

Archetyp Market: A Haven for US-Based Fentanyl Traffickers

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Executive Summary

Archetyp Market has rapidly emerged as the top English-language dark web marketplace. This drug-focused market explicitly permits the sale of fentanyl and other dangerous synthetic opioids, establishing itself as a haven for United States-based traffickers of these illicit substances. This report briefly explores the history of Archetyp Market, factors contributing to its recent growth, and its unique position as a dark web market that allows fentanyl sales, setting it apart in the dark web ecosystem. Subsequent reports will illuminate the activities of the fentanyl traffickers operating on Archetyp Market—including those identified in this overview—and highlight selectors and other identifiers that may assist law enforcement and other entities in deanonymizing these threat actors. Data is drawn from proprietary dark web monitoring tools and open-source intelligence, providing a comprehensive examination of Archetyp Market and the fentanyl traffickers who use it.

Introduction

Archetyp Market was first launched on the dark web in May 2020 and has since grown to become one of the largest darknet markets in the world. Archetyp's ascent has not only attracted a global user base but has also established the marketplace as a haven for US-based traffickers of fentanyl and other dangerous synthetic opioids. These traffickers exploit the dark web's encrypted communications and cryptocurrency transactions to operate with relative impunity, evading traditional law enforcement methods. Unlike most dark web markets that impose restrictions or outright bans on fentanyl sales due to its extreme potency, high overdose risk, and law enforcement scrutiny, Archetyp explicitly permits it. As law enforcement and public health officials grapple with the implications of synthetic opioid trafficking on the dark web, understanding the evolution and operations of markets like Archetyp is essential for developing effective countermeasures.

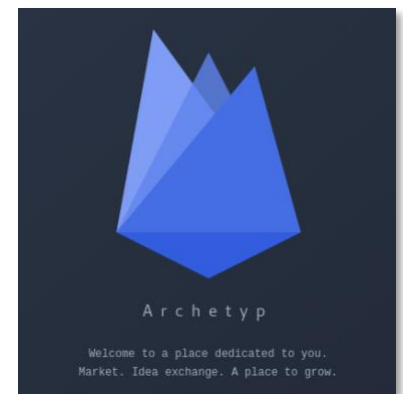


Fig. 1: Archetyp Market logo

History

Establishing a dark web marketplace comes with significant challenges. Administrators must navigate a complex landscape of operational security (OPSEC) concerns to protect themselves and their users from law enforcement and malicious actors. Building trust within the dark web community is crucial and new markets often struggle to gain user confidence. On 17 May 2020, marketplace administrator "YosemiteGhostWrite" announced the launch of Archetyp Market on Dread, the dark web's

preeminent forum for drug-related discussions. ⁱ The German-run market was initially positioned as a European and drug-only marketplace, accepting transactions exclusively in Monero (XMR), but has since expanded operations globally. ^{ii iii}

A review of DarkBlue holdings dating back to Archetyp’s initial months in operation indicates a struggle to keep the market afloat with little buy-in from the community. ^{iv v} Following three years of instability, including a complete market shutdown and a self-imposed exile from Dread, Archetyp Market began its rise to the top of the English-language dark web market ecosystem. ^{vi}

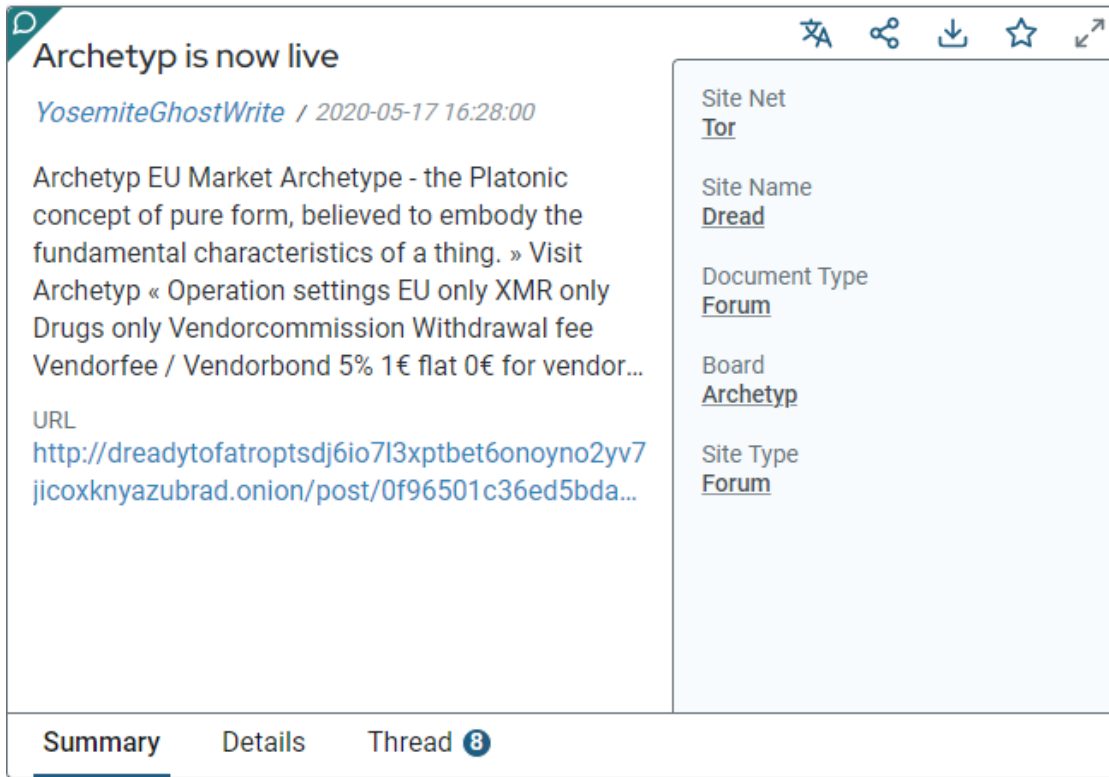


Fig. 2: YosemiteGhostWrite announcing Archetyp Market on Dread in May 2020 as captured in the DarkBlue Intelligence Suite

Market statistics

Archetyp Market has experienced a rapid rise to the top of the English-language darknet market ecosystem over the last twelve months. Several factors have contributed to this rise to prominence, including a concerted marketing effort on Dread and other dark web forums, a user-friendly user interface (UI) and user experience (UX), and the removal of several major darknet market competitors via exit scam, seizure, or retirement. Statistics from a 17 May 2023 thread posted on Dread by BigBossChefOfArchetyp (the new moniker for YosemiteGhostWrite) and captured in DarkBlue holdings revealed the market statistics at the time: 177,896 users, 1,127 vendors, and 6,711 products. ^{vii}

Since then, top dark web markets like Bohemia, Incognito, Tor2Door, and Cypher have exit scammed, creating a vacuum for Archetyp to fill. While new markets have been established and smaller markets have gained some foothold, Archetyp Market appears to have benefited. As of 2 July 2024, the market’s current statistics are 453,344 users, 2,332 vendors, and 13,222 products. ^{viii} While no exact monetary value can be placed on the market at this time, a comparable market with a similar number of users was seized in July 2017. Reporting indicates that the market was hosting \$600,000 to \$800,000 in daily transactions shortly before its demise. ^{ix x}

Market features and design

Archetyp Market hosts many features not seen on most other major darknet markets, including an active forum section centered around drugs, cryptocurrencies, and OPSEC. ^{xi} Customers can access an interactive search functionality to quickly identify vendors of a specific drug category, or narrow searches by destination or source country/region. Major drug categories are Cannabis, Stimulants, Ecstasy, Designer Drugs, Opiates, Benzodiazepines, Psychedelics, Prescription Drugs, Steroids, Dissociatives, Chemicals, and Other. Vendors must pay a €650 vendor fee to apply, and market commissions appear to be 10%.

Archetyp Market also features several gambling and betting games, including Deadpool and ArcheLotto. Deadpool is a gambling game where users bet on which darknet market will shut down next, while ArcheLotto is a numbers-based lottery where the winning number is drawn every Sunday. ^{xii xiii} A recent post on Dread by BigBossChefOfArchetyp revealed that the first lottery winner won 514.865 XMR (\$87,014) following 10 weeks without a winner. ^{xiv}

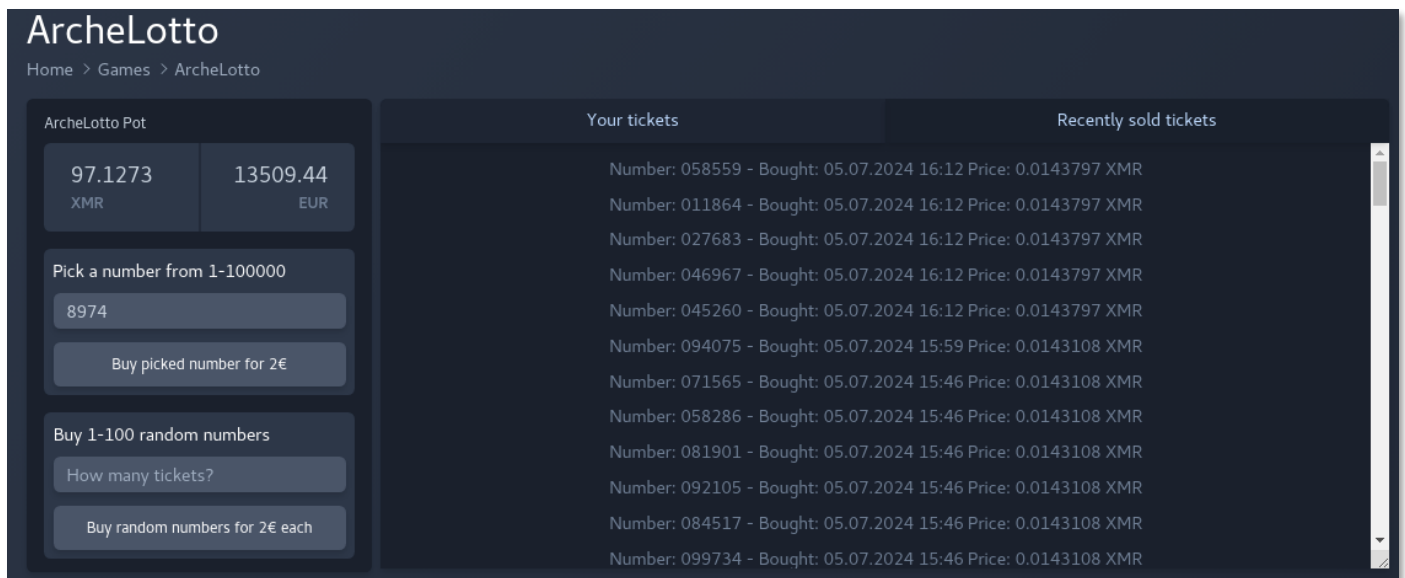


Fig. 3: ArcheLotto is one of the many unique features that sets Archetyp Market apart from other darknet markets

Fentanyl on Archetyp

Due to its extreme potency and associated overdose risks, fentanyl is a particularly dangerous drug and many dark web markets have banned or restricted its sale to avoid scrutiny and mitigate harm. Archetyp Market, however, explicitly allows the sale of the synthetic opioid and includes Fentanyl as a subcategory under Opiates, allowing buyers to quickly discover vendors selling the product. A review of data captured in DarkBlue holdings identifies at least 32 vendors selling fentanyl or fentanyl-laced products, 30 of which were based in the U.S. according to the source indicated in their listings. While product availability and quantities vary daily, most active vendors offer multiple options within the fentanyl category. Sample data from June 2024 collected by CACI’s DarkBlue Intelligence Group identified 47 fentanyl/fentanyl-laced products from U.S.-based vendors, including 23 listings for pressed M30 oxycodone pills, 19 listings for “Synthetic China White” heroin, three listings for “White Rock” fentanyl, and two listings for pressed Percocet pills.

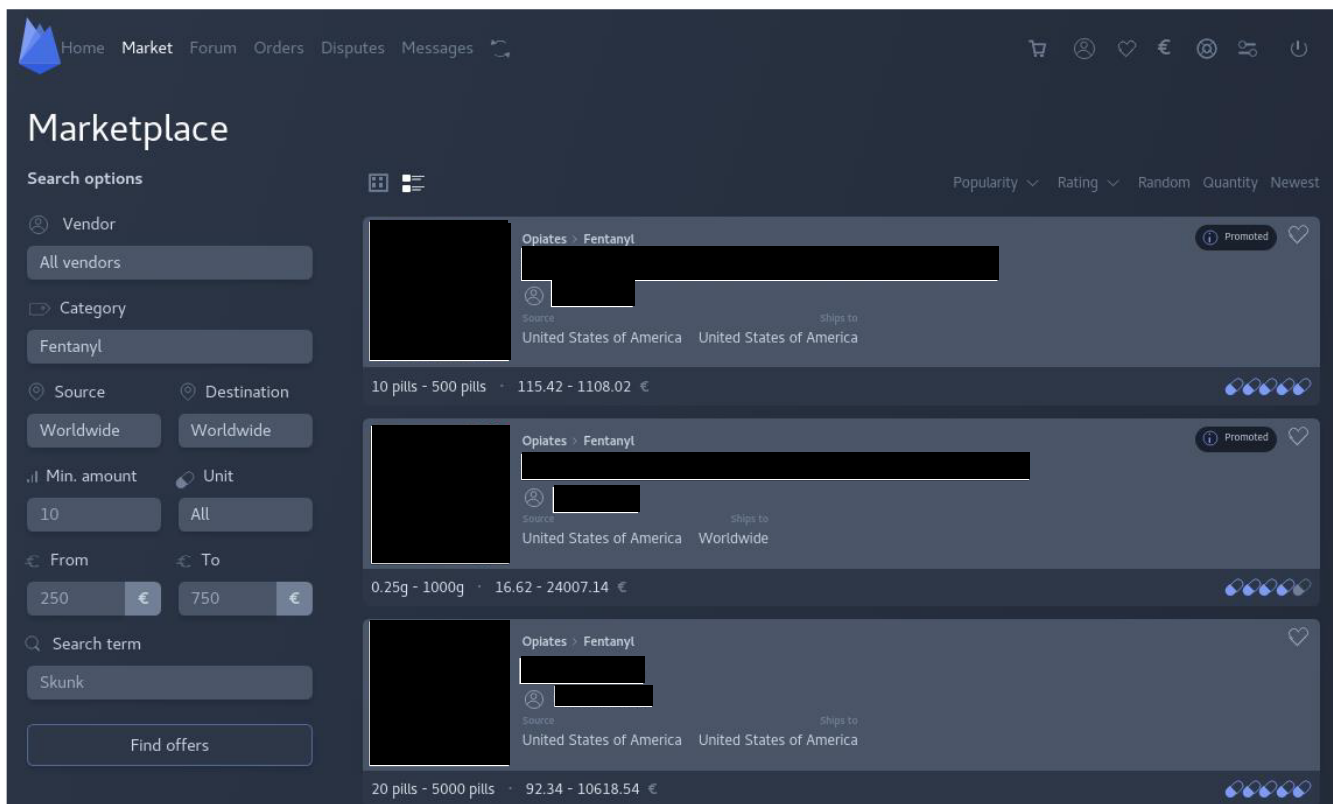


Fig. 4: Archetyp Market’s interactive search functionality quickly lets buyers find drugs of interest, including fentanyl and fentanyl-laced products, as captured in DarkPursuit

In addition to identifying the fentanyl product types available on Archetyp Market, DarkBlue analysts also attempted to determine the total sales of those products by type and quantity. While this is difficult due to vendors frequently updating listings and the market using sales ranges (e.g., 300-500) instead of exact numbers, DarkBlue analysts established a baseline using the lowest range value in both categories to identify minimum product sales on a certain day (4 June 2024). These

statistics revealed over 7,000 individual fentanyl and fentanyl-laced products by U.S.-based vendors, totaling tens of thousands of pressed pills and several kilograms of “Synthetic China White” heroin and “White Rock” fentanyl sold. As these are the absolute minimum totals, the actual numbers are likely much higher.

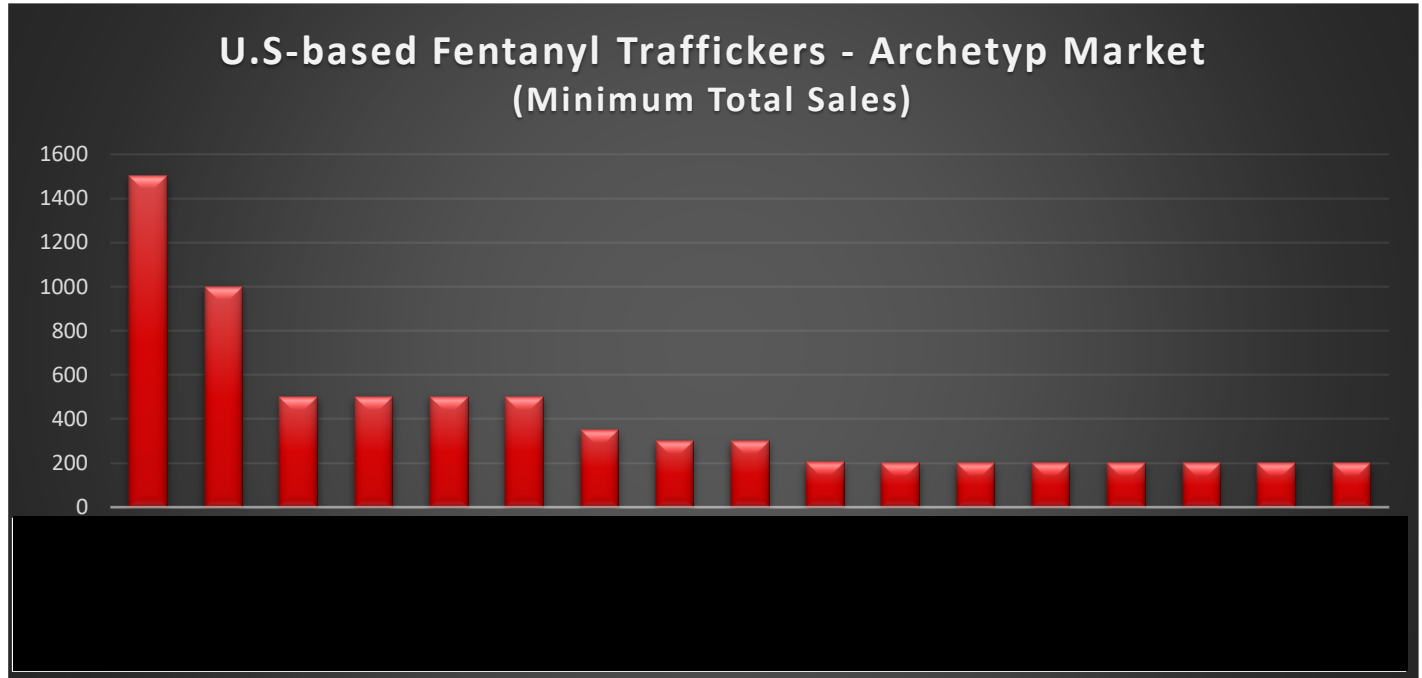


Fig. 5: Minimum total sales of fentanyl products by U.S.-based fentanyl traffickers operating on Archetyp Market (at least 200 sales)

U.S.-based traffickers

After identifying Archetyp Market as a haven for U.S.-based traffickers of fentanyl, DarkBlue analysts conducted comprehensive research to identify selectors and other intelligence in DarkBlue and on the live environment via DarkPursuit to assist in deanonymizing these threat actors. These selectors include email addresses, Telegram channels, instant messaging handles, and other data. Below is a brief description of some of the top fentanyl traffickers:

- ██████████: Joined Archetyp Market on ██████████ and has become the market’s top supplier of fentanyl with at least 1,500 total sales of fentanyl-laced products. ^{xv} The vendor specializes in oxycodone M30 pressed pills (minimum 1,000+ sales) and two variations of synthetic heroin, otherwise known as “China White” (minimum 500 sales). A search of DarkBlue data dating back to ██████████ identifies over 10,000 records referencing ██████████, including an encrypted email address revealed when parsing the threat actor’s PGP key via the DarkBlue Intelligence Suite’s built-in PGP Module. DarkBlue analysts have also potentially identified the threat actor’s real name and home city.
- ██████████: Currently has listed only one product: an extremely potent “brick” of China White. However, the vendor has already surpassed 200 sales of the fentanyl-laced drug. Recent posts on Dread indicate the vendor may

Information in this report is not comprehensive and is derived from the dark web, a dynamic and deliberately obfuscated environment. This report should be considered single-source, raw information and should be corroborated with information from other sources for all-source analysis assessments. Information contained in this report is considered to be in the “public domain” as defined in 22 CFR § 120.11 and/or “published” information as defined in 15 CFR § 734.7.

also be trafficking in drugs laced with Xylazine, a veterinarian-prescribed sedative and analgesic known as “tranq” or “tranq dope,” which has been extensively reported on by the DarkBlue Intelligence Group. ^{xvi} PGP analysis of the public key provided on Archetyp Market identifies an unencrypted email address, which surfaces exposed passwords associated with that account when searched in DarkBlue’s credentials database.

- ██████████: Joined Archetyp Market on ██████████, although data preserved in DarkBlue holdings indicates they’ve been vending on the dark web since at least ██████████. ^{xvii} The vendor is one of two active on Archetyp that sell pressed Percocet pills laced with fentanyl. A review of historical activity captured in DarkBlue indicates the vendor has been active on most major darknet markets over the last several years, including AlphaBay, ASAP, Incognito, Bohemia, and ToRReZ (all now defunct), and remains active on MGM Grand and Archetyp. ^{xviii} Selectors identified for ██████████ include an unencrypted email address.
- ██████████: Specializes in flavored M30 oxycodone pills pressed with fentanyl (minimum 500 sales), but also has over 500 sales of “premium white rock” fentanyl. Since joining Archetyp in ██████████, the vendor has quickly become the second-highest-selling fentanyl trafficker on the marketplace. ██████████ operates on at least two other major darknet markets, MGM Grand and Abacus, where they also sell fentanyl-laced products.

Analyst comments

The rise of Archetyp Market as a major hub for fentanyl distribution presents a significant concern in the ongoing battle against the illicit drug trade and opioid crisis in the United States. The ease of access to such a potent substance increases the risk of overdose and death among users, and the anonymity provided by the dark web makes it challenging for law enforcement to track and apprehend traffickers. As the opioid crisis continues to escalate, understanding and addressing the role of dark web markets like Archetyp is essential for mitigating the public health impact of fentanyl.

CACI’s DarkBlue Intelligence Group will release subsequent reporting amplifying the activities of the listed vendors and other fentanyl traffickers on Archetyp Market as more information becomes available, with a focus on those with exploitable selectors that the national security community and law enforcement investigators may be able to exploit.

About CACI’s DarkBlue Intelligence Suite

CACI’s DarkBlue Intelligence Suite is the established leader in dark web exploitation. Our mission-focused technology, analyst-led training, and tailored services empower clients to operate within hidden portions of the information environment effectively. DarkBlue provides national security, intelligence, and law enforcement communities with safe, persistent, and holistic access to identify, target, and track dark web threat actors globally. To learn more, visit <https://www.caci.com/darkblue>.

ⁱ DarkBlue ID Hash: [b2be6392cc781554584a26fb82df4e0fb48812e67fd035d4bc4d1418346cb8a6](https://www.caci.com/darkblue)

ⁱⁱ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/10575677241229682>

ⁱⁱⁱ DarkBlue ID Hash: [e691f0edf80b5adb5ede2fd14e7a71f7349fc6c48b983c2e5f7e15eb1fa1bab5](https://www.caci.com/darkblue)

^{iv} DarkBlue ID Hash: [3064f868a448f005a58ea0c83e963b7caabdda02872e3cf251a0af4a76a8c2d1](https://www.caci.com/darkblue)

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- v **DarkBlue ID Hash:** [db1adfdbbaf2386971679c77a26a24b0b45bc9a9d40f8dcfce444fb2615507aa](#)
- vi **DarkBlue ID Hash:** [a4278c36ed29a3650d8e63d1179163f66a57177f5146f6b997fb51d584f3b258](#)
- vii **DarkBlue ID Hash:** [89bbc38dd310d82156e6e9b19a8245568a3c4c46bde5397e5830b9e1f1d6df45](#)
- viii **DarkBlue ID Hash:** [4e5566bec81f141352920da8f51ba4cc47a9a270cfdcbc8b83ec9706d0caa34d](#)
- ix <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/alphabay-dark-web-market-taken-down-after-law-enforcement-raids/>
- x <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/business/dealbook/alphabay-online-drug-bazaar-goes-dark.html>
- xi **DarkBlue ID Hash:** [9d98e61e2c50c340f4ca3edd47576d22ea5b0bef53f6ab49494be9e4aaa902d9](#)
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- xvi **DarkBlue ID Hash:** [4dabf62cfabeb1de4f402a38ebccd612c0e2ed493ecbb05e53156e113acf9b65](#)
- xvii **DarkBlue ID Hash:** [d9afddc6d75e8e130c4f35b04fb392743516f3038eb0c155ada552eb09457b7d](#)
- xviii **DarkBlue ID Hash:** [58b78a9a602e97e7efea1d9efc86d54cc386cbcf86d256ded8162af17dc9a6ea5a](#)