

Poughkeepsie, NY, USA

a.k.a. "Fray", "the Bubble"

Poughkeepsie is an American city (population 30,000) on the Hudson River in New York State, with a history stretching back several centuries. The mundane world doesn't have much to say about the place; it's mostly known for its mildly memorable name, and Vassar University. To mortal eyes the city is not particularly noteworthy and hardly especially significant.

To *celestial* eyes, it's a place of horror - and we're talking in-space-nobody-can-hear-you-scream style horror.

It all started on August 23, 1908, when an otherwise routine reconnaissance mission resulted in what the more wild-eyed research metaphysicians call a 'cascade'. According to one controversial, yet ineffable theory, generating Disturbance via supernatural actions on the corporeal plane rewrites reality in the near vicinity. The effects scale up, too. The larger the disturbance generated, the greater the rewriting.

Then again, this is per the theory. The problem is that, given how celestials would be equally vulnerable to the effects of the revisions, it's very difficult to confirm that anything at all has happened. According to the theory,

cascades would simply be rewrites that were large enough to have people notice the flotsam. To complicate matters further, if this was a cascade, it was an anomalous one (albeit with a rather flexible definition of 'anomalous.')

In this case, the reweaving process that the Symphony would theoretically use to repair itself has stalled. This resulted in a metaphysical blank spot - globe, actually - measuring five miles in diameter and centered on the shore of the town.

Inside that globe, *nothing* supernatural works. That means no resonance use, no gathering or expending of Essence, no Song use, no imposition of dissonance conditions, no celestial combat (or even taking celestial form), bi long-term maintenance of vessels not specially designed for the specialized environment, no sort of Undead whatsoever, no Superior invocations: nothing.

Luckily for human beings actually living in Poughkeepsie, the old wives' tale that when a person dies his or her corpse loses a quarter's grain of weight is quite true; souls have a physical component, so anyone who dies in Poughkeepsie is *not* instantly subject to the True Death. On the other hand, the dead of Poughkeepsie do not automatically go on to Heaven, Hell, and/or reincarnation. They have to leave under their own power. Given that they

aren't Ghosts, either (with a Ghost's stubborn drive and focus), they typically lack enough Will to do so.

The result of this is that the least supernatural section of the corporeal universe also has one of the highest concentrations of apparitions and spooks. Generally speaking, they don't do much, but their relative presence triggers human subconscious attitudes; the town 'enjoys' a reputation for being boring, stodgy and (tellingly) dead. Aside from that, it's interesting to see how little things change when angels and demons are taken out of the picture. The town is not notably worse or better off for having no celestial oversight - which is actually quite odd, given that human beings are unable to even unconsciously spend Essence while inside the Bubble. Perhaps everything balances out in the long run.

As noted above, celestial vessels not designed for Poughkeepsie tend to degrade over time. Most vessels aren't really designed to work the way that a *real* body would; trying to keep muscles working when they're being supplied by a digestive and circulatory system that's supposed to be largely ceremonial isn't exactly easy. In game terms, every 24 hours spent inside the Bubble will cause one hit of damage to a vessel, and there's no way for celestials and/or ethereals to properly heal damage

while still inside the no-supernatural zone. They can stop bleeding and set bones, and that's about it.

The only two exceptions to this are Grigori and Lilim - the former supposedly are both immune to the daily damage and can heal normally there, while the latter seem to just be able to 'encourage' their vessels to take on a functionally human aspect. It should also be noted that both Nephilim and Gorgons immediately lose all of their supernatural aspects while in the Bubble... which can include their imposed Disadvantages. They may still suffer lingering physical effects, but not many crossbreeds care.

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