

FAS52401



# THE AKKADIAN CONNECTION

## BOOK 1

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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO



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ROLEPLAYING  
GAME

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BIG TROUBLE IN  
LITTLE SOHO

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THE AKKADIAN CONNECTION,  
BOOK ONE



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# DEDICATIONS

This book is for Jeanne Baré, Annie Besant, Harriet Ann Jacobs, Mary Seacole, Mary Fairfax Somerville, and thousands of other women who altered the course of history, doing what they believed to be right whether or not their society and culture approved.

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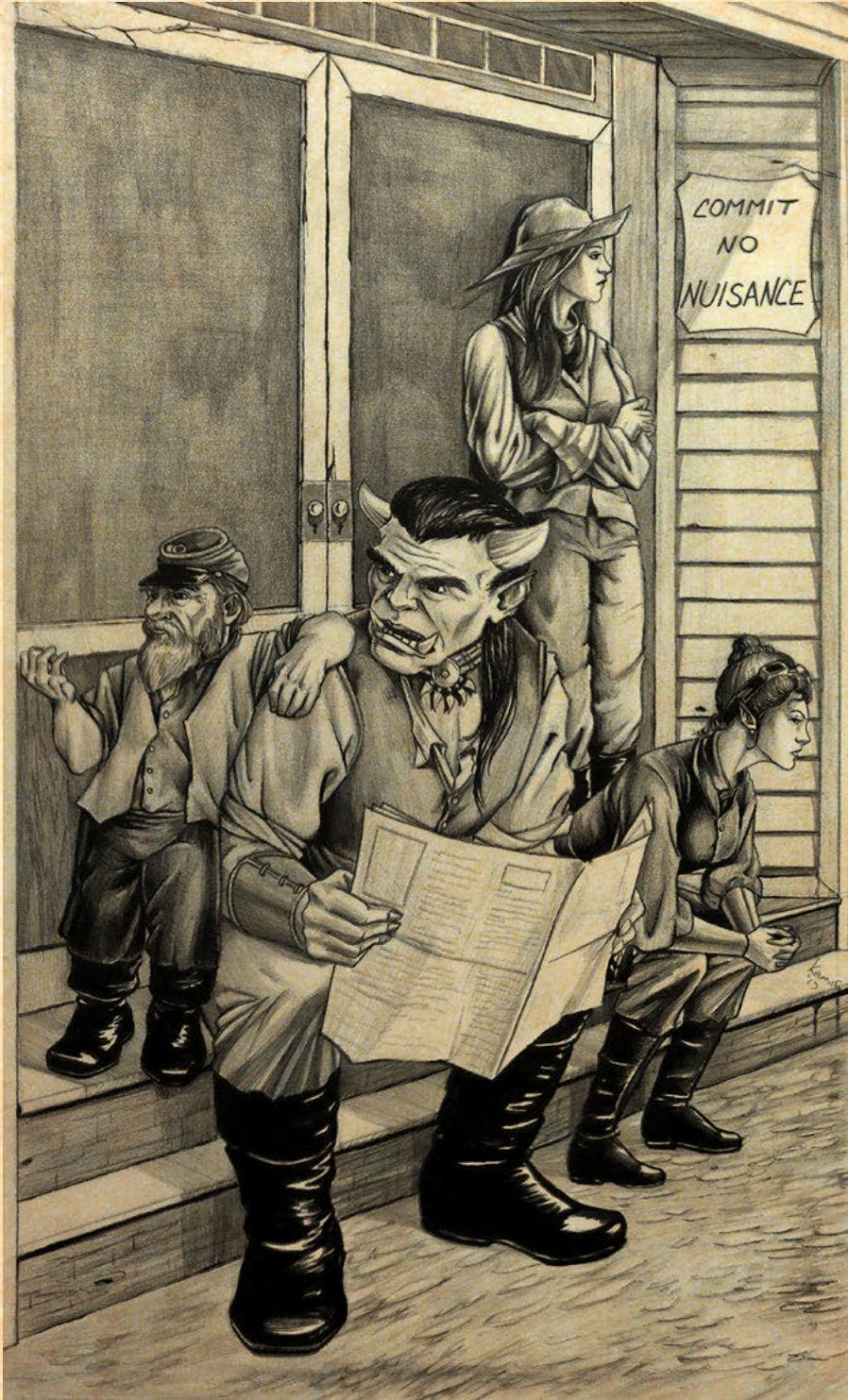
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This game takes place in an alternate history from our own world. As such, numerous actual historical personalities, events, religions, and other institutions are referenced. No endorsement, approval, disrespect, disparagement, or other opinion or view on actual, real-world persons, faiths, nations, or other entities is intended, implied, or imputed. This is a work of fiction based on our world. Please treat it as such. Thank you.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	5
Episode 1: Bang Snuff .....	13
Episode 2: The Cry in the Pyramid.....	29
Episode 3: Indiana Bones.....	39
Episode 4: Brickyard Ballroom .....	51
Episode 5: A Visit After Hours .....	67
Episode 6: Nobody Likes Fights At Parties ....	77
Appendix.....	85
Index .....	93
Kickstarter Backers.....	95



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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO

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Adventure for 1879



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## Introduction

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**B**ig Trouble in Little Soho is an adventure set in the London of *1879*, a sprawling, overcrowded metropolis struggling desperately to handle its expansion.

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## Gamemastering Notes

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Big Trouble in Little Soho is a linear adventure, meaning that its events follow a particular sequence. The Gamemaster should, however, feel free to adapt the adventure to suit their particular group of players.

This adventure is intended for a group of three to five Novice Tier adventurers of any Profession. Renown and Reputation will help determine how the player characters are brought in, by an aristocrat or by the police. Some of the adventure depends on social interaction. High Social Levels will be an impediment in trying to deal with the criminal element, while low Social Levels will impede negotiations with the upper crust. It's up to the players how they prepare for this when they build their characters.

## INTRODUCTION

Both the *1879 Player's Guide* and *1879 Gamemaster's Guide* are required to use this adventure. The setting material provided in this book can also be used as the basis for further adventures. London will be detailed in depth in its own sourcebook, but it changes from day to day, and the player characters may play a vital role in its history. It is certainly a place they will come back to in the future.

Though Gamemaster characters (GMCs) can play significant roles in this adventure, the Gamemaster should not allow them to overshadow the player characters. When the adventurers attempt to overcome a particular obstacle, or try to think of a way out of some dangerous situation, do not use the GMCs to tell the players how to resolve the problem. After all, if players make the right choices all the time, both they and the Gamemaster have a lot less fun. Whenever possible let your group of players make their own beds and then find them uncomfortable.

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## Making Tests

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During the course of *Big Trouble in Little Soho*, whenever a character attempts to take an action such as casting a spell, firing a gun at an opponent, tracking a drug courier, or flirting with a barmaid, the Gamemaster or the player rolls dice against a Target Number to determine the action's outcome. These dice rolls are called Tests (see the Game Concepts chapter of the *1879 Player's Guide*, pg.29).

To make a Test, the player or Gamemaster rolls the appropriate dice based on the Step number of the ability being used. If the dice roll result is equal to or greater than the Target Number, the Test succeeds and the character accomplishes the action. If the result is less than the Target Number, the character fails to accomplish the action. If the dice come up all ones, the Rule of One leads to dire consequences for the spectacular failure. In Tests that deal with magic, the result often determines the efficacy or duration of a magical effect.

Frequently, a Test result determines not only basic success or failure, but the degree of success. For every five points that the Test result exceeds the Target Number, an extra success is scored. One success, equal to or barely exceeding the Target Number, usually means the character only just accomplished the action. Two successes yields a better result, and three or more lead to extraordinary results. Any successes past the first may give the character some additional gain for their actions, including more damage to an opponent, a more precise result from a spell, or valuable extra information. The amount of gain for the number of successes is determined by the Gamemaster, unless specifically noted.

In many cases when the player characters must make a Test, the required ability is given, followed by the Target Number of the task in parentheses. For example, a Perception (8) Test means that a character must use their Perception step to make a Test against a Target Number of 8. A result of 8 or better succeeds; anything else fails.

# How to Use this Book

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Aside from the *1879 Player's Guide* and *1879 Gamemaster's Guide*, this book contains everything required to run Big Trouble in Little Soho. The Gamemaster should read the adventure carefully to familiarize themselves with the background before beginning the game.

The pace of Big Trouble in Little Soho will often go very fast, much like a roller coaster ride. To stay on top of the adventure's rapidly changing events, the Gamemaster must know what happens in advance so unwitting characters can be hurled into the next challenging situation before the players have time to think. The Gamemaster should be familiar with the basic outline of the plot and know precisely which developments trigger later events. As always, the Gamemaster should also be prepared to deal with the unexpected.

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## Encounters and Events

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The **Plot Synopsis** in this chapter summarizes the story background and the most probable course of the adventure. Each chapter describes an **Episode**, which may consist of one or more scenes, with situations and events the characters must deal with during the course of the adventure. Each **Episode** chapter contains five sections: **Overview**, **Setting the Stage**, **Themes and Images**, **Behind the Scenes**, and **Troubleshooting**.

The **Overview** gives the Gamemaster a summary of the action that occurs during the **Episode**, and provides the **Episode**'s objective.

The next section, **Setting the Stage**, contains a description of the **Episode**'s surrounding. This section may also contain a narrative describing the player characters' location and what is happening to them as if the players were actually there, for reading aloud to the players. Any special instructions for the Gamemaster are highlighted.

**Themes and Images** helps the Gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular **Episode**. It includes hints about imagery to use, emotions to convey, sounds, sensations, and so on. The information provided varies in form and content from scene to scene, ranging from general themes to specific sensory impressions.

**Behind the Scenes** explains what is really going on in each **Episode**. This section provides the Gamemaster with all of the information needed to run the **Episode**, such as specialized descriptions of locations and events, and statistics for any GMCs the player characters may meet or creatures they may fight. If the players or Gamemaster need a map to play an encounter, it appears here. As with **Setting the Stage**, any special instructions for the Gamemaster are highlighted.

The final section of each **Episode**, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the Gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry. For example, the characters may miss an important clue or lose a fight they need to win. Gamemasters will not want the player characters to get discouraged or killed off too easily. This section offers options for keeping the game going over trouble spots. The Gamemaster can, of course, ignore these hints and invent their own solutions, or simply let the chips fall where they may. However, the freeform nature of roleplaying means we can't anticipate everything the player characters might do! The Gamemaster is advised to be prepared to improvise if required.

# Plot Synopsis

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This adventure is divided into three Books, each intended to be the core of a Plot Point Campaign. The first Book takes place on Earth, and ends with the characters being pointed to the Rabbit Hole and the Gruv. The second Book starts with passage through the Rabbit Hole, and ends with the Saurid issue resolved but a Samsut issue opened. The third Book takes the heroes into Samsut lands, ending with resolution of the overarching storyline. Throughout all three books, the theme of the cult and its Akkadian connections provides a link from beginning to end, and weaves the disparate pieces together.

In Book 1, the heroes start off tracking down a dangerous new drug that massively boosts the user's prowess in a fight, with terrible side effects both during and after its use. Criminals in London have been using it to overpower the police, resulting in fatalities on both sides. Following the supply to its source reveals a cult that's making the drug from the glands of Gruv creatures, using what looks like Samsut magic. The heroes rescue the local expert on Gruv creatures or Samsut magic (or both) and shut down the primary laboratory. Following the money reveals a firm of some repute that has apparently been a front for the cult since its founding, many years ago. Confronting the firm's chairman with evidence of this reveals him to be a highly placed cultist, and brings the attention of Crown agents. The cult, the firm, and the chairman had all been under investigation by the Crown, but the heroes have brought things to light in rather a spectacular fashion. Book 1 ends with the heroes being asked to render a service to the Crown and follow the trail to the Gruv.

Following are synopses of each Episode. The Key Clues found in the episode, information that must be learned by the players to progress the story, are called out in a subsection.

**Episode 1, Bang Snuff:** Our heroes have been recruited by the authorities to lend a hand in taking a new drug off the street. Some very bad people have been turning up lately with a powder, called "bang snuff" on the street, that boosts their abilities in a fight. This is causing grief for everyone involved. Breakage and injuries are on the rise, the users have to be locked up in asylums if they survive the drug's effects, and the Home Office has taken notice. Someone, meaning our heroes, must track the supply back to the source. This will require either undercover work, capturing a criminal with his mind still intact enough for clever interrogation, or subterfuge to follow a criminal to his supplier.

**Key Clues:**

- What bang snuff is, what it does to its users and those who go up against them
- Scantly, the snuff merchant, who operates out of the Inverness Titan in Bethnal Green, and has a string of henchmen, all of whom he calls Francis because he can't be arsed to learn their actual names
- The Florist, leader of a smash and grab robbery gang in Wapping
- The distribution point at Limehouse Pier
- The link to the Hesperidean Society

**Episode 2, The Cry in the Pyramid:** Aha, there's a cult involved. Research must be done to find out more about it. Oh dear, they specialize in forbidden knowledge, and were banned for threatening to replace Parliament with something conjured from the Outer Darkness. Well, then. A raid on the production facility at the docks is in order. Of course, nobody of any consequence is captured,

but we do find some rather strange equipment, assuming it survives the fire. Interestingly, some of the instructions are written in what looks vaguely like the Samsut language. It's cuneiform, anyway.

## *Key Clues:*

- Samsut or ancient Akkadian writing in the lab notes and on the lab table in the distribution point workshop – this ties in to the Hesperidean Society being involved
- The canister of dinosaur bits, a key ingredient in bang snuff
- The name of Harrison and Thurbert on the packing case, and the original destination of a pottery works on Dauberney Road
- Bang snuff requires not just dinosaur bits, but alchemy to make it
- The names of Professor Thomas Macguire and Doctor Ezerhan Toprak, leading authorities on dinosaurs and Akkadian respectively

**Episode 3, Indiana Bones:** Ancient remains found at the lab? No, this skull isn't fossilized. And what about the Samsut mixing instructions? Attempting to follow up on this runs up against enemy operatives at the museum, or the university, whichever our heroes decide to visit first, and a fight in very fragile surroundings. The subject matter expert is kidnapped in the middle of the festivities, and the cultists set a fire to cover their departure. Well, it worked last time, why not do it again? Now, do we save the priceless artifacts or pursue the evildoers?

## *Key Clues:*

- Professor Macguire – the dinosaur bits are adrenal glands and a skull from a large theropod
- Doctor Toprak – the writing is Akkadian, not Samsut, and invokes the goddess of rage

**Episode 4, Brickyard Ballroom:** A difficult assault against a well defended foe will be required to get the evidence needed. We know where they've taken the subject matter expert. We have to go in, rescue the professor, and trounce the villains. Well, well, and here's a fresh supply of the source material for the drug. Someone is smuggling dinosaur parts from the Gruv. Specifically, they're using the adrenal and pituitary glands from a particular species. They're also using Akkadian magic as part of the process to create bang snuff, no wonder the batches vary so much. Haven't caught the most senior of the cult, though, but we do have some documentation that suggests a London firm is tidying up the monetary issues, and may be run by the cult as a front. We need proof of this that can be put in front of a judge.

## *Key Clues:*

- Another alchemist and the active process for making bang snuff
- Definitive evidence that the Hesperidean Society is involved and doing very nasty magic
- Clyton Elsey's name on the shipping manifest
- A clerk from Harrison and Thurbert, who can reveal considerable information
- A set of Engine cards that unlock a secure storage system at Harrison and Thurbert
- The Milwall Dock permit mark on the departing coach

**Episode 5, A Visit After Hours:** A run (or raid) on a respected firm turns up evidence that they're fronting for the cult. Are we aboveboard, and perhaps have police backup, or are we not such

## INTRODUCTION

respectable sorts, and on our own? Walking in on a clandestine meeting of a criminal organization with magical capabilities never ends quietly. The chairman of the board isn't here – he's off at a formal event. Have we got proper dress for such an occasion?

### *Key Clues:*

- William III does not know what his son has been up to
- William IV has a flat in New Cross Tangle, with various bits of evidence in it
- Harrison and Thurbert have offices on Derrick Street, with not only evidence, but a few senior people meeting with Hesperideans
- Running the Engine cards at the Harrison and Thurbert offices provides definitive evidence that Clyton Elsey is in this up to his neck

**Episode 6, Nobody Likes Fights at Parties:** Our heroes confront the cult leader at a social event. Hopefully, things don't get awkward. The person we've singled out for attention is also being watched by Crown agents, who intervene if things start getting out of hand, and quietly join the party if we're handling things well enough on our own. The Crown is impressed with how we've handled this, despite the occasional bit of noise or untoward ruckus. Shouldn't be hard to go find out who's been hunting the beasts and using Samsut magic to turn them into drugs. As nasty as the saurians are, there can't be too many people capable of the job. Pack your bags, we're off to the New World!

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## Game Information

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The following chapters provide additional information on the adventure, GMCs, and handouts.

### Loose Ends

Following the Episodes, this chapter sums up the consequences of the adventure and suggests ways in which the Gamemaster might use the adventure's GMCs and settings in future adventures.

The Awarding Adventure Points section lists the Episodes and the appropriate Adventure Point Awards in each session for defeating opponents, finding useful or valuable stuff, creative roleplaying and heroics, and so on. In addition to awarding Adventure Points to player characters at the end of the adventure, the Gamemaster awards Adventure Points at the end of each game session, whether or not the entire adventure fits into that session. Each session also has a clear session goal, as outlined in the Game Sessions section.

For more information on awarding Adventure Points, see the **Gamemastering 1879** chapter of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, pg.167.

## Preparing the Adventure

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It is impossible to create a published adventure that provides the appropriate opposition level for every diverse group of player characters. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others. The Gamemaster must adjust game statistics and capabilities of the opposition to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for the group.

If the adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, the Gamemaster may use it as an outline, the bones on which to develop an adventure of their own. If it works well except for a glitch here and there, the Gamemaster can change any part of the plot or events to make the adventure a better fit.

Several maps and handouts are included with this adventure. The Gamemaster should photocopy or print out any handouts and have them ready to use when needed. In addition to props, Gamemasters might want to use background music to help convey mood. Use the descriptions in the **Themes and Images** sections to find out what kind of props, lighting, music, or other extras might be appropriate for a given encounter.

Keep in mind that you, as the Gamemaster, have a unique responsibility to make the adventure exciting, keep the players involved, and hold the story on track. In describing the world of *1879*, try to answer all the players' questions about what the characters see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Feel free to go beyond the descriptions provided in this book when evoking places and moods.

To keep the players connected to the action, ask them "*What do you do?*" each time you describe a new scene to them. By having to describe what they want their characters to do, the players help tell the story and add to their own enjoyment.



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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO

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Adventure for 1879



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## Episode 1: Bang Snuff

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This chapter contains everything you need to get started if you intend to tie *Big Trouble in Little Soho* into a running campaign or start with a new group of adventurers. We assume the players have already created characters according to the rules presented in the *1879 Player's Guide*.

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### Setting the Stage

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If the heroes are well placed, or at least have a good reputation, read the following:

*Somewhere after the third whiskey of the evening, your friend gets round to business. "So anyway, old boy, we've run into a spot of trouble on the streets. Coshers and kneecappers turning up with some new powder, turns them into bloody great tigers – oh, not literally, really. But one good sniff of this stuff and they go berserk, fighting like five men rolled into one. Apparently they call it bang snuff. Causing a terrific bother, and loading up the hospitals and mortuaries and asylums. Could you do us a favour and look into it, see if perhaps you could find out where it's coming*

## EPISODE 1: BANG SNUFF

*from? It's a bit low class, sorry about that, but you're such a clever bean and frightfully good at figuring out this sort of thing, really."*

If the heroes are lower class, or have criminal or underworld connections, or both, use this:

*So the sergeant leans in a bit closer, puts his face right up next to yours, and keeps his voice low. "See, we've got yer dead to rights, we 'ave. It's the Dino-Land for yer if this goes ter court. But the blokes upstairs, they says, find some clever jacks. We've got this problem, we do, nasty new drug going round, and we need some folks what haven't got a connection ter Her Majesty's men in blue to poke their beaks into it. Have yer heard of bang snuff? No? Well, I'll tell yer, it's rum stuff, it is. Yer snort it up yer beak, and it gives yer the strength of half a dozen men, if it don't blow yer brains out yer ears. Find out who's selling it, and where they're getting it from, and we might just forget about this whole little embarrassment yer've got yerself caught up in."*

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## Themes and Images

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A favor asked that cannot be refused, a mystery presented that must be solved. Something untoward going on that affects the characters' home, something amiss in London that's out of the ordinary to the point where adventurers are needed.

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## Behind the Scenes

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Bang snuff turns up in the hands of the more violent criminals – robbers who confront their victims directly, smash and grab sorts – rather than the quieter types, the con artists and second story men. This makes sense, as the more likely the person is to get into a fight, the more they're going to want an advantage. The more they depend on their intellect, the less they're going to be interested in something that clouds their minds. Unfortunately, it means the characters are going to have to deal with men (very few women go in for this sort of thing) who will pull a knife for the slightest perceived insult, and who won't hesitate to cut someone's throat if they feel threatened.

The characters may go undercover and try to pass themselves off as criminals in order to find a snuff merchant. They may try locating a snuff merchant and tail him to his pickup point. If the characters have connections with the underworld (Criminals or Dodgers), they may try using those to find a snuff merchant and possibly his supplier. If all else fails, snatching a snuff merchant off the street and interrogating him might yield results, but beating the answers out of someone isn't exactly heroic, now, is it?

### What Is Bang Snuff?

The drug is a vaguely yellowish powder, sold in a tiny cylinder with a flip-top lid, usually worn on a chain around the neck. That way, it can be fished out and opened one-handed in a hurry. The powder is sniffed up the nose, like snuff, with immediate and explosive results. The user gains

## Chapter 2

massive advantages in combat for a short time, and feels invincible, resulting in reckless behavior. Afterward, the user is drained for several hours, and feels listless and ineffective for days. Bang snuff is not physically addictive, but there is a psychological addiction factor to the feeling of power and supreme competence. The more it's used, the more the user craves the feeling. Habitual users tend to burn themselves out, using the drug too frequently and dying of heart attack, stroke, or a combination thereof. A user is referred to be "at the dance", or "dancing" if currently under the effects, due to the restlessness the drug induces.

Bang snuff is made in small batches. Each cylinder has a label affixed with the batch number. Each time a new batch is encountered, roll on the following table for its effectiveness.

**Batch Quality** describes how potent that particular batch is.

**Effect** lists the effects on the user and the duration.

**Aftereffect** lists what happens to the user when the drug wears off.

**Penalty** lists the Step penalty to Toughness Tests when taking bang snuff, cumulative per dose taken in the past ten days. See below the chart for how the Toughness Test works.

Roll	Batch Quality	Effect	Aftereffect	Penalty
1	Bad	Confused and jittery, may hallucinate, for 2d6 rounds.	Take Step 8 damage, Fatigued for 1 day. If the damage causes a Wound, the user is Fatigued until the Wound is healed.	-2
2	Weak	Increase DEX, STR, TOU by +1 Step for 1d6 rounds	All physical Tests at -3 Steps for 1d4 hours, Fatigued for 1 day.	-1
3 – 6	Normal	Increase DEX, STR, TOU by +1 Step for 2d6 rounds	All physical Tests at -2 Steps for 1d4 hours, Fatigued for 1 day. Willpower Tests at -1 Step for 1 day.	-1
7	Excellent	Increase DEX, STR, TOU by +2 Steps for 2d6 rounds	All physical Tests at -2 Steps for 1d4 hours, Fatigued for 1 day. Willpower Tests at -2 Steps for 1 day.	-2
8	Way too strong	Increase DEX, STR, TOU by +3 Steps for 1d6 rounds	User takes Step 16 damage from massive bleeding. If the user survives, reduce DEX, STR, TOU values by one point permanently.	-3

The damage bang snuff does accumulates over time, but can be healed. Each time a dose is taken, the penalty in the Cumulative column adds to any existing penalty. The user must make a Toughness (9) Test with the accumulated penalty when the dose is taken. If the Toughness Test fails, the user takes Step 6 damage for each dose taken in the past ten days. The penalty for each dose goes away ten days after using bang snuff. If the user goes ten days without using bang snuff at all,

they clear all of their penalties. However, each day, the user must make a Willpower Test against the cumulative penalty minus the number of days since their last dose, or give in and take more.

### Seeing the (Im)Patient

Questioning the very few dancers who've been arrested simply isn't possible. They've already been taken to the Assizes, convicted, and hanged. Whatever information the Metropolitan Police gained from them isn't available. The Peelers apparently have decided that bang snuff users are best treated like rats, exterminated rather than studied.

If the party asks about the hospitals and asylums that were mentioned, and the possibility that there are dancers in custody, they're directed to the Islington Workhouse. While the poor inmates of the workhouse were shipped off to the Gruv over a year ago, the charity ward remains in use. Those unfit for Gruv transportation were collected there, and at Bethnal Green, from other workhouses east of Farringdon Road, and of course there have been new indigent patients showing up since then. The Metropolitan Police didn't care to pay the cost of housing a violent criminal with self-induced brain damage in a proper mental hospital.

Describe the run-down nature of the building to the party, its lack of maintenance, the echoing empty halls where the poor were housed, and the smell of too many people with poor hygiene coupled with thin cabbage soup and stale bread. The young, overly earnest sister who answers the door, her trainee's nurse habit a bit threadbare, carefully patched and carrying a few stains that just won't wash out, can be got past with a relevant Social Skill Test against a TN of 6. She's just there to open the door and ask the party to wait while she gets the ward mother. The party has a few minutes to take in the depressing atmosphere, and think about how the inmates must have been truly desperate to commit themselves to such a horrid place, before the ward mother arrives.

Ward Mother Mary Gabriel is a formidable woman, an older nun who has seen far more of the lower end of humanity than anyone born above the criminal underclass ever will. She's not physically imposing, being of average height for a woman and built lean and wiry underneath her voluminous habit, but she has sharp eyes that don't miss a single detail, an acerbic tongue that can strip the flesh from your bones with a single remark, and a determined self assurance that has faced down more than one senior politician. If all that fails, she's a Novice Tier Priest, and won't hesitate to wrap her rosary around her hand and call on the power of her Faith.



### *Ward Mother Mary Gabriel*

Professional Rank: 5

DEX: (13): 6/D10 STR: (10): 5/D8 TOU: (13): 6/D10

PER: (16): 7/D12 WIL: (18): 7/D12 CHA: (14): 6/D10

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 0 Mystic Defense: 9

Mystic Armor: 0+3 Social Defense: 8

Death: 68 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 56 Knockdown: 9

Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

Skills:

Spelcasting<sup>P</sup> (9):16/D12+D8+D6; Willforce<sup>C</sup> (8):15/D12+2D6; Durability (5); Astral Sight<sup>C</sup> (10):17/D12+2D8; Dispel Magic<sup>C</sup> (7):14/D12+D10; Avoid Blow (5):11/D10+D8; Physician (6):13/D12+D10; Spirit Hold<sup>C</sup> (5):12/2D10; Streetwise<sup>C</sup> (6):13/D12+D10; Resist Magic<sup>C</sup> (6):13/D12+D10; True Sight<sup>C</sup> (4):11/D10+D8; Steely Stare (5):11/D10+D8

Armor: None

Weapons: None

Equipment: Habit, Rosary

Karma: 30 Karma Die: d8

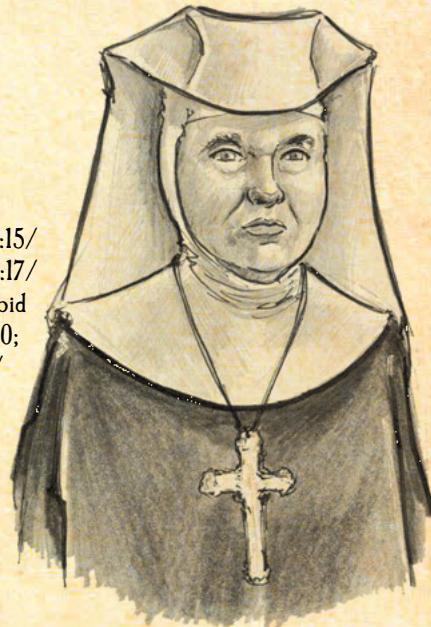
Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Quotes:

“Just because I’m a woman of the cloth, doesn’t mean I don’t know a fiddle when I hear one.”

“It’s Mother Gabriel to you, laddie, and you might remember which archangel that is.”

“What you do is between you and the good Lord above, except where it comes to my patients, and then I get a say in it too.”



If the party is convincing, or has some sort of proper documentation, Ward Mother Gabriel will take them to see Freddy, or what’s left of him. She warns them, however, that they’ll be going into the cell alone, and whatever happens in there is their own lookout. She won’t abide her patient being tormented. Yes, he’s a very bad person and has done terrible things, but that’s for God to judge. If the party does anything untoward to Freddy, she’ll have them out of there and in the street before they can say Jack Robinson. If Freddy does anything unpleasant to them, that’s their problem, not hers. And the party had better drop a couple of shillings in the donation box for the trouble.

Ward Mother Gabriel leads the party down a long hall past the Mens’ Ward, now holding the overflow from the charity ward, mostly terminal cases with a few ward sisters doing their best to care for them. On the way, she tells the party that only three people will be allowed to see Freddy, no matter what arguments are made, and they need to get that sorted out amongst themselves who goes in.

## EPISODE 1: BANG SNUFF

The mental ward's main room has a few patients, playing cards or painting or plinking out a melody on a badly out of tune piano, and a couple of ward sisters keeping an eye on them. At the far side is a heavy security door, with a snark ward sister keeping guard. Ward Mother Gabriel has a brief word with Sister Josephine, who looks the party over, and demands they leave any weaponry in a strongbox in the nurses' room. Sister Josephine gets to make a Perception Test if any of the party try to hold back on her, and can simply refuse to allow a party member who won't give up the suspect item. The ward mother will back her up on her decision.

### *Sister Josephine*

Professional Rank: 3

DEX: (13): 6/D10 STR: (19): 8/2D6 TOU: (16): 7/D12

PER: (13): 6/D10 WIL: (13): 6/D10 CHA: (11): 5/D8

Social Level: 2

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 0 Mystic Defense: 8

Mystic Armor: 0+2 Social Defense: 7

Death: 64 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 53 Knockdown: 10

Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 6

Skills:

Physician<sup>P</sup> (4):10/2D8; Unarmed Combat (7):13/D12+D10;

Durability (3); Avoid Blow (5):11/D10\_D8; Streetwise<sup>C</sup>

(5):10/2D8

Armor: None

Weapons: Sap (Dmg Step 1)

Equipment: None

Karma: 15 Karma Die: D4

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Quotes:

“Don't upset the patients.”

“I ran with the Elephant and Castle before I took Orders. Don't even think about it.”

“He bites you, that's your problem. You hit him, that's my problem.”



Once satisfied, Sister Josephine unlocks the security door and takes the party into the violent ward, more of a prison than a hospital, with three heavy doors down each side of a short hall. Ward Mother Abigail brings up the rear. Sister Josephine unlocks the middle door on the left, steps back, and ushers the party into a cell with an iron frame bed bolted to the floor, a chamber pot, and a savagely violent brain damaged drug addict.

Freddy is human, more or less, a big man with dockside tattoos. He's missing a few teeth, and his eyes are bloodshot and the pupils uneven. The good news is that he's strapped into a straight jacket. The bad news is that he's loose in the cell and won't hesitate to charge or bite. He's unable to speak intelligibly, reduced to half-understood profanity, grunts, and howling like an enraged chimpanzee. Getting any sort of useful information from him will be a serious challenge.

If the party upsets him, which is very likely, combat ensues. Sister Josephine and Ward Mother Gabriel will intervene as needed to protect Freddy and get the party extricated, then escort the party out of the building as quickly as possible. What Freddy knows is up to the Gamemaster, but it's suggested that it be fragmentary and only half true. The effort to question him should end up costing more than it was worth.

### *Freddy*

Professional Rank: 0

DEX: (17): 7/D12 STR: (15): 6/D10 TOU: (15): 6/D10

PER: (8): 4/D6 WIL: (7): 4/D6 CHA: (5): 3/D4

Social Level: 1

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 10

Physical Armor: NAMystic Defense: 5

Mystic Armor: 1 Social Defense: 4

Death: 50 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 42 Knockdown: 6

Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 6

Skills:

Durability (2); Tiger Spring (3); Unarmed Combat (5):12/2D10

Armor: None

Weapons: None (unless you count his teeth)

Equipment: None

Karma: 3 Karma Die: D8

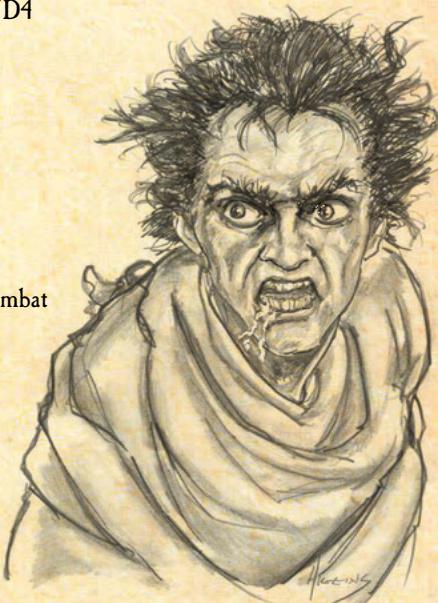
Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Quotes:

“Ggghhh!”

“Brbrbrbrbrbrbr.”

“ \* *inarticulate howl* \* ”



### Passing for the Wrong Sort

Undercover work will require passing off one or more of the characters as criminals, the difficulty of which will of course vary. Any character attempting to pass as a criminal must make a Streetwise Test against the target's Social Defense, at a Step penalty equal to the character's Social Level, upon initially meeting with actual criminals, and any time they're expected to be convincing. Dodgers and similar Professions, who really are criminals, do not need to make this Test.

Getting in with the right people will take time. Make a Streetwise (4) Test. Subtract the number of successes from 5 to find out how many days will be spent on this. For example, if the character has only one success, they will spend 4 days finding the right people. Once in, getting recruited for the right sort of job or convincing people that the character needs bang snuff for their

## EPISODE 1: BANG SNUFF

own reasons will take another d6 days. The party or character can cut this in half (round down) with a Streetwise (6) Test. If the character fails the Streetwise Test, they seem far too eager, and word will get around that they are not to be trusted.

Snuff merchants usually ask for payment up front. A successful Charisma (7) Test, or use of an appropriate Skill (such as Haggling) or spell (such as an Improve Attitude KAV), will convince the merchant to advance the snuff against a percentage of the expected take. If the characters have gotten in on a large operation, the gang leader may provide bang snuff to key individuals, on the understanding that they will use it only during the planned crime, and return any unused bang snuff afterward. How far the characters have to go in planning and possibly committing a crime depends partly on how well they're trusted by the snuff merchant or gang leader. Bringing in the authorities and having people arrested would put an end to the undercover operation and move the investigation to the Interrogation model. Actually going through with the crime presents serious risks, but may result in being able to track the connection up to the next level, and find out where the snuff merchant or gang leader is getting their supply.

## *Getting In With a Snuff Merchant*

After several days of buying cheap pints of awful beer for unwashed and unsavory characters, the characters have finally been introduced to Rufus "Scantly" Cockbaine, a snuff merchant. Scantly, a gimlet-eyed, weasely little man with an old green jacket three sizes too big, never goes anywhere without a large associate, any of several men all addressed as "Francis". Yeah, he might be able to lay hands to what you want, assuming you've got the dosh. The characters had better have a good story if they want him to front them the snuff on the promise of a cut, or the current day's Francis



will give them a rowdy seeing-off. Passing themselves off as a Fagin and associates, buying snuff for an operation, can work if the adventurers have sufficient cash on hand, and can lie convincingly.

Scantly does most of his business at the Inverness Titan, a pub on Busby Street in Bethnal Green. The Titan's shingle bears the portrait of a supposedly massive steamship, but the wooden model of the ship over the bar was the only thing the company ever built before they went bankrupt. There's always a few dancers loitering in the pub or just outside, hoping to scrape up the price of a snuff vial. Anyone threatening Scantly may find themselves in the midst of a feeding frenzy, as the dancers either come to Scantly's aid or try to help themselves to a free vial in the scuffle. Neither Scantly nor his current Francis will use bang snuff under any circumstances, even in such dire straits. Firearms are only used if the fight is going badly, as shots being fired will bring the police at a run.

Scantly makes the run to Limehouse for his supply on Saturday morning, or whenever he needs a large restock, taking Francis the Horns, a troll BooJum, with him. They walk part of the way, take cabs through the larger part of Stepney, and change their route and mode of conveyance more or less randomly at various points. Tailing him requires a Streetwise (11) Test, or similar Test using whatever Skills, spells, or devices the characters can reasonably apply to the situation. A Rule of One result at any point leads to Francis the Horns either aborting the run and getting Scantly to safety, or engaging the characters in a physical discussion, depending on how many pursuers he becomes aware of. In either case, the characters' cover is blown. The best they can hope for is to pass themselves off as spies for a rival gang.

### Scantly:

DEX: (11): 5/D8 STR: (8): 4/D6

TOU: (9): 4/D6 PER: (12): 5/D8

WIL: (12): 5/D8 CHA: (11): 5/D8

Social Level: 1

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7

Physical Armor: 0 Mystic Defense: 7

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 7

Death: 41 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 34 Knockdown: 4/D6

Wound Threshold: 7 Movement: 6

### Skills:

Awareness (5):10/2D8; Durability (4); Firearms

(4):9/D8+D6; Haggle (5):10:2D8; Streetwise

(6):11/D10+D8

Armor: None

Weapons: Derringer

Equipment: Cheap suit

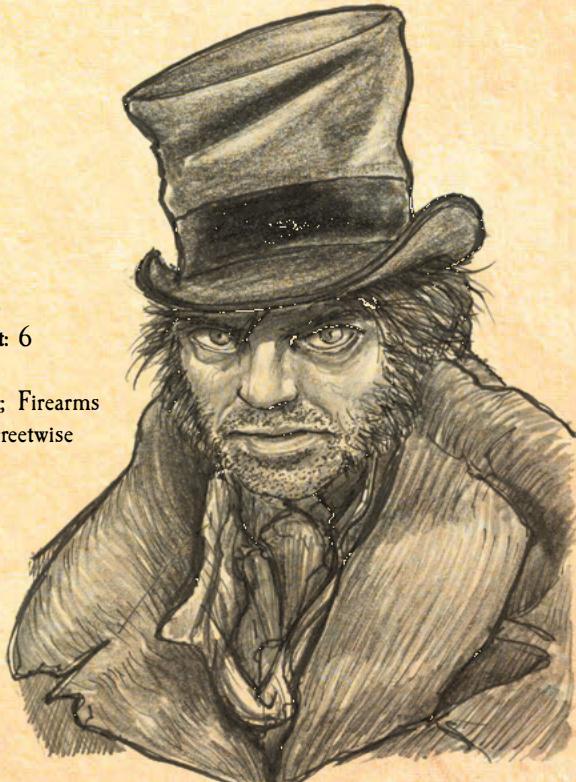
Loot: £-12/-

Adventure Award: Initiate Tier

### Francis (human):

DEX: (12): 5/D8 STR: (12): 5/D8

TOU: (12): 5/D8 PER: (10): 5/D8



## EPISODE 1: BANG SNUFF

WIL: (11): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

Social Level: 1

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7

Physical Armor: 2 Mystic Defense: 7

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 6

Death: 47 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 39 Knockdown: 5/D8

Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

Skills:

Awareness (5):10/2D8; Durability (3);

Firearms (4):9/D8+D6; Melee Weapons

(4):9/D8+D6; Streetwise (5):10/2D8

Armor: Leather coat

Weapons: Knife, light pistol

Equipment: Cheaper suit than Scantly's

Loot: £-/-/8

Adventure Award: Initiate Tier

Francis the Horns (troll):

DEX: (11): 5/D8 STR: (17): 7/D12

TOU: (15): 6/D10 PER: (10): 5/D8

WIL: (12): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

Social Level: 1

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7

Physical Armor: 2 Mystic Defense: 6

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 6

Death: 79 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 60 Knockdown: 7/D12

Wound Threshold: 10

Movement: 7

Skills:

Awareness (5):10/2D8; Durability

(5); Firearms (4):9/D8+D6; Melee

Weapons (5):10/2D8; Shake It Off

(4):10/2D8; Streetwise (5):10/2D8;

Unarmed Combat (5):10/2D8

Armor: Leather coat

Weapons: Howdah pistol; Policeman's

truncheon (treat as Club)

Equipment: Ill-fitting cheap suit

Loot: £-/-/5

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Notes: Heat Sight



## *Getting In on an Operation*

Nicholas “The Florist” Roseman, a snark of imposing aspect, runs a crew in Wapping specializing in smash and grab burglaries. The gang plans a raid on Charles Jamrach’s menagerie in Betts Street, a short, narrow lane running between Saint George Street and Cable Street. They’ll meet up at Damary’s brothel on Saint George, one of many such establishments on the old Ratcliffe Highway right by the docks, and after midnight make their way to Betts Street. There’s only a few guards, who should be easily overpowered by a gang of dancers, and then it’s into the menagerie, take whatever animals are close to the door and already in wheeled transport cages, and off down Saint George to the New Dock at Shadwell, just six blocks away. The cages go up the gangplank of a ship already under steam, the gang gets paid, and the ship and the evidence are off down the Thames.

The Florist’s gang usually runs a dozen strong, but they’ve had several people laid up recently between snuff effects, a bar fight, and a couple of arrests. They’re down to just five plus the Florist himself. A few extra hands for the grunt work of pushing the cages would be useful, if the characters can convince the Florist that they’re the right, or wrong, sort. This will take a Charisma Test against his Social Defense, the use of appropriate Skills, or roleplaying using connections and reputation.

The Florist being clever, he won’t hand out the snuff until the gang is ready to leave Damary’s. The characters could try to follow him to the Limehouse distribution point the day before. This will take a Streetwise (12) Test, or similar Test using whatever Skills, spells, or devices the characters can reasonably apply to the situation, with the Florist and two of his equally large and pugnacious friends ready to deliver a thrashing to anyone snooping in their business. How the characters obtain the snuff, keep a sample, and find the Florist’s connection is up to them. Bringing in the police may or may not be an option. The characters may have to work it out for themselves.

If the characters have the police intervene at the menagerie, and the Florist is captured, he’ll gladly sell out his snuff connection if it means he doesn’t get transported for the robbery. This will, however, require a large fight between the police, the gang (half of which will be on the dance), and the characters, who will of course have to take a bit of a thumping from the police so as not to blow their cover. The police may decide to wait until after the dancers have come back down, and the gang is en route to the steamship. In that case, the Florist turns loose an animal or two into the fracas, and makes a run for it. If he gets away from the fight, the characters will have to chase him down in one of the dodgier areas of the East End, possibly with a wild animal or two on the loose.

### Gang Dancers:

DEX: (11): 5/D8 STR: (12): 5/D8 TOU: (12): 5/D8

PER: (10): 5/D8 WIL: (10): 5/D8 CHA: (9): 4/D6

Social Level: 1

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7

Physical Armor: 2 Mystic Defense: 6

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 6

Death: 47 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 39 Knockdown: 5/D8

Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

Skills:

## EPISODE 1: BANG SNUFF

Awareness (3):8/2D6; Durability (3); Melee Weapons (4):9/D8+D6; Unarmed Combat (5):10/2D8

Armor: Leather jacket

Weapons: Knife

Equipment: Nothing worth mentioning

Loot: £-/-4

Adventure Award: Initiate Tier

**The Florist:**

DEX: (12): 5/D8 STR: (14): 6/D10

TOU: (15): 6/D10 PER: (11): 5/D8

WIL: (12): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

Social Level: 1

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7

Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 7

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 7

Death: 79 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 66 Knockdown: 6/D10

Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 6

**Skills:**

Awareness (5):10/2D8; Durability (6); Firearms

(5):10/2D8; Melee Weapons (6):11/D10+D8; Shake

It Off (5):11/D10+D8; Streetwise (5):10/2D8;

Unarmed Combat (6):11/D10+D8

Armor: Military surplus coat

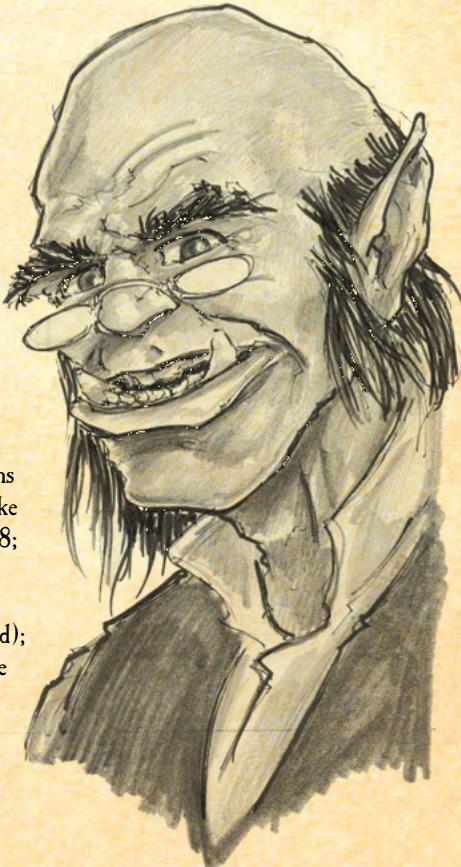
Weapons: Large knife (treat as Short Sword);  
Truncheon (treat as Club); Heavy Pistol (only three  
rounds of ammo)

Equipment: Rough clothing, rougher attitude

Loot: £1/8/-

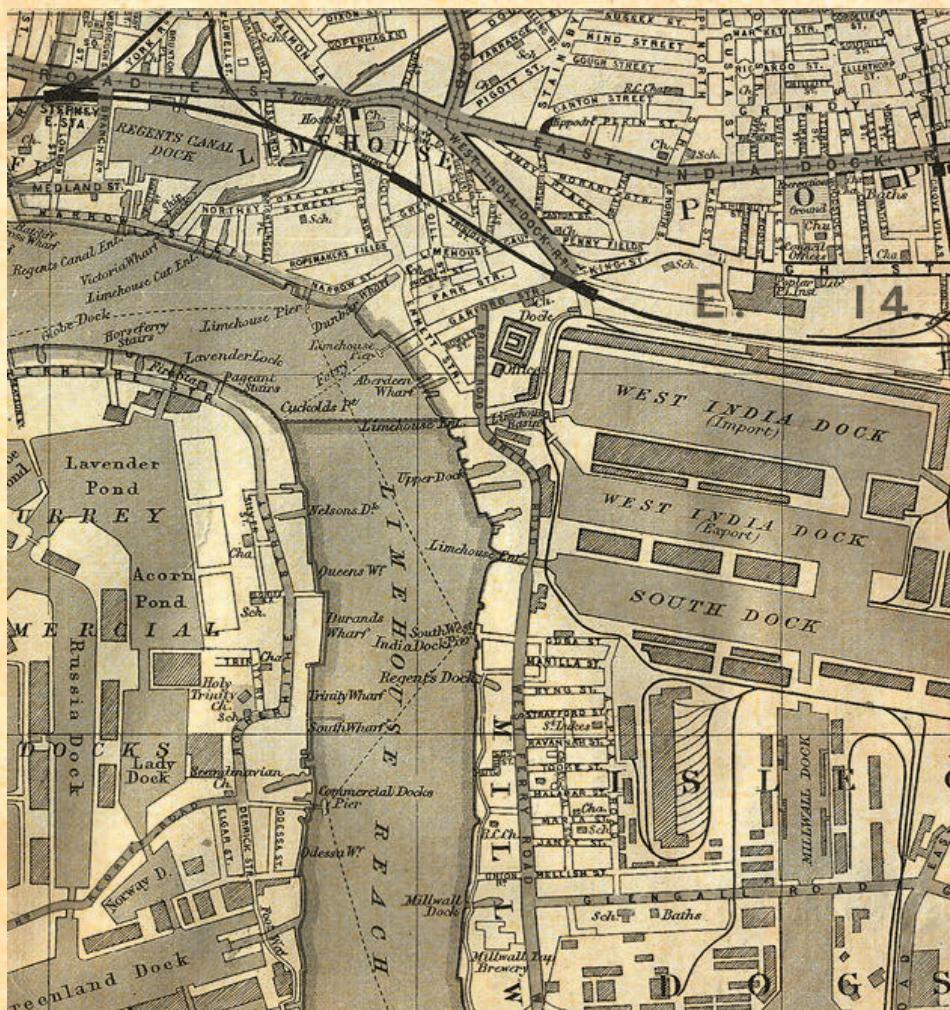
Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Notes: Low-light Vision



### Spying on the Dealers

Tailing a criminal known to be on the dance presents its own challenges, as such an individual may be highly suspicious of everyone and everything, deep in the grip of the drug. On the other hand, they may not care at all, being either overconfident in their advantage, or too burned out from their last use to notice much of anything. Several days and nights of observation are likely to be required to find out where the dancer gets their supply, and then to tail the supplier back to their source. A mistake at any point could spook the quarry, requiring either starting over with another known user, or abandoning this approach entirely in favor of one of the others.



Roleplaying this can be supplemented with a series of Streetwise (9) Tests, Charisma (11) Tests, or the use of other Skills, spells, or abilities as appropriate. For each Test, roll a d6 for the Bonus or Penalty to the TN. On a 1 or 2, the quarry is highly paranoid, creating a +2 TN penalty. On a 3 or 4, the target keeps an eye out, as one would in such an environment, but not unusually so, creating neither a bonus nor a penalty. On a 5 or 6, the target is jittery, Fatigued, and preoccupied with obtaining the next vial, for a bonus of -2 to the TN. Roll 2d6 for the number of days required to tail the dancer to their source. This time can be shortened by 2 days for every extra success on a Streetwise Test (or use of a similar Skill). A Rule of One result on any day's Test results in the target realizing they're being followed, and either shaking the tail or confronting the heroes. A failure on the Test means the quarry was lost in the crowded streets, among the wagons and pedestrians and beggars and piles of rubbish.

## Working through Underworld Connections

The characters can attempt to trace the bang snuff supply through their connections, if they have appropriate ones, such as Dodgers or Criminals. While the customary Streetwise Tests could be made, actually playing out the process of talking to the connections would be more engaging.

As an example, the characters could look into the bare-knuckle fighting circuit, a seedy and semi-illegal business where men brawl for prize money and a lot of cash gets wagered. While there are few rules in this game, one is inviolable: the fight has to be fair. The few attempts to introduce bang snuff into the circuit have ended badly for the suppliers. Thugs in the employ of the punters broke a few kneecaps in one case. In another, the crowd ran riot, and the fighter and his backers were stomped to death. Tracking down the survivors of the leg-breaking might be useful. While they won't grass on their confederates to the authorities, causing them trouble by pointing an independent team at them would just be getting some of their own back, now, wouldn't it?

## Interrogating a Suspect

Asking questions starts out with a person to ask them of. Capturing someone who's on the dance without them being able to use their bang snuff will require quick thinking and fast reflexes, as no battle plan has ever survived contact with the enemy. Once the subject is in custody, getting information out of them may require inventive techniques, as their minds will be consumed with concern about their supply being interrupted or cut off entirely if they grass on their connection. The usual police method, beating the subject until he says what's desired, simply isn't going to work here. Charisma and Charisma-based Tests are at a -1 Step penalty initially, with the penalty increasing the longer the suspect is held, as their withdrawal symptoms worsen.

Dancers are not as trusted as dealers, so once the suspect gives up the name of their supplier, the characters will have to work their way up the chain. Taking a snuff merchant off the street may result in the distribution point being shut down. Give the characters an hour or two for interrogation, but if they go much longer, they should find the distribution point closed and possibly on fire when they arrive. Impress upon the player group the need to do this quietly and subtly, rather than by brute force.

## Results

In the end, whatever method the characters pursue, when they achieve success, they discover that the drug comes from a nondescript brick building at the corner of Gurnard Street and Lime Kiln Hill, at the foot of Limehouse Pier. The empty vials are brought there for refilling, so either there's a laboratory inside where the drug is made, or at the very least a distribution facility, and certainly some people who know more about the drug than anyone the characters have met thus far. Oh, and one more thing: gaining admittance requires showing a tattoo on the inside of the left wrist, of a flying snake wrapped around an apple. A bit of research (or a successful Research (7) Test) turns up the origin of this tattoo. It's the sigil of the Hesperidean Society, an organization put under ban a year ago for experiments that went far beyond the boundaries of civilized society.

With the link to the Hesperidean Society revealed, further research must be done. The characters can do this themselves, with a visit to the appropriate facilities and a Research (6) Test,

or could ask their contacts with a Streetwise (7) Test or similar applicable social Skill. In either case, or if the characters find a third way to the information, they discover that the Hesperidean Society was, or perhaps still is, an occult organization specializing in ancient Persian mysticism. Unfortunately, if you go back far enough into Persian antiquity, the practices tend toward the grisly: animal sacrifices, bathing in bull's blood, and possibly even human sacrifice. A year ago, the Society had to be forcibly dispersed. According to the characters' sources, and they're rather close-mouthed on the issue, the Society had planned some sort of massive ritual, a sort of magical Gunpowder Plot, intending to sacrifice Parliament to summon something untoward into the government's place. Of course, at the time, nobody believed such a thing was actually possible, but with the developments since the opening of the Rabbit Hole, who knows what can and can't be done any more? At any rate, the leaders, or at least the ones who were captured, were quietly tried for treason and hanged. The whole sordid affair got swept under the rug, as nobody really wanted the broadsheets to get wind of it.

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## Troubleshooting

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Most of the scenes in this Episode have their own troubleshooting suggestions. As this Episode takes place on the streets of London, among the criminal underground, a friendly or hostile GMC could be readily used for correcting a problem. For example, if the Florist doesn't trust the player group, a connection who brought them together could vouch for the player group, later demanding a beer for the favor done. Conversely, a pair of policemen strolling past could decide to roust the player characters, finding nothing and giving them a stern warning, thus establishing them as the right sort in the eyes of the criminals.

As there's several possible ways of finding out where the bang snuff is coming from, don't reach for a Troubleshooting solution until the players have tried at least two. The Episode presents a number of possibilities, but if the players come up with something else entirely, let them run with it. The important thing is that they get the information, not how they get it.



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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO

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Adventure for 1879



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## Episode 2: The Cry in the Pyramid

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**W**ith the knowledge that the Hesperidean Society is probably involved somehow, the situation has grown more complicated and dire. Moving faster would probably be a good idea. With the location of the bang snuff distribution point known, a raid must be carried out, pretty much immediately. Let's just hope the Hesperidean Society hasn't put a mage on guard, or worse.

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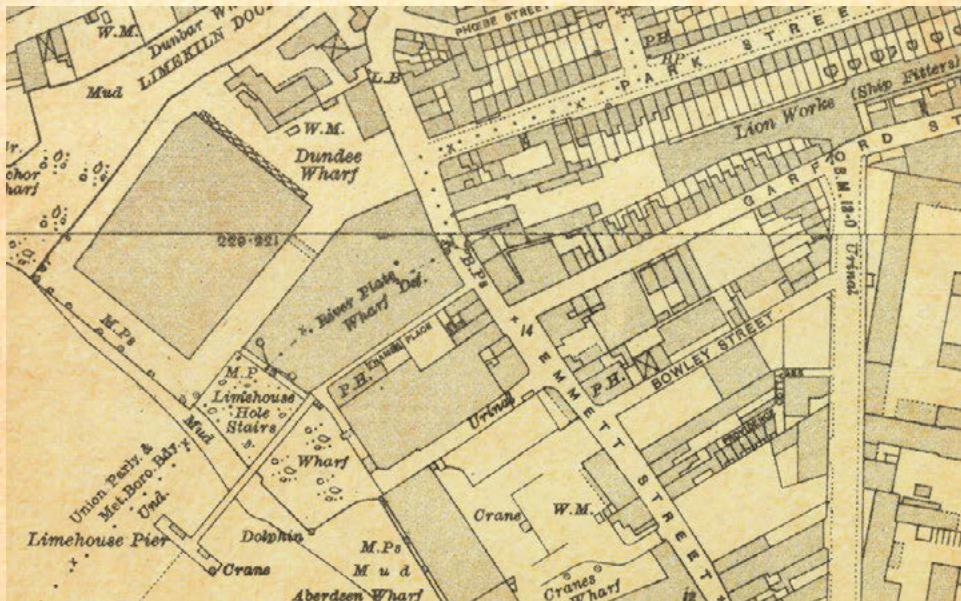
### Setting the Stage

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Read the following to the players:

*Obviously, the next step requires a forcible visit to the building in Limehouse. This must be done swiftly, as the snuff merchants may suspect they've been rumbled, and could abandon the facility at any moment. You've got to assemble whatever firepower you can muster and proceed to the location post haste.*

## EPISODE 2: THE CRY IN THE PYRAMID



## Themes and Images

Rushed plans, hasty improvisation, a charge straight into the enemy's nest without time for proper reconnaissance. The player characters have to barge in, grab and protect whatever evidence they can seize before the enemy destroys it all, and somehow come up looking the better for it.

## Behind the Scenes

The Limehouse distribution point, on Garford Street just up from Lime Kiln Hill, is an older building, of brick construction. A hundred years ago, it might have been a prosperous shop with a work area in the back and the owner's rooms above. Now, it's run down, soot stained, and sad.

The ground floor shopfront has been boarded up. The front door is still usable, although it's been replaced with a heavier door and a better lock. It's also got a guard, a local tough loitering on the step looking like a neddy man with a thick cudgel he's anxious to use. The delivery entrance round the back consists of a pair of large doors, big enough to admit a small wagon, but they've likewise been recently repaired and reinforced, and have a couple of toughs standing guard. The windows have largely been boarded over, and have rusty ironwork thief grates over them just to cause further annoyance. The second floor windows haven't got full-on ironwork, just a bit across the lower

end, and haven't been boarded over, either, but getting up to them is going to take a ladder or a Climbing (10) Test to get up a crumbling brick wall.

### Getting In on the Ground Floor

Faking a tattoo to get the guard to open the door requires an Artist (9) Test, comparable Skill use, or an Illusion spell. One success allows the bearer of the fake tattoo to make an opposed Charisma Test or Charisma-based Skill Test against the guard's Perception. For each extra success the artist gets on their Test, the bearer of the tattoo gains +1 Step to their Charisma Test. If the Test fails, the guard accuses the bearer of being from a rival gang and warns them off. If the Charisma Test comes up a Rule of One, the guard raises the alarm. If the Test succeeds, the guard opens the door, and the raid commences with initiative. If the Test has one extra success, the characters get one free round of action. If the Test has two or more extra successes, the guards are Surprised, and not only cannot take any actions during the first combat round, but suffer a -3 penalty to their Physical and Mystic Defense for the round.

Forcing an entry through front or back requires defeating the guard or guards, then breaking a fortified door or window, with a Physical Defense of 4, a Physical Armor of 7, and a Barrier Rating of 20. See **Barriers and Structures** in the **Perils of Adventuring** chapter of the *1879 Gamemaster's Guide* (pg.203). After the first blow to the entry point, guards inside the building may take shots at or drop things on the characters, if they're not already alerted by the scuffle with the outside guards, so initiative is required from the second round onward.

Once inside, the characters see that the ground floor is largely given over to cots and crates of supplies for the guards, who live in the building. The stairs at the back, by the office (where the guards' gang leader sleeps), lead up to the laboratory. There's lots of partial cover and potential for improvised weaponry. There's six guards, one of them a dwarf, one a snark, and the rest human. None of the guards carry bang snuff. The gang has a very strict rule against using the product. Apply the appropriate racial adjustments to the stats given below for the two Boojums.

#### Guards:

DEX: (10): 5/D8 STR: (12): 5/D8 TOU: (13): 6/D10

PER: (10): 5/D8 WIL: (11): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

**Social Level:** 1

**Initiative:** 5/D8    **Physical Defense:** 6

**Physical Armor:** 2    **Mystic Defense:** 6

**Mystic Armor:** 2    **Social Defense:** 6

**Death:** 54    **Recovery Tests:** 3

**Unconsciousness:** 44    **Knockdown:** 5D8

**Wound Threshold:** 9    **Movement:** 6

#### Skills:

Awareness (4):9/D8+D6; Durability (3); Melee Weapons (4):9/D8+D6; Streetwise (4):9/D8+D6; Unarmed Combat (5):10/2D8

**Armor:** Heavy jacket

**Weapons:** Cudgel (treat as Club); Knife

**Equipment:** Cheap clothing

**Adventure Award:** Novice Tier

## EPISODE 2: THE CRY IN THE PYRAMID

Dennis, the gang leader, has better fighting skills, some natural aptitude for leadership, and a heavier weapon. He knows very little about the operation, save for the fact that Miss Litwin makes the snuff and fills the vials, and is never to be disturbed when she's at it. He's paid right nice to keep his mouth shut, he is, and you won't get anything out of him.

### Guard Gang Leader (Dennis Murrells):

DEX: (11): 5/D8 STR: (13): 6/D10

TOU: (14): 6/D10 PER: (11): 5/D8

WIL: (12): 5/D8 CHA: (11): 5/D8

Social Level: 1

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7

Physical Armor: 2 Mystic Defense: 7

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 7

Death: 63 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 52 Knockdown: 6/D10

Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Awareness (5):10/2D8; Durability (4); Melee Weapons

(5):10/2D8; Shake It Off (3):9/D8+D6; Streetwise

(5):10/2D8; Unarmed Combat (6):11/D10+D8

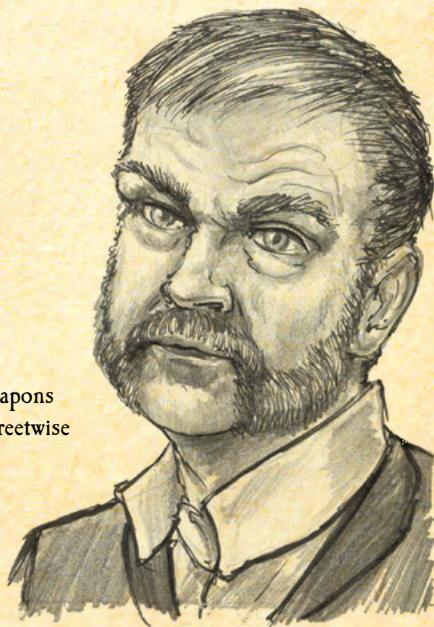
Armor: Heavy jacket

Weapons: Cudgel (treat as Club), Knife

Equipment: Cheap clothing

Karma: 5 Karma Die: D8

Adventure Award: Novice Tier



### The Second Story, Because Nobody Believes the First

Going up the fire escape round the back, a set of iron rungs bolted to the side of the building, without alerting anyone inside the building requires a Stealthy Stride (8) Test to sneak into the alley and then a Climbing (6) Test to go up the ladder quietly. Only one success is needed for either Test. At the top, the window is secured from the inside. Opening it requires a Lock Picking (8) Test. Once the window is open, other characters can climb up the fire escape and in through the window in two rounds without a Test, or in one round with a Climbing (5) Test.

The back room upstairs has two large wooden tables. One is loaded with alchemical equipment, a mish-mosh of proper chemist's gear and arcane trappings. The other has boxes of snuff vials (empty ones on the left, full ones on the right), a balance scale and weights, protective gloves and a cloth mask, and a collection of funnels and scoops on an old tin tray for filling the vials. The room at the front of the upper floor is full of old junk, some of it cleared away to make room for the lab equipment and the guards' area. It's all somewhat flammable.

As soon as the first character climbs through the window, Sabryna, the chemist, throws an oil burner into the junk room, grabs most of the papers and a frost-covered canister off the lab table, and runs down the stairs. If the player character arrives from downstairs, she flees out the window and down the fire escape. Sabryna will not fight to the death, but will instead cause massive

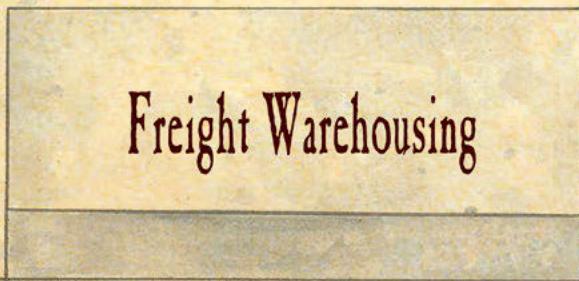
## STREET LAYOUT

### Park Street



### Lime Kiln Rd.

### Garford Street

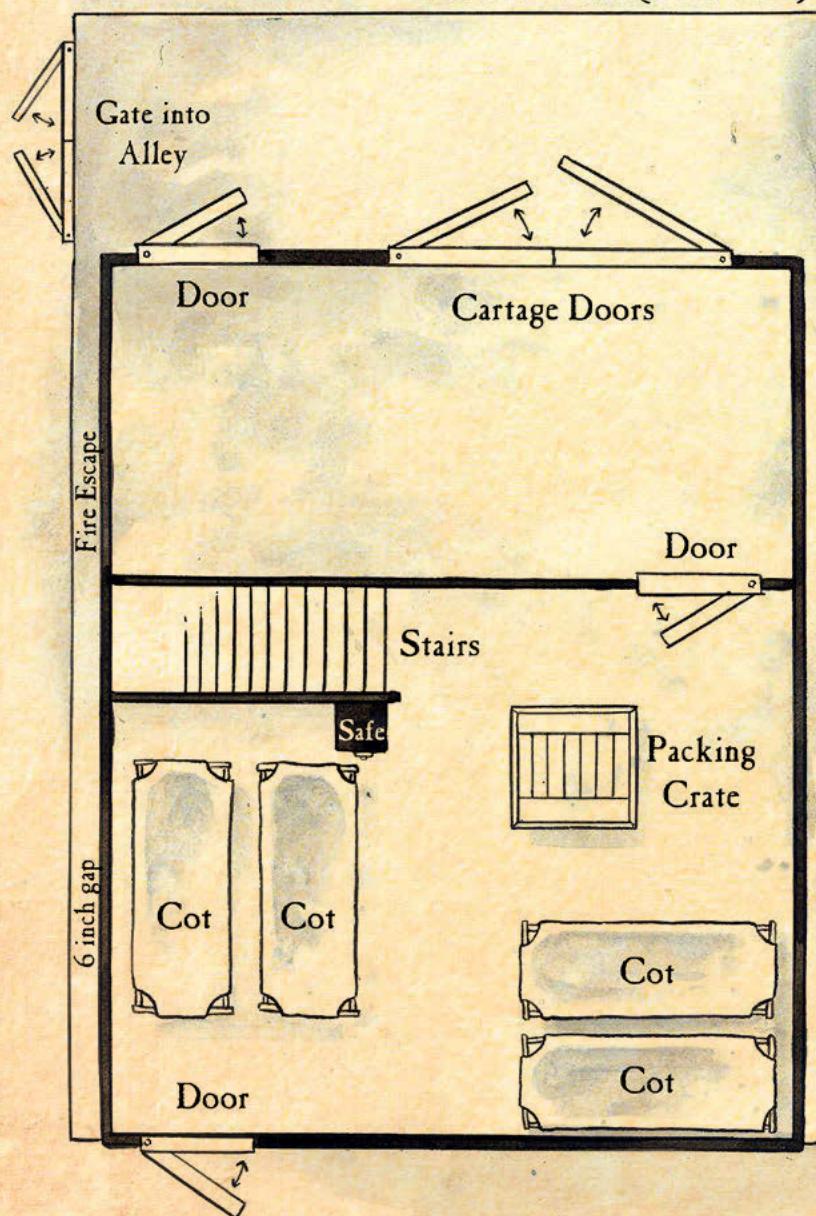


### West Ferry Rd.



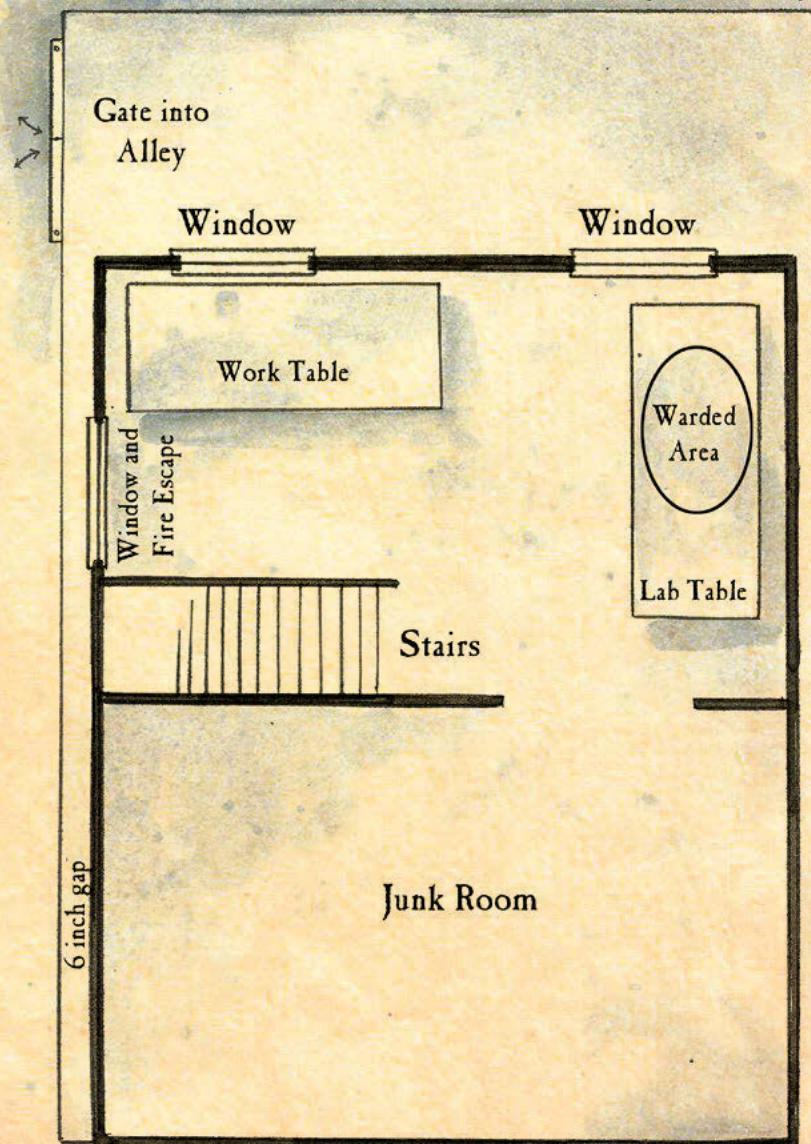
## Lot and Ground Floor

Perimeter Fence (Back/Sides)



## Lot and First Floor

Perimeter Fence (Back/Sides)



## EPISODE 2: THE CRY IN THE PYRAMID

property damage and put innocent lives in jeopardy to slow her pursuers. If captured, she invokes an enchantment from an amulet around her neck, and wipes her own mind, leaving nothing to be questioned.

### Cult Chemist (Sabryna Litwin, human):

DEX: (12): 5/D8 STR: (10): 5/D8 TOU: (11): 5/D8

PER: (13): 6/D10 WIL: (14): 6/D10 CHA: (12): 5/D8

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7 Physical Armor: 2 Mystic Defense: 8

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 7 Death: 45 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 37 Knockdown: 5/D8 Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Durability (3); Firearms (4):10/2D8;

Knowledge (Chemistry) (5):11/D10+d8; Streetwise (4):9/

D8+D6

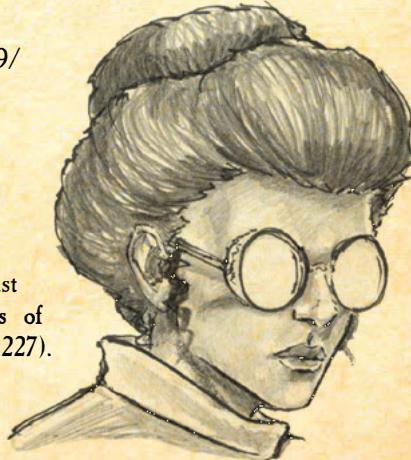
Armor: Canvas lab coat

Weapons: Derringer

Equipment: Chemical apparatus, decent clothing

Adventure Award: Initiate Tier

The blaze spreads at an inconveniently fast rate. See Fire under Injurious Incidents in the Perils of Adventuring chapter of the *1879 Gamemaster's Guide* (pg.227). The fire starts as Step 6 damage by touch. It spreads each round to the adjacent hex, increasing in damage step by +1 as it does so. When the fire reaches a damage step of 10, the room is fully involved and the fire does Step 8 damage within two yards. When the fire spreads into a new room, its damage step in the new location starts back at Step 6. If the fire spreads to the alchemical table, the equipment explodes, doing Step 12 damage to everyone in the room, physical armor protecting against the blast.



## Post-Raid Investigation

If the characters are able to extinguish the blaze, or seize the papers from the alchemical table before they have to flee the burning building, or retrieve the papers that Sabryna tried to abscond with, they discover that the lab notes are partly written in cuneiform. If the alchemical table survives the raid and the fire, the equipment there can also be examined. Some of the glass tubing is bent in strange ways, forcing the extract to travel through some kind of arcane sigil. There's also a magic circle painted on the table, marked at several locations with more cuneiform. The characters should already know the Hesperidean Society was into ancient Persian magic from their earlier research. Apparently the cult has either reached all the way back to the Akkadian era, or is working with Samsut magic. If anyone among the characters has an appropriate Knowledge Skill, they can make a Test against a TN of 8 to determine that the cuneiform is ancient Akkadian, not modern Samsut.

Reading it is quite another matter, as it's an arcane text, and doesn't make sense if the reader has no experience with Akkadian magic. A Magic Theory Test won't help if the mage or priest has not worked with this sort of thing before. A Research, Knowledge (London), or similar Skill Test against a Target Number of 6 brings up the name of Doctor Ezerhan Toprak, a leading authority on ancient Semitic languages at University College. He's been in the papers a good deal over the past year, consulting with the Crown on the Samsut language.

The packing case on the materials table has a Gruv import stamp on it. Someone got it through Greenwich Station's security, either as legitimate goods that got redirected, or through bribery or other nefarious means. The importer's name is on the case, as one would expect: Harrison and Thurbert. They're an easy name to Research, a TN of 3, a well established fourth-generation import-export firm used by quite a few organizations for bringing in scientific specimens. The Royal Society ships its bits and bobs home from the Gruv via Harrison and Thurbert. What is such a reputable firm doing mixed up in this? Is there an inside person, or is the firm corrupt all the way up to the top? Anyone looking over the case may also notice the original destination marked on the lid, a pottery works out on Dauberney Road. Did this get delivered there and then rerouted here? Or was it redirected before then?

Then there's the skull at the end of the table, which looks decidedly saurian, and the ceramic jar half full of some sort of animal bits, and the nearly-frozen cylinder of animal bits that Sabryna grabbed during her escape attempt. Again, if the characters have an appropriate Knowledge Skill, such as Biology or Zoology, they could make a Test against a TN of 8, and learn that the jar is full of saurian adrenal glands, reasonably fresh, harvested no more than a day or so ago, or kept on ice for no more than a week. What species the glands and the skull came from will require an expert in Gruv animals. A Research, Knowledge (London), or similar Skill Test against a TN of 6 gives the party the name of Professor Thomas Macguire, a paleontologist and the closest thing to an authority on dinosaurs in London. Anyone who knows more about dinosaurs is likely to be in the Gruv, studying the live ones over there.

More research. Hooray.

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## Troubleshooting

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The most important bit here is that the characters retrieve the evidence of Persian magic and the use of saurian animal parts. If the lab goes up before they can get hold of any of it, Sabryna could always fail her Climbing Test and fall off the fire escape, or fall down the stairs, breaking her leg and putting what she's carrying into the hands of the party.

If the fight is decidedly going against the party, and it looks like they're going to be roundly defeated, the noise could bring reinforcements of various sorts. The Metropolitan police might actually take an interest in a loud fight in the Docks area. The toughs will break and run if the Peelers show up, not being paid enough to take on the law. A private security force from the warehouse across the street might pitch in, or a party of temperance crusaders, glad to see somebody doing somewhat about the drug dealers. Any plausible interruption or arrival could be tossed in to help the party. Environmental factors could also play a part. The building is on fire, after all. A falling spark could ignite something flammable and possibly explosive behind the toughs, doing them enough damage to bring the fight back to winnable for the characters.



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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO

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Adventure for 1879



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## Episode 3: Indiana Bones

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**T**he characters have to make a decision. Do they go to the British Museum to speak with Professor Thomas Macguire, the noted paleontologist and the closest they'll find to a dinosaur expert this side of the Rabbit Hole? Or do they pop round to University College, London to see Doctor Ezerhan Toprak, an Ottoman Turk granted citizenship for his scholarly accomplishments, and leading expert on ancient Persian languages? Or do they split up and go see both men at once? After all, the British Museum and University College London are only three blocks away from each other, and the party could do more damage that way.

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### Setting the Stage

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See the two scenes in this Episode for the stage setting as appropriate to the scene.

## EPISODE 3: INDIANA BONES



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## Themes and Images

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Now it's getting serious. The party has gotten close enough that they're running afoul of hostile mages. This is a serious, determined enemy, willing to cause significant property damage and inflict civilian casualties to get their way. Minimizing collateral damage may not be possible, but if it gets out of hand, the party's reputation will suffer. Tough choices have to be made.

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## Behind the Scenes

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The first scene, *Fossils Aflame*, takes place at the British Museum, where Professor Thomas Macguire may be found. The second, *The Loss of Even One Page*, takes place at University College, London, where Doctor Ezerhan Toprak has his office. See the respective scenes for details. Either or both of these scenes may be used, sequentially or simultaneously as previously noted.

### Fossils Aflame

Read the following to the players:

*Located at the former site of Montagu House in Bloomsbury, the British Museum has been under construction since 1823, with the plans being revised, open areas filled in with halls for new*

*collections, and further space being acquired as acquisitions keep outgrowing the facilities. Despite the dust and scaffolding and inconvenience, the Museum still hosts thousands of visitors each day, and dozens of scholars make use of its collections in their studies.*

Play through the following to set the stage. By the time the characters reach the Professor, they should be somewhat annoyed by the delays, and well aware of the vulnerability of the Museum in case of a fight.

Upon asking for Professor Macguire, the characters are given directions by landmark, as the signs are probably down again. Not for me to comment on, the jobsworth at the door informs them. The natural history wing is at sixes and sevens, crates and workmen everywhere, half the collections packed up or being packed to be transported to the new building in South Kensington, although construction is expected to require another year to complete. John Edward Gray, the Keeper of Zoology and de facto head of natural history, is a heavyset, balding man with a slight resemblance to Old Chuck, and a perpetually harassed and tired demeanor. Of course, the characters are pointed straight to him when they have an odd request and some peculiar specimens. They find Gray on the second floor, polishing his glasses repeatedly and trying not to have an attack of apoplexy. Multiple cases of entomological specimens have had all their labels and registration numbers removed by Professor Heiberg, who disagreed with the classification that Dr. Quebbemann, his professional rival, had implemented. Getting all the specimens identified and re-labeled with their catalog numbers will take up far more time than Professor Heiberg is perhaps worth. Gray will have to pull people off trying to relabel Dr. Cuming's conch shells, which had their labels blown away while being carried in open trays by his widow. She meant well, really. Sir Antonio Panizzi, the Principal Librarian, keeps having the signs pointing the way to the natural history collections taken down, and refuses to allocate space for several thousand volumes of scientific knowledge acquired from abroad, saying that he needs the space for the growing collection of medieval manuscripts, and the library's responsibilities under the Copyright Act to store a copy of every book printed in Britain, and nobody of any importance has any interest in all that science claptrap anyway. After unloading all this on the characters, and then apologizing for sharing so much of his woes, Gray will happily introduce them to Professor Macguire, whom he feels should be getting much more attention from the public. After all, with living saurians found in the Gruv, we need an in depth understanding of paleontology just for everyday survival in the New World.

Read the following to the players:

*Professor Thomas Macguire, when found, proves to be a sturdy Scotsman who looks more like a navvy than a respected paleontologist. He's having a somewhat heated discussion with a man in an expensive suit, while trying to supervise the enshrouding of a large bone in plaster. As the characters arrive, Professor Macguire shouts at the man in the suit, "No, I won't come with you now, I don't care who you bloody well represent!", then at the workmen, "Slowly, you idiots! We can't have bubbles in the plaster, it won't support the damned fossil properly!"*

*The man in the expensive suit sighs. "I was afraid you might prove intransigent." The four toughs with him produce large pistols from under their coats, and he raises his hands, now glowing slightly, in a menacing gesture. Initiative, please.*

Combat ensues.

## EPISODE 3: INDIANA BONES

### Cultist (Severn Wylam)

DEX: (13): 6/D10 STR: (11): 5/D8 TOU: (12): 5/D8

PER: (16): 7/D12 WIL: (16): 7/D12 CHA: (14): 6/D10

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 9

Mystic Armor: 3 Social Defense: 8

Death: 59 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 49 Knockdown: 5/D8

Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Astral Sight (4):11/D10+D8; Awareness (4):11/

D10+D8; Dispel Magic (4):11/D10+D8;

Durability (5); Firearms (4):10/2D8; Impressive

Display (3):9/D8+D6; Spellcasting (5):13/

D12+D10

Armor: Ballistic vest

Weapons: Light pistol

Equipment: Disposable fetish (Spellcasting +2

Steps, one use only)

Karma: 10 Karma Die: D8

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Notes: May use any Initiate or Novice Mage spells

from the Hesperidean Society spell list in the

Appendix



Severn tosses fire spells by preference. While he would really like to abscond with Professor Macguire, the sudden appearance of the characters has thrown that plan into a cocked hat. He'll kill the Professor if he can't kidnap him, and set the entire room ablaze if necessary to cover his escape.

### Cult Toughs

DEX: (13): 6/D10 STR: (14): 6/D10 TOU: (14): 6/D10

PER: (11): 5/D8 WIL: (12): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

Social Level: 2

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 7

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 6

Death: 70 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 58 Knockdown: 6/D10

Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Durability (5); Firearms (5):11/D10+D8; Melee Weapons (5):11/D10+D8; Unarmed Combat (5):11/D10+D8

Armor: Ballistic jacket

Weapons: Heavy pistol, knife



**Equipment:** Sturdy clothing

**Adventure Award:** Novice Tier

Gender of the toughs is irrelevant. Apply appropriate racial modifications if a Boojum is desired among them. The toughs have three priorities: kill the player characters, incapacitate Professor Macguire and carry him off, and make sure Severn gets away cleanly. How they carry those out depends on the situation. They'll have no problem at all with causing massive property damage in the process.

### Professor Macguire

DEX: (12): 5/D8 STR: (12): 5/D8 TOU: (13): 6/D10

PER: (17): 7/D12 WIL: (13): 6/D10 CHA: (12): 5/D8

Social Level: 4

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7 Physical Armor: 0 Mystic Defense: 10

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 7 Death: 75 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 62 Knockdown: 5/D8 Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

## EPISODE 3: INDIANA BONES

### Skills:

Avoid Blow (4):9/D8+D6; Awareness (6):13/D12+D10; Durability (6); Evidence Analysis (6):13/D12+D10; Firearms (5):10/2D8; Knowledge (Paleontology) (7):14/2D12; Melee Weapons (4):9/D8+D6; Research (7):14/2D12

Armor: None

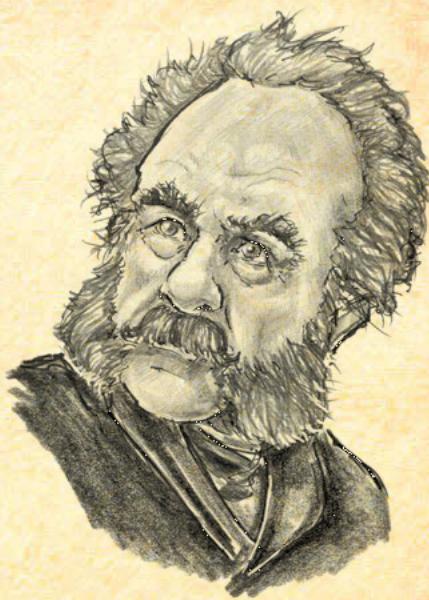
Weapons: Geologist's hammer (treat as Mace)

Equipment: Rough but well made clothing; Native American tribal fetish (+6 Physical Armor vs. spell damage, one use only)

Karma: 6 Karma Die: D8

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Notes: The tribal fetish is a small silver and turquoise pendant the professor wears on a thong around his neck, given him by a shaman in the wilds near Deseret. The professor will be very surprised if its effect activates. The turquoise inlay will crumble and fall out when this happens.



Macguire has faced blackguards with firearms before. He seizes the nearest bit of timber and attacks the cultist, first because the cultist is obviously the most dangerous to the exhibits, and second because if you take down the leader, the followers generally run away. He's got no concern at all for his own safety, but will fight savagely to protect his work. He resorts to his geologist's hammer if the improvised club is lost.

The workmen have no dog in this fight. They scatter to the four winds at the first sign of trouble, although one enterprising young fellow does throw a bucket of plaster at one of the gunmen on his way out, spoiling the thug's aim.

The room itself is large, full of fragile specimens, wooden packing crates, papers, and buckets of plaster, definitely not the best choice for a battle with someone who uses fire as a weapon. There's a high probability of the battle spilling out into the natural history wing, where there's plenty of the unsuspecting public to use as hostages or distractions. The workroom has a 4-6 chance on a d6 of any fire spreading and increasing in Damage Step each round. See Fire under Injurious Incidents in the Perils of Adventuring chapter of the *1879 Gamemaster's Guide* (pg.227). The museum has thankfully set out buckets of sand at key locations, so there's the possibility of smothering the blaze if the heroes act quickly, and are willing to forego hostilities in favor of trying to save the museum.

The fight ends when Severn escapes or is slain. Any surviving thugs will flee with him or surrender if their leader dies. If the cultist and his cronies make off with the professor, so much the better for the storyline, but if they don't, they've at least caused a tremendous amount of damage and set the characters back considerably. If the characters manage to search the cultist or find the badge-case he dropped in the fracas, they find a well-made but counterfeit set of Home Office credentials, identifying the cultist as John Smith of Special Services. The cultist has no other identification, except for the Hesperidean Society tattoo on his wrist. The thugs are just common criminals, recruited from Bethnal Green yesterday to provide muscle. They have no idea who the toff was, but he paid well and provided expensive guns.

If Professor Macguire survives the fight, and hasn't been kidnapped by the cult, he can tell the characters that the skull is from a carnivorous theropod, one of the mid to larger sized ones that Lady Jennings has documented in the western part of the Gruv. The adrenal glands are definitely saurian, but he's never dealt with a fresh specimen before, just fossils, and can't help the characters there. Now, if you don't mind, he's got to see what he can salvage of the collection. The characters will earn a bit of grudging respect if they stay to help with the cleanup effort.

If the cultist and his team escape the Museum, with the characters still in pursuit, they meet up with the team from the University library in Russell Square, a block over and between the Museum and the library. There, the cultists set off a sizable bomb, causing considerable destruction and civilian casualties, and flee under cover of the explosion. The blast does Step 25 damage within 5 yards, dropping by 5 Steps per yard outside that radius. Anyone in the open area of Russell Square must make a Knockdown (20) Test or be bowled over by the force of the blast. The characters may make an Awareness (6) Test to spot a cultist lighting the bomb's fuse, with the explosion going off at the end of the next combat round.

### The Loss of Even One Page

University College, London occupies several blocks along either side of Gower Street. The older bit, where the Classical Studies department resides, stands opposite University College Hospital, where doctors and nurses have trained for the past forty years. Let's hope the characters don't have need of such an institution, shall we?

*Roleplay through the following.*

The characters go in through the old main gate of the University, now just two brick gatehouses and a bit of decorative ironwork, and make their way across the small quadrangle to Warwickshire Hall. Up three marble steps, in through a heavy wooden door bound in iron, and left into the Classics Library, at which point they're shushed by a severe matron who glares at them over her pince-nez. If the characters have an average Social Level of 3 or better, they're directed to the second floor research rooms. If their average Social Level is below 3, they'll have to make a contested Charisma Test (or appropriate Charisma-based Skill) against the librarian's Willpower (Step 6/10). Failure results in their being ejected from the building and seen off the campus by a pair of burly snarks in College livery. Success allows them up to the research rooms, but with a stern warning to behave themselves and to not touch anything. Finding alternate ways around the matron is left up to the characters' ingenuity.

Read the following to the players:

*The main room of the Library is two stories high, with wooden bookshelves along the walls that reach nearly to the ceiling and those rolling ladders that feature so prominently in this sort of scene. The central area, half the size of a football pitch, has shoulder-high bookshelf cabinets in neat rows, alternating with massive study tables that seat eight, or twelve at a pinch. At the back of the echoing chamber, which embarrassingly amplifies even the slightest sound you make, a stairway of openwork iron leads up to a balcony.*

## EPISODE 3: INDIANA BONES

A narrow, carpeted hall extends from the balcony to a window at the far end, with three doors (their upper halves clear glass) to either side. Behind each is a private sanctum for advanced study, with a central large table similar to the ones in the main hall, a row of three writing-desks, bookshelves down both side walls, and large cabinets under the windows for storage of artifacts and the like. The rooms have all been recently converted from gas to arc light, which provides a much brighter and probably safer source of illumination, although the lamps have to be shaded with smoked glass and make an annoying hiss. Doctor Toprak occupies the center room on the right. Unfortunately, he's not alone.

The elegant woman in the dark green riding habit seems rather put out at your arrival. She and Doctor Toprak have obviously been having some rather pointed words, considering the set of his jaw and the pepperbox pistol she has pointed at him. She gives you an annoyed frown, and sighs.

"Oh, I do hate interruptions," she says. She gives the four burly men accompanying her a brief glance. "Kill them, would you?"

Combat ensues.

### Cultist (Madeleine Murray)

DEX: (13): 6/D10 STR: (11): 5/D8

TOU: (12): 5/D8 PER: (16): 7/D12

WIL: (16): 7/D12 CHA: (14): 6/D10

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 9

Mystic Armor: 3 Social Defense: 8

Death: 59 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 49 Knockdown: 5/D8

Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

### Skills:

Astral Sight (4):11/D10+D8; Awareness (4):11/D10+D8; Dispel Magic (4):11/D10+D8; Durability (5); Firearms (4):10/2D8; Impressive Display (3):9/D8+D6; Spellcasting (6):14/2D12

Armor: Ballistic vest

Weapons: Pepperbox pistol

Equipment: Disposable fetish (Spellcasting +2 Steps, one use only)

Karma: 10 Karma Die: D8

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Notes: May use any Priest spells from the Hesperidean Society spell list in the Appendix



Madeleine uses her first move to shatter the windows with a Vata's Breath spell, creating an exit. Her goal is to have one of her thugs scoop up Doctor Toprak and depart, leaving the other three thugs to delay the characters. If she gets out the window and onto the fire escape balcony, she turns and sends a Verethragna's Purification spell back into the room, immediately destroying part of the collection of ancient Persian manuscripts and leaving the rest in dire peril. The flames spread to adjacent hexes on a 4-6 on a d6 each combat round. She will also resort to fire if combat

seems to be going against her, aiming behind the characters in order to put the flames at their backs and using the blast to knock them down. Under no circumstances will she allow herself to be captured, using a self-immolation spell bound to a single-use charm if she has no other options. This incinerates her in a single round, doing Step 20 damage to anyone holding her, and Step 15 to the area immediately adjacent. Give the characters one free action when she invokes Verethragna's forgiveness and begins to smolder.



### Cult Thugs

DEX: (13): 6/D10 STR: (14): 6/D10 TOU: (14): 6/D10

PER: (11): 5/D8 WIL: (12): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

Social Level: 2

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 8 Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 7

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 6 Death: 70 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 58 Knockdown: 6/D10 Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Durability (5); Firearms (5): 11/D10+D8; Melee Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8; Unarmed Combat (5): 11/D10+D8

Armor: Ballistic jacket

## EPISODE 3: INDIANA BONES

**Weapons:** Heavy pistol, shotgun, brass knuckles (add +3 Steps to STR for damage, attack with Unarmed Combat)

**Equipment:** Sturdy clothing

**Adventure Award:** Novice Tier

Gender of the toughs is irrelevant. Apply appropriate racial modifications if a Boojum is desired among them. One of the thugs starts out by knocking Doctor Toprak down with the butt of his shotgun, then using his next move to pick up the dazed scholar and sling him across a shoulder. He will attempt to flee with Doctor Toprak whether or not the cultist goes with him. The other three fire one barrel of their shotguns each round, attempting to put the characters in a crossfire. They resort to brass knuckles and dirty fighting on the third round, or when engaged in melee, discarding their now-empty shotguns. They've been paid very well to fight for the cultist, but will abandon the fight and flee down the fire escape or into the library if the room is set ablaze.

### Doctor Toprak

DEX: (12): 5/D8 STR: (11): 5/D8

TOU: (12): 5/D8 PER: (17): 7/D12

WIL: (13): 6/D10 CHA: (12): 5/D8

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7

Physical Armor: 0 Mystic Defense: 10

Mystic Armor: 0+2 Social Defense: 7

Death: 47 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 39 Knockdown: 5

Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

### Skills:

Durability (3); Knowledge (History) (8):15/D12+2D6; Physician (3):10/2D8; Read Language (7):14/2D12; Speak Language (7):14/2D12

Armor: None

**Weapons:** None

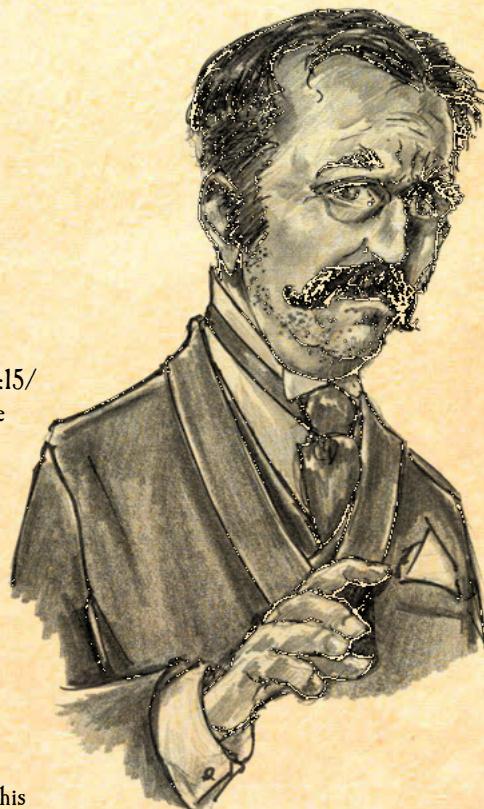
**Equipment:** Notebook and pencil, pocket dictionary

Karma: 7 Karma Die: d8

**Adventure Award:** Novice Tier

Doctor Toprak, once injured, isn't much use in the fight.

If Madeleine escapes with Doctor Toprak, this furthers the storyline. See the previous section for her joining forces with the Museum team and the bomb in Russell Square if the characters pursue her out of the library building. If she does not escape, there's nothing left to search but a charred skeleton. As with the crew at the Museum, the thugs were paid well, but knew very little about their employer.



If the characters rescue Doctor Toprak, he can assist them with translation of the documents from the laboratory in Limehouse. How eager he is to provide such assistance depends partially on how much of his source material was lost in the battle and how eagerly the party leapt to its defense. Ask for a Persuasion (7) Test, possibly at a penalty, if the characters pursued the cultist instead of saving the library. Yes, the writing is most definitely Akkadian, not modern Samsut, although Dr. Toprak can understand how someone not as learned as he might confuse the two. It's a rather foul ritual, involving freshly harvested organs, the sweat of labor, and the invocation of Ereshkigal, a Babylonian deity perhaps best left unreference. While more commonly known as the Goddess of Death, Darkness, and Dust, and queen of the realm of the dead, Ereshkigal, the sister of Ishtar and consort of Nergal, is also known for her horrific temper. According to the papers the characters have brought, the ritual invokes her as the goddess of fury.

### Wrapping Up The Episode

The one bargaining chip the thugs have is the location they were supposed to take their prisoner if they got separated from the cultist. If the characters have captured a thug, he will trade this information for leniency when charged. If the party has a dead thug to search, they find the address scrawled on a bit of torn paper in a pocket. If the characters don't think to obtain the address by either means, a GMC (such as a police officer) will, and the party will have to suffer the GMC's derision. In either case, the party discovers that the hideout is out at the end of Dauberney Road, at the edge of the Hackney Marsh. A Geography (London) (7) Test or a Streetwise (9) Test allows the characters to know that this is a sparsely populated area, unpopular even in the overcrowded East End, with only a bit of light industry and a shipping canal, and an unsavory reputation.

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### Troubleshooting

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The two scenes in the episode have built-in troubleshooting. If both of the scientists are kidnapped or killed, the players still have a way of finding out where the cultists have their base of operations. Make sure to set off the bomb in Russell Square far enough from the characters that they're not caught directly in the blast. The bomb is supposed to create civilian casualties and slow or halt the pursuit, not kill the party. If the fire gets out of hand, having the local fire brigade show up with a steam-powered fire engine can put paid to the flames and introduce more confusion and innocent bystanders. Given the nature of the collections at the Museum and the University Library, a mage might be present pursuing their own studies, and willing to lend a hand if a fracas breaks out.



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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO

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Adventure for 1879



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## Episode 4: Brickyard Ballroom

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**T**he heroes don't have much time to mount a raid on the Hesperidean Society's stronghold out by Hackney Marsh without losing the element of surprise. Even if both cult teams, the one at the Museum and the one at the library, succeeded in kidnapping their targets, they'll know the heroes will be in pursuit.

If the heroes wait until the next day, the hideout will be a burned-out shell, as the cult will have set fire to the building to ensure all evidence is destroyed after they moved on. (They do like fire, don't they?) In that case, a thorough search of the wreckage will turn up a floor safe that the cult forgot to empty during their hasty exit. In the safe, the heroes find a wad of expensive-colored bank notes, a little charred about the edges, and a stack of Engine punchcards, likewise a bit the worse for wear. Investigation, Streetwise, and Persuasion Tests will be needed to make the links from this Episode to the next two. Also found will be the charred remains of someone in the middle kiln, but whether it's Professor Macguire, Doctor Toprak, or someone else entirely will require a professional autopsy to determine.

If the heroes decide to be men and women of action, however, the earliest they can arrive at the hideout will be right at sunset. They find the Hesperidean Society, or at least this branch, in mid-evacuation, with enough confusion that perhaps they can slip in and move around for a bit before being discovered.

## Setting the Stage

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The old pottery factory stands with its back to the east and the Lea Navigation Channel, at the end of Dauberney Road, a dusty and ill-maintained thoroughfare lined with failed small manufacturing facilities. A twelve foot high brick perimeter wall surrounds the pottery works, mossy and with crumbling mortar. At the front, the factory gates stand wide open, the evening sunlight streaming in, their iron bars rusty and the hinges sagging. The yard in front of the main building, a three-story brick structure of unimposing design, is crowded with coaches and steam-cars, the animals restive and the safety-valves hissing as the drivers of both keep them ready to depart at a moment's notice. A steady stream of men and women in lower-class workman's garb carry small items out, boxes with arcane sigils and wrapped parcels that could be books, things that have to be treated as passengers rather than cargo. Off to the left, in the gap between the main building and the stables, more laborers work to load cargo wagons, some of them drawn by oxen and some propelled by steam engines. They're hauling out furniture, crates, and, with a great deal of effort and foul language, a large safe. Obviously, the site is being abandoned in haste. Looking over the top of the wall or through the gates, it's also obvious that anyone coming in the front will be immediately seen.

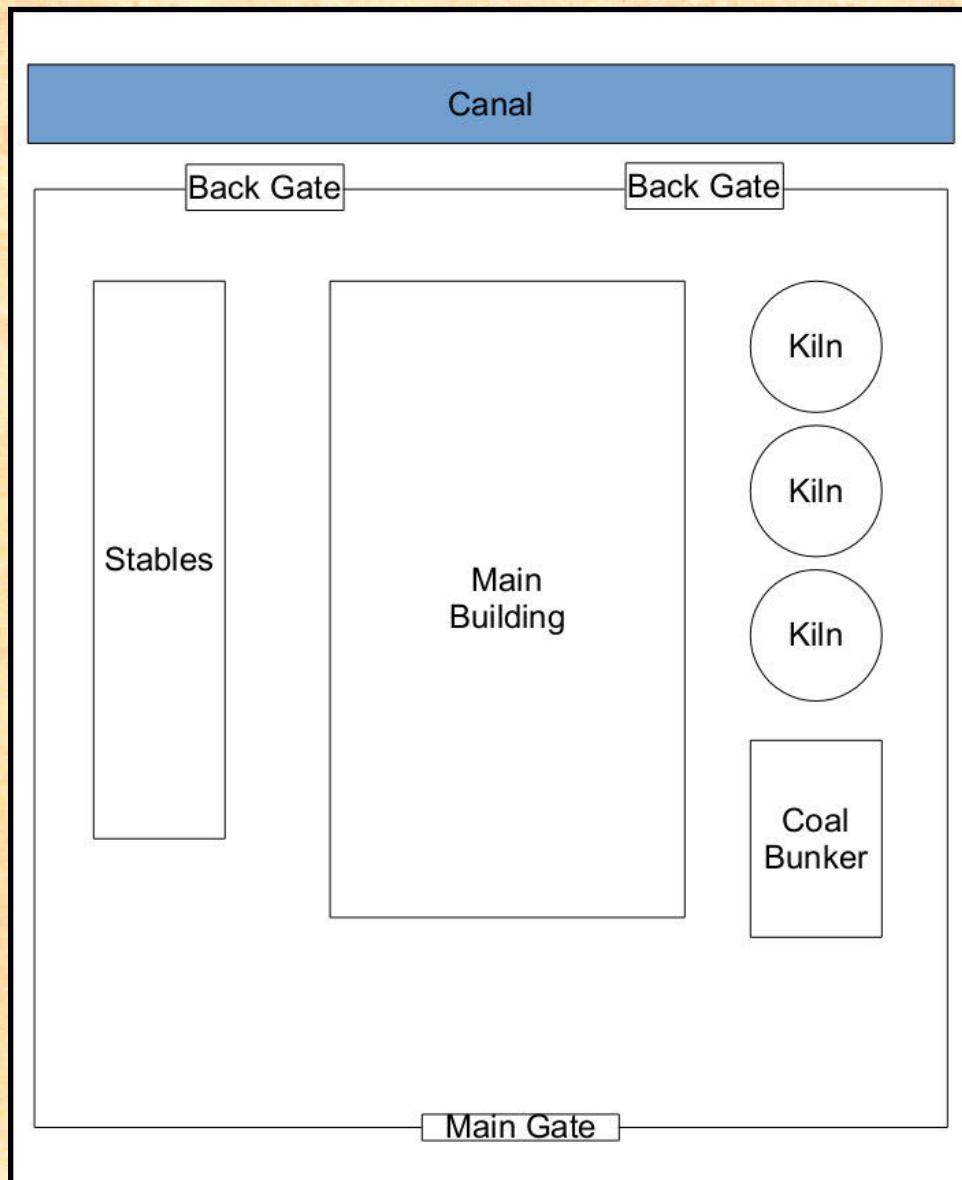
To the right stands the coal bunker, not much more than three walls and a roof and a small pile of bitumen. Behind it rise the great beehive shapes of the kilns, three of them in a row marching from the bunker toward the rear perimeter wall. By the back gate closest to the kilns, the packing shed has collapsed, leaving only a pile of broken timbers laying over the remains of shipping crates and straw, now fit only for mice. Anyone who's ever dealt with a factory, whether as a laborer, an owner, or a Dodger slipping in and back out, would know that there will be at least one, and probably two, back gates, with steps and a ramp leading down to the canal. Nobody builds a factory on the edge of a canal without being able to load and unload directly from the boats. A quick butcher's round the back proves there to be two gates, both chained shut with rusted padlocks, and no sign of a boat. There's also nobody keeping an eye on the rear entrances in all the haste to clear out. A clever person could perhaps make their way along the verge between wall and canal bank to where they could climb over the wall or get a gate open without being seen.

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## Themes and Images

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Your enemy's confusion is your ally. A hasty departure, a kicked over anthill that could easily turn into a hornet's nest that's been poked with a stick. As with any situation, it's easier to get in than to get back out.



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# Behind the Scenes

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## Getting In Is Half The Fun

Any attempt to sneak into the factory requires a Stealthy Stride (6) Test or Dexterity (8) Test to accomplish it without being noticed. Getting over the pottery factory's perimeter wall requires a Climbing (11) Test to surmount due to loose bricks. Around the back, a Dexterity (6) Test will be needed to cross the verge, as it's narrow and slippery. A failure puts the character into the canal. Opening either of the back gates requires a Lockpicking (7) Test and a bit of penetrating oil applied to the lock and the gate hinges. Failure to oil the hinges produces a shriek of rusty metal when the gate is opened.

If the characters are dressed like common laborers, they could try to pass themselves off as part of the evacuation crew, strolling in the front, possibly alongside an arriving wagon, or going round the back and casually joining the effort. If they can't pass for the hired help, they might have to use Stealthy Stride or similar means to gain access to the main building and go poking through it. If they're dressed well enough, the lower class people hired to do the grunt work will ignore them, figuring they're just more of the toffs what are paying so much to get all this done. It's the Hesperidean Society members the party will have to deceive or avoid.

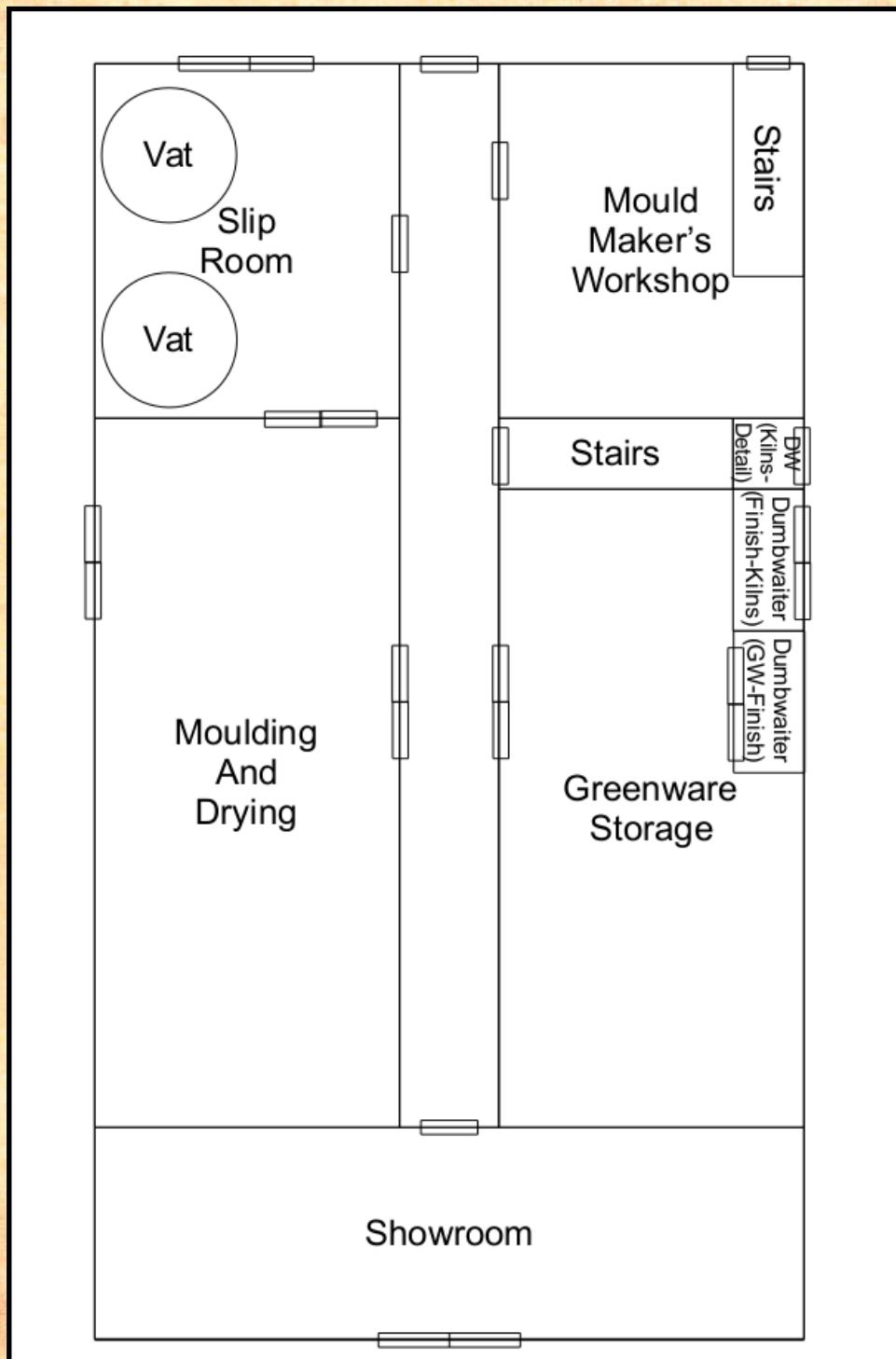
Roll a d6 every time the characters change locations – going up or down stairs, entering a room or hallway, entering or leaving a building. If they're passing themselves off as laborers, and not currently carrying a load toward an exit, they run into someone who questions their presence on a result of 1. If they're not pretending to be part of the hired help, they run into trouble on a result of 1 or 2. The person questioning them is:

1-3: A gang boss ("Marky Moon") who wants to know whose team they were hired in with, cos he don't recognize them. The gang boss will go away on a successful Streetwise (7) Test. A failure starts a loud argument, as he don't believe a word of it. On a Rule of One result, the characters have dropped the wrong name entirely, and the gang boss calls for his boys to come beat these intruders up, as they're poaching on the wrong turf.

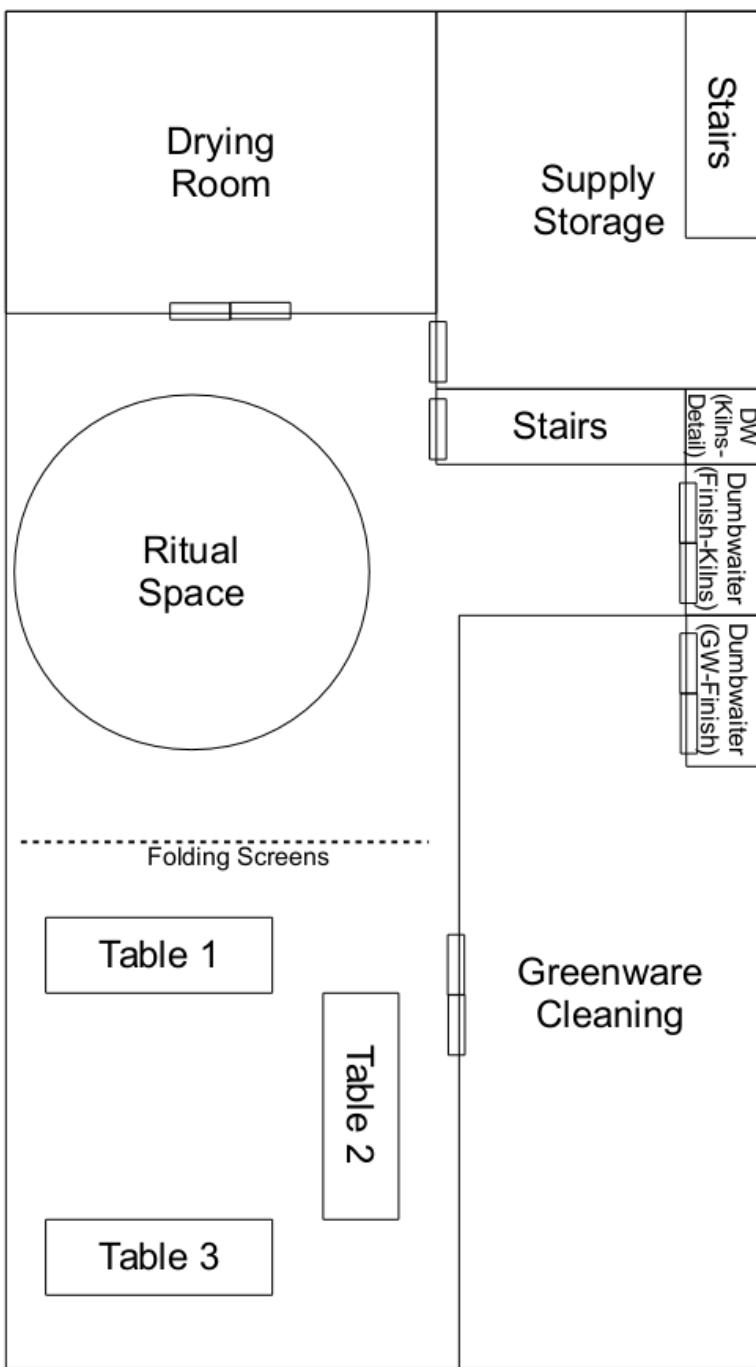
4-5: A cult member who might be persuaded or intimidated into leaving them alone if the characters make an appropriate Skill (8) Test against the cultist's Social Defense, or a Charisma (10) Test. Again, on a failure, the argument gets loud, and on a Rule of One result, the cultist knows the characters are up to no good and raises the alarm.

6: A cult mage or senior member who knows the party is up to no good and starts a fight immediately.

Starting a fight at any point will alert the entire compound that events have gone wildly amiss. Something about the sound of gunfire, you know. Whether the cult members not involved in the fracas choose to come see what all the row is about, or take the noise as their cue to depart under their best speed, is up to the Gamemaster. This episode should be challenging, but not (for the party at least) lethal.



## EPISODE 4: BRICKYARD BALLROOM



## The Main Building

Three dumbwaiters run through the building. The first goes from the greenware room on the ground floor up to the finishing room on the first floor, and is large enough for three people to ride in, if they crowd close. The second goes from the finishing room to an outside access door at ground level facing the kilns, allowing glazed pottery to be sent down to be fired. It also could hold three people if they huddle together. The third goes from a second access door by the kilns up to the decal and detailing room on the second floor, and can only hold one person at a time. It has no access to the first floor.

The ground floor of the main building has the slip room at the back, where the clay was mixed and thinned for pouring. All that remains are the vats, the machinery long since removed. Everything is thickly coated with dust and powdered clay. The moulding room is next door and toward the front, long rows of planks set up on bricks where the moulds rested during pouring. Of the moulds themselves, only a few worn-out or broken bits remain, swept into a corner. Much of this room was given over to cots and a makeshift kitchen, apparently not important or expensive enough to be included in the clearing-out. Next over is the greenware room, containing plank and cinder-block shelves where the unfired pottery finished drying, a lot of dust and tiny bits of broken clay covering everything. The other room at the back was once the mould-maker's workshop, with pegs on the walls where the tools once hung, and a fine layer of sawdust replacing the clay seen elsewhere. A few boxes of tinned food are stacked in the middle of the otherwise empty room.

## Fight In the Finish

The first floor used to be the finishing room, where greenware was cleaned, glazed, and prepared for firing. This has been cleared away and turned into the ritual and processing areas, divided from each other by cheap imitation-Chinese folding screens. While there's a couple of boxes of dried-up jars of glaze and old brushes and such stacked in a corner, the really interesting bits are the ritual circle and the processing tables.

### *The Ritual Area*

A complex diagram painted on the floor in several colors dominates the ritual space, its key points labeled in cuneiform. Most of the ritual trappings have already been packed and carried off, but final closure of the space is still underway. Toward that end, two people are working here, a Priest and a Mage. The Priest has the propitiations of the gods and de-sanctification of the space to see to, while the Mage must drain any remaining magical charge, then carefully break the circle and remove the key markings. They're both in mid process, which is good news, as it will take a round for the Mage to redirect her attention and the circle's energies, and the Priest cannot interrupt his work for three rounds without taking Step 18 damage. Anyone interfering directly with the Priest during this time (yes, that does include shooting him from a distance) takes Step 12 damage from backsplash. The Mage and Priest must also make Awareness (12) Tests to be distracted from their work if the characters just poke in and don't directly interfere with them. Unfortunately, the Mage can shout for help straight away, and when she does get around to dealing with the party, her spells are at +3 Steps for both Spellcasting and Effect Tests due to standing in an active ritual circle. The Priest will receive a similar bonus if he's still around four rounds after any trouble starts. Help

## EPISODE 4: BRICKYARD BALLROOM

consists of three to five thugs (as the Gamemaster sees fit), armed with pistols and cudgels, who show up one round after being shouted for.

### Priest - Hasadiah Fuggle

DEX: (I3): 6/D10 STR: (II): 5/D8

TOU: (I2): 5/D8 PER: (I6): 7/D12

WIL: (I6): 7/D12 CHA: (I4): 6/D10

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 0 Mystic Defense: 9

Mystic Armor: 0+3 Social Defense: 8

Death: 47 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 39 Knockdown: 5/D8

Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Astral Sight (4):II/D10+D8; Awareness (4):II/

D10+D8; Dispel Magic (4):II/D10+D8;

Durability (3); Firearms (2):8/2D6; Impressive

Display (3):9/D8+D6; Spellcasting (7):I4/2D12;

Willforce (6):I3/D12+D10

Armor: None

Weapons: Light pistol

Equipment: Akkadian amulet (Spellcasting +2

Steps, three uses only)

Karma: 10 Karma Die: D8

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Notes: May use any Priest spells from the

Hesperidean Society spell list in the Appendix



### Mage - Samanitha Mayland

DEX: (I4): 6/D10 STR: (II): 5/D8

TOU: (II): 5/D8 PER: (I6): 7/D12

WIL: (I6): 7/D12 CHA: (I4): 6/D10

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 10

Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 11

Mystic Armor: 3 Social Defense: 8

Death: 45 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 37 Knockdown: 5/D8

Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Astral Sight (4):II/D10+D8; Awareness (4):II/

D10+D8; Dispel Magic (4):II/D10+D8;



Durability (3); Firearms (2):8/2D6; Impressive Display (3):9/D8+D6; Spellcasting (7):14/2D12; Willforce (5):12/2D10

Armor: Ballistic vest

Weapons: Light pistol

Equipment: Protective amulet (Physical and Mystic Defense +2)

Karma: 10            Karma Die: D8

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Notes: May use any Mage spells from the Hesperidean Society spell list in the Appendix

### Cult Thugs

DEX: (13): 6/D10 STR: (14): 6/D10 TOU: (14): 6/D10

PER: (11): 5/D8 WIL: (12): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

Social Level: 2

Initiative: 6/D10    Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 4    Mystic Defense: 7

Mystic Armor: 2    Social Defense: 6

Death: 70            Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 58            Knockdown: 6/D10

Wound Threshold: 9            Movement: 6

Skills:

Durability (5); Firearms (5):11/D10+D8; Melee Weapons (5):11/D10+D8; Unarmed Combat (5):11/D10+D8

Armor: Ballistic jacket

Weapons: Heavy pistol, cudgel (club)

Equipment: Sturdy clothing

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

The Priest and Mage are unlikely to survive, but if they do, will refuse to breathe a word about the Society's operations, only demanding to speak to their solicitor. They'll invoke the Gentlemen's Code if they need to remind the characters of their obligations under it. The thugs, as usual, don't know much other than they was paid real well to take care of anybody the toffs didn't like.

### *The Processing Area*

The processing area has waterproofed canvas spread on the floor, to contain the occasional spillage. Any melee in this area or combat movement invokes the Impaired Movement (Light) combat option (*1879 Players Guide*, p.245), with all movement-based Actions at a -2 Step penalty. A failure on a movement Test results in the character slipping in the mess or stumbling over a fold in the canvas and losing their Standard Action. A Rule of One result requires a Knockdown (7) Test to avoid falling.

A strong smell of ether permeates the area. Firing a gun or casting a fire or electrical spell risks setting off a flash fire. Roll a d12 for each round fired or spell cast. On a 1, the flash does Step 8 damage to everyone and everything in the processing area, and may result in sequential flashovers or ignition of flammable materials.

## EPISODE 4: BRICKYARD BALLROOM

The first of the three tables holds a packing crate, two feet across in every dimension, its top off to reveal a bed of packing straw. Harrison and Thurbert's insignia is stamped on the lid, and the crate is marked FRAGILE and GLASS and LABORATORY SPECIMENS. Next to the crate stands a metal canister, a foot and a half in diameter and equally tall, its outer surface partly covered with frost, dripping condensation onto the table and from there to the floor. Its top, a heavy screw-on lid, lies on the table next to it. Anyone peering in will see a whitish, icy-looking lining, but must then make a Toughness (8) Test or be at -2 Steps to all Actions for three rounds, due to the vapors inside. A Knowledge (Chemistry) (7) Test will identify the lining as Thilorier's ice, a mixture of carbonic ice and diethyl ether, used in laboratories for extreme cooling.

The second table has a large amount of alchemical equipment, similar to that seen in Limehouse but more complex and with greater capacity. An old man in protective apron and gloves works at the table, processing small chunks of slimy half-frozen meat from a glass jar that would neatly fit into the first table's canister. He doesn't glance round when the party enters the area, just pleads that he's working as quickly as he can, it's not his fault that this batch arrived just as they were trying to pack out. If confronted, the chemist surrenders immediately, pleading to not be harmed, there's so little work for old chemists these days, it was this or the workhouse. If a fight is under way, or erupts in the area, one of the cultists will shoot the chemist in the head to dispose of him at the first opportunity. If he survives, he can describe the process of making bang snuff in great detail, but cannot give any details of anything that happens either before the materials arrive or after the snuff is made. The apparatus and its process are not stable. If the chemist's attention is kept off it for three rounds, and nobody else makes any adjustments (such as extinguishing the burners), the apparatus explodes on the fourth round, doing Step 10 damage to the immediate area. This sets off the ether fumes from the first table's canister in a flash fire that does Step 8 damage to everyone and everything in the processing area.

### Chemist – Nigel Runciman

DEX: (14): 6/D10 STR: (11): 5/D8

TOU: (10): 5/D8 PER: (15): 6/D10

WIL: (11): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

Social Level: 2

Initiative: 6/d10 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 0 Mystic Defense: 9

Mystic Armor: 0+2 Social Defense: 6

Death: 25 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 20 Knockdown: 5

Wound Threshold: 7 Movement: 6

### Skills:

Avoid Blow (6):12/2D10; Awareness (5):11/

D10+D8; Knowledge (Chemistry) (7):13/

D12+D10; Wound Balance (3):8/2D6

Armor: None

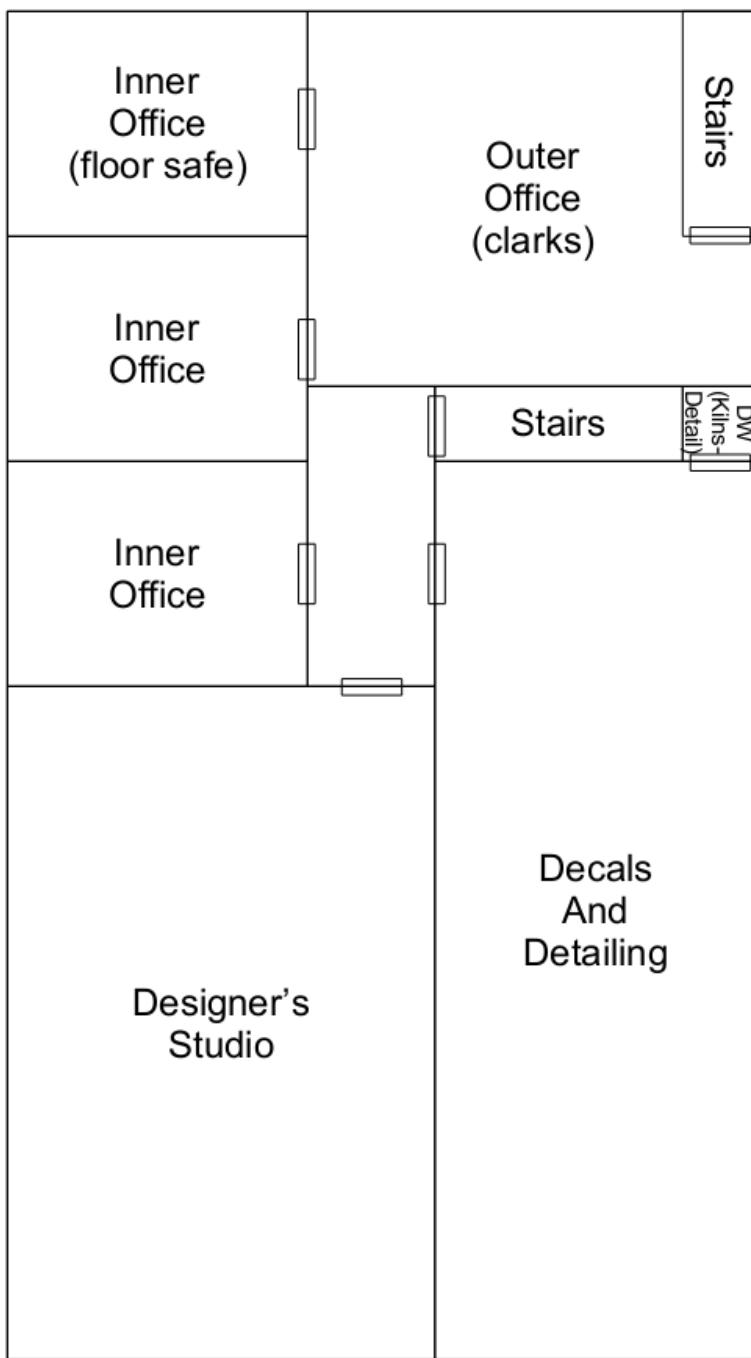
Weapons: None

Equipment: Chemical apparatus

Karma: 5 Karma Die: D8

Adventure Award: Novice Tier





## EPISODE 4: BRICKYARD BALLROOM

The third table holds boxes of snuff vials, a triple-beam balance scale, the necessary tools for filling the vials, and a ledger detailing production. There's no names in the ledger, just batch numbers, vial counts, and notes regarding effectiveness. If the characters have time to review the ledger, either now or later, they discover that the batches have been lurching toward better quality. The magical steps in the process continue to leave batch quality somewhat unpredictable, but the cult is getting a better handle on it.

### *Second Floor: Hostages and Contention*

The second floor has the decal and detailing room, where fired pottery was decorated. Professor Macguire, Doctor Toprak, or both, if captured in the previous episode, are here, strapped down to work tables and being questioned by a cult mage accompanied by two cult enforcers. While the prisoner(s) have been threatened with all manner of horrid fates, no actual physical torture has been performed, the cult believing that they are too valuable to damage. If they're given a few minutes to recover, and a sip of water or a more powerful restorative, they'll be able to walk out under their own power. The cult mage and the enforcers will object vigorously to both the presence of the party and any attempt to rescue the prisoner(s).

If neither man was taken hostage in the previous episode, the cult mage and the two enforcers are packing up the equipment. Given its nature, they really can't have the hired muscle handling the torture instruments. Someone might put a word in the wrong ear in the hope of a reward. No, everything in this room has to go into boxes with carefully neutral labeling. The three cultists will not take kindly to being interrupted in such a delicate operation.

#### Cult Mage – Leoncio Jeffcock

DEX: (13): 6/D10 STR: (13): 6/D10

TOU: (14): 6/D10 PER: (16): 7/D12

WIL: (16): 7/D12 CHA: (12): 6/D10

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 9

Mystic Armor: 0+3 Social Defense: 7

Death: 62 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 52 Knockdown: 6/D10

Wound Threshold: 9 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Astral Sight (4):11/D10+D8; Awareness (4):11/D10+D8; Dispel Magic (5):12/2D10; Durability (4); Firearms (4):10/2D8; Impressive Display (3):9/D8+D6; Shake It Off (4):10/2D8; Spellcasting (6):13/D12+D10; Willforce (5):12/2D10

Armor: Ballistic vest

Weapons: Medium pistol

Equipment: Absorption amulet (absorbs up to 6 points of Strain per day; can absorb up to 12 points but will crumble away)



Karma: 8 Karma Die: D8

Adventure Award: Novice Tier

Notes: May use any Mage spells from the Hesperidean Society spell list in the Appendix



### Cult Enforcers – Bill and Ted

DEX: (14): 6/D10 STR: (14): 6/D10 TOU: (15): 6/D10

PER: (11): 5/D8 WIL: (12): 5/D8 CHA: (10): 5/D8

Social Level: 2

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 8 Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 7

Mystic Armor: 2 Social Defense: 6 Death: 71 Recovery Tests: 3

Unconsciousness: 60 Knockdown: 6/D10 Wound Threshold: 10 Movement: 6

#### Skills:

Avoid Blow (4):10/2D8; Durability (5); Firearms (6):12/2D10; Melee Weapons (5):11/D10+D8;  
Shake It Off (4):10/2D8; Unarmed Combat (5):11/D10+D8; Wound Balance (4):10/2D8

Armor: Ballistic jacket Weapons: Heavy pistol, cudgel (club)

Equipment: Sturdy clothing Adventure Award: Novice Tier

## EPISODE 4: BRICKYARD BALLROOM

Also on the second floor are the company offices and the designer's studio. Not much is left there, other than a couple of battered old desks that the cult isn't interested in salvaging. These rooms have already been cleared out, and are not occupied. A careful search of the offices will turn up the aforementioned floor safe, with the money and the punchcards. No cult members will turn up here unless the characters are taking too long and the story is lagging, in which case someone in a nice suit will poke their head in and demand to know why the laborers are slacking off up here when there's work to be done downstairs.

### The Rest of the Compound

The stables have been emptied out of anything useful. There wasn't much to find there, anyway. Horses, oxen, steam-cars, wagons, and coaches aren't exactly suspicious. At this point, the stables are just a place to hide and a fire hazard.

A young clerk from Harrison and Thurbert (Francine Marryat), who asked one too many questions and hinted that she might go to the police, has been left in the middle kiln, bound hand and foot and gagged. The door has been closed and secured with an old iron bolt run through the hasp. The other two kilns have been left open, so an Awareness (6) Test will pick up on the difference if the characters don't check the kilns specifically. If she's rescued, see Episode 5 for what she can reveal.

### Conclusions

The party can derive a good deal of information from their explorations of the cult hideout. Depending upon what they find, and what's left after the donnybrook is resolved, they can draw a number of conclusions. The Gamemaster should encourage a bit of deductive reasoning and allow time for it somewhere along the way, so that the following can be sussed. In some cases, the party will need to play through a bit of follow-up work to draw all the conclusions possible.

First off, whoever is sending the Hesperidean Society the dinosaur glands has access to cutting-edge equipment. Thilorier's ice hasn't yet been commercially produced. Making it requires expensive machinery that's difficult and dangerous to operate, and a large supply of carbonic acid and diethyl ether. The thin-walled glass jar and the metal cylinder are both well made and show considerable access to high-end technology. The shipping manifest lists Clyton Elsey as the recipient. That's a family name with serious connections. The party is going to need very strong evidence if the Elseys are involved. (There's more about Clyton in the next chapter.)

Second, it would be nice to know where the cult was evacuating to. Unfortunately, every driver captured gives a different destination. It would seem that either the cult was dispersing, or sending their goods to transfer points. Following up proves the latter to be true, as none of the addresses the drivers had are places where the cult could be re-establishing, or even storing their goods. Witnesses at the locations and physical evidence both say that there were vehicles with drivers waiting for a while, and either a transfer was made, or when it became clear that nobody would be showing up to meet them, they left. One enterprising newsie, a young lad who was on the streets early ripping down the competitors' broadsheet advertisements, tells the characters that there was a ruddy big snark atop the steam-coach, there was, in a sailor's coat. He kept looking at his watch, he did, and when the church rang eleven, he swore a mighty oath and drove away. Headed west, not that that helps much, sorry, guv, lost sight of him when the delivery lorry came round with me morning

papers. Oh, but he had a Millwall Dock permit mark painted on the coach, if that's any help. The newsie obviously expects a monetary reward for that last tidbit.

Third, that stack of punchcards really needs to be run through an Engine to reveal its secrets, and not just any Engine, but the one it was made for. A Byron or similar sort who makes an Engine Programming (7) Test can tell that the program in the cards unlocks access to a secondary data storage system. Whether that storage is for secure inventory, or manufacturing secrets, or a second set of financial books can't be determined without access to the Engine. Between the crate with the Harrison and Thurbert's emblem, and Francine, the clerk rescued from the kiln, the connection should be obvious to the party. If it's not, the Byron could make a Research (6) Test to compare the firm code in the punchcards to the Registry.

Finally, there's the question of what to do with anything that's been captured, seized, or otherwise ended up in the party's possession. The thugs are easily dispensed with, either by turning them over to the Peelers, or accepting their parole along with whatever dosh they've got in their pockets and turning them loose on their own recognizance. The alchemical apparatus will require cleanup by someone who knows what they're doing, to avoid chemical burns, fire, and other problems. Any arcane items, books or talismans or what have you, will require proper handling, as who knows what might be laid into them that might go boom under unknown conditions. If the large safe is captured, and can be opened, it turns out to contain several thousand pounds in currency and coin, along with the ledger books of the operation, which will tell the characters exactly how profitable bang snuff has been. Surviving cult members must be properly contained and charges brought, which means involving the authorities yet again. All told, the cleanup and aftermath of the raid should be complex, tedious, and require much more official presence than might be thought strictly necessary.

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## Troubleshooting

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While there's several dozen men and women at work here, most of them have been hired for haulage, not fighting, and won't take part in any combat. At the first gunshot, the larger part of the labor force will take cover, then do their best to depart the premises at the first opportunity. They can be innocent bystanders, moving obstacles, or combatants as needed, but before arming them, remember that there's already a considerable amount of opposition present in the main building, and the characters need to have a chance to succeed.

If the cult appears to be getting the upper hand at any point in the combat, having a GMC pop in and lend a hand can happen for a variety of reasons. The gang boss could knock out a cult boss and take his wallet, on the grounds that it were obvious the toff was about to stiff 'im and 'is men. One of the aforementioned hostages, or a hostage not previously described, could get loose at an inopportune moment, and strike a blow for freedom with whatever heavy object is ready to hand. The opportunities for flash fires in the processing and ritual area could quite easily level the playing field, by taking out a cultist or two at a critical juncture. Combat in this episode is meant to be an upward slog, with a series of battles as the party advances through the building, but should not derail the story or incapacitate the characters. If worst comes to worst, the noise draws the attention of the Peelers, who come barging in en masse and make a dog's breakfast of the situation in the process of rescuing the party.



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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO

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Adventure for 1879



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## Episode 5: A Visit After Hours

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Harrison and Thurbert can be investigated, or just looked up in the Registry. The firm was founded in 1729 as a spice importer and distributor. Since then, it's branched out into several other areas, including acting as an agent for scientific specimens being shipped from the Gruv. If Professor Macguire or Doctor Toprak are available, either one can attest to the Museum or University and several fellow scientists using the firm's services, as well as the Royal Conservatory, and express considerable surprise that such a reputable firm would be involved in anything criminal. The firm's central offices are down at the end of Derrick Street, across from Sedger's, on the north side of the timber shed from the Greenland Dock.

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## Setting the Stage

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While the Harrison family no longer takes an active part in the administration of the central branch of the firm, having relocated to India to run operations there, the Thurberts are still very much hands-on with the daily business. William Ferris Thurbert IV is listed as the manager of the London offices, while his father holds title as senior partner of the firm. The family home is in

## EPISODE 5: A VISIT AFTER HOURS

Chelsea, 7 Cheyne Row (just two doors down from Thomas Carlyle). William IV keeps a flat in the New Cross Tangle, just south of the docks in Surrey.

Francine, the clerk from Episode 4, can provide information if she was rescued. For example, when Mr. Thurbert has a fancy-dress function to go to, as he does at least once a week, he goes out the back of the building and straight into a carriage, with an unfashionably long opera cloak draped about him. There's been a number of people in fancy dress coming and going via the back entrance for a while now, several months at least. Mr. Thurbert has some kind of sideline going on, and from the talk around the office, has been meeting with some upper-class dandy, well outside of his family's usual circles. Oh, and then there's the books. Francine had been struggling with some figures that just didn't quite add up. Too much tax was being paid for cargo weight for what the bills of lading listed. The wagons needed maintenance just a little too often, and horses were out of service more often than they should have for the deliveries they were listed as making. She finally worked it out that someone was putting shipments through that didn't appear on the manifests. When she took the problem to the chief clerk, she was told to keep quiet about it and there'd be an investigation, but that night, she was grabbed on the way out the service entrance, a bag put over her head, and the rest, well, you know.

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## Themes and Images

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Surreptitious entry or confrontation during business hours? Either one has complications. The party is getting in over their heads, socially speaking. Opening one box just reveals a larger and more complicated one inside, and it's not supposed to work that way, dash it all.

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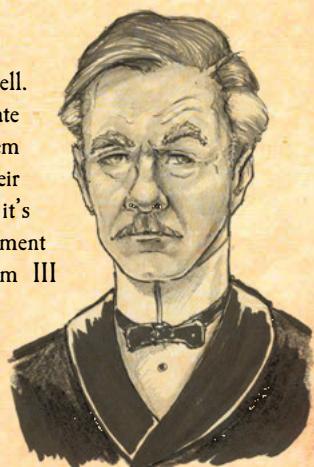
## Behind the Scenes

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### William III at Home

Attempting to burgle 7 Cheyne Row is not likely to end well. The house has all the latest burglar deterrents, and a few private security thugs on site. Let the party try if they'd like. Arrest them when they fail and let them do some explaining from a cell. Their connection, the one who set this in motion, can bail them out, but it's going to cost. As it is, there's not a shred of evidence of involvement with the Hesperidean Society anywhere on the premises. William III honestly has no connection with the cult.

Coming in the front door only happens if the characters are accompanied by a senior official of the Home Office, in which case a quiet talk can be held. William III will be shocked and appalled that his son might be risking the family business in such





an enterprise, and will of course accompany the authorities on a visit to the firm's offices in Surrey. While this does let the party into the building, as William III has the keys, it adds an innocent bystander who must be protected when things go pear-shaped.

### William IV Not In Residence

A visit to William IV's flat in the New Cross Tangle, a maze of railway lines, workshops, buildings with rooms and flats to let, pubs, and two railway stations both called New Cross, would be easier. While there's proper locks on the doors and windows, getting in isn't nearly so difficult, and there's no one at home, no matter the hour. A quick search turns up evidence of a somewhat dissolute lifestyle: a half bottle of laudanum, an opium pipe, and bits of clothing belonging to at least three women. There's no evidence of a connection to the cult here.

### Office Invasion

There's really no substitute for a visit to the firm's offices on Derrick Street. The neighborhood isn't exactly the best, which may work in the characters' favor, as the Peelers' response to a possible break-in might be a bit slow in coming. If the characters have shown up with official documents and police attendance for a legitimate raid, however, this will work against them, as they'll receive no support from the local bobbies until the situation is pretty well over. Professional rivalry.

Interestingly, the Harrison and Thurbert offices are probably the most well-kept on the block. The building shows no sign of the depredations of vandals or of thieves nicking the roof lead. The

## EPISODE 5: A VISIT AFTER HOURS

three-story brick building has bars on the windows, as one would expect, and a sturdy and well-made lock on every door and window. Anyone making an Awareness (6) Test spots arcane-looking sigils on the door frames, the window sashes, and the corners of the building up near the top of each story. A Spellcasting (6) Test or Magic Theory (7) Test reveals these to be protective in nature, the sort of thing that gives you hives if you try to enter without permission, and discourages casual interest in the place. Gaining entry requires either the key, and a copy just won't do, or a combination of a Lockpicking (8) Test to defeat the physical security, and a Spellcasting (9) or Dispel Magic (8) Test to defeat the magical security. A failure against the locks just leaves the heroes out in the cold. A failure on the magical end causes Step 8 damage to the Mage or Priest challenging the security, and Step 5 to anyone in close proximity, with all persons affected breaking out all over in a painful and itchy rash that lasts for 24 hours.

### The Card Run

Running the cards (from the Hesperidean hideout in the previous Episode) on the firm's Engine requires an Engine Programming (9) Test, and ten minutes of uninterrupted work. This can be done before or after the fight in the boardroom (see the next section, *Boardroom Brawl*). The secondary storage turns out to hold an import manifest, records of special shipments brought in from the Gruv under cover of legitimate business. There's enough here to put several people away for a long time, including William IV. There's also a mention of Clyton Elsey, who apparently has been paying for the special shipments.

On a successful Awareness (7) Test, any of the party can remember hearing Elsey's name recently. Clyton is the eldest scion of Parker Elsey, a mercantile genius who parlayed an interest in a tool and die business into one of the leading manufacturers of Difference Engines. Elsey the elder



supplies Engines to a number of industries, and to the government for naval signaling. Clyton has been in the society papers off and on over the last year, ever since he contracted Looking Glass Fever. The bout turned an already handsome man into an elf that the punters are heralding as the most eligible bachelor in the West End. Oh, dear. This is going to be terribly messy, if someone with that much of a reputation is involved. The scandal!

### ***Boardroom Brawl***

The visit goes smoothly until the characters investigate the third floor, location of the boardroom and the senior offices, at which point they run afoul of the Hesperidean Society, meeting with senior firm officers. William IV is noticeably absent. A bit of a dust-up ensues.

Unless the characters have made a terrifically loud noise elsewhere in the building, or otherwise drawn attention to their approach, the fight begins when the boardroom door is opened. The firm officers are seated on the far side of the table, the Mages on the near, and the thugs standing around at either end of the room. There's a few books on the table, shipping logs and accounting ledgers and a dictionary of Akkadian, and some loose papers. The aforementioned dispatch in the Samsut language lies to one side of the document holding the meeting's attention, a fragile and aged scroll unrolled and held down along its edges with small brass paperweights in the form of sailing ships. The Mages will attempt to preserve the scroll and the dispatch, and take them along if they depart.

There's one Secret Society Mage and one Thug for every three members of the party. Add one Mage or Thug for every two GMCs the characters have brought along for support. There's also three firm officers. If the party brought the authorities, the officers will be doing their best to leave the instant things turn ugly. The boardroom has a second door that leads into a back corridor through the senior offices. If the characters have shown up on their own, the firm officers will take cover behind the furniture, draw pistols, and open fire, figuring it'll be easier to dispose of a few bodies than deal with the scandal if any of this goes public.

The Mages fight without quarter, paying no heed to property damage (other than the two documents) or their erstwhile allies. They'll happily immolate one of their own thugs or a firm officer if they happen to be in the line of fire between the Mage and one of the party. If it looks like the characters might carry the day, one of the Mages will attempt to flee with the documents while the others make a final stand. Any Mage captured will not cooperate with any questioning, remaining mute until their solicitor shows up to bail them out of jail. The thugs fight to the second Wound, at which point they either try to flee, or take cover and wait for the fight to be over if there is no readily available escape route. The firm officers will surrender at their first Wound, having never been in a situation like this before and not being trained for it.

If the characters have to withdraw, the Mages take the papers from the table, set fire to the building, and flee into the night. The firm officers will try to save the building, ringing the alarm bell to summon Yancey's Fire Brigade, a paid service that operates in the area. Any clues remaining in the building after the blaze is extinguished, or that the characters manage to scoop up in the confusion, are up to the Gamemaster.

#### **Secret Society Mage**

Use these stats for however many Mages are present. The Gamemaster is free to adjust them or apply Boojum modifications if desired for variety.

**DEX:** (13): 6/D10 **STR:** (12): 5/D8 **TOU:** (12): 5/D8

**PER:** (16): 7/D12 **WIL:** (16): 7/D12 **CHA:** (12): 6/D10

## EPISODE 5: A VISIT AFTER HOURS

Social Level: 3

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 8

Physical Armor: 4 Mystic Defense: 9

Mystic Armor: 0+3 Social Defense: 7

Death: 53 Recovery Tests: 2

Unconsciousness: 44 Knockdown: 5/D8

Wound Threshold: 8 Movement: 6

Skills:

Astral Sight (4):11/D10+D8; Awareness (4):11/D10+D8; Dispel Magic (4):11/D10+D8; Durability (4); Firearms (3):9/D8+D6; Shake It Off (3):8/2D6; Spellcasting (5):12/2D10; Willforce (5):12/2D10



**Armor:** Ballistic vest

**Weapons:** Medium pistol

**Equipment:** Strength of Uruk amulet (+3 Steps to one Spellcasting Test or one Effect Test)

**Karma:** 8 **Karma Die:** D8

**Adventure Award:** Novice Tier

**Notes:** May use any Mage spells from the Hesperidean Society spell list in the Appendix

### Thug

Thugs are pretty much interchangeable. These stats can be used for all of the ones present.

**DEX:** (14): 6/D10 **STR:** (14): 6/D10 **TOU:** (15): 6/D10

**PER:** (11): 5/D8 **WIL:** (12): 5/D8 **CHA:** (10): 5/D8

**Social Level:** 2

**Initiative:** 6/D10 **Physical Defense:** 8

**Physical Armor:** 4 **Mystic Defense:** 7

**Mystic Armor:** 2 **Social Defense:** 6

**Death:** 71 **Recovery Tests:** 3

**Unconsciousness:** 60 **Knockdown:** 6/D10

**Wound Threshold:** 10 **Movement:** 6

**Skills:**

Avoid Blow (4):10/2D8; Durability (5); Firearms (5):11/D10+D8; Melee Weapons (5):11/D10+D8;

Shake It Off (4):10/2D8; Unarmed Combat (5):11/D10+D8

**Armor:** Ballistic jacket

**Weapons:** Medium pistol, cudgel (club)

**Equipment:** Sturdy clothing

**Adventure Award:** Novice Tier

### *The Sorting-Out*

If the characters win the fight, they get to search the premises. As it turns out, William IV keeps his Hesperidean Society robes in his office cupboard. There's no sign of any other cult paraphernalia, though, nor any magical apparatus, although there is an empty box of the sort one might keep a ring in. The heroes find Clyton Elsey's name in William IV's appointment book, next to a society event taking place tonight, with "Akkadian!" written next to it.

The firm officers, should they survive, are Hiram Burchard, the chief accountant; Silas Margesson, a senior translator from Records; and Neve MacEwan, the senior shipping clerk. They know very little of the magical side of the operation, being mostly concerned with the financial and mercantile parts. In the aftermath of the battle, they'll admit to smuggling, keeping two sets of books, and assisting with the translation of some documents that William IV was working on. As soon as any one of them has a moment to recover, though, that officer will warn the others to keep their mouths closed, and demand to be put in contact with the firm's solicitor. Once the solicitor is mentioned, they all stop answering questions. They will however freely tell the heroes that William IV is meeting a big client at a society event this very night, in the hopes of pinning most of the trouble on their erstwhile boss.

## EPISODE 5: A VISIT AFTER HOURS

Unless one of the party is literate in ancient Akkadian, there's no information to be had from the scroll. Any surviving Mage will just glare at the character who demands to know what the scroll says, and the firm's officers, realizing the depth of the trouble they're in, hold that back as a bargaining chip for legal clemency. If a character or an accompanying GMC can read Akkadian, the scroll describes a complicated ritual for summoning the energy of the warrior. There's a number of unfamiliar terms, the Akkadian magical equivalent of technical jargon, that leave the exact process unclear. It does seem to ask for certain organs from giant lizards, though.

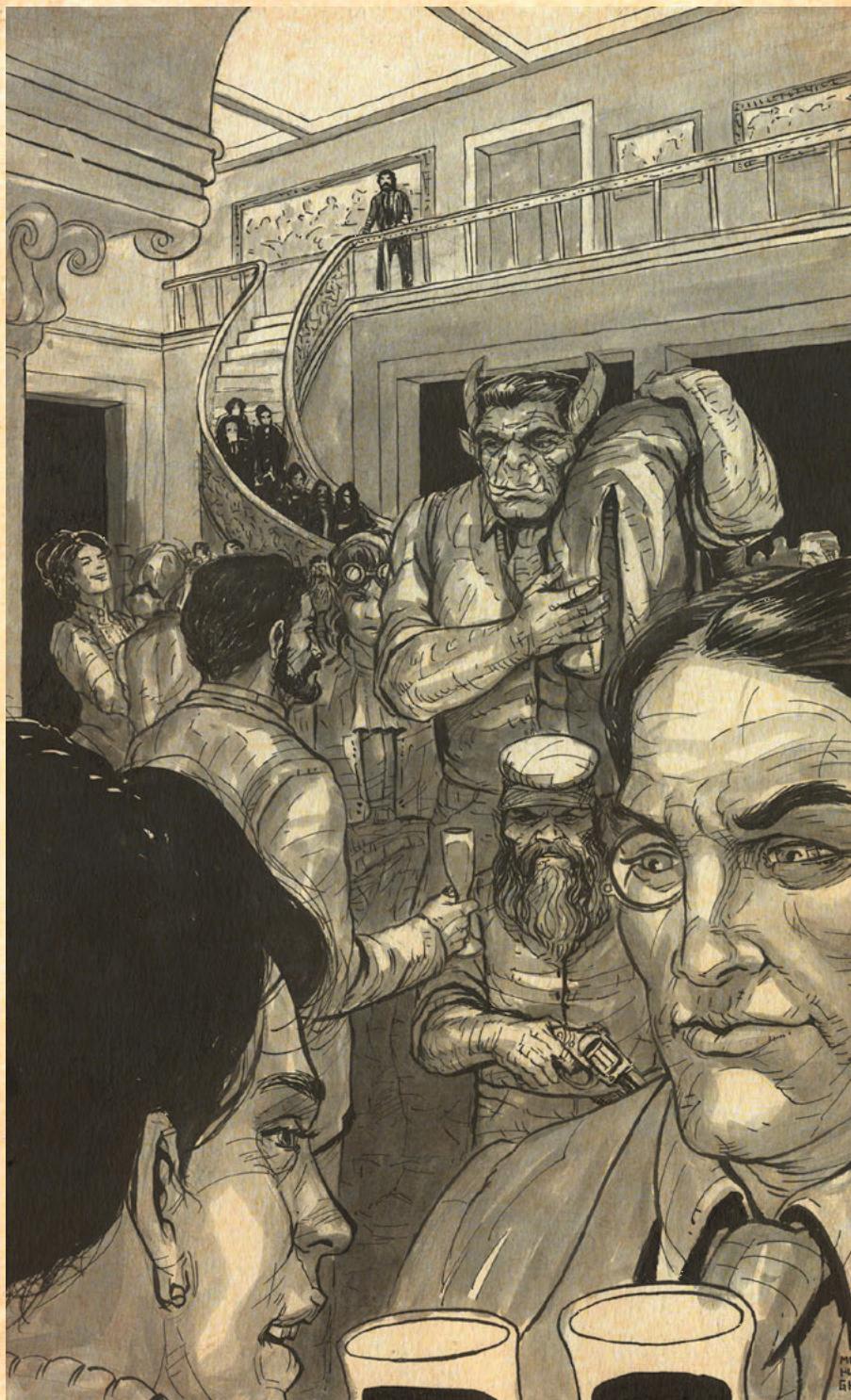
If the characters hurry, they can just make it to Vestry Hall on Mount Street, up in Mayfair, before the phaetons are brought round. A change of clothing along the way would be a good idea, as the event is black tie.



## Troubleshooting

The primary point where things can go awry is in the boardroom fight. If the Mages and thugs are pounding the characters, the firm officers could betray the cultists and attack them, in hopes of winning legal clemency later on. No matter how subtle the Mage, a bullet between the shoulder blades will seriously interfere with his day.

If the party's Engine specialist can't get the cards to run, Clyton Elsey's name is still available in William IV's appointment book. Having a GMC along with the party who can point out clues the player characters missed is always a good idea.



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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO

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Adventure for 1879



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## Episode 6: Nobody Likes Fights At Parties

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**T**he ringleaders of all this mess are quite likely attending a very posh society function. If word gets to them that their scheme has been uncovered, and the authorities may well be on their way, the villains will make their excuses to the host and scarper. Like as not, they've got some bolt-hole already planned for the eventuality, or tickets on the next airship to the Continent, or maybe even seats booked on the Greenwich Special to Fort Alice. Someone has to nib them before the wind gets up, and there's only one party both on the spot and with the knowledge. Isn't it lovely to be needed?

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### Setting the Stage

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Read the following to the players:

*A quick change of scenery (and hopefully clothing) and you're in Westminster, just a block south of Grosvenor Square Garden and a bit west of Berkeley Square, coming up to Vestry Hall.*

*Elegant coaches line Mount Street down both sides, waiting for the toffs to emerge from the posh function going on inside. Now the question is, how are you getting in?*

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## Themes and Images

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High society, with all the starched collars, voluminous gowns, public-school ties, understated but terribly expensive jewelry, and snooty attitudes that entails. Social invisibility for the hired help. Subdued music, champagne in tall thin glasses, vapid conversation.

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## Behind the Scenes

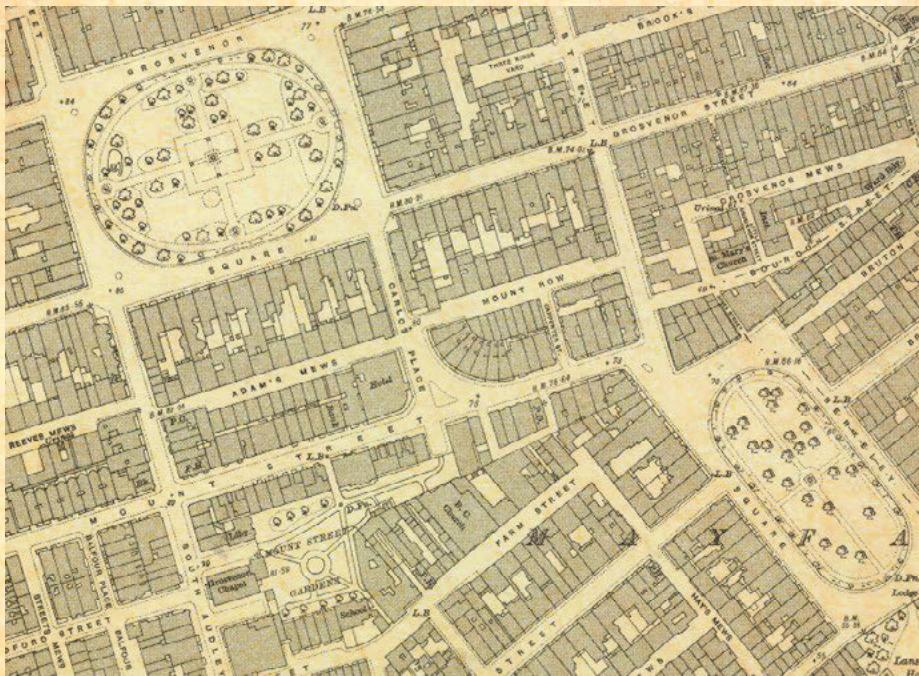
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### Getting In is Just the First Step

The front entrance has large, well-dressed snarks checking invitations. If the heroes have someone with a Social Level of 4 or 5 among them, they could bluff their way in, patting their pockets and apologizing for having lost the silly thing. No Test is necessary; they can breeze through on Social Level alone. If they have someone of serious authority, such as a police inspector or a representative from the Home Office, they could claim official business, which will get them let in, although any uniformed officers may be asked to wait outside until summoned, so as not to make a scene unnecessarily. Without either authority or nobility, the characters are not getting in the front way and will have to crash the party. This means going around to the back entrance on the portico overlooking the gardens, or down the alley to the service entrance, or up to a window. There's no skylights or other rooftop entryway.

The back entrance, a set of folding French doors, stands wide open, with people coming and going under the watchful eye of another well-dressed snark with a Perception Step of 8 and a Social Defense of 9. Distracting her shouldn't be too terribly difficult, especially if the characters are dressed properly to attend the function, or if they can pass themselves off as servants bringing round trays of beverages and canapes and clearing away the empty glasses and plates. A Streetwise (9) Test might be appropriate here, to pass as a servant, or a Charisma (9) or appropriate social Skill (9) Test to convince the snark that Bert, over there pouring drinks, owes the character a fiver, and can be counted on to cough it right up if he's hit up at his job. Attempts to buy her off will require a Bribery Test at a -2 Step penalty and at least five quid.

Getting in through the service entrance means getting past the caterer, a nervous, fussy man with far too many people to watch whom he doesn't trust for a moment out of his sight. A Charisma (9) or appropriate social Skill (7) Test, an empty box, and a couple of papers to wave would convince him that the party has brought the case of wine that was on special order. The caterer is unlikely to do more than glance their direction before directing them to the sommelier, and please tell me you didn't jostle it unnecessarily on the way over? Dear God, please don't let it need to settle, we were supposed to pour that vintage an hour ago. Any other vaguely likely explanation for a late delivery, or emergency repair to the plumbing, should do to let the characters into the



building. Oddly, there's no snark on watch on the service entrance. Maybe they ran out of formal wear in Extra Extra Large.

Getting in a window will require a couple of Climbing (12) Tests, to get up on top of the next building over and then in through a top-floor window. A Lock Picking (9) Test will also be necessary. There's no bars on the windows up this high, but there's a deucedly fiddly latch. Once inside, the characters find themselves in a storage room full of small tables, stacks of matching chairs, and old props and flats from some sort of cheap stage production. One of those horrid dinner theatre things they do for charity, perhaps, where one pays far too much for a shabby meal and then has to watch Lady Farrington and Lord Donelson prance about in some romantic farce, pretending that they have acting talent. Those trunks might have costumes in them, and if they do, one might be able to rig up some sort of disguise from them with a Disguise (7) Test.

Once inside, the party must locate William Thurbert IV and Clyton Elsey without causing a scene. This can be roleplayed, handled as a Sustained Action based on a social or subterfuge Skill (which one determined by whether the characters passed themselves off as guests or sneaked in), or a few Charisma (9) Tests to navigate the party without committing a faux pas. A Rule of One result should only affect the character who down-ended their Test, not the entire group, as this is too important a scene to derail with a bad turn of the dice. Eject the character who botched the Test, allow the rest of the party to deny knowing them, and move on.

## The High Sign

At some point, as the characters are working their way through the party, an older gentleman with full, bushy whiskers approaches them.

## EPISODE 6: NOBODY LIKES FIGHTS AT PARTIES



"A word in private, if I may?" He indicates a side parlor. If the party seems reluctant, he shows them a badge in a very nice leather wallet, identifying him as a Crown agent. "Not really a suggestion, I'm afraid, more of an order sort of thing."

Failing to go along with the gentleman gets the character who put up a fuss removed from the party. A staunch young man or sturdy young woman is suddenly behind them, and uses a spell or a Weird Science device to put them in a state of extreme intoxication. Nobody will lift a finger to interfere with a drunk being thrown out of the event, and will do their best to not notice the faux pas being tidied up. Once the remaining party members are off in the side room, Sir Anthony Loveridge, Companion of the British Empire, introduces himself as a Knight of the Grail. If anyone doesn't appear to know what that is, he explains that the Knights are the personal arcane guard of the Royal family, and by extension the Houses of Parliament and the British government. He's been keeping a weather eye on Clyton and his little operation. Hadn't quite got enough in the portfolio to bring in such a pillar of society, but by Jove, you lot seem to have taken care of that, haven't you?

"We've been keeping a close eye on you," he explains to the party. "We're here in force tonight to bring those two in, but I really hate making a public arrest at a social function. Spoils the whole evening for everyone. Do you think you can bring him along quietly, hand him over to us later?"

If the party agrees to turn over Clyton and William to the Knights once extracted from the party, Sir Anthony beams. "Splendid! Knew you were the right sorts! Bring them out the service entrance. We'll just take them off your hands and put them somewhere safe. You didn't have anyplace specific in mind, did you?" If the characters are working with the police, and bring that up, Sir Anthony nods. "Lovely people, the Metropolitans, but they're really not equipped to hold this sort of prisoner. Best if the Knights take them."

If the party refuses to work with Sir Anthony, he brings a variety of ammunition to bear. He has every dirty secret of the party available, and warrants if appropriate. He outranks anyone short of a baron, and the Home Office has strict orders to cooperate with the Knights. He won't hesitate to turn grim and serious, and will promise that anyone who fails to cooperate with Her Majesty's personal guard will meet a dire fate indeed.

Anyone doubting Sir Anthony's authority, or suspecting him of being in league with the Hesperideans, is invited to send a runner to Sefton House in Belgravia Square, or to the Metropolitan Police, or just ask the Prime Minister, he's in the card room three doors down. If the party has serious legal authority, either on their own or via an accompanying GMC, Sir Anthony's credentials can be readily verified.

Either way, reluctant or cooperative, the characters are sent back out into the social function to resume their hunt. Sir Anthony informs them that if things get out of hand, the Knights of the Grail will be within arm's reach, ready to lend a hand. Try not to let it come to that, eh what?

### Thurbert and Elsey, The Old Firm

Mr. Thurbert is on the second floor, in the mens' parlor, having a quiet chat off to the side with a blond elven man in a splendidly elegant Savile Row bespoke. One is quite certain that Mr. Thurbert paid his tailor well, but next to this Brummell, he looks woefully shabby and out of style. There can be really no question that the characters have located Clyton Elsey. To remove any doubt, one of the obsequious young men dancing attendance upon him addresses him by name, wondering if Clyton is going to spend the entire evening talking business with this dreary fellow from the shipyards, or will he indulge them with a round of baccarat?

An Awareness (7) Test should be called for if the characters don't request it, to check William IV's hand. By gad, there it is, on his right ring finger, the signet of the Hesperidean Society. But what's this? Clyton has a similar ring, but his has a ruby inset and a fancier bit of scrollwork round the edge. Could we have found the high priest of the cult? Dramatic tension abounds. If these two are Hesperidean mages, what might they set loose in a crowded social venue? Are the characters endangering the public by confronting these two here? Somehow, the party must either convince William IV and Clyton to accompany them to the service entrance, or bring them there against their will without causing a scene.

### Well, That's Put The Cat Amongst the Pigeons

If William Thurbert III has accompanied the heroes, he makes a dog's breakfast of the situation straight away, walking right up to his son and demanding to know what William IV has gotten the family business embroiled in. Clyton will take the opportunity to do the socially proper thing and excuse himself from an awkward family moment. He'll make for the nearest exit, his phaeton, and the dock, with the intent of fleeing the jurisdiction. The party, of course, must try to head him off without creating a scene. Hinting that they have incriminating evidence against him is a better move than outright declaring such. A Charisma (9) Test, modified by Social Level, would work here if roleplaying doesn't. Clyton's not going to throw the first spell. If the party won't let him by, he'll first call them on their behavior, and then let a few of the aforementioned obsequious young men engage these ruffians. Clyton will only resort to magic, or his sword cane, if the situation well and truly gets out of hand.

### Can We Be Gentlemen About This?

The best option is to get William IV and Clyton off to the side, possibly in an adjoining small parlor, where they can be confronted with the situation in private. This will require the use of social Skills, based on what the characters have to work with – reputation on the street, Social Level, or roleplayed innuendo. “You really don’t want to discuss this in public, old chap, step aside with us here and let’s settle this like gentlemen.”

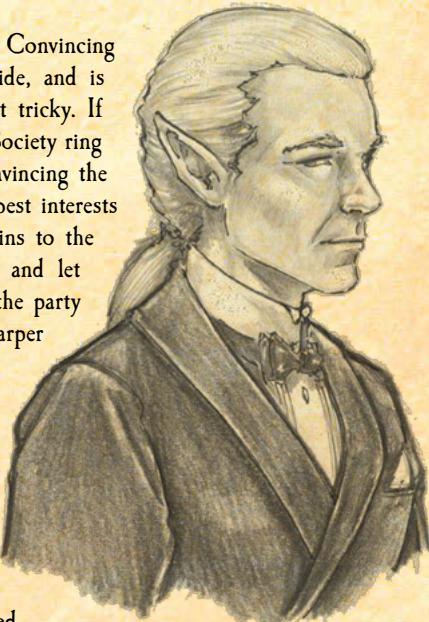
If the party gets either William IV or Clyton, or both, off to a private room, they can either confront the men directly with the evidence, or discuss in more general terms what might be happening. Convincing either to turn themselves in, if the characters have no legal authority, will be nearly impossible. In such a case, Clyton will pull out his bank book and ask the characters how much he needs to write the draught for to make this all go away, assuming, of course, that the evidence is handed over so the party doesn’t turn into remittance men. Blackmail is such an ugly word, let’s not even bring it into the conversation, shall we? If the characters have legal authority, it’s still going to be a challenge to get Clyton and William IV to surrender quietly.

### We’re Here to Warn You

The party could present themselves as a rescue. Convincing William IV and Clyton that the party is on their side, and is there to warn them of impending arrest, may be a bit tricky. If any of the party has thought to obtain a Hesperidean Society ring and can display it, that will go a long way toward convincing the two bounders that these strangers really do have their best interests in mind. The party could then simply escort the villains to the service entrance under the guise of protecting them, and let the Knights handle the situation outside. Conversely, the party could put the wind up, let Clyton and William IV scarper on their own, and route them to the service entrance in one way or another.

### We’ll Take It From Here, Thank You

If the negotiations break down, William IV, Clyton, or both prepare to toss a Stun spell, or bolt for the exit, or take whatever other action might be appropriate for either fight or flight. The aforementioned young men pull out saps and derringers, or ready their walking sticks for use in combat. Let the first round go off as normal. In the second round, before the first blow can be struck or spell loosed, several men and women dressed as party attendees and serving staff descend on the incipient fight, weapons drawn, hands raised to conjure. Sir Anthony steps into the middle of the situation and announces, “That’ll be enough.” Anyone making a hostile move after that is Stunned into the middle of next week with either a spell or a Weird Science gun. Wouldn’t want to disturb the charity event with this nasty business, now, would we? Sir Anthony addresses William IV as Waklum, Clyton



## Chapter 7

as Abum, and demands they surrender their rings and give their oath to bow to legal authority. Resistance is useless, and William IV and Clyton will both recognize that. Better to go on your own feet than to be carried.

Approximately the same thing happens if the party is able to get William IV and Clyton out the service entrance, voluntarily or not. Sir Anthony and his people make a dramatic appearance, the villains are put in rune-engraved restraints, and the situation is cleared away.

Once William IV and Clyton have been relieved of their rings and other magical paraphernalia, and led (or carried) off, everyone who isn't immediately involved is cleared out of the area.

"You've done well, here," Sir Anthony says. "A captain and a colonel taken off the field – Waklum and Abum, Akkadian rank equivalents, that sort of thing. Evidence we couldn't quite reach. A nasty drug taken off the streets. The Crown is impressed with how you've handled this, despite the occasional bit of noise or untoward ruckus. Shouldn't be hard to find who's been hunting the dinosaurs and using Samsut magic to turn them into snuff. There can't be too many capable of the job. Pack your bags, you lot, you're off to the New World on the Queen's shilling."

Of course, the characters could demur, but Sir Anthony's pronouncement has all the weight of a Royal command, and defying the Queen's request wouldn't be the wisest thing, now, would it?

*To be continued in Akkadian Connection: Book Two: Saurids on the Grosvenor Express!*



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# BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SOHO

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Adventure for 1879



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## Appendix

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**T**his chapter provides suggested AP awards, answers open questions, and provides some suggestions for using characters and story elements of this adventure in future **1879** adventures and campaigns.

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## After the Adventure

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The party has several options for continuing their story.

- They can take Sir Anthony up on his offer, and move on to the next published adventure in this series.
- London has a gap in the drug trade, which is going to cause a few scuffles as the various gangs try to move into the void. Someone's going to need to help keep order and put the next lot out of business.

- There's probably quite a few Hesperideans still out there. They need to be chased down and dealt with. Conversely, they might decide that the adventurers need to be chased down and dealt with. Having a magical cult for an enemy can keep life exciting for quite a while.
- Depending upon the party's origins, and how well they did, there might be offers of work from various quarters. A clever troupe of Dodgers who's managed to come off the better for working with the authorities might find themselves with a higher paying sort of client, one who needs people who can improvise when it all goes terribly awry, and who can handle themselves in social situations as well as burglary. Capable people of good social standing are always in vital need for Her Majesty's business, between the problems faced by the Metropolitans just in London, and the Home Office throughout the Empire, and let's not even mention the Foreign Office and all the intrigues they've got going.

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## Awarding Adventure Points

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The following section provides guidelines for awarding Adventure Points to the player characters. As recommended in the *Introduction* chapter, p.5, the Gamemaster should award Adventure Points at the end of each game session as well as at the end of the adventure. The following guidelines for Adventure Point Awards suggest the points to be awarded for each task accomplished or goal reached in a game session.

### Game Sessions

*Big Trouble in Little Soho* is designed to take one session per Episode, for a total of six sessions. If the players pursue multiple courses of action to resolve an Episode, expect to run each option in its own session. As with all pre-written adventures, how many sessions are actually required depends upon the Gamemaster and the players.

### Adventure Points

The following tables show the suggested Adventure Points rewards for each Episode. These awards are based on a party of three to five lower-Novice Tier characters. Adjust the AP awards as required for party size, experience level, and actual play. See *Awarding Adventure Points* in the *Gamemastering 1879* chapter of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

Note that "defeat" can be interpreted several ways. Killing someone certainly defeats them, but so does convincing them to hand over the critical evidence without a fight. The Gamemaster should adjust the "defeating" awards according to the effectiveness of the method used. If a player convinces or bribes a villain to turn against their fellows and help the heroes, that should be worth more APs than just shooting the villain in the head and moving on.

Players are encouraged to spend their APs between Episodes. This adventure is designed to become progressively tougher and more challenging with each Episode. Some degree of character advancement will be necessary to complete the adventure and prepare for the next installment.

## Episode 1: Passing for the Wrong Sort

Item	Suggested AP Award
Getting In with a Snuff Merchant	
Completion of Episode	300
Convincing Scantly to reveal his source	500
Tailing Scantly to the distribution point without conflict	500
Finding the distribution point after a conflict with Scantly	200
Surviving a conflict with Francis the Horns	100
Getting In on an Operation	
Completion of Episode	300
Finishing the job without problems and leaving with a vial of snuff	600
Calling in the police to bust the gang	400
Winning a battle against the Florist and his gang	400
Capturing released animals	200 each, minus 100 for civilian casualties
Killing a released animal	No points
Spying on the Dealers	300
Working Through Underworld Connections	300
Interrogating a Suspect	200

## Episode 2: The Cry in the Pyramid

Item	Suggested AP Award
Completion of Episode	300
Gaining entry to the distribution point building	400
Defeating the guards (per guard)	250
Defeating the gang leader	600
Capturing or defeating the chemist	600 (no points for killing)
Saving evidence from the fire	250
Putting the fire out before the building is involved	500
Keeping the fire from spreading to nearby buildings but losing the distribution point	300

## Episode 3: Indiana Bones

Item	Suggested AP Award
Completion of Episode	300
Saving Professor Macguire	800
Defeating Severn Wylam (the Mage)	700
Defeating the Thugs (per)	150
Saving the exhibit room	700
Saving the Museum but losing the exhibit room	400
Saving Doctor Toprak	800
Defeating Madeleine Murray (the Priestess)	700 (half if she uses her suicide charm)
Defeating the Thugs (per)	150
Saving Doctor Toprak's research	700
Saving the library but losing the research room	400
Preventing civilian casualties at Russell Square	400

## Episode 4: Brickyard Ballroom

Item	Suggested AP Award
Completion of Episode	300
Getting into the Pottery Works	300
Fending off challenges to the party's presence without fighting (per)	300
Main Building: Clearing the ground floor	200
Main Building: First Floor: Defeating the Priest	900
Main Building: First Floor: Defeating the Mage	900
Main Building: First Floor: Defeating the Thugs (per)	200
Main Building: First Floor: Saving the Chemist	500
Main Building: First Floor: Saving the Evidence	500
Main Building: Second Floor: Rescuing hostages (if any, per)	800
Main Building: Second Floor: Defeating the Mage	900
Main Building: Second Floor: Defeating the Enforcers (per)	700
Finding the money and punchcards	300
Kilns: Rescuing Francine	800

## Episode 5: A Visit After Hours

Item	Suggested AP Award
Completion of Episode	300
Talking with William III without causing a scene	200
Sneaking into and out of 7 Cheyne Row without getting caught	1000
Searching William IV's flat	200
Getting into the office building	300
Running the punchcards on the firm's Engine	300
Boardroom: Defeating the mages (per)	1000
Boardroom: Defeating the officers (per)	500
Boardroom: Defeating the Thugs (per)	300
Boardroom: Saving the evidence	1000

## Episode 6: Nobody Likes Fights at Parties

Item	Suggested AP Award
Completion of Episode	300
Getting into the party	600
Finding Thurbert and Elsey	300
Confronting the villains (quietly)	1000
Confronting the villains (loudly)	300
Completion of Adventure	2000

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# Hesperidean Society Spell Tables

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These tables provide spells and KAVs for the Hesperidean Society mages and priests encountered in this adventure. The Gamemaster is of course free to invent new KAVs as needed for the GMCs.

## Mage

These KAVs are available to the Mage GMCs.

Spell	Tier	Known As	Style	Modifications
Bind	Initiate	Utu's Hold	Rays of brilliant light wrap around the target. If outdoors during the day, these appear to radiate down from the sun.	None.
Ignite	Initiate	Breath of Kingu	Mage invokes the Goddess of Dragons and exhales a small stream of fire at the target.	None.
Lock	Initiate	Ninazu's Closure	Mage puts a clay seal with the symbol of the god of incantations on the thing to be locked.	None.
Shield	Initiate	Shutu Prevents It	Mage invokes a god of wind to deflect enemy blows.	None.
Bolt	Novice	Wrath of Kingu	Mage invokes the Goddess of Dragons and exhales a massive plume of flame.	If Effect scores more than one success, target is ablaze and takes Step 8 fire damage until extinguished. Strain +1.
Explosion	Novice	Enlil's Fury	Mage conjures a storm cloud that emits a ball of lightning, exploding at the target point.	If Effect scores more than one success, targets take -2 Steps to DEX and DEX-based Tests and are at half Movement for 3 rounds. Strain +2.
Improve Skill	Novice	Inanna Aids You	Mage blesses the target in the name of the Goddess of Love and War.	Restricted to fighting Skills. Strain -1.

Spell	Tier	Known As	Style	Modifications
Reduce Damage	Novice	Namtar's Notice	Mage invokes the god of illness to weaken the target.	None.
Deny Movement	Journeyman	Pazuzu's Resistance	Mage invokes a wind demon to oppose the target's movement.	None.
Shockwave	Journeyman	Wings of the Anzu	An illusionary lion-headed eagle appears and claps its wings to create the shockwave.	None.

## Priest

These spells are available to the Priest or Priestess GMCs.

Spell	Tier	Known As	Style	Modifications
Ignite	Initiate	Verethragna's Touch	Magician invokes the deity of purifying fire, and a spark leaps from fingertips to target.	None
Shield	Initiate	Indar's Protection	Magician invokes the protection of the God of War. Translucent shield of Persian style appears.	None
Sleep	Initiate	Bushyasta's Caress	Magician curses the target in the name of the demon of sloth.	None
Stun	Initiate	Ereshkigal's Notice	Mage invokes the Goddess of Death, Darkness, and Dust. Area dims slightly during casting as if a shadow passed over. Targets are left dazed by Her brief attention.	None.
Bolt	Novice	Verethragna's Wrath	Magician invokes the deity of purifying fire, and throws a fire bolt from upraised hand.	Make a second Effect Test against target's Mystic Defense to set target on fire, doing Step 4 damage for three rounds.

Spell	Tier	Known As	Style	Modifications
Heal	Novice	Simurgh Shakes the Tree	Magician waves a fan made of feathers toward the target.	None
Improve Movement / Physical Defense / Damage	Novice	Gift of Indar	Magician invokes the God of War and asks a blessing on the target.	Strain 4 + 1 per success. Adds +1 to Movement / Initiative, +1 to Physical Defense, +1 Step to STR for Damage Tests per success for Rank rounds. One target only.
Reduce Defense / Movement	Novice	Indar's Curse	Magician invokes the wrath of the God of War on the target.	Strain 4 + 1 per success. Applies -1 penalty to Physical Defense, Movement / Initiative for Rank rounds. One target only.
Burn Area	J Journeyman	Verethragna's Purification	Magician invokes the deity of purifying fire, and sweeps a fan of flames from hand across area.	None
Shockwave	J Journeyman	Vata's Breath	Magician invokes the deity of wind and exhales sharply.	Blast wave is accompanied by a strong wind, cosmetic only.

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# Index

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## A

- Adventure Points 86
- After the Adventure 85
- Appendix 85
- Awarding Adventure Points 86

## B

- Behind the Scenes 14, 30, 40, 54, 68, 78
- Boardroom Brawl 71

## C

- Can We Be Gentlemen About This? 82
- Conclusions 64
- Credits 2

## D

- Dedications 2

## E

- Encounters and Events 7
- Episode 1: Bang Snuff 13
- Episode 1: Passing for the Wrong Sort 87
- Episode 2: The Cry in the Pyramid 29, 87
- Episode 3: Indiana Bones 39, 88
- Episode 4: Brickyard Ballroom 51, 88
- Episode 5: A Visit After Hours 67, 89
- Episode 6: Nobody Likes Fights at Parties 89
- Episode 6: Nobody Likes Fights At Parties 77

## F

- Fight In the Finish 57
- Fossils Aflame 40
- Freddy 19

## G

- Game Information 10
- Gamemastering Notes 5
- Game Sessions 86
- Getting In Is Half The Fun 54

- Getting In is Just the First Step 78
- Getting In on the Ground Floor 31
- Getting In With a Snuff Merchant 20

## H

- Hesperidean Society Spell Tables 90
- How to Use this Book 7

## I

- Inside Cover 1
- Interrogating a Suspect 26
- Introduction 5

## K

- Kickstarter Backers 95

## L

- Loose Ends 10

## M

- Mage 90
- Making Tests 6

## O

- Office Invasion 69

## P

- Passing for the Wrong Sort 19
- Plot Synopsis 8
- Post-Raid Investigation 36
- Preparing the Adventure 11
- Priest 91

## R

- Results 26

## S

- Second Floor: Hostages and Contention 62
- Seeing the (Im)Patient 16

Setting the Stage 13, 29, 39, 52, 67, 77  
Sister Josephine 18  
Spying on the Dealers 24

## T

Table of contents 3  
The Card Run 70  
The High Sign 79  
The Loss of Even One Page 45  
The Main Building 57  
Themes and Images 14, 30, 40, 52, 68, 78  
The Processing Area 59  
The Rest of the Compound 64  
The Ritual Area 57  
The Second Story, Because Nobody Believes the First 32  
The Sorting-Out 73  
Thurbert and Elsey, The Old Firm 81  
Troubleshooting 27, 37, 49, 65, 75

## W

Ward Mother Mary Gabriel 17  
We'll Take It From Here, Thank You 82  
Well, That's Put The Cat Amongst the Pigeons 81  
We're Here to Warn You 82  
What Is Bang Snuff? 14  
William III at Home 68  
William IV Not In Residence 69  
Working through Underworld Connections 25  
Wrapping Up The Episode 49

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# PPC01 Big Trouble in Little Soho

## The Akkadian Connection, Book One

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