

# Death Hill

[[The Day After Ragnarok](#)]

City: Todt Hill, Staten Island, New York

Population: 2,000

Controls: Parts of Staten Island

Government: Despotism

Problem: Monsters

Heroic Opportunity: Trade Goods

City Aspect: Cultist and Mercantile

The top of Staten Island is four hundred feet above sea level, which meant the island did not get completely inundated by the Serpentfall. It did get battered and thoroughly tainted by the tsunami, but there was enough relatively clean land at the top to allow crops to be grown afterward. Once the plagues, fighting, and monster attacks tapered off, at least.

By then Staten Island was firmly under the control of workers from the Staten Island Rapid Transit company (SIRT). SIRT had access to freight trains using the B&O Railroad lines at the time of the Serpentfall; by great good luck this included things like canned foods and military supplies. Unfortunately, the average SIRT worker was also thoroughly Snakebit within weeks. When charismatic preacher Peter Hickey came through in the fall of 1945 to

preach of his new Church of Venom, the entire organization converted almost en masse. The rest of the population either did the same, or were forced out into the Drowned Lands (with a week's worth of food, a revolver, and twenty rounds of ammo) to take their chances with the monsters.

That odd flavor of ruthlessness tempered by slight mercy permeates the Church of Venom. It's not an *entirely* vile Serpent Cult, in that the Church doesn't keep slaves and won't sacrifice humans. Break its rules, and the Church sends you out to die in the swamps of NYC instead of killing you itself - which is likewise considered very enlightened, by the extremely low standards of the Drowned Coast. And, most importantly, the Church will trade with outsiders in good faith.

This is important because Staten Island overlooks the ruins of New York City, which is both the richest salvage site on the East Coast, and one of the most monster-haunted. The Church of Venom has techniques and rituals to keep monsters away from their walled encampment on Todt Hill, and know the safest ways in and out of NYC itself. They will share all of this, for a thirty percent cut of the proceeds... or a conversion to the Church of Venom. Most adventuring parties choose giving the Church its cut. Alternatively, you can always buy some

of their salvage (mostly precious metals and jewelry, or other non-perishable luxury goods). The markup is high, but sometimes it beats going in yourself.

It should be noted that the Church of Venom is not a *benevolent* organization, either. Bishop Hickey is superficially cordial, but he is a fanatical Serpent Cultist who fully intends to rule more widely than the mere island of Staten Island. But he respects both the letter and the spirit of a contract, and his Church doesn't abduct solitary travelers and sacrifice them to snake gods. Which possibly almost *does* make it a benevolent organization, in this fallen year of 1948.

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