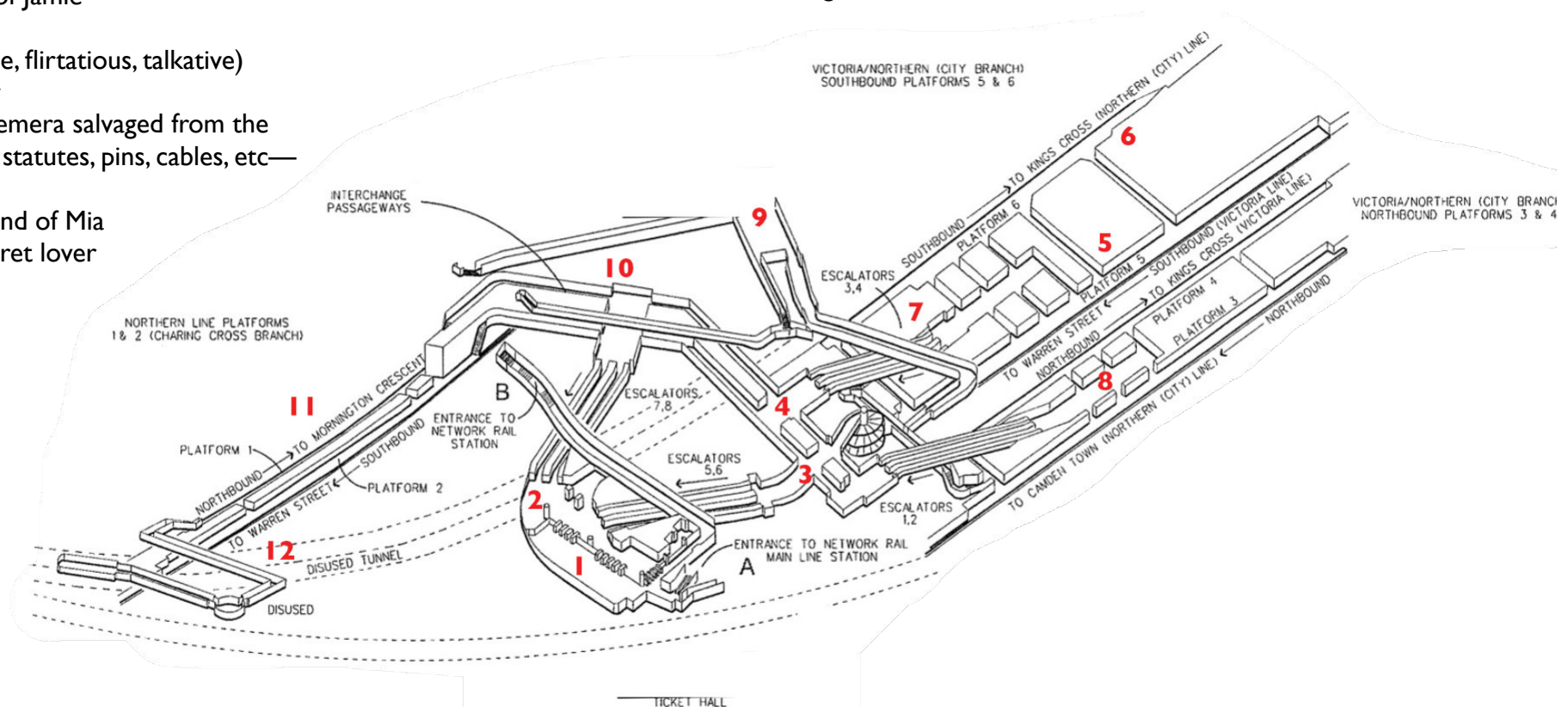
SOMNOLENT

- A small, mutually supportive community of the unhoused
- Each person lives in a different section and has relations with the others
- Artists, tinkerers, some more communal, some more individualistic
- Secretive, careful to hide existence from the powers above
- All trade happens through barter
- Somnolent: 2hp, 8 Str, 8 Dex, 12 Ctrl, d4 Dmg (various)

- 1** Wen the neversleeping (alter, protective, literal)
 - Guards entrance, can raise an alarm if police stop by
 - Good friends with Trish and Alfie
- 2** Rosie (sweet, sincere, helpful)
 - Has a small generator and a TV
 - Former lover of Jamie
- 3** Trish (personable, flirtatious, talkative)
 - Antique trader
 - Scavenges ephemera salvaged from the tunnels—lamps, statutes, pins, cables, etc—all in bad shape
 - Childhood friend of Mia
 - Alfie is her secret lover

private, creative, petty, eclectic, communal,

- 4** Poppy (flamboyant, vain, blunt)
 - Will trade spell scrolls but needs to be flattered
 - Best friends with Jamie
 - Plotting to kill Mia
- 5** Emele (shrewd, unassuming, blind)
 - Stores a patchwork collection of mis-matched clothing, some heavy (1 Armor)
 - Also tarps, tents, and blankets
 - Met Shawn in prison
 - Distrusts Priya
- 6** Sumkind (brave, driven, earnest)
 - Tunnel adventurer, could be persuaded to join PCs
 - Secretly in love with Trish
 - Owes a favor to Olivia
 - Drinking buddies with Shawn



EUSTON

- 7** Olivia (alluring, spacey, curious)
- A poet
 - Used to work in the same place as Jiao
- 8** Alfie (practical, austere, intelligent)
- Thinks about where society is going
 - Trish is his secret lover
 - Rival of Mia
 - Involved in an ongoing dispute with Issac
- 9** Muhammad (passionate, warm, jokey)
- Cooks for everyone, holds dinner
 - Owes a favor to Jiao
 - Jamie is his partner
- 10** Mia (demure, loyal, graceful)
- Thief - steals from the surface but always shares
 - Childhood friends with Trish
 - Plotting to kill Poppy
 - Rival of Alfie
- 11** Shawn (quick-tempered, unsightly, paranoid)
- Paces incessantly. Full of thoughts. Aggressive
 - Drinking buddies with Sumkind
 - Met Emele in prison
- 12** Jiao (confident, forthright, stoic)
- Keeps stores of food, plans for survival of Somnolent
 - Wants to help Issac
 - Used to work in the same place as Olivia

- 13** Issac (bulky, generous, chill)
- Likes to smoke weed
 - Used to be friends with Jamie
 - Involved in an ongoing dispute with Alfie
- 14** Torv (condescending, cunning, frayed)
- Tattered clothes
 - A philosopher
 - Does not like Shawn
 - Has become friends with Priya
- 15** Priya (industrious, energetic, analytical)
- Union organizer
 - Under threat of arrest
 - Has become friends with Torv
- 16** Jamie (theatrical, wooly-headed, anxious)
- Musician
 - Runs makeshift bar with odd liquors
 - Best friends with Poppy
 - Used to be friends with Issac
 - Muhammed is his partner

