

PILTOVER AND ZAUN: OIL AND WATER

BACKGROUND GUIDE

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- Terrorism
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- Poverty
- Cybernetic Enhancement
- Chemical Warfare

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DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EQUITY AFFAIRS

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hello Delegates!

Welcome to SSICsim 2022 and to Piltover and Zaun: Oil and Water. Last year Arcane took the internet by storm. As someone who played League of Legends for the better part of middle school and high school, I wanted Riot Games to make a show set in the world of League of Legends for years. Although the twin cities of Piltover and Zaun weren't my first choice for the setting of a League of Legends TV show,

Arcane breathed so much life into these cities in just nine episodes. Arcane proved that it is possible to successfully adapt a video-game into another medium. To carry on the spirit of adaptation, our Dais have been hard at work transforming Piltover and Zaun into a committee where delegates can experience—and influence—the politics, technological change, and conflicts highlighted in the show.

Delegates will represent influential members of the factions that appeared in Arcane. From the heads of state in the High Council of Piltover to the Chem-Barons of Zaun, major players that appeared in Arcane will all be present—as friend or foe. Although this committee does take some liberties with the lore of Arcane and tweaks some story details to not interfere with the agency of the Delegates, we've tried our best to preserve the unique atmosphere and setting that the show is known for. Any of those changes should become apparent when reading the History, State of Affairs and Characters section of this background guide.

The mechanics for this committee should not be too complex. Mechanics like building new inventions, sabotage, and swaying the hearts and minds of everyday citizens were all elements present in the show. Instead, these mechanics provide Delegates with the opportunity to take advantage of the unique opportunities that Piltover and Zaun can provide. I would also encourage everyone to deviate from the events of the show and place their own unique spin on the material. Hopefully we can all build a story that will blow Arcane out of the water.

As a bit of background, I'm a third-year student at the University of Toronto majoring in Ethics, Society & Law, Political Science, and minoring in Philosophy. This is my second year being a part of SSISim and my first year directing a committee. Whether you're new to Model UN or an experienced Delegate, I hope to make your experience a memorable one.

To close off this letter, I would like to leave everyone with a quote from Arcane. "Real power doesn't come to those who were born strongest or fastest or smartest. No. It comes to those who will do anything to achieve it." All of you possess great power. It is up to you to use it to fight for the city that you believe in.



DIRECTOR FOR PILTOVER AND ZAUN: OIL AND WATER

INTRODUCTION

For Piltover and Zaun: Oil and Water

Welcome to Piltover! In the City of Progress, delegates can find the most brilliant minds and the most influential merchant clans to grace the continent of Runeterra. However, deep beneath Piltover, in the seedy underbelly known as Zaun, there are only the desperate and the destitute—barely making ends meet. Conflict has been brewing between Piltover and Zaun for years. As leaders of influential factions in Piltover and Zaun, each with their own ideology and vision for the twin cities, delegates have the power to permanently change the fate of their home.

This background guide will introduce delegates to the history of Piltover and Zaun, and all the factors that led to the conflict in this committee. Through this, delegates will be exposed to the various factions in the city and learn of their capabilities and visions for the future. For example, Silco's faction consider themselves revolutionaries and fight for Zaun's independence. This will inevitably place themselves on a collision course with the Council of Piltover, who believe that stability and order must be maintained for Piltover to preserve its status as the commercial and scientific hub of Runeterra. Although the motivations and ideologies of delegates may shift throughout the committee, this background guide provides a foundation for delegates to understand the political and ideological conflict at play.

Moreover, this committee takes place in the wake of Piltover's most recent scientific revolution with the invention of Hextech and Shimmer-based Chemtech. By understanding the significance of this scientific revolution, and the technology that delegates have access to, every faction can access many more avenues to achieving their goals. In essence, this committee is largely free-form and delegates are only constrained by their creativity and their knowledge of the setting.

DEFINITIONS

For *Piltover and Zaun: Oil and Water*

Piltover

The City of Progress. Piltover is the commercial and cultural center of Runeterra. A coastal city, merchant ships and budding entrepreneurs come to Piltover to engage in all sorts of trade. Institutions like the University of Piltover attract the most brilliant minds on the continent, who provide the city with inventions like Hextech. Piltover is one of the least militarized city-states in Runeterra and is ruled over by a council of influential merchants and scientists.

Zaun

Zaun is a large district in the canyon that lies below Piltover that is riddled with crime, corruption and poverty. However, many refer to it as the City of Iron and Glass. Streams of chemical waste flowing from Piltover have left the district heavily polluted. Many of its inhabitants resort to collecting and repurposing junk and discarded experiments from Piltover to survive. The inhabitants of Zaun view Piltover with a mixture of envy and loathing and frequently find themselves at odds with the Piltover Enforcers that patrol the region. Zaun is informally ruled by the most influential Chem-Barons in the district.

Noxus

Noxus is a brutal, expansionist empire that values strength, in all its forms, above all. Noxus has arguably the most powerful military in all of Runeterra, with the largest standing army. There has been an uneasy peace between Noxus and Piltover. Although none may count themselves true allies of the Noxian Empire, trade with Piltover has been essential in maintaining Noxian supply lines and funding their war economy.

Hextech

A recent invention of Jayce Talis and Viktor, Hextech is a fusion of the magic stored within Hex crystals and Piltover technology. Hextech has become a part of daily life in Piltover, powering homes, transportation and all manner of technology. Development in Hextech has led to the creation of the Hexgates, a series of gates capable of transporting airships and all manner of goods thousands of miles in an instant. For reference, one Hex crystal can power an airship for weeks if not months when refined properly.

Chemtech

Since Zaun lacked the funds or equipment to access Hextech, they developed Chemtech as an alternative. Widely used throughout Zaun to power everything from weapons to street-lamps, Chemtech operates based on the various chemicals that can be found throughout Zaun. The most potent Chemtech equipment is based on a chemical named Shimmer, which runs the risk of inflicting terrible damage to the user.

Chem-Baron

Zaunite industrialists and merchants with significant influence in the development and trade of Chemtech.

The Council

The heads of the merchant clans that serve as the ruling body of Piltover.

Enforcer

The police of Piltover and the closest thing the city has to a standing military force. Enforcers typically have a tense relationship with Zaunites and carry arms while on duty.

HISTORY/CONTEXT

Piltover and Zaun: Twin Cities

Piltover was founded centuries ago by roaming merchant clans from all corners of Runeterra. Many of the first merchant clans like the Arvino, Medarda, and Kiramman formed the council that serves as the governing body of Piltover. These merchant clans include descendants that remain on The Council today. Its proximity to the ocean meant it would soon develop into a major trading hub. In addition, the surrounding valleys and canyons made the region easily defensible.

As Piltover grew, residential areas arose. Those which accommodated some of the earliest arrivals, closer to the ocean, would become the nobles' and merchants' neighborhoods today. In contrast, the residential homes built decades if not centuries later were often occupied by those of more modest backgrounds. Eventually, due to a lack of available space, a new district was constructed deep below Piltover in the surrounding valleys and canyons. Many of the inhabitants in this new district were barely able to make ends meet. The precariously built infrastructure and lack of political will to invest in the district only worsened matters. Eventually, this district came to be known as Zaun.

Piltover's booming economy bolstered the Council and influential merchant families as they built the University of Piltover, to whose gilded halls scholars from all across Runeterra flocked. This made the city a center not only for the exchange of goods, but also ideas. Over time, Piltover also developed a reputation for scientific innovation. However, the byproducts of innovation—untreated chemicals, toxic waste, discarded inventions—were disposed of in Zaun via sewage. Eventually, Zaun developed the heavy, green smog that it is known for today.

Destitute and poverty-stricken, Zaunites had to adapt to survive. Some turned to petty theft

and gang violence in order to make ends meet. Others hunted the mutated wildlife in the canyon or tinkered with the scraps of discarded Piltover technology. Zaunite innovations — jury-rigged inventions born of scraps and chemical waste — spread among its citizens, laying the foundations for Chemtech. After reports of this technology being used in territorial disputes, Piltover Enforcers boosted their presence in Zaun, rousing their deep-seated tensions.

At this point, many Zaunites no longer considered themselves part of the city above. Life in Zaun or Piltover could not be more different.. Many would describe Zaun as a twin city to The City of Progress, earning it the moniker: The City of Iron and Glass.

Revolution and Deepening Divisions

Ten years ago, Zaunite revolutionaries led an insurrection against Piltover. The revolutionaries attempted to seize control of government buildings and major trade ports but were met with violent resistance from Enforcers on the Bridge of Progress, which connects Zaun to the rest of Piltover. They and their revolution were wiped out in an instant. But this incident only deepened the divisions between the city's splintered halves. Piltover soon heightened the amount of Enforcer patrols in Zaun, leading to frequent scuffles with locals.

Vander, one of the rebellion's leaders, turned away from its goals after witnessing the collateral damage. In the following years, he sought to co-exist with Piltover. However, Silco —a rising crime lord in Zaun rumored to have a history with Vander —took the opportunity to garner support from Zaunites dissatisfied with the uneasy peace and began plotting another revolution. Very few know what happened, but one night, fifteen years ago, a confrontation between Silco and Vander left Vander dead; Silco rose unchallenged to become one of the most influential figures in Zaun.

Hextech and Chemtech

A few years after the attempted revolution a young inventor by the name of Jayce Talis began experimenting with Hex Crystals (crystals containing raw arcane energy) to no avail.

More recently, Jayce partnered with another inventor, Viktor, and together they achieved a breakthrough. At the behest of the Council, particularly Councilor Medarda, they received funding and assistance from the University of Piltover.

Around the same time, the alchemical technology on which Zaun relied developed rapidly. Zaunite scientists, mainly those under Silco's influence, developed Shimmer, the compound which powers all Chemtech, Zaun's Hextech counterpart. Users who over-rely on Chemtech experience several terrible side effects; the primary one is a dependency which blinds one to the risks of Shimmer until it may be too late.

PRESENT ISSUES

Developments in Hextech

As the popularity of Hextech and Hexgates rocket upward, Piltover has seen an unprecedented trade boom. Backed by Councilor Medarda, Talis has secured a position on the Council. Alongside Viktor, and under Professor Heimerdinger's supervision, he continues to develop applications for Hextech, including mining gauntlets and lasers.

A week ago, a handful of Hex Crystals went missing from one of Jayce's laboratories. After an investigation by Piltover Enforcers, the culprit was determined to be a lone Firelight under Silco's command. Following such a costly theft, Enforcers have gone on high alert and the Council is preparing a response.

Silco's Faction:

Over the last few years, Silco has consolidated enough power to rival the power of multiple Chem-Barons. Silco has transformed The Last Drop, a tavern in the undercity of Zaun that previously belonged to Vander, into a base of operations where a significant number of Zaunites work to further Silco's ambition: Zaunite independence—by any means necessary. Silco is the main distributor of Shimmer, in part thanks to the efforts of his scientists. Although not a monopoly, Silco's syndicate distributes almost half of all Shimmer-based Chemtech in Zaun.

Silco's ace is a girl named Jinx, only spoken of in hushed tones. Those who have met her often doubt her ability to follow instructions but few can question her effectiveness. Jinx is an expert marksman, inventor and sleuth but many believe that she is unstable. In her most recent daring act, Jinx stole a handful of Hex Crystals - without clearance from Silco. She's since convinced him that the crystals can be turned to their advantage, either as a bargaining chip or...repurposed...for other ends.

High Council of Piltover

With the addition of Jayce Talis, the Council's membership is now five...While it is their mandate to ensure Piltover's prosperity, each Councilor wants to do what is best for their clan. The opportunity to capitalize on Hextech and the accompanying economic boom seems to have focussed the Council's aims for now, fizzling their internal tensions.

Although the Council is aware of Zaun's rampant crime and the surge in Chemtech, they have turned a blind eye. But the recent theft of Hex Crystals means a blind eye no longer: it demands action.

Chem-Barons

Although the Chem-Barons of Zaun largely retain their status as the pseudo-nobility, Silco's Shimmer-based Chemtech operation has eaten into their profits. Some have considered making a move against Silco, but the army at his service and his supplying the Chem-Barons with materials to manufacture Shimmer remain strong deterrents...for now.

Silco's anti-Piltover stance has troubled the Chem-Barons. Although ideologically opposed to Zaunite independence, none of the Chem-Barons have moved against Silco...yet. Since Piltover has historically been unwilling to raise the money and political will to attempt a crackdown on crime in Zaun, Chem-Barons' profits go unchecked. Silco's actions risk forcing Piltover's hand and destroying the comfortable status quo the Chem-Barons have maintained.

Firelights:

A group of Zaunite misfits known as the Firelights have been harassing Silco's faction in recent months. The Firelights do everything from hindering Silco's forces to intercepting messages, but most of their efforts seem to be aimed at stopping the distribution of Shimmer. Many are trained in guerilla combat and are quick on their feet. They're most conspicuously masked, flying on Chemtech hoverboards.

STATE OF AFFAIRS

Hex Crystals

A handful of Hex Crystals have been stolen by a member of Silco's faction. With a handful of Hex Crystals, and enough time, expertise and equipment, who knows what Silco can do. Piltover Enforcers are wary of the military applications of the Hex Crystals in Silco's possession. Despite advancements in Hextech being under Piltover's purview, Jayce and Viktor have largely ignored its military applications.. The Council is also wary of Silco using the Crystals to increase Zaun's spending power and to leverage in negotiations with Piltover in future. Nevertheless, something must be done.

The recent theft of the Hex Crystals has also exposed the inadequacy of Piltover's security to all. If a lone member of Silco's faction could steal some, who's to say Hex Crystals can't be stolen again?

Guiding Questions:

1. What does Silco's faction intend to do with the Hex Crystals?
2. Are the Council prepared to negotiate for the crystals or do they plan to re-acquire them through other means?
3. If Hex Crystals can be stolen, will other factions attempt to?
4. How will the Council prevent future theft of Hex Crystals?

Zaun's Independence

Silco's actions are largely driven by the desire for Zaun's independence. However, whether the Council is willing to grant independence, or whether it is even possible remains to be seen. As of now, independence is still a lofty prospect, even amongst Silco's followers. If independence is something the Council is willing to entertain, what formal conditions are included in Zaun's independence will have to be negotiated.

Guiding Questions:

1. Under what conditions would the Council be willing to consider Zaun's independence, if any?
2. What does Silco's faction want from independence and what are they willing to compromise?
3. Independence will change the future of Zaun forever. Is this a future that the Chem-Barons and Firelights want to be a part of?

The Information War

The one that shows their hand first tends to be one getting the short end of the stick. As of now, the capabilities and plans of every faction are almost entirely unknown to the others. Silco, despite being the one of the faces of Zaun, only schemes with a few trusted subordinates. The Council of Piltover releases regular reports to the public, but each member of the council is mercurial and has schemes upon schemes. It would be wise not to take everything in the press at face value. Finding out what the Chem-Barons plan to do is similarly impossible.

Discovering the plans of a few individual Chem-Barons is a difficult task. Knowing what all of them want to do is something no one, not even other Chem-Barons, is capable of achieving. Lastly, the Firelights are an unknown element to every other party. Their leadership structure, agenda and base of operations are entirely hidden. The average Piltovan or Zaunite might not even know they exist. With diplomatic meetings and a potential war ahead, how do you plan on uncovering information about your opponents?

Guiding Questions:

1. How do you plan on uncovering information about your opponents? Through diplomatic meetings? Spies? Creating an alliance?
2. How can you prevent your opponents from catching wind of your plans? Or if you're bold, can you mislead your opponents into believing what you want them to believe?

SUGGESTED READING

Although delegates might benefit from consulting additional sources in the League of Legends expanded universe, this committee takes liberties with the established lore of Piltover and Zaun. The representation of the setting in Arcane bears the most similarities with the setting of this committee. As such, delegates are recommended to only watch Arcane as further reading.

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