



INTRODUCTIONS an introduction of sorts

RunePunk was conceived in 2004 after I decided I wanted to write for the Savage Worlds system. I wanted to create something unlike anything that had gone before and I wanted to do it quickly. Let's address those points in turn. RunePunk was going to be a world in which the arcane developed parallel with technology. Wherein there was a viable reason why one did not eclipse the other, a world where factories belched forth filth into the air and slime into the gutters while mere streets away demonologists toiled over ancient rituals to summon forth demons to do their bidding. I wanted high fantasy in an urban environment. I wanted to give my due to works of fiction that had profound effects on my youth. While many pay tribute to Lord of the Rings, my heart ached far more for the exploits of Elric and his black blade. While some loved the epic tales of adventure that stretched across the realms of a mundane landscape, I loved the mystery and wonder, the grime, and the filth of the city spun out by Leiber with the beloved Lankhmar far more. I enjoyed the political intrigues of Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast and was overwhelmed by China Mieville's Perdido Street Station, which brought back a sense of amazement for me and redefined modern fantasy. While I'm giving nods to influences, I cannot leave out Neil Gaiman who unknowingly taught me to challenge myself, to draw upon the myths of the past, pay homage to what has gone before, and try to add a bit for the future.

Getting to the second part of my design parameters, I wanted to quickly develop my setting. I opted to limit my environment and confine it to a city, but I wanted my city to be able to handle anything I came up with, so it ended up being a huge city. To this, I must give a wink and a nod to all the Judge Dredd comics I read in my youth that have influenced this work as well as the artistic visions of Tim Burton. Fully fleshing out my cultural influences, I must say such movies as Dark City and Labyrinth played with the ideas of what was right and proper in a fantasy work. Finally, the computer game Arcanum fascinated me from the outset with its blending of disparate genres.

So, when I'm asked, "What is RunePunk?" it's difficult to give a hard and fast answer, as it is impacted by so many influences on my life. If pressed, I say that it is dark steampunk fantasy, but it's not solely steampunk in

the traditional sense and the fantasy is not the stereotypical dragons and the like, but wanders farther afield. In effect, RunePunk goes far beyond the fields we know and into a realm of possibility and wonder, which is what any good fantasy should do. Hopefully, I've managed to capture the essence of this to some degree, but a game setting, unlike a story or novel, is not truly alive until a group of people comes together to explore its nooks and crannies.

Is it possible to enjoy RunePunk without any of these literary conceits or cultural references tucked away in your memory? Of course it is. ScatterPoint is a city comprised of many people and is an amalgam of many times and cultures. While it is sometimes a waypoint for people slipping between dimensions and dreams, it is far more. Against the backdrop of a thriving industrial age powered by magic and steam, desperate people take desperate measures to ensure their survival. Life is a commodity like any other and the gears of the city grind down hard. Everyone is replaceable and knows this, so some strike out to make their fortunes. Hardbitten mercenaries with runic arms and armor implore passing merchants for employment while chemists leave their labs and take up the mantle of adventurer. Humanity forms the core of the city's populace, but it is not alone. Ghosts and demonspawn are a familiar sight among all levels of society. Mechanized men powered by technology and magic trade their souls to support their families. Ratlike folk go where the others cannot and keep the complex mechanisms of the city running smoothly. The shadows and the steam contain many secrets. Read on through the history and the races of this place. Imagine the grit beneath your feet and the grime pervading the air. Imagine this is your life and - know this- the only way to get ahead is to somehow be extraordinary. With that challenge, I welcome you into the streets of ScatterPoint and encourage you to make ScatterPoint your own. Everywhere there is a story desperate to be told. Tell yours.

Best Regards,

SEAN PRESTON