

# The Hunters of Altoona

[\[The Day After Ragnarok\]](#)

City: Altoona, Pennsylvania

Population: 20,000

Controls: Altoona Works, portion of Pennsylvania Railroad

Government: Strongman

Problem: Serpent Cultists

Heroic Opportunity: Technology

City Aspect: Tense and Foreboding

Altoona is a company city. It became the effective headquarters of the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) after the Serpentfall, and PRR President Martin Clement is the ruler of not only Altoona, but all of Blair County and the railway from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg, although Pittsburgh increasingly disputes this (there aren't enough people left in Harrisburg to meaningfully dispute anything). The massive rail manufacturing complex of Altoona Works still operates, salvaging, maintaining, and converting train locomotives to burn whatever the engineers can get their hands on; the city itself is a haven for mechanics and engineers, including the ones willing to experiment with Ophi-tech.

As company cities go, Altoona is not oppressive. Both the PRR and President Clement are reasonably well-liked, not least because the company rules with a light hand. Altoona is also one of the few places in the Poisoned Lands where the ruler does not have an entirely negative opinion of the Pacific US government remnant. In the increasingly unlikely event that the USA returns to the Northeast, Clement would welcome its return.

Unfortunately, Altoona is currently on a knife's-edge. The Serpentfall did not quite reach the city, but the tsunami did lap areas accessible via still-functional PRR tracks. Some ill-advised expeditions went out to salvage what they could from the accumulated flotsam from the Drowned Coast, and six months ago a team brought back a curious artifact: a crystal-glass polyhedron that reportedly seemed to glow with its own light.

Furtive rumor now claims that the crystal is an unholy artifact that previously surfaced in lost Providence, and then thought drowned in Narragansett Bay; the crystal was briefly displayed, then vanished from public view at about the same time that certain queer disappearances began among Altoona's refugee population. President Clement has made it known that he will not only pay well for a resolution of this issue; he will pay with only a modicum of

questions. Fruitful investigations would most likely start by trolling for rumors in Altoona's remarkably sanitary refugee towns; there's one particular madman -- Doctor Dexter, a babbling scientist from some former secret government project in Tennessee -- who seems to have a lunatic's half-mad, half-intuitive grasp of the situation. Perhaps he can open up the way forward for the investigators?

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