

Dragon in the Smoke



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THE DRAGON IN THE SMOKE

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"This tale is dedicated to one who was lost to us. Rest in peace, Ingrid, you live still in our memories."



Thanks to family and friends, to numerous to mention but I'm grateful to you all. Thanks to ORK and RegnCon for being my playgrounds. Thanks to Eva Reme and the folklorists of Bergen.

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INTRODUCTION

The dark and smog filled streets of London in the Victorian age is an unwelcoming and treacherous place, and not in the least bit safe for the unprepared visitor. The following adventure revolves around two upper class children that have sought adventure within the East end of London and found it. The two have been kidnapped by a group of thugs in the employ of a Chinese Tong seeking retribution against the children's father, and it is left up to the players to locate them and return them to their home. This will lead them through the dangerous streets of London and bring them into contact with different characters that might prove helpful or hazardous, or both.

HOW TO USE THIS ADVENTURE.

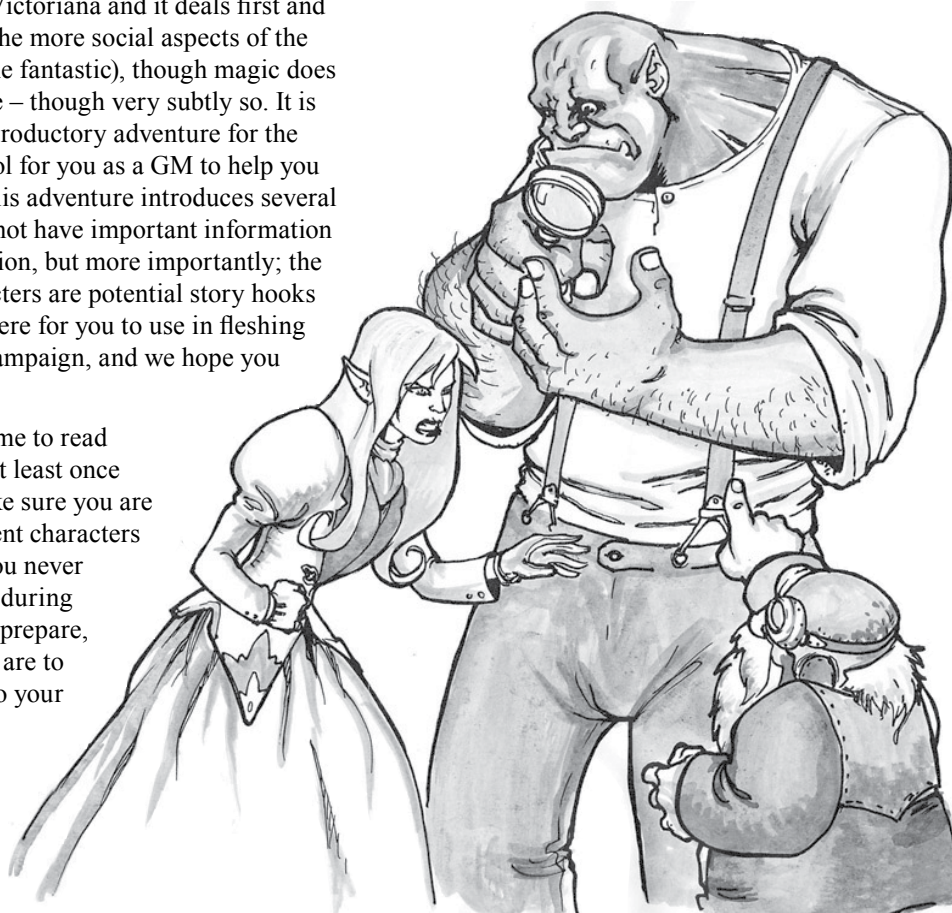
The adventure you're now holding in your hands is a simple introduction to Victoriana and it deals first and foremost with some of the more social aspects of the setting (as apart from the fantastic), though magic does have it's place even here – though very subtly so. It is meant not only as an introductory adventure for the players, but also as a tool for you as a GM to help you start your campaign. This adventure introduces several NPCs that may or may not have important information regarding the investigation, but more importantly; the majority of these characters are potential story hooks themselves. They are there for you to use in fleshing out the future of your campaign, and we hope you do so.

You should take your time to read through the adventure at least once before playing, and make sure you are familiar with the different characters and their motivation. You never know what will happen during play, and the better you prepare, the better equipped you are to deliver a great session to your players.

Though the adventure's climax is quite difficult for beginning characters, this adventure has

been written with them in mind, it should play equally well for more experienced characters. The adventure probably works best with a mixed class group; a bunch of 'proles' without any sense of etiquette might do well in the nastier parts of town, but would have a difficult time dealing with their upper class employers. A single class group could however pull it off, it would just make some of the social dealings more difficult - but that's the thing about a class based society isn't it?

Whether you wish to start the game with an already established group of friends or unrelated individuals is entirely up to you. Hopefully the story's beginning serve both options equally well. They may find it easier to work together on the case if they already know each other; however if they are perfect strangers thrown together (perhaps crossing class divisions) the role-playing opportunities could be far more interesting. If this is the first story in a campaign you should discuss this with your players before beginning.





BACKGROUND

In many ways the game starts 'in media res', in the middle of the story, as a lot has happened before the PCs are brought into the intrigues. Some of this background will become known at the beginning of the game, while much of it will only become known through the player characters' investigations. Some of it might never be known by them.

THE OPIUM WARS

The Opium Wars are some of the most despicable acts in the history of Western imperialism, rivalling even the atrocities committed in later days. The short of it is that in the mid 19th century two wars (1839-1846 and 1856-1867+) were waged by the western empires (spearheaded by Britain) against the eastern empire of China. The result of the first war was a crushing defeat for China, and with the added complication of the *Taiping Rebellion* the second war looks to be heading the same way. The purpose of the war was to allow western traders to export their goods to China, most importantly the drug Opium that was illegal in China. The wars left China and it's people humiliated by the barbarians, and the ports forced open to trade by the war have become criminal havens where drugs and prostitution are the norm, and where British citizens and their associates are exempt from Chinese Law.

In real life history (understandably) the resentment about this lingered on for years, one might say that the real Opium Wars did not in fact end until 1997 when Hong Kong was returned to the Chinese.

THE TONG

The Chinese Tongs are often confused with the Triads, and were frequent bad guys in historical British Pulp. In reality Tongs, apart from being a family name, refers to brotherhoods or secret societies. Some may be criminal, some political and some both. Some Tongs may even be affiliated with the Triads.

The Tong active in this little tale is an ancient and secret religious organisation with political aspirations. Normally quite insular and monastic, they have been spurred to action by the theft of one of their most guarded treasures (and responsibilities) by the agents of Mr Doyle.

The tong sent delegates immediately to retrieve the artefact, and sent instructions ahead for the hiring of indigenous local thugs to kidnap any children that Doyle may have. The Mandarin in charge of the Tong's delegation considered the hiring of local criminals a necessity to deflect attention away from his society and his countrymen residing in London, but it's a decision he regrets when he finally arrives and finds out just

what 'help' his money bought. Despite their desire for secrecy the Tong delegates find they have to intervene directly.

THE SIBLINGS

The Eldren adolescents Henrietta and Michael Doyle have on frequent occasions snuck out of their secure and sheltered upper class homes in the better parts of London, to go adventuring in the dark and deadly nightlife in the lower class districts of the city. They do this inspired by the antics and stories of their second cousin Robert. They have done this by forcing the assistance of the house servant Carolyn, whom they have blackmailed with their knowledge of her affair with the 'sleazy' reporter, Mr. Sheffield. With the aid of Carolyn secured, the two siblings have ventured into the night time and time again, and experienced the world that Robert has introduced them to. Through these activities they have gotten some attention from a rather nasty crowd of people, among them a small group of semi-independent thugs based in the dock area (an Ogre, a Dwarf and a Ratman), currently contracted by the aforementioned Chinese Tong. Mr. Harrington, a Dwarven tough guy gained their trust and lured them away with the promise of great fun and adventures to be had, in the parts of London he frequented. The children slowly bonded with the dwarf, who then arranged for them to be kidnapped by his companions.

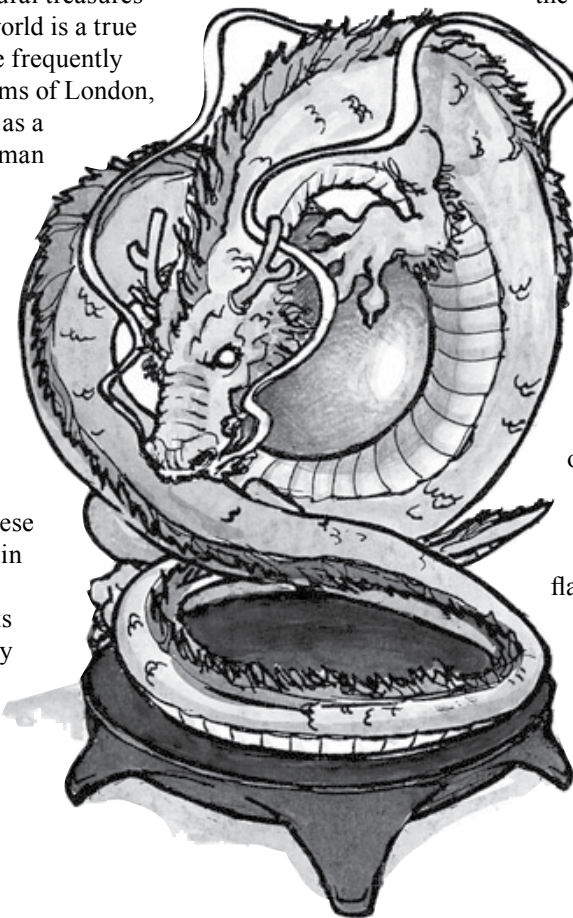
These thugs are heavily involved in all sorts of illegal import and export businesses, and now the children are under lock and key, Mr Harrington is already planning a double cross of his secretive employers. He believes the two children, with their pale clean skin and Eldren features will fetch a high price on the overseas flesh market, especially in the East. The thugs were ordered by their Tong 'employers' to kidnap the children, and although it would be the Tong's intent to return the children once the dragon artefact was returned, Harrington and his thugs now have other plans.

THE SINS OF THE FATHER

Mr. Henry Michael Doyle is a man of many talents, and most of them within the realm of finance and politics; as becomes a man of the lower aristocracy. Wisely he has invested much of the family funds into the import-export business, specifically the eastern spice trade. This way he has secured the family fortune, and contributed to the economic welfare of the British Empire. As a businessman Henry is ruthless, his shrewd financial sense and willingness to sacrifice others for his own gain have secured an enviable family fortune. If Henry has one true weakness it is for exotic

art. The importing of cultural treasures and art from around the world is a true pleasure for Henry, and he frequently loans pieces to the Museums of London, securing him a reputation as a scholar as well as a gentleman among society circles.

Nonetheless Henry's fortunes are made in the eastern spice trade, which is simply a polite term for running opium from India to China. Among his business associates are several Chinese Triads, who have helped acquire much of these treasures he so loves, and in return he has helped them build distribution networks to sell his Opium. Recently Mr. Doyle came across references to a Dragon statuette purported to grant immortality to



the owner. Doyle acquired the statue through his Chinese agents and allies. Unbeknownst to Doyle, the dragon statuette has a history and legacy of its own far beyond its value as a piece of art.

THE DRAGON STATUETTE

Standing two feet high, this green jade statuette is of a Chinese dragon, coiled upon itself and clutching a green jade orb. Its value as a historical object of art is priceless, and the detail of the sculpture is breathtaking, a close observer might even swear that the eyes of the dragon truly do flash with an inner fire.

Not all is as it seems, the reason for the startling realism of the sculpture is that the artefact is not a sculpture – it is a dragon!

ML03

JADE DRAGON

Observant readers may have noticed that there are no dragons in Victoriana, but we did say that they appeared in legends before the dark ages. The truth is that Dragons existed before the time of Rome, and they were rapacious destroyers, sworn enemies of all living things. Across the globe in isolated and separate fronts a running battle took place against the devouring beasts. Most were destroyed or cast out into the planes, the last few finally hunted down in the middle ages (giving us our Dragon slayer legends), but in China one dragon existed whose power was beyond the abilities of the greatest hero to slay or dispel.

Eventually a small group of Mandarins came together with a plan, if they could not slay the beast, then perhaps they could imprison it. They spent

years preparing their sorcery, and eventually they were successful, and the mighty dragon was trapped in a prison of Jade. However the sorcerers found that although they had captured the beast's physical form its own mastery of sorcery allowed it to reach out to those around it and influence the minds of men, ever trying to fool unsuspecting mortals into performing the rituals needed to release it from its prison. Knowing the statue could not be destroyed without releasing the beast the Mandarins hid the statue in a remote monastery, and founded a Tong to be responsible for guarding it from the unsuspecting world.

Now, several millennia later, an ignorant Mr Doyle has stolen the statue for its artistic value, and it has started to twist his mind...



ACT 1: MISSING HEIRS

ENTER THE HEROES

There are several ways that characters can get involved in the adventure that follows, Upper and Middle class characters might know the Doyle family in some way, and therefore be a natural choice for the family to turn to for discrete assistance. It's also possible that your characters are in fact investigators, in which case they might be directly hired to investigate the children's disappearance. In either case you can ignore the following section on 'shots in the dark' and head straight to the next section 'A Mother Distraught', where the characters can be referred to Willowpin by the family and can then head into the investigation proper in Act 2. We introduce the characters to Willowpin as he can provide an excellent '*deus et machina*' if the characters get stuck with their own investigations.

It's also possible that your group is completely lower or middle class and that they are not investigators, in which case the section directly below gives your characters a way into the adventure by first encountering and assisting Thomas Willowpin, a private detective who it would seem is in over his head in his investigations on the Doyle's behalf...

SHOTS IN THE DARK

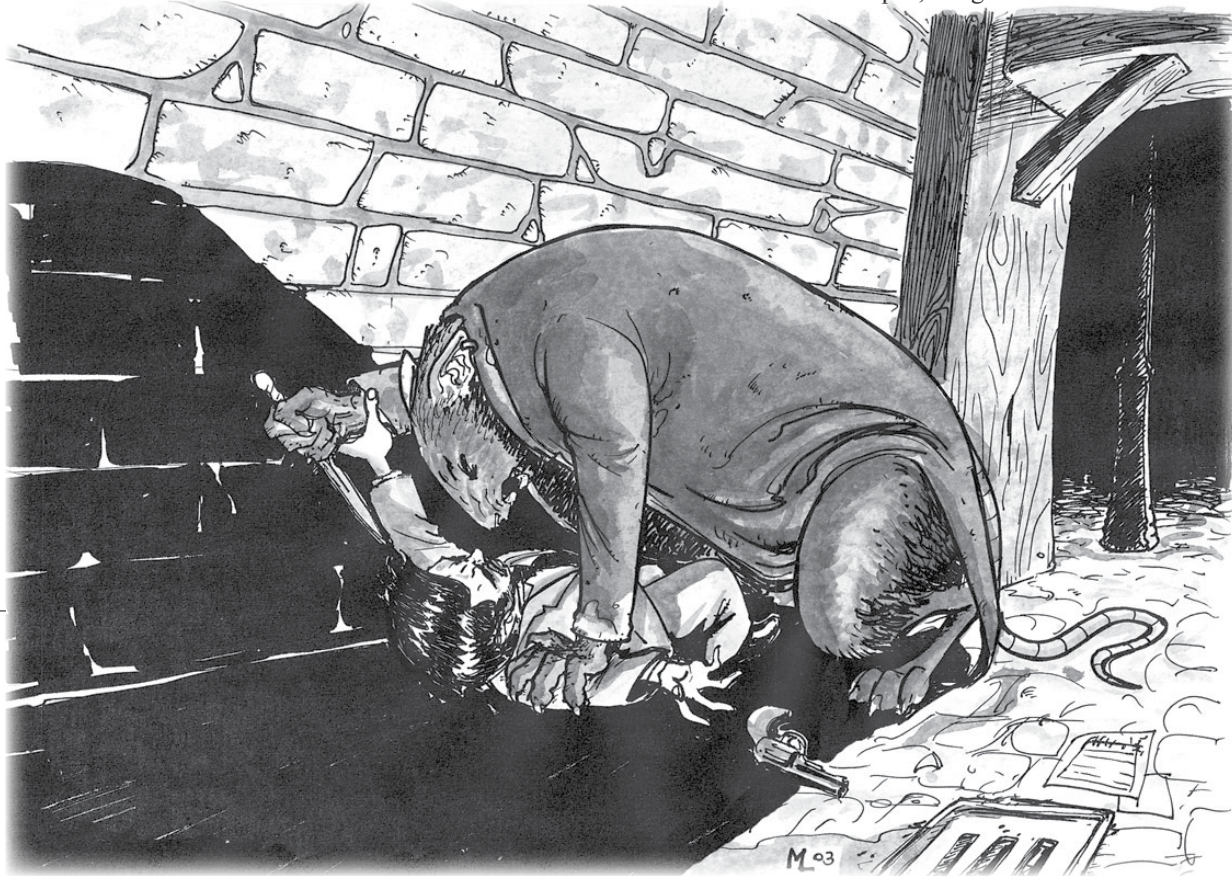
The adventure starts on an autumn Monday as night is fast approaching; darkness has already fallen upon the smog filled streets of London. The player characters, as a group or as individuals, are making their way through the dark streets of St. Giles, when suddenly they hear sounds of brief struggle from a nearby alley. A rat faced scoundrel ('Hairy-Jones'), dressed in a long dark coat and concealing his face with a dirty handkerchief comes running out of the alley. A shot rings out, and the alley is briefly lit by the flare of a gunshot. Keen observers will notice that the man is in fact a Beastman, probably a Ratman, and in his hands he is holding a bloodied knife. The shot misses him and he runs past the player characters, bumping into one or two of them (perhaps sending an unfortunate lady into a puddle). Through the powder smoke from the gunshot, a dark haired gnome (Thomas Willowpin) can be dimly observed, clutching a still smoking revolver in his right hand, while pressing a bleeding wound with his left, the Gnome falls face first out of the alley and into the street where the player characters are standing.

A daring person or two with high initiatives (more than 8 on an initiative roll) might attempt to pursue the escaping assailant. To keep up use the chase rules

for several rounds, Hairy Jones starts the chase 'close by'. If the player characters lose the ratman in the first two rounds, they will only find the bloodied knife tossed to the ground a few yards up the street, near a few empty crates and barrels blocking an alleyway. If they manage to keep up, they will see their prey throw aside the bloodied knife, and jump (more like a skipping climb) over the empty crates and barrels (perhaps tipping over one), and flee down the alley on the left side of the road. To quickly climb over the obstacle the player characters must make an action roll using *dexterity+athletics* (18) or lose the momentum of the chase and thus their prey. A foul failure will result in the crates and barrels being tipped over with a loud crash, and slight damage to the clothes of those on top of them as they fall. The ratman continues through the alley and into the next street, and into an overcrowded public house 'The Fiddler', where he loses himself in the large crowd before finally slipping out through the back entrance.

For those unable to grasp the point; he is actually supposed to get away with it, but don't worry, the player characters will get their chance.

While the ratman escapes, the gnome will come to





himself after a short while and help himself to his feet if no one else assists. He has a knife cut on his right side that's bleeding badly, but a diagnosis reveals that it's not too deep and he's not in great danger if he gets some treatment quickly. He introduces himself as Thomas Willowpin, private investigator, and asks the player characters to help him to his lodgings where he has some medical supplies. He will resist any suggestion about going to a doctor, hospital or even fetch the police (if they are not on their way already); he insists that it's a private affair. He suggests however, that perhaps the player characters could help him conclude the 'affair', while they are heading towards his home.

A MOTHER DISTRAUGHT

This introduction assumes that the characters (or at least one of) already know the Doyle family in some way, or that the characters are private investigators.

The adventure starts when the characters receive a letter from Patricia Doyle asking for assistance in a most urgent and personal dilemma. Mrs Doyle's letter continues to ask the characters to come to the Doyle's townhouse at the earliest opportunity.

Once the characters arrive at the Doyles' residence the butler shows them straight in to join Mrs Doyle in the drawing room, they are expected after all.

The Doyles' city home is a beautiful building in the exclusive neighbourhood of Kensington, with a set of three beautifully carved marble steps leading to the entrance, the doorknocker is a beautifully carved oriental dragon. The Doyle family always keep a decent amount of servants around them, and their stylishly bearded butler, Mr. Straub. The house itself is beautifully decorated with art from around the world, much of it with an obvious oriental flair.

Mrs. Doyle sees the characters in the drawing room as is proper. The drawing room is furnished tastefully, and a painted portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Doyle hangs above the mantelpiece. On the mantelpiece are several photographs of their two children at various ages. A two-seat sofa and some chairs surround a coffee table, an ornately decorated Chinese urn stands on the middle of the table.

As she has summoned the characters Mrs Doyle will ask them to be seated, offer them refreshments and send her maid to fetch some. She will be polite, but not too warm or friendly. If the characters are meant to know Mrs Doyle, let your players know that their characters might expect this, Mrs Doyle is well known for her obsession with correct etiquette. Under the rigid

and austere Victorian fashion she has wrapped herself in, Patricia Doyle is a beautiful eldren lady just now approaching her middle age. She's normally a quiet, reserved lady who does not like to make a spectacle of herself, nor does she appreciate the thought of her family becoming the centre of the idle gossip of the aristocracy. She represents the family mask, a mask that that must be upheld. It's a mask of dignity and morality, a mask of perfection.

Tea or other refreshments will be served here by Carolyn the maid, while the guests are 'entertained' with polite conversation by Mrs. Doyle. Finally once tea has been served and the servants have left, Mrs Doyle confides in the characters that her children Henrietta and Michael have disappeared. She cannot believe that they have run away, she is distraught with worry that there is foul play afoot.

Canny socialites among the characters will also realise that if the children have indeed run away, it would be a tremendous scandal that would ruin the social mask Mrs Doyle has worked so hard to maintain.

Mrs Doyle continues to confide that rather than go to the police and risk the press, that she decided to hire a private



investigator, Thomas Willowpin, instead of going to the proper authorities. She did this without the approval of her beloved husband, whom she would normally never act without, as he is away on business and will not be back until tomorrow night.

However, the detective promised that he would report in within 24 hours with an initial appraisal, but has not been seen yet, and is now 12 hours overdue. Mrs Doyle is concerned that the plot which has stolen her children might also have harmed the detective, and beseeches the characters to visit his offices, establish his welfare, and if they can, to assist his work.

To professional investigators Mrs Doyle offers £1 a day for their efforts, which she will double if they can successfully return her children.

If the characters are friends, Patricia makes no mention of recompense to them, which is actually a courtesy; they are friends and equals – not hirelings. If characters broach the subject, she's shocked at the rudeness of the character at such a time, and blusters that her husband will certainly reward the character appropriately upon his return. However, her personal esteem of the character rude enough to mention money drops through the floor.

Regardless of Motivation, when the characters accept, Mrs Doyle gives them Willowpins address. Play continues at 'Willowpins loft', where the plucky gnome can be found patching his knife wound, and is only too happy for some assistance.

WILLOWPIN'S LOFT

Thomas Willowpin has his single room apartment and office in a small loft in Holborn, not far from St. Giles. It's not a long walk, but much longer than he initially gives impression of.

It's a pretty big room that he rents from a middle aged widow who lives in the first floor of the building. The room is divided by a large green curtain that separates his sleeping quarters from his living room that also functions as his 'office'. The living room office has a comfortable human sized sofa, a small and low dining table with several gnome sized chairs, a gnome height work desk littered with papers and two comfortable (for a gnome) 'smoking' chairs in which he conducts his meetings. Several bookshelves filled with books, and boxes of papers along with a few paintings cover the walls. As the characters arrive in the evening, the lighting is supplied by 2 covered oil lamp. By day the light spills in through a large skylight. The bedroom

MRS. PATRICIA DOYLE, THE SOCIAL MARTYR

Patricia got married at a very young age, to the much older Henry Michael Doyle, and over time she has learned to show him the love, care and respect that such a marriage demands of her. But she is very grateful for the two children she has, and would very much like to have them back in her house. The children, (cynical characters may believe or not) are very precious to Mrs. Doyle. They are the only things in her life that are truly hers. The product of her labours and love, and she cannot imagine a life without them, though she will not speak of it in such crude terms herself. Victorian society stifles emotions, so she has never truly bonded with her children, she holds an idealised image of whom and what her children are, and she cannot deviate from that. Her affection is hidden, and her love for her offspring never uttered in words, nor made too apparent in deeds. Since her husband is often busy with his business, she relies on her staff and her children for company when she's not entertaining visitors, still such company is never emotionally intimate.

Mental 12 – Physical 4 - Health 20/6 (w/ Corset) - Combatpicks: -.

Skill picks: Charm (15), Etiquette (15), and Seneschal (15)

Artistic Eccentricity: Social Martyr, Patricia is obsessed with 'proper' protocol and etiquette.

side of the loft is pretty simple, a bed, a nightstand, an old chest and a wardrobe, everything in a size befitting a gnome. Willowpin's nightgown is lying on the floor.

NPC: THOMAS WILLOWPIN, THE GNOME DETECTIVE

A square-jawed gnome with dark curly hair, Thomas Willowpin is a man of many talents working as a private investigator on the streets of London. A veritable social chameleon, Willowpin has the ability to blend naturally in with both aristocratic society as well as the poor of Whitechapel and St. Giles. Originally born of wealthy middle class family, Thomas Willowpin did not follow in the footsteps of his ambitious industrialist father, leaving that to his elder brother: preferring to live what he feels is a more interesting life - a life full of challenges and surprises, a life without any suffocating routines. His background has given him the freedom and financial opportunity to pursue this life, and the education it requires. Mr.



Willowpin is extraordinarily fond of books of all kind and the knowledge they represent, whether novels or scientific treatises, Willowpin absorbs them and uses them in his work. Since his work is very much about blending in, it can be hard to pin down just who *he* is, and what is an act.

Willowpin is usually a pleasant chap; he smiles a lot and often jokes around. He is dedicated to his work, which he feels is contributing a valuable service to society. When the economy allows he is not unwilling to work for free for those of his contacts in the poorer parts of the city that may need his help. He is fully aware that not all his clients, rich or poor, are always honest and decent people, but he judges the merits of the case on the case alone, and not the person he works for.

Mental 14 - Physical 4 - Health 10/2 - Combat picks: Derringer pistol (8) – 2d lethal.

Skill picks: Bull (16), Charm (15), Investigating (20), Streetwise (18), Etiquette (15), and Medicine (8)

Mr. Willowpin has needle and thread as well as bandages in his ‘bedroom’, and if none of the PCs are capable of performing the necessary first aid, Mr. Willowpin will walk them through it. He will be smiling throughout the entire ordeal, and make a few attempts at jokes. If anyone seems interested in his bookshelves or papers, he will be happy to tell them about it, even if they don’t ask any questions. If there’s a lot of ruckus getting in, Willowpin’s landlady will eventually knock on the door and enquire what’s going on. Willowpin will be reluctant to tell that he’s

wounded, and try to conceal it, and tell her that they are just friends and business associates who have volunteered to help him with something. She will be happy to meet them, and shake all of their hands and offer them some tea and biscuits for their late work, which can give characters an indication of their host’s good character. She returns not long after with the promised refreshments. Hopefully Willowpin has been patched up by then.

Whether or not tea is served, Willowpin will ask the PCs to stay, since he has a proposition for them. Though his wound may not be serious he doesn’t look particularly forward to go traipsing all over London to wrap up his current case, he asks the PCs to consider assisting him. He assures them that it’s not a difficult task, and that they will be compensated for their work when it’s done. If some of the PCs are reluctant he will first try to play the ‘missing children’ card. He will blurt out that it is about the life and safety of two innocent children that will meet with certain death on the unforgiving streets if they are not located. If this doesn’t manage to convince the PCs he will mention that the children’s parents are rather powerful, not to mention quite wealthy.

When they accept the case Willowpin will explain the case in as simple manner as possible, with all the information known to him.

Mr. Willowpin will of course try to help them along as far as possible, and answer any question that they might have and give advice on how to handle the different situations. But where they choose to go from here is up to the players.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



The two adolescent children of Henry Michael and Patricia Doyle have gone missing. They may have run away from home, since there isn't anything implying that they have been forcibly removed from their home. The two children, Henrietta, aged 15, and Michael, aged 13, disappeared four days ago, in the middle of the night. Their parents want them back home as soon as possible, and Willowpin has been hired by their mother (with her husband's approval) to see to that this happens. As discretely as possible, before rumours about their disappearance starts spreading through society.



Mr. Willowpin has learned that the children have on several occasions sneaked out of their home, and visited the less friendly areas of London. Probably from a need for adventure, an urge to escape the dull life of Victorian confinement, an attitude Willowpin can sympathise with. Unfortunately this has brought them into contact with dangerous people and locales, all of which may have proven to be too hazardous for the children, and caused their disappearance. Mr. Willowpin has already gotten a good impression of who, what and where the children have been in contact with, ruled out some and highlighted others as responsible. There are still some things that need investigating properly.



This brings him to the attack on his person that evening. He believes (falsely) that he recognised the culprit as an associate of Reverend Matheson, a firebrand preacher that has a loyal following among the indigents of the neighbourhood. He had just visited his 'church', and questioned him about an incident involving two Eldren adolescents at a prayer-service a week ago. Two children that could have been, and probably were, Henrietta and Michael. Apparently they started making trouble at one meeting, laughing loudly and making fun of the service, defaming it as a sham. According to Rev. Matheson they were thrown out of the premises, and they haven't been seen around his church since. Given the attack on his person, and his incorrect assumptions about the identity of his assailant, Willowpin believes the church is a hot lead.



Willowpin also suggests that they should talk to Robert Doyle, the children's cousin. Willowpin believes he, and his bohemian comrades, have been a huge influence on the children, and have probably been aware of most of their activities. Though Mr. Willowpin hasn't himself been able to get him or his friends to talk, he suggests that the characters might have better luck where he has failed. Robert can be found in many of the more popular drinking establishments, but usually he and his friends set up camp at the Ten Bell's Pub on Commercial Street and Fournier in Whitechapel.



However, firstly the characters should also talk to the parents of course, and perhaps some of the household staff. There might be something in the family that has caused the children to run away. The Doyle's aren't too happy about strangers knocking on their door, Willowpin remarks, so it would help if they had a letter of introduction. Willowpin offers to write a small note for them explaining that they are associates of him involved in the investigations. He asks the PCs to be discrete and very polite when using this note, any action of theirs will reflect back on him and he is dependent on having a good reputation in London's good society.

DEBUGGING

Do your players want to play this adventure or not? The only real problem at this point is that some players might find it 'fun' to purposefully and intentionally resist the story. If your players are pig ignorant enough to say 'not interested' to pleas of help and offers of money from Willowpin or Mrs Doyle, there's not a lot

more you can do to interest them. Perhaps you might use the locations and characters in the adventure from a different perspective as the characters try to steal the Dragon statuette or the Children away from the various parties for personal gain.



ACT II, SCENE I: INVESTIGATION

THE DRAGON IN THE SMOKE

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW...

Every character in Victoriana has at least a few contacts, and for some the contacts they have are a defining character feature.

In an investigative adventure such as this, those contacts can prove invaluable, and you should expect your characters to refer with contacts and allies frequently as they attempt to verify fact from fiction.

Indeed a mixed party can have contacts right across the social strata, and be capable of an amazing degree of information gathering.

You should encourage players to do so, and use their

conversations with their contacts to confirm their own conclusions - or sow confusion as you desire.

When players wish to gain information directly from their contacts, rather than simply gaining a verifying opinion, you may ask the character in question for a *Streetwise* roll. The difficulty of the roll would vary depending upon the obscurity or value of the information being requested, with common knowledge or 'juicy gossip' being available on average rolls, whereas guarded secrets or 'the real dirt' might require, difficult, exasperating, or even ridiculous levels of difficulty.



THE BOHEMIAN COUSIN

Robert Doyle, the missing siblings' second cousin, and his bohemian friends can be found drinking at the Ten Bell's Pub on Commercial Street and Fournier in Whitechapel. Robert's friends are a friendly bunch of over-indulged drunkards and aspiring artists (of mediocre potential), who circle around and Eldren lady of an exceptionally beautiful and mysterious lady who calls herself Miriam. The well dressed gang of about a dozen individuals can be found seated around one or two tables in the smoke filled public house, from time to time they will walk, dance or skip around the floor or tables merrily. They are quite easily approached, and anyone who can express themselves artistically is welcomed enthusiastically, as is any great beauty.

NPC: ROBERT DOYLE, THE BOHEMIAN COUSIN.

A dashing, young Eldren gentleman addicted to his indulgences with alcohol, absinthe, and opium as well as 'the good life'. The dark haired dilettante considers himself something of a poet, and though this has yet to be proven, he will always consider it his duty to pursue his artistry. Though accepted and welcomed, he is considered the black sheep of the family, but the general feeling is that it's just a phase he will grow out of.

Robert is informal, and outgoing and will embrace the PCs socially as well as physically when they introduce themselves. Any insult or accusation will only be met with a hearty laughter. He will be very interested in helping them find the missing siblings, they are after all family, and in the back of his mind he has a nagging feeling that he is somewhat responsible for their disappearance.

Mental 12 - Physical 8 - Health 20/4 -
Combatpicks: Swordcane (13) – 3d+4 lethal.

Skill picks: Bohemian fashions (16), Bull (16), Gossip (16), Seduction (14), Party (16), Poetry (6), Streetwise (14), Etiquette (14).

NPC: MIRIAM, THE MYSTERIOUS LADY.

Long, black hair envelops the beautiful face of this mysterious Eldren lady. Always dressed in black, she strides effortlessly through the



crowd of the Pub, surrounded by her loyal entourage of dilettantes and lovers. Her eyes gleam, and a 'Mona Lisa'-like smile is always on her face, like she knows something no one else knows, and she finds it highly amusing. What that private joke is, no one can tell. She came to London three years ago, and started gathering her group of followers. Her followers all have beauty in common, whether they are beautiful, or try to express themselves beautiful or only share her love of beauty and tries to emulate it. What she wants in London however, is anyone's guess, so far she has not made the slightest effort to be recognised in the more respectable social circuits, nor has she ever been involved in any activity that might explain her obvious financial wealth.

She will be friendly, if not so outgoing as her entourage, and she will show no sign of being inconvenienced by the PCs. Quite the opposite in fact, she will be very interested in what they have to tell and she will share whatever insight she might have on the matters discussed.

Mental 18 - Physical 8 - Health 20/8 (w/ Corset) - Combatpicks: Magic ?.

Skill picks: Fashion (20), Thaumaturgy (20), Demonology (16), Seduction (22)

THE TALKS

Robert will tell them that the children have snuck out of their home for over a month, he doesn't know how exactly, but they came to him early on asking him to show them a good time. Which he did. Who was he to keep them from enjoying what life had to offer? He assures the investigating PCs that he was quite adamant in telling his cousins about the dangers of roaming around the dangerous streets of London at night. When the children got tired of hanging around with Robert and his friend they started going out on their own; Robert tried to keep track of them, but he doesn't know where they have gone off to.

He did however introduce them to a chap by the name of Martin Croyle whom they apparently took a liking to. He's an untrustworthy sort, according to Robert, and he leads a group of 'red revolutionaries' over in Holborn. Probably in a derelict factory, which Robert tells them where to find. Martin is somewhat of a regular at the Ten Bell's Pub, but he hasn't been seen there for two or three weeks.

Robert had also introduced them to the Pavilion, and one of the writers over there. Apparently the boy had loved the crazy 'vaudeville' over there. Robert suggests they speak to the writer whom he only refers to as Dylan.

He has heard rumours that they had been going around town with a rather questionable dwarf by the name of Harrington, who usually can be found somewhere around the taverns in Wapping, or even here in the Ten Bell's Pub.

If they mention the children's parents, it will be evident that Robert doesn't like them very much. Especially not the father whom he believes is a hypocritical tyrant.

Miriam has not much information to share, but she will consider every question and give whatever opinion she has, while never losing her enigmatic smile. Her impression of the children was that they were quite beautiful, and she expresses her concern that something ugly might have befallen such beauty. She also picked up some strange emotions from the two, from the girl directed to her cousin, Robert, and from the younger brother to his sister.

THE GNOME-HAG

As they leave the company of Robert and his friend, the party is accosted by an elderly gnome-hag, wrapped in rags, missing her teeth and fronting a boil-covered face. She will stand in their way, giving clear indication for them to stop. She will look them sternly in the eyes, one by one, before she speaks hoarsely: 'You are searching?! You will awake the dragon! They are searching as well! The children are in peril, I can hear them cry!... oh... oh NOOO!' And then she faints. If the PCs ask Robert or any of the other patrons of the pub they will learn that she is a local hag, claiming to be psychic, but all she does is spout gibberish. If asked about the Gnome, Miriam just smiles knowingly and fades into the crowd.





THE DOYLE CITY HOME

A beautiful building in the exclusive neighbourhood of Kensington serves as a home for the Doyle family when in London. A set of three beautifully carved marble steps leading to the entrance, and the doorknocker is a beautifully carved obsidian dragon. The Doyle family always keep a decent amount of servants around them, and their stylishly bearded butler, Mr. Straub. Without the note from Mr. Willowpin, 'undesirable' PCs will find it almost impossible to get by the butler to see the Lord and Lady of the house. Mrs. Doyle is usually available every other day (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) between 3pm and 6pm, while she might be made available outside those times if very important; like the safety of her children. Mr. Doyle however is often harder to get a hold of. When not at home, he can be found at his Club (see The Smoke) or he will be attending meetings. When at home he usually confines himself to his office, where he seldom receives visitors who just pop in from the street. The few hours at home he doesn't spend working, he spends relaxing in his neatly organised smoking-room. He will of course be available by appointment, or if Mrs. Doyle intercedes on their behalf, though she will not be very inclined to interrupt him. The house itself is beautifully decorated with art from around the world, much of it with an obvious oriental flair.

THE DRAWING ROOM – MRS. DOYLE

Depending on how the adventure started this might be the characters first or second visit to the Doyle household. In the case of a first visit you may also wish to refer to the first section of the adventure 'A Mother Distraught'.

For Returning PC's, Mrs. Doyle will once again see the PCs in the drawing room as is proper.

Patricia will ask them if there is any progress in the

investigation, and be visibly disappointed (bordering on distraught) if not, yet only discretely pleased if they say they are getting closer. She knows surprisingly little about her children, and their recent activities. If told that they have been leaving the house frequently for the last month, she will be unable to hide her earnest shock. She had no idea that this was going on, and she is surprised that none of the staff has been aware of this, especially their maid Carolyn who seemed so close to them. She makes it perfectly clear to the PCs that if it turns out that any of the staff knew of this, and had kept it from her there will be severe repercussions.

Patricia suggests that they talk to some of the staff if they suspect that any of them have pertinent information. She will make sure that they are all made available to the PCs, and have a room made ready for the interviews. Sneaky investigators might take it upon themselves to go sightseeing around the house. They may come upon Mr. Doyle's private rooms: the office and the smoking room, or 'the Chinese Room' as he refers to it.

THE OFFICE & SMOKING ROOM

Two rooms of the house are considered the father's private rooms, the office and the smoking room, both rooms are usually locked and are connected by a simple door. During most of the daytime, Mr. Henry Michael Doyle, will be available in his large office. Either sitting behind or standing next to his orderly desk. There isn't much light in the room when a meeting is not taking place. Usually a single gas-lamp on Mr. Doyle's desk supplies the only light for his work. A beautifully rendered portrait of Mr. Doyle's father hangs on the wall behind his desk. A portrait of Henry hangs above the area set aside for meetings; a

THE DRAGON

The jade-coloured dragon sculpture in Doyle's 'Chinese room' is an ancient Chinese artefact, that promises its owner supernatural longevity and more. Characters who has some sort of supernatural affinity and might sense such things, may feel there's something odd about the dragon. As if the eyes are following them with malice. You are free to make up whatever boons the dragon may give if you want to use it in further adventures of your own making. The specific powers are not important for this Penny Dreadful. What is essential is that the Tong have been betrayed, and want the sculpture reclaimed.

long table with oriental carvings and matching chairs. A few small Chinese paintings fill some of the wall space, as do a couple of oriental (and ornamental) weapons, a spear and a sword.

If there's no pressing business to attend to Mr. Doyle can be found relaxing with a good book in his smoking-room, or the 'Chinese room' as he calls it. Though adjacent to his office, the 'Chinese room', is not as large making it a more intimate room. Like the name implies this room has a distinctly oriental feel to the furniture, artwork and even the wall panels. Incense scents the room with exotic flavours, and jade figurines cover the shelves and tables around the room. A couple of very comfortable chairs provide seating around a round table decorated with creatures and characters from Chinese mythology. Even the pipes on the pipe stand have a distinct oriental feel to them. The books in the shelves cover a wide array of topics, but most of them are about the history and mythology of the orient. Well illuminated by two gas-lamps, a green dragon statue dominates one wall, this is one of Mr. Doyle's newest acquisitions, and by far his most prized possession. This is the object his Tong affiliates wants back.

MR. DOYLE.

If they manage to find Mr. Doyle, they may want to put him to the question as well. Mr. Doyle will be annoyed, and bordering on insulting when conversing with the meddling investigators. Complete write-up for Mr. Doyle can be found in Act 2, under The leak. It soon becomes apparent that Henry Michael Doyle doesn't know much about his children. He will talk about how his beautiful daughter is becoming quite marriageable and his son appears to be quite bright according to the home teacher's they've had. He expresses concern that they might have been caught up in something relating to his business, perhaps jealous rivals seek to strike at him through his children. He will react similarly to his wife if he is told that the children have been sneaking out frequently, promising punishment for both his undisciplined children and whatever members of his untrustworthy staff that has conspired with them. He is sure that no-good Robert Doyle has put them up to this.

THE HOUSE STAFF.

The Doyles have surrounded themselves with a quite competent staff, lead by the disciplined and loyal Mr. Straub, the Butler. Under him are about eight servants. The cook, Edna and her two kitchen maids see to the kitchens (obviously). The housekeeper Mrs. Torbo manages the four housemaids, including

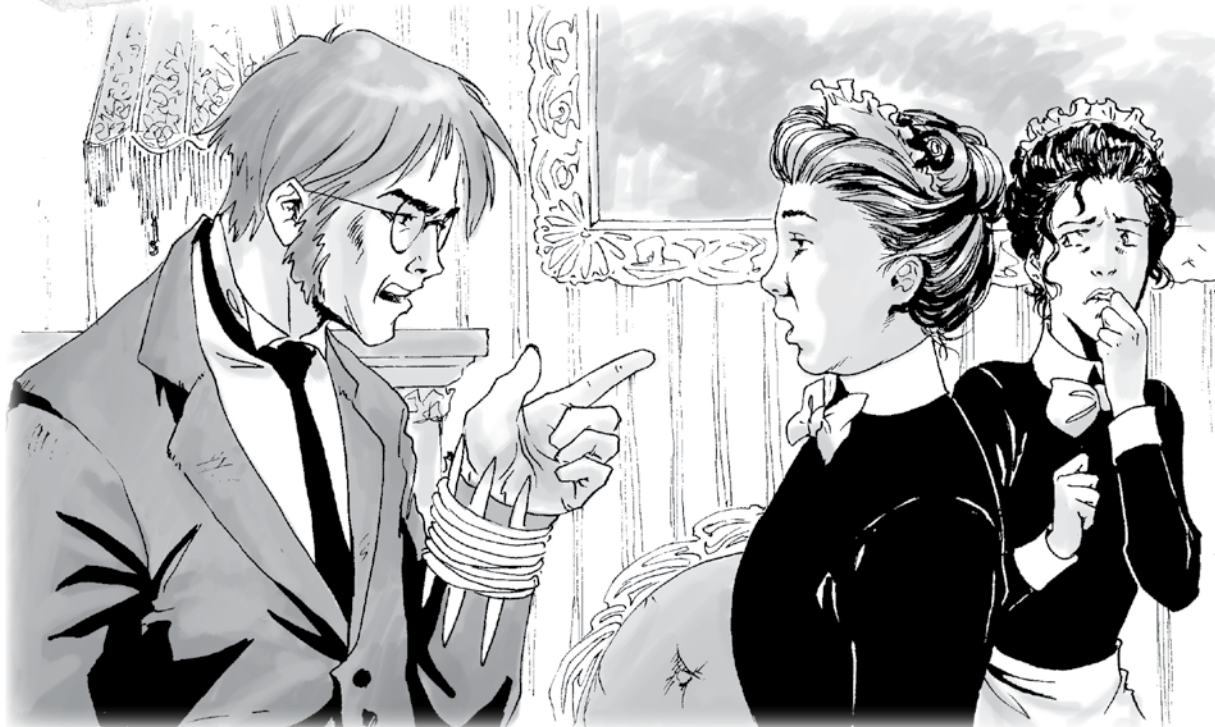
Carolyn who was in charge of the children and their room. Mr. Straub is a strict and formal character, with a neatly kept greying beard. He speaks in a slow and condescending manner, so that anyone can understand what he's saying. The cook is a large ogre woman with a dreadful cockney accent, and obvious dim witted in all matters except the culinary arts. She's covered with flour and other assorted food stains, as is her two girls, Jenny and Karina, both somewhere around 15 year old human girls. The two girls are dark haired and quite slim, and surprisingly pleasant considering the how hard Edna makes them work. Mrs. Torbo is a tall slender woman closing in on her 60th birthday, she's impatient and uncooperative, feeling that the investigation is interfering with her (and her girls') duties. Her girls, Martha (a gnome), Molly, Joanne and Carolyn all live in fear of Mrs. Torbo's temper, which can be formidable when she catches anyone slacking off.

Even though the staff will be told to cooperate by Mrs. Doyle, they will at first be reluctant to share their true feelings about the children with the investigators, feeling that if it got out it would be considered disloyal and grounds for dismissal. Mrs. Torbo and Mr. Straub are those who are most fiercely loyal to the family, and will be hard to get to talk. The younger cook's maids and the housemaids are those who more easily will tell their true feelings. The exception here of course is Carolyn, who fears repercussions from both the children and her employers.

Most of the staff have experienced that the children are annoying and noisy, always getting in the way of their work and trying to get them into trouble. They are spoiled and undisciplined. But initially they will only speak well of the children, and what fine examples they are, and what fine adults they will make. The PCs can easily pick up on the falsehoods in this with a *Human Perception* roll against a difficulty of 12. Carolyn is of course, a whole different matter.

NPC: CAROLYN, THE HOUSE MAID.

A pleasant girl with long blonde hair, dressed in the livery of a house servant, her bright blue eyes jumps nervously around as she faces the investigating PCs and their questions. For the most part a quite innocent girl, almost naïve, from southern England she came to London seeking employment with few credentials. She counts herself lucky that Mr. Straub and Mrs. Torbo gave her a chance to serve, and she has done her utmost to serve them and the Doyle family as best she can. She was not old when she first came to the family's doorstep six years ago, so she was at first given the job of keeping the children's room tidy, and to help



take care of them (or in other words, serve their every whim). A duty she has performed well to this day, she is now fast approaching her twenties, and is therefore also quite anxious to move on and perhaps settle down, but she is kept back by her loyalty to her employers. The Doyles does not appreciate it when members of their staff pursue too much of a social life, it usually hurts their performance as servants.

She has however gotten quite close to a journalist she has met in nearby Hyde Park while chaperoning Michael and Henrietta. Over time she has gotten quite close to Jonathan Sheffield, and they have started courting each other, and she spends much of her time off with him, something the children are very much aware of. When Henrietta told her they would go to their parents with their news, she was understandably distraught, and quite willing to do whatever they asked of her. Henrietta demanded that she helped them sneak in and out of the house at night, and cover for them if necessary. If the Henrietta and Michael got caught, so would Carolyn. And thus Carolyn started sinking deeper into the mess, incriminating herself further. She knows that if any of this got out, she would be thrown out at best. This has made her really nervous, especially after the children didn't return one night. This has caused her performance to get worse, and some of the staff have started to complain that she has to get a grip of herself. It doesn't get any better when the investigation starts.

Carolyn is usually timid, polite and quite subservient. Answering whatever questions posed to her, and dutifully performing whatever is requested of her.

She's a really nice girl, who is aware of the fact that she has gotten herself into trouble, and she is looking for a way out. When not under such distress, Carolyn can be quite charming in her own quiet way.

Mental 8 - Physical 6 - Health 15/6 (w/ Corset)
- Combatpicks: -

Skill picks: Etiquette (10), Bluff (14), Tidy (14), Child-care (14)

Carolyn will answer every question quickly, a bit too quickly perhaps. She will only speak good of the children, and she will express surprise at their disappearance. She assures the PCs that she has no idea where the children might have gone, or how they have gotten out.

Her anxiety over the situation is only increased by the investigator's presence, and when they are gone she decides to find a way to help their investigation without revealing herself. She loves the children, even if they are spoiled, she has seen them from their best sides and wishes to help them as well as save her own hide. While the idea of leaving an anonymous note for the investigators might be tempting, such a clue would only inevitably lead back to her. She decides instead to ask her boyfriend to help find the children through any means at his disposal.

THE CHURCH

The charlatan Reverend Matheson has found himself quite a lucrative little venture, a church preying on the poor working class without any other hope than what can be offered through religion. For the promise of a luxurious afterlife many a man will gladly give away a large part of his paycheck. Along with him in this scheme Matheson has brought a couple of helpers to aid him in carrying out his miracles, and keeping order in ranks of the congregation. There isn't just the financial gain to be made from such a venture; Matheson and his associates have learned that their position gives them certain advantages over their followers. Something Matheson and his associates take great pleasure in. Several young maidens of the congregation have found themselves willingly locked away upstairs where the 'devil' can be driven out of them. And several of their congregation are more than willing to do more or less illegal things, if they are told it furthers God's plan. This goes especially for the large amount of ogres that have found their way into Matheson's clutches.

At a service a week ago, Henrietta and Michael Doyle in the company of Mr Harrington the dwarf, started making trouble. Mr. Harrington had brought them to the church as part of him showing them a good time to gain their trust. As an acquaintance of one of Matheson's trusted Ogre associates, Mr. Harrington had learned some of the tricks used during the services. He thought that showing these snotty little kids how gullible the workers were would be great fun for them. He told them of how the trapdoor was used during the miracle performed on stage, but in the middle of the miracle Michael, jumped up and shouted: 'Look, he's using a trapdoor. Can't you see it?!' Before Mr. Harrington could get the boy to shut up they were being thrown out of the church. Reverend Matheson managed to talk all it away, blaming devils spreading lies and doubt, but if the Dwarf or the children were to return they would not be welcome, fortunately so far they have not returned.

Reverend Matheson's church is located in an old run down brick building, which once might have housed a factory. There's nothing about the building that makes it stand out from the other run down buildings stretched along this street in St. Giles. The only thing that marks this as a church is the white chalk cross on the front doors, and a small wooden sign hanging, slightly crooked, next to the doors. The sign reads in primitive letters: 'Services and Prayers, 6 o'clock every day. God's Love.' The building's back entrance leads to a small courtyard that can only be reached

by a cramped alley. The courtyard is covered with old mud, and littered with pieces of wooden barrels and crates, as well as metal debris a few years old. A metal staircase – the fire escape – leads from the top of the two storey building to the alley.

The double doors at the front lead straight into a large assembly area with a brick covered floor, resembling a large factory floor. At the farthest end a crude stage has been built from mismatched wooden boards. Several lines of crude wooden chairs fill the space in front of the stage, followed by even simpler benches closer to the door. This is where the services are held, with the Reverend Matheson and his assistants on the stage and his attentive flock seated in the chairs. A staircase on the left side of the room leads to the second floor where Matheson has his offices; there are also a few rooms with beds that he sometimes offers chosen members of his parish. There's a locked door on the right side of the assembly room, next to the stage, that leads to a small storeroom where he keeps the tools of his trade. A door leads from the store room to the courtyard outside, and a trapdoor, hidden beneath an out-of-place rug, leads to a damp cellar. In the cellar Matheson hides the secret behind his miracles - namely the floor having been removed beneath the stage, and a ladder having been constructed to the secret trapdoor leading to the middle of the stage.

Reverend Matheson can usually be found around the Church, as can a few of his associates. He holds a service every day at 6pm, and it's guaranteed he'll be there from 4pm to 10pm. The services take about 90 minutes, and usually consists of him speaking for half that time on God's Love and the truth of the Holy Bible, and the lies of the Aluminat Church which has lost it's ways; seduced by worldly wealth and evil sorcery. Testimonials usually get their timeslot, where people speak of how letting God's Love into their life changed them to the better, and improved their lives. Often there will be room for a miracle or two (thanks to Rev. Matheson's many tricks), before wild prayer and cacophonous song close the proceeding leaving the participants quite spent at the end of the day. Usually the collection plate will find its way around the congregation once or twice during the services.

NPC: REVEREND MATHESON, THE BLASPHEMOUS PRETENDER.

A tall man, with refined features; his unfashionably long hair (almost down to his shoulders!) is combed backwards. His dark eyes are piercing, and his deep

voice shifts between soothing and booming effortlessly to fit his words. This despicable man was once a man of the Church, though he never took his role as clergy too seriously, for him priesthood was a way into circles and opportunities otherwise closed to him. Coming from a poor middle-class family, his current wealth and power are very definitely considered a success. He isn't completely irreligious though, he has strong spiritual feelings, but they keep dragging him in different directions, which is what led him to being defrocked in the first place. The church considered his infatuation and research of the old pagan pantheons unwholesome and his failure to follow orders forced the Church to boot him out.

It didn't matter much though, after a time roaming from place to place, trying to make a living as a

researcher, lecturer and even religious advisor he came to London where he came upon the idea to start a church under a new, false name. The undereducated working class would be easy targets for his religious rhetoric, and if all went well he could spread out and start preaching, and feed on, the middle and upper classes as well. Those stupid enough to fall for the lies of religion deserved it anyway, and he did after all give them something they sorely needed; Hope. So in his mind it wasn't all bad, it was simply what the church had been doing for centuries.

All through his life, Matheson has followed his instincts. This has lead him to trouble, but more often than not it has lead him to great fortune as well, and even the odd revelation as well of scientific or historical nature. He has therefore learned to trust his instincts, those whispering voices in the back of his head that tell whether to go left or right. Lately, the voices have been telling him to dig.... to dig in the cellar beneath his church.

Matheson acts the part of the gentleman; he is never rude and will tolerate neither rudeness nor lewdness in his company (except when alone with his associates). He will try to be as helpful to the investigators as possible, answering their questions as honestly as possible. He will smile, nod and give advice. Even offering them a private prayer session if he deems them worthy. Only when alone with his associates will his mask drop, revealing his lecherous and greedy nature. The only feature common to both act and his true persona is that he is a driven man, driven by his instincts.

Mental 10 - Physical 8 - Health 20/4 - Combatpicks: Punch (6) – 1d+4 stun.

Skill picks: Firebrand preaching (15), Charm (14), make congregation feel really small (16), Induce guilt (16), Theology (14), Occultism and demonology (14), Bull (16)

Mr. Matheson will tell the PCs what he told Mr. Willowpin: that the two children in question caused a disturbance during a service and had to be forcibly removed. If told of what happened to Mr. Willowpin he will claim to know nothing about it, and he sends his deepest sympathies to the detective and he will pray for a speedy recovery of his health as well the children. When asked about his 'ratfaced' associate,





Matheson will tell that his associate, Mr. Duggle, was here the entire evening in question, helping him with his congregation. They are offered to talk to him if they aren't satisfied. Irritated by the questions caused by the incident last week reverend Matheson will now offer an additional bit of information. That the children were in the company of Mr. Harrington, a dwarf of ill repute known in many parts of London. They can probably find him in the Ten Bell's Pub in Whitechapel, or The Bearded Wench Tavern in Wapping. Matheson doesn't know where the dwarf resides at the present time. Matheson feels that he is getting even by sending the PCs after Mr. Harrington who caused him such a nuisance by bringing those children.

The associates of Matheson that can be found at the church at various times are:

Mr. Duggle, a ratman whose main job is aiding the recruitment, Bjoern and Olaf two ogres of Nordic descent that helps with security and Mr. Monty and Mr. Landers who help out during the services (mostly with the miracles).

THE ABANDONED FACTORY - MARTIN CROYLE

Located among the many printing houses and assorted factories in Holborn, Martin Croyle's hangout is an old fire-damaged brick building. The bricks still bear the marks of a raging fire that must have driven the original owners out of business, or at least made them leave the business and the factory. The factory is apparently abandoned. The front entrance is boarded up, as are the windows. The fire-stairs lie rusting in a heap next to the building. The only entrance is the back entrance, carefully guarded by Martin Croyle's comrades when they are holding session. Usually there's one or two on the roof, and a single guard hanging out by the back entrance, keeping strangers out while trying to seem as inconspicuous as possible.

Inside is a mess, cluttered with the debris from whatever catastrophe that struck the building. Croyle and his comrades haven't bothered to clean up, only make room for themselves and their own projects. Pieces of wood and metal, have been shoved aside and into corners, used as spare parts. Ropes and partial chains lie on the floor. It is obvious that this building used to consist of several floors, not just one big room, but only the burnt remains of the other floors remain, and the stairs don't look very safe. An intricate system of ropes and homemade ladders lead to the roof through the skylight. All glass has been removed from the skylight, and it has been covered with an easily removable tarp. A Civil Engineer roll against a difficulty of 11, or perhaps a Perception roll against a difficulty of 17, will reveal that they are constructing a complex system of rope, chain and pulleys to lift something to or from the roof. If the roll fails all they will see are a lot of chains and ropes and stuff hanging around.

Croyle has made room for a couple of workbenches

where work is being performed on small mechanic gadgets, which could be parts of the great project or just a smaller device which they plan to use. The great project is hidden beneath a large brown tarp. Underneath the disassembled great project consists of several tubes, gears and cranks sorted in a way to ease the assembly of the finished project. A couple of crates with tools and equipment are stored near the working area, including a crate with explosives, and a few other crates containing the tools of the revolution. The metal tubes and tools that lie around are also excellent weapons should the need arise.

NPC: MARTIN CROYLE, SHIFTY REVOLUTIONARY

Martin Croyle is not a tall man, or particularly muscular, he is however quite intelligent and devious. His dark face is usually covered with soot, and his black curly hair sticks out from beneath a bowler-hat. He usually wears a dirty, dark, wool coat, and he keeps his small hands in his pocket. It would be a mistake to underestimate this man for his size, he is agile and quick thinking. His eyes always gleam mischievously as if pondering some scheme or another. Which he probably is, his mind is always working on some issue or another. Though he has far from a good reputation, Croyle not a truly wicked man, he is a man of strong principles who believes he is doing something good. Who knows, perhaps he is.

Martin Croyle grew up in the care of an obscure aristocratic writer, who his own family had practically sold him to. He served his master well, on his travels around Europe, and as pay his master would share his vast knowledge of the world with him. His master had no love for the ways of the world, and cared much for the plight of the working-class, which to him



was personified in his servant boy, Martin, whom he loved very. To Martin Croyle his master was as much a father as a mentor or master, and he loved him just as dearly. When his master finally succumbed to consumption one would expect the young boy whom he loved as a son to inherit something, but Martin Croyle was only kicked out by his master's family. His family considered their loving relationship improper, a scandalous abomination. If a Will promising the boy any money or property had been made, it disappeared shortly after his master's death. He was left with nothing, penniless on the streets of London. What he had was his schooling, and an increasing distaste for the current social order.

Martin Croyle is a violent revolutionary with a bent towards the teachings of Mikhail Bakunin. He will do whatever is necessary in pursuit of his revolutionary goal, even murder, but he seldom loses sight of his goals, and there is always an underlying love for the working-man in all his actions, as well as hatred towards the oppressive upper-class. Martin Croyle has with the help of his more intelligent comrades hatched a scheme that will further the cause. They refer to it as the great project, and it involves a large mechanical device they are in the process of building.

Mental 12 - Physical 8 - Health 20/8 (w/ greatcoat)
- Combatpicks: Pistol (12) - 3d lethal. Switchblade

(12) - 2d+4 lethal

Skill picks: Oratory (15), Politics (8), Charm (6), Hide & Sneak (12), Bull (14), Civil engineering (8), Inventor (8)

CROYLE'S COMRADES

Croyle has gathered a few likeminded individuals around him, it's not exactly a secret revolutionary cell like Bakunin envisions, but it will do. His comrades consist of an assortment of five disgruntled members of the working class or lower middle class swayed by his broad range of knowledge of society. Leon and Herman are responsible for putting together whatever mechanical gadgets they dream up with Croyle. Leon is an elderly gnome, and an impoverished watchmaker from the St. Giles district where he still lives in his closed store. The Dwarf, Herman is a mechanical genius from Prussia whom Martin befriended on one of his frequent trips there with his master. 'Slit' the Halfling cutthroat is usually in charge of security and dealing with any 'problems' that might occur. Martin usually finds it hard to control the Halfling's violent urges, but so far so good. 'Pony', the horsefaced beastman, sometimes acts as a buffer for 'Slit', the two of them often work together, and 'Pony' is often the target for much of Halfling's abuse, which he takes willingly. And lastly the muscles of the operation,

Sean O'Fahey, a balding Irish strong man, occasionally employed doing heavy labour in the factories. Strong and wilful, this man defends Croyle and his cause with his very life.

Leon

Mental 14 - Physical 6 - Health 15/3 - Combatpicks: Improvised weapon (12) 3d+3 stun, all out dodge (12).

Skill picks: Science (18), Civil engineering (16), Invent (18).

Herman

Mental 12 - Physical 8 - Health 20/4 - Combatpicks: Improvised weapon (14) 3d+4 stun, all out dodge (12).

Skill picks: Science (17), Civil engineering (18), Invent (16)

'Slit'

Mental 4 - Physical 10 - Health 25/5 - Combatpicks: Switchblade (16) 2d+5 lethal.

Skill picks: Hide & sneak (16), Streetwise (16), Athletics (14), Acrobatics (8)

'Pony'

Mental 12 - Physical 10 - Health 25/9 (w/ greatcoat) - Combatpicks: Switchblade (14) 2d+ 5 lethal, Crowbar (12) 4d +5 lethal.

Skill picks: Hide & sneak (12), Conceal item (12), Streetwise (14), Climb (12), Athletics (12), Dodge (12).

O'Fahey

Mental 6 - Physical 12 - Health 30/6 - Combatpicks: Brawl (16) 1d+6 (punch) 2d+6 (kick).

Skill picks: Hide & sneak (8), Streetwise (10)

Getting in.

Getting in quietly might be difficult. 'Pony' is keeping watch from the roof, and Sean is sitting on a crate by the back entrance, twirling a crowbar in his hands. Trying to dislodge the boards on any windows or the front door would probably make enough noise to attract attention, unless the culprit makes a Hide & sneak roll against a difficulty of 25. But the investigators are of course welcome to try getting in, they will most likely be greeted as attackers, in other words, quite violently. They could of course try to talk their way past Sean, either by bluffing (against a difficulty of 20) or by insisting on them having to see Mr. Croyle. It would of course be hard, but it would be easier if they mentioned the children or who sent them, but not much (increase their chances by 2 points). Robert Doyle is

not their favourite person in the world, and they have only limited interest in two pampered children of the aristocracy. If they do manage to get in this way, Martin Croyle will not be very cooperative, he will ask them their business, answer a few questions before he tells them to leave, and forget they ever spoke to him.

A particularly clever or lucky PC might think of speaking to Willowpin before going to find Martin Croyle's hangout, since they are in his own neighbourhood. Willowpin instructs them that Croyle is not a very trustworthy person, but he thinks himself somewhat a man of the people, so anyone who does good by the workingman is ok in his book. He will warn them to be careful. He will also instruct them to tell them he has sent them; Croyle will respect that, though he probably won't like it. Sean will reluctantly let them in to speak with Martin if they say Thomas Willowpin has sent them to speak with Martin Croyle, and Croyle will greet them, and be just a hint more polite and respectful than he would if they had managed to get in on their own.

GETTING ANSWERS.

How willing Martin Croyle is to answer any question depends on how the investigators approach him. If they break in forcibly, they should expect a good fight with him and his comrades. The same can be expected if they bluff themselves clumsily in and are found out. If they win however they might get him to talk, though they have made themselves a persistent enemy. If their bluff is not found out Martin will be reserved, and quite rude, answering perhaps four questions before he tires of them and tells them to leave, the exception being if they manage to intrigue him. If he learns they are working for Willowpin he will be more willing to answer their question since the detective has a fairly good reputation among the workers in Holborn, and is known for giving them a helping hand. If they do behave themselves, they might have gained a useful friend and perhaps even an ally.

He will remember meeting the two children at a couple of occasions and having been introduced by that worthless layabout Robert Doyle. He remembered that they were children of Henry Michael Doyle, a bloodthirsty parasite, feeding on the life of others. Croyle expresses an extreme distaste of Mr. Doyle and what he represents, going on and on about the hypocrisy and lack of morals involved in his blood drenched business of exploiting the working man all over the world. He cannot say he knows where the children have gone, but he is sure that no good has come to them. To him they were two spoiled brats,



who crept forth from the cesspool of aristocracy demanding to be fed on the blood of the working man. That's why they were out on the town he says, to feed on the working man and woman's experiences, their tragedy, their sweat, tears and blood. Of course they didn't appear to have much respect for their parents or their home, but that was just the pathetic rebellion

of two over privileged children. The girl did most of the talking, and she talked a lot, and asked a lot of questions, but nothing Croyle said seem to have any serious effect on them. They did mention a writer called Dylan from time to time, and someone called Mr. Harrington in Wapping.

THE PAVILION – DYLAN

The Pavilion is a small theatre in Whitechapel that caters to the lower-class inhabitants of the area. It is no way a good theatre, and probably not even a decent one, but its patrons doesn't seem to mind. As the PCs enter and ask to speak with 'Dylan', they are directed towards the stage where 'Dylan' is preparing some new material. She's wearing a discrete suit for men, and her long auburn hair rests on her shoulders, she turns to the PCs when they enter and gives them a strained, but welcoming smile. Her appearance is quite indecent for a woman of the Victorian age, so most respectable PCs will be taken back by her attire, and the fact that Dylan is a woman as well. She will ask them to join her by the stage, since she isn't getting any work done anyway.

The players for the routine she had planned to rehearse are all in costume, and holding their scribbled scripts. They all seem sort of lost, and they don't appear to be doing much rehearsing. One of her lead actors for the routine hasn't turned up, so Dylan and the others are a bit upset. She reckons that the drunkard, Mr. Talbot, is at the Ten Bell's Pub, and if the investigator's has been there that night they might remember seeing the person she describes (see p25) there. If the characters can succeed in a *concentration* roll against a difficulty 14, they do indeed remember the halfling as being quite drunk and being handled by a particularly unattractive prostitute.

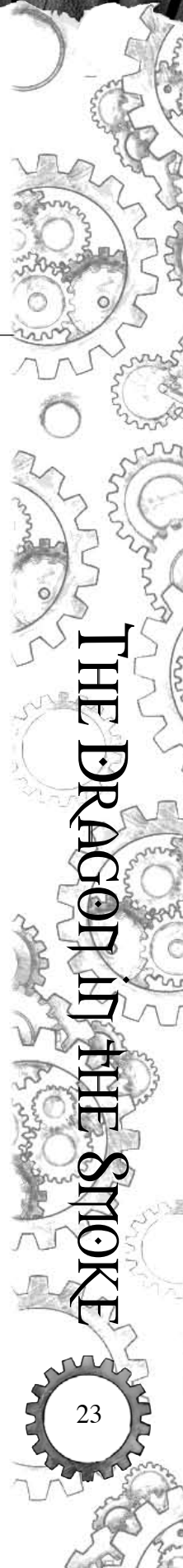
Dylan desperately needs Talbot to assist in preparing the show but can't send any of the actors since they are all in costume, and the other people at the theatre are quite busy so she's hesitant to call upon them. Characters looking to gain favour with Dylan can do so easily by assisting in recovering the errant mr Talbot. Dylan will bring this up pretty early in the conversation, before the PCs get to start asking their questions, and she will imply that she wants them to go collect him at the Ten Bell's Pub. However she will wait for them to offer to do so,

and won't bring it up again if they seem uninterested.

NPC: DYLAN.

A friendly, though unconventional woman in her thirties, Dylan spends most of her days working at the Pavilion where she produces plays both humorous and dramatic. Though entertaining her plays often have a bitter taste to them, since her inspiration lies in her own life, and the things she has endured since she was a child. Though she has Eldren blood in her lineage, the human Dylan was originally born to a lower middle class family aspiring to make their way up in the world. The family never did succeed well in business, and they were forced to make their way as best they could. When an elderly aristocratic widower came to them asking for Dylan's hand in marriage, she was given no choice by her parents for this was their golden chance to rise in station. She was sent away at an age of ten to be married to the old man when she had grown a few years. Her family prospered indeed, yet she suffered in the hands of her cruel betrothed. And life did not improve when she married, even though she served as best she could, she would only receive spite and molestation from her husband. After a few years of marriage life, without any child presenting itself, things got even worse, the impotent geriatric blamed her for this 'failure'. When she reached her twenties she quit, she packed her bags and left without a word, seeking freedom and anonymity in the East End of London under her new name 'Dylan'. Here she quickly gained acceptance, and respect, as a writer at the Pavilion, where she makes her living. She is quite content with this, but she feels the urge or writing something more 'serious', the story of her life, and presenting it to the greater public, but she fears what will happen if anyone finds out whom she is, and takes her back.

Her dark kind eyes seem friendly, she has learned to trust the people who surround her in her new life, and she welcomes them with her broad smile. She has learned to keep up her appearance, even though she has chosen an unconventional way of expressing her freedom. Even when dressed as she is she could be considered quite beautiful,



even beneath all her wear and tear, and many a man has made advances to her, though she has declined them all. Truth is, her life has left her with a strong dislike for men. She fancies them not at all.

Mental 12 - Physical 6 - Health 15/3 - Combatpicks:
Slap (8) 1d+3 stunned and shamed.

Skill picks: Writing and directing (16), Oratory (15), Streetwise (14)

Dylan answers the PCs' questions, though she will seem a bit preoccupied if Mr. Talbot has not been brought back. She remembers the two children visiting her, and seeing her plays, and thought them quite delightful even if they were a bit... rude. They would grow out of it sooner or later she thinks, especially if they continue to seek contact with the true life of London away from aristocratic hypocrisy. She doesn't seem too worried about the children though, she thinks maybe they've come to their senses and ran away from their oppressive upper-class home. Away from an uncaring mother, and a brutal father. At least that's what she supposes the family was like, the children didn't talk much about it. They came to see the shows a few times, and talk to her about what life was like outside the confines of respectability. The children seemed to enjoy her company, and she enjoyed theirs. She never had any children of her own, she points out.

She was first introduced to her by Robert, who came backstage with them after a show. He brought them around a couple of times. Then they started coming alone, and sometimes in the company with a dwarf. When the dwarf was around they didn't stop to talk with her. She also noticed that sometimes a ratfaced beastman, hung out at the back of the room some nights when the children were there, he seemed to be following them. The only distinguishing feature

she remembers was that he had a golden earring. She wishes them luck in their investigation, but she warns them not to trust the Doyle family, she knows their type, she says, and they're never up to any good.





MR TALBOT

This is just a small diversion for some fun and a bit of action. If the players seem uninterested in going after Mr. Talbot then this encounter can be safely ignored.

Mr. Talbot is an excellent actor, though he spends most of his time dead-drunk in the arm of one prostitute or another. This gets him into all sorts of trouble of course, but he has the luck of a cat, and always seem to get out of it in one piece. He dresses in filthy, smelly rags. His long, black unwashed and dried up hair hangs limply from the top of his scalp and down beside his face. Underneath all the muck, however, an always-smiling face hides away; ready to charm all comers. It's his charm and personality that has made him essential to the Pavilion plays.

On the night in question Mr. Talbot has yet again gotten drunk, some would say much too drunk. The prostitute has lead him out into the alley, where she performed her duties while waiting for the arrival of her Halfling pimp and his three cronies, who plan to give Mr. Talbot a good beating before they help themselves to any valuables. The patrons and bartender at the Ten Bell's Pub all saw Mr. Talbot and the prostitute going to the alley, and when the PCs follow them there they find Mr. Talbot swaying by the brick wall, keeping himself balanced with one hand on the wall while he tries to pull his pants back up with the other. The prostitute is standing to the side as the four brigands circle around their target.

Helping Mr. Talbot out brings the PCs both his and Dylan's gratitude, and both NPC's will gladly help them out in the future should the need arise. The helpful characters will have gained a pair of trustworthy *friends*.

Halfling Pimp

Mental 6 - Physical 6 - Health 15/5 - Combatpicks: Switchblade (8) 2d+3 lethal.

Skill picks: Pimping (12), Streetwise (10), Hide & Sneak (8)

Thugs

Mental 6 - Physical 10 - Health 25/9 (w/ Greatcoat) - Combatpicks: Dagger (12) 2d+5 lethal, life preserver 4d+5 stun.

Skill picks: Look dodgy (12), Hide & sneak (12), Streetwise (12)

THE BEARDED WENCH TAVERN & MR. HARRINGTON, THE DISREPUTABLE DWARF.

The Bearded Wench Tavern is nestled in between the warehouses of Wapping, and serves largely to the sailors (employed or not), that frequent the docks and warehouses of the area. The Tavern is not far from the Mariner's Employment Office, and Randolph 'Red' McLaren stops by from time to time (see *The Smoke*). Also nearby are the St. Katherine's & London Docks. The place is 'home' to every thinkable illegal activity, primarily gambling, prostitution, smuggling and even murder. Mr. Harrington and his companions are regulars at this place, and they often conduct 'business meetings' here.

The place is buzzing with activity, there's a lot of shouting and even some drunken dancing, and the putrid smell of vomit, alcohol and unwashed seadogs washes over the PCs as they enter the establishment. The first thing they will notice as they enter the first time is a large ogre laughing heartily at a fight occurring by the bar. People have made room for a brawl occurring between a rather large human sailor, and a well dressed dwarf. Surprisingly the dwarf appears to be beating the human easily. The human's head is bounced forcibly into the bar, and he slumps backwards, knocked out. The bartender hands the dwarf a pitcher of ale with a muffled 'Here ye go, Mr. Harrington, sir' which the PCs might pick up if they manage a Perception roll against a difficulty of 16 or even a lip reading roll against a difficulty 13. As the unconscious body is dragged off, the small crowd disperses and the dwarf makes his way to his corner table, where he is joined by the still laughing ogre.

It doesn't take much asking around to learn that the dwarf is in fact Mr. Harrington, a dwarf of some standing in the 'community' at the tavern. People know him as a jack of all trades, someone who tries to get involved in whatever action there is. He deals in both legitimate and illegitimate businesses. Rumour has it that he's holed up in a derelict warehouse somewhere down by the dock, but no one knows where. They say he uses the warehouse for smuggling. Some rumours claim that he actually works for the government, others that he is an agent of Roman Aluminat Church, others claim he works for the Chinese in the Limehouse. But really, he's nothing but a thug, with a sweet tongue and a few connections.

At the corner table Mr. Harrington is enjoying his ale

and a quiet conversation with the Ogre, Tom while fondling one of the local pleasure girls, 'freckles' Fiona. Mr. Harrington will be quite polite towards the investigating PCs, and try to be as forthcoming as he can without incriminating himself in any way.

Mr. Harrington will tell them that he remembers the two children, he had been showing them a good time around town, but one night they didn't show up as planned and he hasn't seen them around since. They probably have found something better to do; he isn't worried at all since he knows that the two of them know how to take care of themselves. He can't give them any specific places they've been, they have been





to so many, almost all over town. He does remember the spectacle at the church though, which he thought was great fun. He tells them how he knew about the trapdoor. If they mention Martin Croyle, he will warn them of Martin as the sort of man who will do anything if it furthers his damned cause. Harrington is quick to assert that if Croyle is involved, there's a good chance he might have done something to the children.

Tom remembers meeting the children on a few occasions, and thought they were nice. He doesn't have much to say on the subject, he just stays quietly in the background. The pleasure girl, Fiona, is visibly upset by the situation, but it appears to be because she is being fondled by the dwarf. In fact she is upset because she knows where the children are, and that Mr. Harrington plans to sell them into slavery. She is unfortunately not in a position to tell the investigators about it. An observant character might notice moisture forming in her eyes, when she's thinking about them with either a *Perception* or *Human Perception* roll against difficulty of 16. Observant characters will also suspect Tom the ogre, who's replies are simply too coherent and smooth for an ogre - the lucid dialogue indicates a well rehearsed speech.

NPC: MR. HARRINGTON, THE DWARVEN THUG.

This stout, well dressed Dwarf is very well behaved for a thug, and in fact he does have some very rudimentary schooling which he uses to his best ability. Mr. Harrington usually wears a dark-grey suit, and a matching bowler, a cigar often protrudes from the corner of his curly 'mutton chop' beard. He attempts to speak proper, educated English, but his northern accent usually shines through, but not enough to make him seem vulgar. Originally from a middle-class family, Mr. Harrington received good schooling paid for by his father, but this all came to an end when his father was bankrupted on account of some very unwise agreements, and they no longer could afford the tuitions. His mother had died when Mr. Harrington was just a child, so it was only him, his brothers and sisters and his father who then moved to London, where his father hoped to regain his financial security. Unfortunately this was not meant to be. Mr. Harrington was old enough to accompany his father when he conducted business, and it was on one such occasion that his father was murdered. His desperate father had involved himself in some shady dealings, and when it all went sour on a meeting his associates beat him up, leaving him bleeding on the floor. Mr. Harrington watched his suffering father, crying for Mr. Harrington to help him, but Mr. Harrington did nothing. He just watched his father die, a failure. When the crying

stopped, he left and never looked back. He has made his own way since, through smuggling, murder and white slavery; Mr. Harrington has become financially secure. He and his associates are independent, working for whomever he wants - even the Chinese in the Limehouse area. It was through these contacts he was contracted to do a job for the mysterious Tong. He was asked to find something to be used to pressure Henry Michael Doyle with during some rather sensitive negotiations. "Sensitive" meaning borderline illegal. He started to make nice with Robert Doyle, seeing him as the easiest way to get close to the Doyle family. He had no idea however that he would be as lucky as he was, when Robert actually introduced him to the children of his prey. He quickly made sure to get close to the children and gain their trust, before setting them up and kidnapping them.

He has been in hot water before, and he already knows that someone is looking for the two children, so he won't be too unsettled by the PCs' questions. He's more worried about his employers arriving any day now. He has a strong gnawing feeling that this might get a bit complicated, and he is looking into cutting his losses by just selling the children off to the highest bidder and send them away to some faraway flesh market, while he escapes.

Mental 8 - Physical 10 - Health 25/13 (w/ lined coat)
- Combatpicks: Brace of pistols (14) - 3d lethal, Brawl (15) - 1d (punch) 2d (kick) + 5 stun

Skill picks: Charm (14), Etiquette (12), Trade (12), Dodge (14), Athletics (12), Bull (16), Streetwise (14), Intimidate (12)

NPC: TOM, THE OGRE THUG.

Tall and strong, as Ogre's tend to be - Tom is relatively handsome, and he always seems to be in a good mood. A smile or a deep resounding laugh is not far away. He does however have a disturbingly sadistic streak to him, enjoying watching the pain of others immensely. There's nothing like watching some poor soul squirm under pressure to make this fellow laugh. Tom usually dresses in simple clothes, brown pants and white shirt, both quite torn and filthy (and smelling of fish), the only thing of any value he wears is a pocket watch he has attached to his shirt with a string. He keeps this beautiful 'Klockmocher' watch (see The Smoke) in perfect, shiny condition.

Tom grew up in a cruel orphanage in Manchester, where he learned his sadistic behaviour from the best teachers he could have had, the orphanage staff and its manager. He escaped the orphanage during a large fire scorched the place to the ground, killing most of

the staff, bringing only his pocket watch with him out of the inferno. Working his way to London where he hoped to find some sort of life, he picked up a few skills (mostly larceny), which have become quite useful to him. In London he was found by Mr. Harrington who adopted the Ogre, and soon a strong bond has formed between the two. Mr. Harrington is the closest thing to a father-figure Tom has ever had.

Mental 2 - Physical 11 - Health 66/6 - Combatpicks: Fists like bricks (12) - 1d+11 stun, Axe (12) - 5d+11 lethal

Skill picks: Arson (8), Intimidate (8), Dodge (4), Streetwise (6)

NPC: 'FRECKLES' FIONA, THE LADY OF CONVENIENCE.

A petite woman of battered beauty, Fiona would under different conditions been considered a woman of youthful beauty, but the poor and dirty conditions in which she lives, and the hardship of her life have left their marks. Though not yet fully devolved into someone undesirable to her clients, she is a visibly broken woman, looking like someone in her thirties. She is actually only in the beginning of her twenties. Her clothes are old, ragged and dirty. Her nearly face is dominated by large brown eyes, and a small pointy nose, and numerous freckles which is the source of her nickname. Her red, curly hair is usually unkempt, but when washed and combed it is a divine sight. She speaks with a distinctly Irish accent mixed with cockney.

Fiona is a prostitute, and has been so for a large part of her life, ever since she was lured away from her home in Belfast by the promise of riches and luxury in London by a seemingly kind and caring gentleman. Leaving her family without a word of goodbye, at the age of twelve, she came to London only to learn the harsh truth of her gentleman. She was systematically broken down, and forced to degrade herself. First with a select few of her gentleman's client, then over time as she matured and grew less 'interesting' to their tastes, she was sent out on the streets to work her trade, knowing quite well what would happen if she refused.

She has lived a life of perpetual degradation and fear of her pimp. She dreams of one day getting away from the streets, but knows in her heart that such dreams are folly, so she keeps them tucked away in the corner of her mind. She is a quiet and obedient girl, at least when she has been paid, or knows she is going to be paid. She knows that Mr. Harrington is a particular friend of her pimp, so she suffers his whims knowing that her pimp would be quite upset if she didn't. Through her frequent encounters with Mr. Harrington she has

learned his business quite well, and she has learned his apparent scheme of selling two children into slavery. Prostitution. And this has struck a chord with her, she wants to scream out what he is up to, but she knows she will only forfeit her life and probably the children's too. So she keeps quiet while the PCs are there, hoping to find some way to help them.

Mental 8 - Physical 6 - Health 15/6 (w/ Corset) - Combatpicks: All out doge (12).

Skill picks: Bull (14), Charm (14), Trade (12), Pick pocket (10), Streetwise (14), seduce (14).

FIGHT!

Naturally both Harrington and Tom are as guilty as sin. The characters have indeed found their marks, but smart characters will realise that the children are not here and then back off to trail the thugs, or at least question Fiona once the thugs have gone.

Unfortunatley characters who attempt to trail Harrington and Tom are ambushed by thugs as they leave while the villains run into the night, Harrington has many friends here - much to the peril of the characters.

Of course some characters might try force of arms to pursue a resolution within the Bearded Wench, which is simply disasterous - Harrington and Tom cover each other's backs and fight to the door while their peers in the pub take a cue to riot on the characters! in the resulting affray the villains slip into the night and leave the PC's dodging the police who inevitably come to restore order.

Whatever happens, this little encounter gives a perfect opportunity for the characters to gain a personal reason to bring Harrington and company low.

The villains lie low after this event, not wishing to reveal their hideout.

Thugs:

The number of brawlers attacking should be proportioned to the number of PCs. Perhaps one or two more. Three more if it's a large party of PCs.

Mental 6 - Physical 10 - Health 25/9 (w/ Greatcoat) - Combatpicks: Dagger (12) 2d+5 lethal, life preserver 4d+5 stun.

Skill picks: Look dodgy (12), Hide & sneak (12), Streetwise (12)



ACT II, SCENE II:

RANSOM

As the investigation progresses, the PCs find many clues, but nothing concrete presents itself allowing them to solve the mystery quickly. However, certain events take place during the investigation that draws it towards its final conclusion. The first of these events takes place on the first or second day of the investigation, preferably after they have interviewed the servants at the Doyle house. You can of course choose the timing for these events occur yourself, your players might be taking their time, and need a swift reminder of urgency.

As a general rule the first event, the leak, takes place the day after they interrogated Carolyn and the rest of the staff, but if they don't interview her do it whenever you feel it's right. Just about the same time, the delegation from the Chinese Tong arrives to start their operation, and they meet with Mr. Harrington. This is swiftly followed by the first note of instructions to the Doyle estate the morning after.

A second ransom note from the double crossing Harrington follows the same evening.

THE LEAK

Carolyn upset by the investigation and the fact that the children have not reappeared yet, tries to help the best way she can. She allows her suitor, Jonathan Sheffield, to run the story in the paper he works for. Depending on what arrangements the PCs have made they are contacted either by Thomas Willowpin (through a young associate of his) or the family itself (one of the servants comes looking for them), and asked to appear at the Doyle home immediately. Once there, they are brought to 'the Chinese Room', where both Mr. and Mrs. Doyle are waiting alongside Willowpin, they do not look too happy. Willowpin seems a bit embarrassed; Mrs. Doyle is facing downwards, while Mr. Doyle is standing next to his precious dragon clutching a newspaper furiously. They are immediately presented with the fresh issue of the Daily Chronicle, and told to open it to page five. PCs with the habit of reading the paper, might already have read the article they find there, right next to an advertisement for 'Prof. Holden's Automated Revolving Hat Stand'.

NPC: HENRY MICHAEL DOYLE, THE CUTTHROAT BUSINESSMAN.

A respectable gentleman well passed his middle-age, but not yet elderly. When in the office he dresses in formal suits, but while relaxing in his 'Chinese-room'

he wears a smoking jacket with oriental brocades. His dark-blond hair is just only slightly fading to grey, and he keeps his moustache as neat as ever; a man of great intelligence, and a passion for art. Though his family was never highly ranked among the aristocracy, it has always been wealthy. A wealth Henry has increased considerably through wise investment in imports and exports, especially in the east. He has no qualms about the large profits the Opium wars have provided to him, and he was quick to lend his full support to the 'war effort' early on in the first skirmishes, both financially and politically. Henry is fully aware that a large amount of his profits originate from activities and relations that would be considered illegal at home, even grossly criminal, but this has never bothered him much.

Henry Michael Doyle has a great love for the exotic, and he feels himself blessed for being part of the British Empire that grants him access to the cultural treasures and artefacts that satisfy his artistic senses. This love for exotic treasures leads him into trouble at times, as he is willing to do whatever it takes to get his hands on a piece that catches his fancy; even if it means stealing, murder or the betrayal of business partners.

Usually Mr. Doyle is intensely occupied with his work in the office, Frequently bordering on the impolite, he





handout:

Daily Chronicle, page 5

TRAGEDY STRIKES THE DOYLE ESTATE. CHILDREN GONE MISSING.

- Jonathan Sheffield

This reporter has been informed that the two children of Henry Michael Doyle and wife have disappeared from their home some time ago. So far there has been no sign of the children, and what has happened to them. In hope of getting their beloved children returned, the family has hired a group of special investigator's to learn what has become of them, and to track them down.

This reporter was unable to speak with these investigators himself, as they have been understandably busy with their ongoing investigation. It is however understood that anyone who can help this investigation in any way should contact the Daily Chronicle with whatever they know.

So far there has been no official reward announced, but anyone who has information should come forward, a good deed is after all it's own reward and the gratitude of the very affluent Doyle family should

probably not be underestimated. One can only speculate what has happened to the two Eldren children, Henrietta (aged 15) and Michael (aged 12), and where they might be. What may have gotten them to leave their beds and their home, in the middle of the night?

These are dangerous times, and there are many dangers out there for the unwary child. If the children have chosen to leave their homes voluntarily, where are they now? And what made them leave? If this is so and they read this article I urge them to contact their parents. No matter what has happened, I am sure that the readers join this reporter in his hope and prayer that the children will turn up safely, now that investigators are working on this case.

THE DRAGON IN THE SMOKE

will hardly look up from whatever papers are in his hands to even acknowledge his guests when speaking.

He will not allow himself to be unbalanced by the disappearance of his children, it would only make him open for attacks from his business rivals, and he has too much to lose to allow that to happen.

When relaxing in his 'Chinese Room' he will appear equally distant. Mr. Doyle suspects the Dragon sculpture's magical potential, he has read several accounts that hint at it granting among other things longevity to its possessor. And he is aware that stealing this sculpture from his Chinese partners, probably will have some sort of ramification, it could possibly even be the reason for the children's disappearance. He is however quite reluctant to think about returning his new found treasure, no matter what it will cost him; even if it means risking the children's lives.

Sadly Mr Doyle is totally unaware that the statue itself is affecting him - it has slowly exerted its subtle influence on the voyage back from China, and now he has returned and found his children missing the dragon is frantic to find them- it doesn't want to be thwarted so close to freedom.

The dragon's influence comes across as instability, Doyle's business like facade suddenly breaks apart in a passionate, almost lunatic outburst, before normality returns, from this point in Doyle's own persona becomes more and more dominated by the dragon leading up to the potentially tragic scene at 'the end'.

Mental 14 - Physical 6 - Health 20/3 - Combatpicks:
Swordcane (10) 3d+3 lethal

Skill picks: Finance & business (18), Chinese culture and language (16), be calm/stoic (16), Bull (16), Intimidate (15), Etiquette (15)

After being allowed to read through the article, they are asked to explain themselves. Weren't they told to be discrete? 'This does not look very discrete! We wanted to AVOID a scandal! In my business we do not need this kind of attention... this household does not need this kind of press!!' Mr. Doyle does most of the talking, or more accurately, yelling. Patricia seems shocked, an outburst such as this is extremely uncharacteristic for her husband, and she sits quietly in one chair and accepts the intense and very personal verbal abuse directed at both her and the investigators. If any investigators are rash enough to interrupt his torrent of abuse he might even slap or strike them, so far gone in the dragon's rage is he.

Willowpin sits quietly just watching the conversation, waiting for the situation to cool down.

This is a good time for your players to practice their etiquette and being polite in the face of derision. It will take some time to explain to the Doyles that they did not cause this leak; and can they be sure that they didn't? It is made abundantly clear that whomever leaked this story to the Chronicle will have to answer to the Doyles, and they are not pleased at all. regardless of how far they have come in their investigation, the enraged Doyle tells them to lay off the case completely before storming out of the room to lock himself in his Chinese room.

Once he has left, a shaken Patricia, quickly apologises for her husband 'a... fever picked up on the voyage back from China, is affecting his temper.. please do excuse him' and goes on to stress that it will mean a lot for her husband and herself to get the children back, and she requests that they should continue their investigation in spite of her husband's outburst. Speaking for her husband like this is a major breach of etiquette, but one she feels is necessary if her children are to be returned. Some characters might not be willing to continue the investigation without permission from Mr Doyle, and likewise if the characters have entered the adventure as friends of the Doyles they too might be concerned for Mr Doyle's health.

Within an hour Doyle is back in his office, sifting through his papers as if nothing had happened, and seemingly with no recollection of his temper outburst earlier - even to the point of enquiring how the investigation is going!

Willowpin leaves the house with them, and once outside he will point out that they now have another avenue to investigate. Who leaked? Could it be anyone they talked to? He would advise them to contact Jonathan Sheffield at the Chronicle on Fleet Street, and pressure him to tell them who spilled their guts.

The characters will also run into Carolyn while leaving the house - she is understandably nervous, peeking around the corners and sweating, her anxiety might be picked up with a Human Perception roll against a difficulty of 16. If any of the PCs confront Carolyn with the leak she will crack, and tell them everything; being blackmailed by the children because of her relations with Mr. Sheffield, about helping her get out at night and cover for them, and about her leaking to the press. She will cry hysterically and plead the investigators to show mercy and not tell her employers about this, she fears their retribution and rightly so. Their best option for finding out who leaked is either going directly to Jonathan Sheffield at the Chronicle, or to go through the list of people whom they have interviewed. The latter option won't yield any results.



FLEET STREET – JONATHAN SHEFFIELD

Fleet Street is the home of many of London's newspapers, and among them the Daily Chronicle. Here in one of the oldest parts of London City, reporters of prestige and ill-repute alike make their living. At the Daily Chronicle the PCs can be informed that Jonathan Sheffield is not currently there, but can be found at a local watering hole, just around the corner. There, Mr. Sheffield is sitting by himself at a table, enjoying a pint and a smoke while waiting for inspiration to strike him. He seems to be a very content man as he stares into empty air with a faint smile on his face.

NPC: JONATHAN SHEFFIELD, DIRT-DIGGING REPORTER.

A handsome man, and well dressed, Jonathan is a man who has made a living on his wits and charm, and he knows this. To him this makes him the perfect reporter, and he is always waiting for that big chance at making it big, and he's always working a case or two. As the youngest of five children in an affluent middle-class family, he knew that the family business would not fall to him, which suited him fine anyway. Still the army life did not appeal to him at all, nor did the clerical life, and his academic records were far from excellent. This has lead him to pursue his chosen trade instead, it might not be very glamorous, but he finds it amusing and worthwhile, and the opportunity for fame and glory might very well present itself here.

He will be friendly and charming to everyone he meets, hoping that they will let their guard down and maybe he will get lucky and find a story in whatever they confide in him. He is not the physical sort, and any sign that a struggle or similar trouble might occur he will run; luckily he is quite fast. When speaking he speaks with no apparent accent, and he will be as informal as the situation allows, always joking and smiling, without being appearing boorish or lewd. He will also laugh at any joke, no matter how dry and dull, and compliment his conversation partners at their appearance, ethics or intellect.

When Carolyn came to him and told him about the children, their blackmail and their disappearance, he knew what to advise her. The best way of getting information, is to invite information to come to you. He told her to tell him everything she knew, and he would run the story as soon as possible. That way people all over the city could help find the children if they have information, instead of having to trace everyone who has had anything to do with them, and put them to the question. He assured her that the Doyle would be

so grateful that they would forget any trust she had broken, but to be on the safe side she would not be mentioned in the article.

Mental 12 - Physical 6 - Health 15/3 - Combatpicks: Punch (10).

Skill picks: Human perception (14), Writing (14), Investigate (15), Doge (10)

He will of course be quite unwilling to reveal his source to the investigator, but he could be convinced if he is promised some information now, and an exclusive interview once the case is closed. The information he wants now is pretty simple, he asks them to tell him what clues they have. Who have they been talking to? What have they been saying? What are they up to next? Do they have any ideas what happened? In exchange for this information he will tell them that Carolyn told him about it, nothing too insidious he assured them, and she was driven only by a wish to help the case as best she could. He asks them sincerely to treat her indiscretion sympathetically. However they could of course try to intimidate him with an Intimidate roll against a difficulty of 15, which will probably lead to the same result though makes Mr. Sheffield a rather upset reporter, and not very inclined to help them should their paths cross again. If threats don't work, they could of course physically brutalise him, but that would be hard in a public place, and any violence at the place will be stopped by the Halfling waiter and the Ogre bartender acting in concert. If the investigators want to beat him up, they will have to lure him outside somehow, though he will volunteer the information under physical duress, the use of such tactics will also make him an embittered enemy of the investigators.

If they give him the information he wants, his comments might shed some light on the different individuals, but in general it won't help the case. Miriam is virtually unknown in good society despite her apparent wealth and class, Reverend Matheson is a charlatan, and his associates are crooks. However when the Dwarf Harrington of Wapping is mentioned to him, his eyes flare up. He might be wrong, he says, but there is a dwarf by that name operating out of the docklands who is never up to any good. If this is the same dwarf, and he has been seeing the children there's more than a good chance he is involved. He is suspected of being involved in all sorts of criminal endeavours, including prostitution and white slavery, and kidnapping is probably not beneath him.

There's a possibility that the investigators at this point wish to see Mr. Harrington again, but if they try to find him at the Bearded Wench Tavern at this point in the story they'll find that he has gone underground. He returns to his warehouse where he keeps the children as soon as he learns who they really are. His ratfaced partner, 'Hairy-Jones', is at the Tavern, lurking in the shadow. A perception roll against a difficulty of 15 will make the PCs see and recognise the ratman standing at the end of the bar as Willowpin's assailant at the beginning of the story.

NPC: 'HAIRY-JONES', BACKSTABBING COWARD.

'Hairy-Jones' gets his moniker from the sleek black fur that covers his ratlike face. 'Hairy-Jones' always dresses in pitch black clothes that match his fur, and he is quite adept at hiding, something he was forced to learn at an early age. His most distinguishing mark is the golden ear-ring he wears. Though all beastmen at times suffer harassment from the other races, the rat-folk suffer twice that aggravation for being connected to such a filthy and hated animal. Early on his childhood 'Hairy-Jones' learned that his appearance was not appreciated, by the folks in his neighbourhood he was constantly derided as being filthy and disgusting, often he was chased until he hid in the sewers where no one would follow, but that would only increase the harassment the next time; sewer rat! An ability to hide is not the only trait that he has picked up

from these early days. 'Hairy-Jones' is also a bully and a coward.

Like his associate Tom, the Ogre, 'Hairy-Jones' is a sadistic bully. He gets pleasure from being in a dominant position, and abusing it. There's nothing like getting back at the people that hurt him, and in his mind everybody has hurt him. Still this is only a side of him that comes out when he's on top, when he's outnumbered or in any way outclassed his primary instinct will be to run and hide from any harm and humiliation. This cowardly demeanour has served him well while skulking in the shadows, waiting for someone to turn their backs to him; then he will strike and run away.

'Hairy Jones' speaks with a raspy voice, as if he has something lodged in his throat and he's trying to get it out. When under pressure and there's no way to go, he will act tough – hissing and spitting excessively.

Mental 8 - Physical 12 - Health 30/6 - Combatpicks: Switchblade 2d + 6 lethal.

Skill picks: Hide & sneak (16), Drive carriage (14), Bull (14), Intimidate (12), Streetwise (16)

If 'Hairy-Jones' spots the investigators approaching him he will recognise them, and attempt to get out quickly. Engaging in a fight with him inside the Tavern will only lead to a huge brawl as the other patrons will join in, not really caring who is fighting who, and least of all, why. 'Hairy-Jones' will do whatever he can in such a chaos to just get away. In the alleys outside they will have a much easier time getting to him and capturing him. He will flee down the streets which he knows quite well, even going as far as jumping off a pier to get away. When captured he will fight until he knows he cannot get away, at which point he will start to plead and threaten all at the same time. 'Please don't hurt me sirs, I've done nothing to you. If you hurt me, you'll never see the kids alive you know. The others will kill them! If you let me go, we will let them go... it's already decided you see... you'll get the children back, you see, sirs! But... if I don't come back, they will hurt them. Especially the little girl!!' And so on, and so forth. If they will release him he is quite sure he will be followed and he will walk over the city for a couple hours in an attempt to loose them. They might be able to bully him into leading the way to the warehouse in exchange for his life and freedom, in which case he will attempt to escape at the first possible moment, if that opportunity doesn't present itself he will lead them into the Limehouse district where he hopes to get them into trouble with a gang of Triadic crooks. His last option is going somewhere really public where the investigators are



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more unwilling to cause a scene. Anyway, unless you the GM want them to, 'Hairy-Jones' will likely not lead them anywhere near the warehouse, thus saving that location for the final confrontation.

BACK AT THE DOYLE'S HOME.

The PCs have the possibility of returning to Kensington with what they know. As mentioned above Carolyn is quite distressed, and will give in easily if confronted with what they have been told by her suitor. If they tell this to any of her employers (including the superior servants), she will be called in for a dramatic meeting, and she will be thrown out into the streets without any references to fend for herself again. If they seek the advice of Mr. Willowpin before revealing this

information, he will tell them that it's a tough call, and not one he would enjoy taking, but he would keep the information to himself, at least for the time being.

If they tell Mr. or Mrs. Doyle about their suspicions about Mr. Harrington (if they have any), they will be manically commended for doing a good job, and told to keep it up. Apparently such a lead brings them back in to the favour of the family. Depending on what happened with 'Hairy-Jones' they might be upset by the fact that they lost him (or killed him), and they are anxious to find out what he meant when he said they had already decided about the children.

THE FIRST DEMAND

The Tong arrives in London and makes contact with Mr. Harrington. Though displeased with the condition of the children (this is after all a mercy mission for the tong!) they decide to compose a letter of instructions for Mr. Doyle in order to swiftly resolve the scenario. The letter arrives at the break of dawn on the day after the story was broken to the press, delivered either by 'Hairy-Jones' (if the investigators didn't incapacitate him) or an anonymous street urchin. The note, intended for Mr. Doyle is not addressed as such, and Mrs. Doyle intercepts Mr. Straub and receives the letter. Opening it she is shocked to find what appears to be a ransom note, demanding payment for their children. She immediately instructs Mr. Straub to call in the investigators, before she informs her husband. Mr. Doyle would of course have preferred that such a note did not become open knowledge, but he is forced to play the hand he is dealt. While his wife waits for the investigators, he concocts his own plans for yet again cheating the Tong out of their treasure by using the investigators.

The PCs are called back to the house early that morning by a member of the household, upon arrival they are brought directly to Mr. Doyle's office where he and Mr. Willowpin is waiting along with an obviously anxious Mrs. Doyle. Mr. Doyle greets them wearing an oriental smoking jacket, telling them it was good they could come, and asks them (including Mr. Willowpin) to follow him into the 'Chinese Room', where he asks them to be seated. Mr Doyle seems tired and strained - an effect of the Dragon's increasing influence.

Once people have gotten comfortable, and been given

the opportunity, once again, to witness the splendour of his oriental collection, he will lower the pipe from his mouth and produce a note from his left pocket. '(Ladies and) Gentlemen, there's been a development in the case. It appears that our enemies have decided to show their hand, and are expecting us to do the same. My wife acquired this ransom note along with a piece of cloth torn from my daughter's petticoat; it makes certain demands on this household to be fulfilled tomorrow at noon.' He hands the note over to Willowpin, who gives it a quick once over before handing it to one of the PCs. 'I am inclined to keep the authorities out of this matter as long as possible, so it has fallen upon us to solve this situation without any great losses. I ask you to be of assistance in this matter, as this is not something I can handle on my own.'

Mr. Doyle won't continue speaking for a while, so unless the players have immediate comments the room falls silent until Mrs. Doyle excuses herself, and goes to make tea. Whatever business is to be discussed is not for her ears. If the players start asking questions before she leaves, she will excuse herself at the first possible convenience. Mr. Doyle won't answer any questions before she has left. He won't go into any detail on the references to betrayal and business mentioned in the letter. He will just say that the perpetrators are probably some business rival or another who feels betrayed, while in fact they were only outsmarted. These things happen in business, and the request for something as strange as a piece of art only proves that this is just an act of spite. Asked about the sculpture his eyes will gleam, and he will proudly show them the fine work he has on display, such beautiful stone



HANDOUT:

Ransom Note One

Mr Doyle,

we have your children. Our apologies to your family for their distress. The children are alive, and relatively unharmed. We demand that you hand over a certain artefact, a sculpture shaped as a dragon if you wish to have your heirs returned to you. Bring it to Grosvenor Square at noon tomorrow, in a carriage, a representative of our organisation will meet you there and you are instructed to transfer the sculpture safely back to this representative. When we have the sculpture in our hands, we will instruct our employees to release your children in the vicinity of your home. Understand that we have their safety in mind, and you cannot see them until you relinquish the dragon. If you seek to betray us again, your heirs will be lost to you - whatever happens.

Know that this situation is fully your own responsibility, and you must also bear the responsibility for what happens next. Choose your course of action wisely.

We do not wish your police or any other meddling authorities involved in this, and we do not think you would want it either. Please do not complicate things further, a quick and friendly resolution to this situation is preferred, and it will not disturb your future business interests. However, if you do not comply with our demands know that you are placing your children and business in jeopardy. May we close this matter with dignity, so we both might prosper in the future?

and so artistically carved. It is one of his most precious and recent acquisitions he explains, just recently arrived from China. He also makes it clear that he is not at all intending to let it go without a decent fight. And that's where the investigators come in. 'I don't care how you do it,' Mr. Doyle explains when they get to the heart of the matter, 'I want you to retrieve the ransom, this sculpture, for me. I do not want to lose it. I will send you to the drop point, and you will hand those mongrels the ransom, and then you will find out where they are hiding - track them down, chase them, interrogate them, I really don't care. My instructions are pretty simple, return the Dragon me after the

payoff, I want that sculpture, you hear? Bring it...'

He hesitates, as if he realises that he might seem a bit uncaring, and then adds, '... and the children.' From his little speech Mr. Doyle's priorities should be clear, he wants the return of the sculpture at any cost, and he is allowing it to be handed off for a short while in order to locate the perpetrators and to perhaps retrieve the children. But there should be no mistake, he cares more about the sculpture than the children; this he denies of course as it is preposterous.

If the players haven't realised this, then Willowpin is sure to point this out to them as they leave the house. He suggests that they go along with his plan, but keep



in mind that the main object of this endeavour is the children, not some over-priced stone carving. As for preparing for next day's ransom Willowpin suggests that they start by checking out Grosvenor Square before making their plans. That, at least, is where he will be heading. He's wounds aren't healed yet, so he warns them that he probably won't be useful to them when the action starts.

PREPARATIONS

You should be aware that most of the preparations they make might turn out to be useless due to the next events. Furthermore such preparations often take a lot of game time, and makes demands on you as a GM to improvise, so you should be prepared to speed these preparations up, unless your players enjoy such planning sessions enough that you feel it's justified.

There are different approaches to this, they could for instance follow the pick-up man into an ambush and force the location of the children out of him (risky business), or they might try to follow him all the way to it's hiding place (less risky business). Either way it demands that they can plan properly, and be prepared to improvise. Some might have deduced that Mr.

Harrington is involved, and have heard the rumours that he is working out of a warehouse in Wapping; in that case they even have a general direction to plan for as well. If not, they have to prepare for every direction. Of course they might decide to wing it, which might work out just as fine.

They might use their contacts for resources and equipment, though it's improbable that they can get their hands on a Wyvern or Ornithopter, but a horse with or without a carriage might prove useful for a speedy, yet conspicuous chase. Travelling along the rooftops might prove difficult, as they have no idea where they are going and they are obviously not guaranteed that they can travel in a direct line by rooftop to their destination. Mr. Willowpin's idea is to pay a few street urchins in his neighbourhood to act as runners, and follow the ransom money. Other ideas more intricate ideas might surface, and if your players seem to be enjoying themselves you should go along and improvise, considering the limited amount of information they have they need a simple plan as possible, and if they are lucky they might come up with a plan that works even after the plans are changed; which they do as night falls.

THE SECOND DEMAND

As the plot nears its conclusion, Mr. Harrington decides to make his move. He wants to get out of the grip of his foreign employers with his life and profit intact. His scheme is simple, make the ransom transaction without the Tong, with one minor alteration; he will keep the children and the sculpture for himself to sell off or use as bargaining chips when he leaves town. This plan has met with some disapproval from his companions, but they reluctantly go along with it, he is after all, the brains of the operation. The new instructions are delivered to the Doyle home the same day as the original one. The fatal flaw in Harrington's scheme is simple, the Tong are master spies, and they are aware of his plans, and they intend to stop him after the transaction.

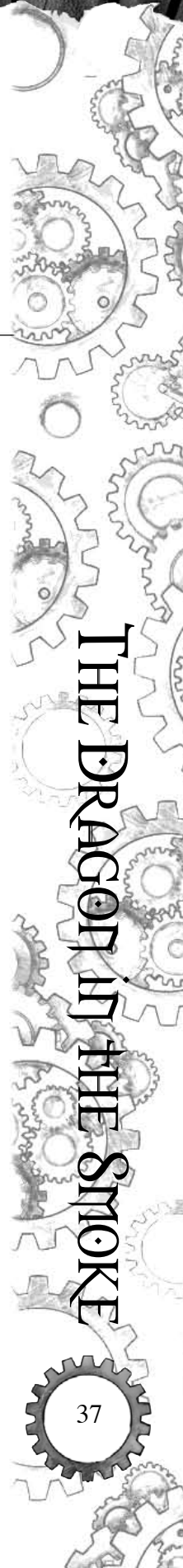
Upon receipt of the new demand, close to midnight, Mr. Doyle immediately sends for the PCs and Mr. Willowpin. The importance of the matter they are called away for is underscored by the fact that it is the butler, Mr. Straub who comes to collect them in a cab. On the way to Kensington, the butler will be pretty passive, just keeping his mind on the horses. If pressured he will say that a ratfaced beastman

delivered the note (or an foul-smelling Ogre if 'Hairy-Jones' has been incapacitated).

They are hurried to his office and the 'Chinese room', where Mr. Doyle is waiting in the dim light of his pipe. Mr. Straub hurries off to prepare the crate containing the dragon sculpture. The 'Chinese room' is currently very dark, the different lamps have been turned off, and Mr. Doyle is sitting quietly in his chair. 'Please, sit down. I do apologize for the lack of light, there's a lamp over there. Feel free to turn it on.' He indicates a lamp at the other side of the room, where the Dragon sculpture was earlier. Observant investigators might notice that it is gone (Perception or concentration against a difficulty of 16 in the dark, and 14 when the light is on). A Human Perception roll against a difficulty of 16 might indicate that Mr. Doyle now seems incredibly distracted and ill - he is disturbed, nervous even - and his brow shows a constant sheen of sweat.

He is of course nervous about the change in plans, and anxious that his little scheme works out in spite of this.

He starts slowly as the PCs are seated, 'I'm sorry



HANDOUT:

Ransom Note Two

DOYLE

THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE OF PLAN.

IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE CHILDREN AGAIN
YOU'LL BRING THE RANSOM TO THE SQUARE
TONIGHT AT THREE HOURS PAST ~~MIDNIGHT~~
MIDNIGHTBE THERE AND BE ALONE, NO ROSSERS,
BEAGLES OR CHARLIES OR YOUR PRECIOUS
LITTLE GIRL GETS HURT

to call you here at this hour, but there was no other option. The situation has changed; I have received another note informing me that the kidnappers want their ransom tonight, at 3 am. So you understand we don't have much time.' A small pause: 'You will meet them at Grovesnor Square like before and carry out your mission as discussed earlier. I hope this change of plans does not invalidate your preparations in any way. Even if it does, it cannot be helped. Take the horse and carriage parked outside, the ransom is already in the crate there. Another carriage will meet you at Grovesnor, the instructions are that you should place the crate inside this carriage, and not interfere as it leaves. Remember my instructions, they must be carried out, at all costs. You will be well rewarded for you services to this household. Return the Dragon to me... after securing the release of my children. Do not let them get away, I am not so sure they intend to release the children anyway.' Questions will be swept

aside, since there is no time for such idle chit-chat. They are instructed to leave and carry out their orders.

Outside Mr. Straub has prepared their carriage, an ordinary dark brown thing, with a white horse. The crate rests ominously in the back, it's just the right size to contain the dragon sculpture. The drive to Grovesnor Square takes them through the fogging streets of London, and the City gives more and more room for crime and debauchery as the memory of day fades away. Under the dim luminescence of gaslights in the fog, the carriage carrying the ransom enters the Square.

No one has had time to look (although they may suspect), but the crate actually contains a bronze urn, the Dragon is safely hidden away back at the Doyle's town house, where it will stay until the children are returned.



ACT III: CONFRONTATIONS

Now the action starts, after building up over this long investigation it's time for some frustration to be released upon the villains and secure the release of the children. At first the players might get confused at the appearance of the Oriental Tong, but if you keep them on their feet and keep the action going, they won't have time to ask the questions until they can be answered at the close of the confrontations.

THE DRAGON IN THE SMOKE

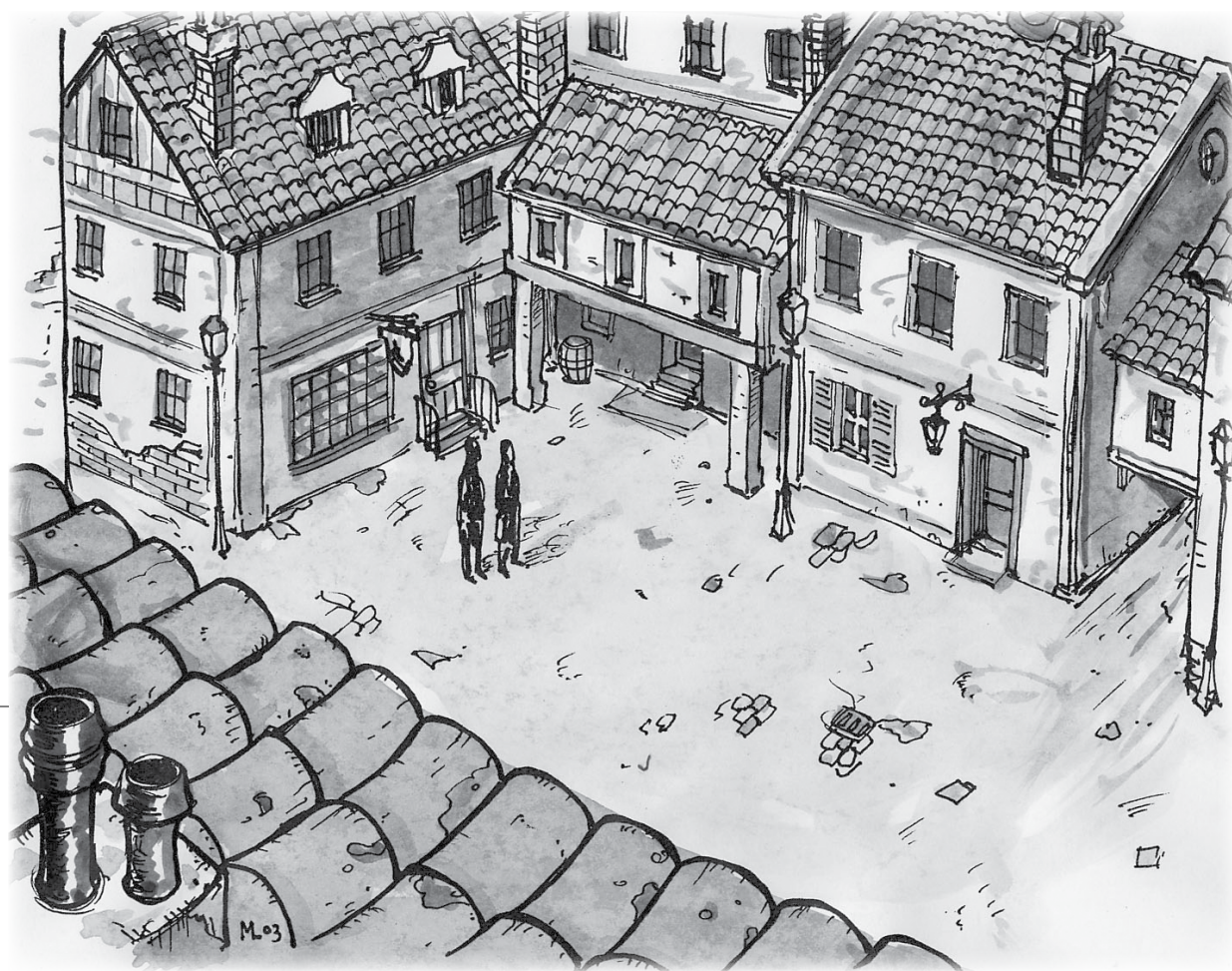


GROSVENOR SQUARE – THE RANSOM

Grosvenor Square lies in the fashionable Grosvenor neighbourhood just outside Hyde Park, it can be reached by Grosvenor Street, Charles Street, Adley Street and Brooke Street. Grosvenor Square was originally, before the square was built, the site of an annual 'May fair' of some reputation. It's quite possible to drive a carriage onto the square as is necessary for the transaction to take place.

About five minutes past three, if anyone is keeping time, a closed black carriage drawn by two horses enters the square and approaches the PCs carriage. Driving the carriage is 'Hairy-Jones', his face covered with a cloth, his gold earring gleams in the gaslight. (If the PCs have somehow incapacitated him earlier, just use Tom, the Ogre). The carriage is driven up next to the PCs carriage and 'Hairy-Jones' indicates with a hiss and a pointing finger that they should move the crate inside the carriage. The crate is hard to lift requiring a feat of strength (difficulty 12) or

preferably a joint effort. When the crate is aboard the carriage hurries away towards the east first taking Brook Street, right through to Hanover Square and from Hanover Street to Great Marlborough Street and into the cramped streets beyond, zigzagging southwards between the buildings (a perfect place if any of your characters want to prepare an assault or surveillance from the rooftops). The suggested route from thereon is to come out of the tighter roads to Pall Mall and from there to Strand, then into Fleet Street breaking south onto Bridge Street and then East again onto Earl Street. From Earl Street continue onto the Upper Thames street followed by Lower, this takes them past the Custom's House and upto the Great Tower Hill and Trinity Square, then the Royal Mint and St- Katherine's Docks; a chase down this path would probably excite some of the night guards and workers on the night shift, leading to all sorts of fun. After St. Katherine's Docks the carriage turns south again, and goes between St. Katherine and London Docks, to stop





RUNNING THE CHASE

If you wish you might want to lower the difficulty of the different rolls involved in following the target carriage by 2 if 'Hairy-Jones' is driving it. He's nervous and undisciplined and this could very well affect his performance.

If they should happen to fail one of the rolls, they will either lose track of their target, or they are spotted; depending on the situation and your judgment. If they are spotted a chase begins, and the PCs will need a carriage or be supernaturally fast runners to keep up for long. On foot they will most probably have to watch the carriage disappear into the misty night. If they are really lucky, and you, the GM, is in a good mood, they might be able to steal a carriage or some horses parked nearby. But we leave that to your discretion. Remember, even if they fail miserably the cause may not be completely lost. See below.

A chase through the streets of London is a good opportunity for some fun. Whether it starts because they are spotted following the carriage, or the PCs just start chasing their target as it leaves Grosvenor Square, the driver's goal is to reach the warehouse in Wapping as soon as possible. Though the target carriage has one extra horse compared to the one provided by Mr. Doyle, it is slowed down by the heavy crate in the back. It makes them roughly even as speed is concerned, so it all comes down to the skill of the drivers, and their ingenuity. The PCs probably has the advantage of having more than one head coming up with ideas on how to catch their quarry. Use the standard Chase rules from the main book for this section, the starting distance is up to you, based on how the chase starts.

Complications for the chase include gunfire, as the PCs might want to take out their target carriage wheels or perhaps try their luck at shooting the driver as he looks back. 'Hairy-Jones' will probably fire a couple of shots back himself. For easy reference if you don't want to refer to your rulebook constantly; the chances of hitting someone during this night-time chase is decreased by 6. All manners of complications might come from failing a roll, not just falling behind or loosing the target. A misplaced shot might hit something entirely different, like a sign or a window or even a pedestrian. The driver might run someone or something over, or perhaps knocking over barrels and crates. Incidentally this

would be a good tactic by the target for slowing down his followers. Trying to manoeuvre past crates and barrels knocked over by mistake or purposefully decreases the Drive carriage roll by two. Extreme manoeuvres, or distracted movement might cause some of the standing passengers to lose their footing, and you may call for an athletics roll against a difficulty of 15 for them to stay on the carriage. Falling off would do 2d6 damage.

As a GM you can be as creative as you want with what sort of complications and opportunities you wish to present your players with. Crates and barrels have already mentioned, but all manners of debris might be used. As for pedestrians they make for lovely obstacles, bear in mind that most people out on the streets at this time of day are probably quite drunk, and therefore quite capable of endangering themselves in the most improbable ways. You can also throw in a horseless carriage blocking the road partially, or even a carriage driving out into the road between the PCs and their target.

Any magic or mechanical contraption that the PCs have at their disposal should also be taken into consideration. Not just during a chase, but also when following the carriage; animal familiars, sense spells or even levitation will be great assets and reduce the difficulty of dealing with this situation drastically.

by a small run-down warehouse that connects to the shoreline.

Willowpin will excuse himself from any chase or tracking expeditions, by citing his poor health. After seeing the driver (especially if it's Tom), and considering some of what they know of Mr. Harrington, it is quite possible if not certain that he is behind this. At least that's what Willowpin now suspects. He will tell the PCs to meet him at the Bearded Wench Tavern if everything goes wrong, he also tells them not to let that other carriage out of their sight. If all fails, even chasing it, they should meet him at the tavern. He has an idea on how to solve it.

A HOW-TO-GUIDE

Depending on what plans they had already prepared, they now have to act with some measure of spontaneity due to the immediacy of the situation. As mentioned 'Harry-Jones' will be driving unless he has been somehow incapacitated, and will now be much easier to coerce should they chose the direct approach of attacking him. He is quite scared by the Tong agents, lead by a wizard of some sort, and he does not trust them one bit nor does he have much faith in Harrington's plan to double-cross them. 'Harry-Jones' therefore fears for his life, and any physical pressure put on him by the PCs will make him talk in exchange of a promise to let him go. Tom might just as easily talk, since he is no less nervous about betraying the Tong.

They might try to just follow the carriage, but doing so with a carriage of their own might prove problematic, luckily their target takes a slow pace because of the heavy cargo, so it is quite possible to follow on foot. On foot it requires a Hide & sneak roll against a difficulty of 15, by carriage it is a Drive carriage difficulty 20. Disguising the carriage somehow might help reduce the odds of being discovered, though. Make a disguise roll against a difficulty of 14, for every point above the difficulty subtract one from the difficulty of following with Drive carriage. This also requires the driver to be either unknown to the target or disguised (same difficulty). A decent Track and scout roll is required if the PCs wish to follow way behind, tracking the trails left by their target Carriage in the mud and filth of London's streets, difficulty 17 (there are a lot of trails). Perhaps the best alternative is a combination of Drive Carriage and Sneak & Hide; two or more follow the carriage by foot, while the rest stay way back in their own carriage, one of those who are sneaking functions as a runner – going back and forth between the scouts and the carriage giving directions. Or the scouts could

just leave a trail for a tracker on the PCs carriage to follow, which would make the difficulty of Track & scout roll an easy 10, give or take, depending on what solution they have for the problem. The different rolls for this process (Sneak & Hide, Drive Carriage or Track & Scout), should be repeated every other turn, or for each street turn (which makes it more difficult to keep up) and especially long stretches without turns (which would make the PCs easier to spot and recognise).

IF ALL ELSE FAILS.

There's a good chance that the PCs might actually fail at following or capturing the carriage. This being the case, it would be rather mean of us to deprive them of the last bit of action and closure. There chance at redeeming themselves lies with 'Freckles' Fiona, the prostitute from the Bearded Wench Tavern. Mr. Willowpin is waiting for them at the Tavern along with 'Freckles' Fiona, whom he has convinced to tell the truth, in exchange for helping her (mainly financial) get out of London and away from her pimp. She's obviously been crying. Luckily she has a good idea where the children are being kept. They are being held by Mr. Harrington in his warehouse in Wapping, and she assumes he is planning to sell them to the Chinese as white slaves. Fiona agrees to come along with them and show them the warehouse the children are being kept in. Willowpin comes along to escort her to safety afterwards. This way they arrive a bit late, and have to face both Harrington's gang and the Chinese Tong immediately. Mr. Harrington has been caught redhanded, and is pleading his case. He wasn't trying to cheat them of course; he was just trying to speed things up. Naturally they don't believe him. Things might get ugly, and they probably will when the PCs show themselves.

APPROACHING THE WAREHOUSE

The warehouse itself is an old wooden building, three storeys tall. It looks to be barely supporting itself; some of the wood boards have started rotting away. There are two entrances at the front, one simple door, and a larger cargo door for carriages. The back leads to water, parts of the walls there are open and allow small boats to enter the warehouse. There's also an easily accessible fire escape running up the left side of the building. From there one can access the windows of all the three storeys.



When the carriage arrives, Tom the ogre will retrieve the crate and carry it inside, slowly if the carriage is not being chased. 'Hairy-Jones' will follow. If the PCs are in pursuit, they will run inside and be prepared for a fight inside, if not they will probably be surprised by their arrival; depending on how they chose to do it of course.

Sneaking up to the warehouse is no problem, they have posted no guards, and they aren't paying much attention to what's going on. The dock area is always noisy, even in the middle of the night. The front door is not locked, so the PCs could just walk right through the door and demand that they hand over the children, but then again we're dealing with roleplayers here: never an easy solution. Sneaking up and peeking through the window at what's going on is probably the first thing they'll do. A Sneak & hide roll against a difficulty of 11 should be enough, but the windows are so covered in filth and pollution that one needs a perception roll against a difficulty of 16 to make out what's going on inside. Sneaking up the fire-escape to either just get a better view of the situation, or to sneak in the window requires a Sneak & hide roll against a difficulty of 14; it is old and loose, and makes a lot of noise if one is not careful. Sneaking in the window requires a Sneak & Hide roll against a difficulty of 17 for opening the window and slipping in unseen or unheard. To sneak in the front door unnoticed requires a Sneak & hide roll against a difficulty of 19 (or 17 if one is very small and/or crawls).

INSIDE

Most of the action is on the ground floor. Here the

three thugs, Mr. Harrington, 'Hairy-Jones' and Tom are standing by the large crate. They are discussing how to proceed, whether to use the boat or just load all of it into the wagon, or if they should separate. The children are in two separate iron cages and are in bad shape. The cages are the sort used for large dangerous animals, and inside the ground is covered with straw. There's another similar cage next to them, unused. There's a small 'pier' inside the warehouse, and a small rowboat is tied there. The series of empty crates scattered around the area provide good cover in an eventual fight. From the ground a staircase leads to two levels of catwalks, and ropes and chains dangle from the roof. There's also a bit of debris here and there that can be used as improvised weapons.

THE BIG FIGHT!

Mr. Harrington and his lackey's are not interested in talking; they are in a stressed enough situation as it is. Therefore, when the PCs 'present' themselves or are in any way discovered, they will start to fight for their very lives. They know that if they cannot get away or defeat the intruders they will probably be killed or thrown in jail. The three of them fight to the best of their abilities, trying to get away with either the crate or the children: whatever is easiest. The children are too 'broken' to fight them if they are dragged out of their cages. Keeping the thugs alive might be useful if you plan to use them in later adventures, but it's not necessary.

HARRINGTON

Mr. Harrington will pull two pistols and try to put





some distance between himself and his enemies before finding cover. He's got another brace of pistols strapped on his back beneath the coat he's now wearing.

Mental 8 - Physical 10 - Health 25/13 (w/ lined coat)
- Combatpicks: Brace of pistols (14) - 3d lethal, Brawl (15) - 1d (punch) 2d (kick) + 5 stun

Skill picks: Charm (14), Etiquette (12), Trade (12), Dodge (14), Athletics (12), Bull (16), Streetwise (14), Intimidate (12)

TOM

Tom will pull out a rather large axe and charge. Simple and effective, nothing fancy. He will wave his axe and roar, trying to intimidate his enemies, and if that fails let his axe do the talking.

Mental 2 - Physical 11 - Health 66/6 - Combatpicks:
Fists like bricks (12) - 1d+11 stun, Axe (12) - 5d+11 lethal

Skill picks: Arson (8), Intimidate (8), Dodge (4), Streetwise (6)

HAIRY-JONES

Hairy will try to hide in the shadow, and sneak up behind his enemies. And either cut them down with a knife, or get them from a distance with a pistol.

Mental 8 - Physical 12 - Health 30/6 - Combatpicks:
Switchblade 2d + 6 lethal.

Skill picks: Hide & sneak (16), Drive carriage (14), Bull (14), Intimidate (12), Streetwise (16)

ENTER THE DRAGON!

As the fight progresses, the thugs will probably be on the losing side. Then out of nowhere the Tong appear. Four young oriental fighters, lead by an elderly wizard. The Tong have spread out throughout the warehouse, and have one goal, seize the crate and transport it to the boat - to do this they probably have to neutralise some if not all of the opposition. When they appear, they appear on all three levels, the wizard on the catwalk on the top; two fighters on each of the two other levels. As with the thugs they have different approaches, but they're all very much more disciplined and seem somewhat more *ruthless* when they go about their business. They do not actually care about the children, though they are compassionate enough not to let them be harmed if it's avoidable. They are however willing to use the children as bargaining chips themselves, if it's apparent that that's what the PCs want. They would be just as happy to have this whole scene resolved peacefully, as long as they end up with the Dragon sculpture. They have nothing but contempt for Mr. Harrington and his crew, who are now becoming even more desperate to take what they can and escape.

THE TONG WIZARD

An elderly man in a colourfully ornate and flowing oriental robe, and he wears a tall brightly coloured hat. His grey moustache is long and grey in classic Chinese

style. He will use his magic to keep his enemies at a distance while the fighters take care of them. After a while he will levitate towards the crate if it has been secured, if not he will enter the fray.

Mental 14 - Physical 6 - Health 15/3 - Combatpicks:
Magic (16) martial arts (5)

Skill picks: Dodge (10), Athletics (12), Magical skills (16), English (10),

Suggested magic: Levitate, Etheric bolt, Ectoplasmic bonds, Etheric bludgeon, firespark (and if you're in a really nasty mood: Etheric Barrage, steely skin and the emperor's new spell)

Martial arts moves: Defensive strike, breakfall, martial block

TONG #1

A petite and nimble Chinese girl, dressed all in black, no frills or ornaments. Simplicity and precise discipline is the essence of her fighting style, and she doesn't utter a word as she goes about her business. The PCs would quite well consider her attractive, if it weren't for the fact that she was intent on pummelling them to death. Her specialty is the chain, but she is also quite adept at thrown blades. She starts at the level beneath

the Wizard, and works her way down – sweeping away opposition.

Mental 8 - Physical 10 - Health 25/5 - Combatpicks: Martial arts (14) - +12 stun, Thrown blades (14) 2d lethal, Chain 16 - entangle

Skill picks: Athletics (14), Acrobatics (14), Dodge (14), Climb (14)

Martial arts moves: Basic strike, Breakfall, Lethal strike, Martial grab, throw

Tong #2

Apparently an Eldren Asian man, appears next to #1, he's tall and as silent as she. He wears tight green and gold clothing, and will prefer to fight from afar using a crossbow. When in close combat he will favour two short blades. As the battle progresses, he will swing down from the second level to the ground, perhaps making a stop on the way on the catwalk on the other side if there are any enemies still there.

Mental 6 - Physical 12 - Health 30/6 - Combatpicks: Martial arts (13), + 13 stun, repeating crossbow (15) 3d lethal, short blades (13) 4d +6 lethal

Skill picks: Athletics 14, Dodge 14

Martial arts moves: Basic Strike, Breakfall, Martial dodge, Martial disarm

Tong #3

A large man appears by the door, his facial features are oriental, but his face is round and covered with short, white and black fur. He will make his way to the crate and secure it, wielding a long staff with great precision. He wears a loose fitting beige suit, and is surprisingly agile for a man his size.

Mental 4 - Physical 14 - Health 35/7 - Combatpicks: Martial arts (15), + 14 stun, metal staff 4d +7 lethal

Skill picks: Athletics 12, Dodge 12

Martial arts moves: Basic Strike, Breakfall, Martial dodge, Martial disarm

Tong #4

A tall, pointy eared woman, presumably middle aged, emerges from the shadow near some crates at the far end of the room. She is wielding long swords of foreign make. Dressed in red and blue pants and shirt, she will swirl through the room attempting to make her way to the children and the boat, hoping to secure them.

Mental 8 - Physical 12 - Health 30/6 - Combatpicks:



Martial arts (13), + 7 stun, swords (15)

Skill picks: Athletics 14, Dodge 14

Martial arts moves: Basic Strike, Breakfall, Martial dodge, Martial disarm

They may seem a bit much for beginning characters, but luckily Mr. Harrington and company has to fight them as well in order to get out (which is their only thought at this point), furthermore the Tong will be willing to negotiate; especially if one side seems to be winning; even if it is themselves. They will call out that all they want is the sculpture, they might even help get the children back if they're in the hands of Mr. Harrington.

THE DUST SETTLES

There are several ways for the fight to end. There's of course the crushing defeat that leaves our heroes in bloody pulps, the Dragon back in Tong hands, and the two children on a ship to the far east where they will be molested as slaves to whatever perverted master who pays for them. The opposite is also possible (although less likely), where our heroes can gaze over the debris of the warehouse victoriously, and their vanquished foes lie strewn on the floor dead, unconscious or otherwise dismissed. In this case they will have to decide what to do with the survivors, should they just let them go? Or perhaps hand them over to the police. The Tong would get out pretty quick probably, they've got connections. Not to mention that Mr. Doyle himself would rather have the whole business ended without the interference of the authorities. Returning both the children and the Dragon to Mr. Doyle would make him a very happy man, and the rewards would be considerably larger. If this were the case they would gain a considerable ally in Mr. Doyle, as well as a powerful enemy in the Chinese Tong.

However it doesn't have to end with one side decimated, remember the Tong are more than willing to negotiate. They are not interested in the children, so if the children are in their hands while the crate is more

or less under the PCs control they will gladly call for a truce and an exchange. If they get control over the crate during the fighting they will try to keep everyone else away while loading it into the boat. Once into the boat they will withdraw, drifting slowly into the nightly fog outside. The wizard standing, looking back at the people within the warehouse. Such a scene should be played for all that it's worth. If there's a truce, or the situation is such that it's possible for the different parties to communicate; the Wizard will speak with a booming voice, and clear accent. 'I apologize for the nature of our first encounter, perhaps next time will prove more peaceful. Please inform the honourable Mr. Doyle that someone will be sent to renegotiate our former arrangements. The departure of the Tong will leave only the remainder of Mr. Harrington's crew, if any at all, to be dealt with. Which should not prove too difficult.

Escaping with the children is another possible way of doing this, which would leave the unfortunate Mr. Harrington and friends in the hands of the Tong, either to be slaughtered or beaten severely and left for dead before the Tong departs. However, dodging out of the warehouse with the children will prove quite difficult as long as they are perceived as a threat by the Tong.





The best chance might lie with the boat, which is sure to anger the Tong somewhat.

The Tong won't be interested in talking about what's been going on if questioned during a ceasefire. The wizard does the talking, and just states that this was a matter of honour and justice, of retrieving what was stolen from them by the treacherous Mr. Doyle. Mr. Harrington and his crew however could be interrogated for all they're worth if captured. They know that the Tong apparently had dealings with Mr. Doyle, which went sour when he tricked them. Then they were hired to help them retrieve it by any means necessary. They will of course claim that they are nothing but innocent pawns in a game of more powerful players, and therefore they should just be let go. They tried of course to help the children as best they could.

All in all any outcome of the fight that ends with the children safe should be considered a success. If they manage to get the crate with them it will be an extraordinary success. If they manage to get the crate and not the children, it will only be a partial success and be a potential scandal. If they manage to retrieve neither the children nor the Dragon, it is an abysmal failure, shame on them; the DoYLES will not be pleased. The PCs names will probably be splattered all over the tabloids, denounced as bungling idiots causing the premature death of the two children.

NPC: HENRIETTA DOYLE, A MARRIAGEABLE YOUNG LADY

At an age of 15, Henrietta is fast approaching womanhood. And she will be an attractive lady, her long blonde hair, caress the fine pale Eldren features of her face. She dresses and behaves, in public that is, like the proper Victorian lady. Unfortunately she is also a spoiled and bossy brat, who knows only how to demand of others and not truly give. Until now she has never experienced true hardship, and her family has never given her much affection, except for her brother and to some extent Carolyn the maid. She felt confined within the walls of her home, so she wanted to escape; she saw in her second-cousin Robert the freedom from restraint she wanted to taste herself. She was in fact falling in love with the handsome Robert and his rebellious ways. And she wanted very much to impress him, and to be his equal. Her brother tagged along as always, and she has always found him a very potent scapegoat.

When found in the cage she will be completely broken. Her clothes will be torn and stained. Her face is bruised. Curled up like a beaten animal in her cage, Henrietta has apparently suffered much at the lecherous hands of her kidnappers.

NPC: MICHAEL DOYLE, A YOUNG GENTLEMAN

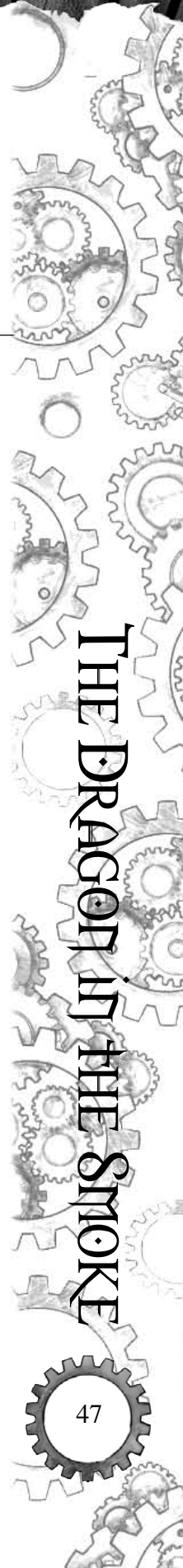
No longer just a child, but not yet a man, the 13 year old Michael is a clumsy and timid boy. Not quite fitting in. He holds on to his sister, whom he loves greatly, and trusts her for guidance in life. Something that often leads him into trouble. When it was suggested they should go on adventures, Michael was not convinced, but he went along with his sister anyway. In appearance Michael resembles his sister, the same blonde hair and dark blue eyes, and the same pale features. He is however a head shorter than her, and does not compose himself with as much grace as she.

When found in the cage it is apparent that he has been brutalised by his captors. Bloody scars and bruises cover his scrawny body. When rescued he just sits up in his filthy clothes and gapes at the one opening the cage. He would cry, but he has cried himself dry a long time ago.

EPILOGUE

What they do now is more or less up to the players themselves. If they haven't already, they might want to go to the Bearded Wench Tavern to pick up Willowpin. They find him there with 'Freckles' Fiona, who will come along with them. They could wait around for the police, who are sure to show up after all that noise. Or they could just gather the spoils and split. This might be a good idea if the children are killed or otherwise lost, they don't want to be involved in such a mess. Unless the warehouse is a complete bloody mess the police will be satisfied by just taking the PCs names if the children are alive, they will be then given an escort back to Kensington. The police will be gruff, but not impolite, they have read the story about the children and consider it their first priority to get them home. If the children are dead however, the PCs will find themselves locked up, and waiting for someone to get them out. Thomas Willowpin might vouch for them if they convince him first, the DoYLES on the other hand will be quite persistent on pursuing the PCs for causing the children's death, especially if the dragon is lost as well.

At the Doyle residence they will be met by Mr. and Mrs. Doyle, and their senior staff Mr. Straub and Mrs. Torbo, the children will be received with repressed joy, hugged slightly and told to go to bed with a promise that they will have a chat about it tomorrow, by their father. Mrs. Doyle is overjoyed, and is visibly fighting her tears when she hugs them, before she leaves with the children and the servants, leaving Mr. Doyle to tend to business. Any police officers present will be dismissed. Mr. Doyle will take them back to



the 'Chinese room' himself, where he thanks them personally one by one for retrieving the children, his thanks are heartfelt if they return the Dragon as well. In the event that only the children are returned his disappointment in this can be noticed with a Human Perception roll against a difficulty of 16. He promises to make arrangements tomorrow to see that they are compensated in a suitable manner. If asked what the Tong were doing, or perhaps enquiring on any cryptic comments the tong might have made, Mr. Doyle dismisses it by saying 'That's unfortunately the necessary evil one has to deal with if one wishes to run an efficient and prosperous Empire, I am sure

you understand'. He says this in a tone of voice that indicates that he's unwilling to discuss it further. He excuses himself, it is rather late, and escorts them to the door, promising to be in touch soon. If they return only with the Dragon, they will be thanked discretely and sent away with the same message.

Talking to Mr. Willowpin does not clear the mystery of Tong for them; all he knows is that Mr. Doyle has had dealings with the east and is involved in the 'spice' trade as well as art. Perhaps this is something for them to look into later?

THE END?

Finally the missing children have been returned; the villains vanquished. Surely it is time to rejoice and relax? Not so.

Mr. Doyle is of course under the influence of the dragon statue, and under its sway he is plotting to murder his children in a sacrifice to its power, an act that will actually free the dragon within. Perhaps unsurprisingly, despite the legends surrounding the statuette, the dragon will not grant longevity to Mr. Doyle, but will instead devour him – along with a great deal of London.

However in order to be freed Doyle must sacrifice both his children to it in an exacting ritual. Player characters might already be 'suspicious' of Mr. Doyle, or concerned about his behaviour enough to watch the Doyle household closely. Characters might equally be convinced that the Chinese 'villains' will return, and insinuate themselves within the household to protect against the mysterious foe.

It's also possible that the characters are not watching the Doyle's at all, but are in fact searching out their Chinese assailants, in which case the trail of the





Chinese leads them inexorably back to the Doyle's, where the Tong are busy trying to prevent the ritual.

Whether the characters are awoken in the night by the shrieks of the Doyle children being dragged to their slaughter in Doyle's office Den, or whether they follow the Chinese visitors through London and try to foil the Chinese 'attack'. The end highlight is one and the same, the office Den where Doyle is attempting to sacrifice his children to the statue with a sacrificial knife.

Doyle is actually easy to overpower, not a powerful man in the first place, the dragon's influence has blunted and twisted his mind to the point of madness. Rather, the threat in this encounter is from the dragon itself, which uses a form of mental domination to hinder characters that enter the den.

All characters entering the Den must make a Resolution roll (24) or be immediately held mesmerised by the dragon, those characters who make the roll, must still make Resolution (12) rolls whenever they take an action or the dragon's mind bending influence distracts them and they lose their actions for the remainder of the turn.

As the players grapple with Doyle and the power of the Dragon, the Chinese (who have come here to prevent the ritual whether the players were aware of it or not) break into the den through the window.

The Chinese monks have been trained from birth to ward against the influence of the dragon, and quickly the warriors work to restrain Doyle and the characters while a mandarin casts a spell to counter the growing power of the Dragon. If any characters are actively resisting the dragon as the Chinese arrive, the characters might fight the Chinese immediately,

don't panic the Chinese martial artists should have no difficulty in pacifying your characters, and once the mandarin has ended the Dragon's influence, he speaks to Doyle and the characters.

Firstly he turns to Doyle, "I think your covetous nature has reaped reward enough with this prize, Mr. Doyle – you stole it from us once – will you keep it now or shall we return it?"

Breathlessly, an extremely shaken Doyle cries 'Take the bloody thing! Take it!' before breaking down completely, Doyle continues to whimper into incoherencies 'it tried to kill my babies...'

The Mandarin then turns to the characters 'this was never your fight, these children were never your blood, but your dedication has not swerved – I commend you, but now I must remove this statue before my spell ends and its power is unleashed again, please, stand down and let us leave this place.'

Traditionally it's at this point that someone demands a potted history of events, or at least a reason why, and the Mandarin will (if only for the sake of closure) oblige. Describing the ancient war with the dragons, the capture of the last dragon and Doyle's theft of the artefact that led to the current sequence of events as described in the introduction. The mandarin then goes on to express his disgust at the 'help' his money had bought in Harrington's gang.

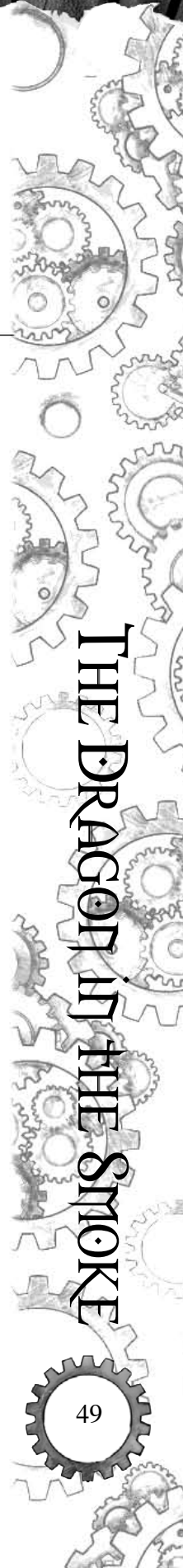
If the characters seem disinclined to let the Chinese leave with the statue, then Doyle himself grants them leave 'let them have it,' he cries 'its been crawling around inside my head since I first saw it – and that's enough of it for a lifetime'.

DINNER PARTY

A few days later the PCs receive an invitation to a dinner party with at the Doyle estate.

The party is a very closed and private affair, just the family, Mr. Willowpin and the PCs, and it's all conducted in a quiet manner. The hosts are graceful and polite, the food and service exquisite. During dinner Mr. Doyle stands to speak, he toasts the bravery of the PCs in returning his children and saving his family name from shame, a service he will always remember. Though whether the PCs believe him is another matter. 'As a token of my appreciation I wish to present you with the following gifts.' He says as Mr. Straub comes in carrying a tray with an envelope for each investigator. The envelopes contain information

on a trust fund in their names. The fund gives them the equivalent of a meagre income asset, that is a petty cash of 6d. If the sculpture was retrieved as well as the children you want to upgrade this to Regular allowance (middle class), which is 10s. This way Mr. Doyle can reward his investigators; while at the same time bind them to him so they won't reveal any unsavoury information they may have come across. Like his involvement with the Tong. For these reasons he finds it necessary to do this even without the Dragon being retrieved. If only the Dragon was saved, he will reward them the same amount as if they rescued the children, but without the dinner party, just a simple note sent them by messenger or by mail.

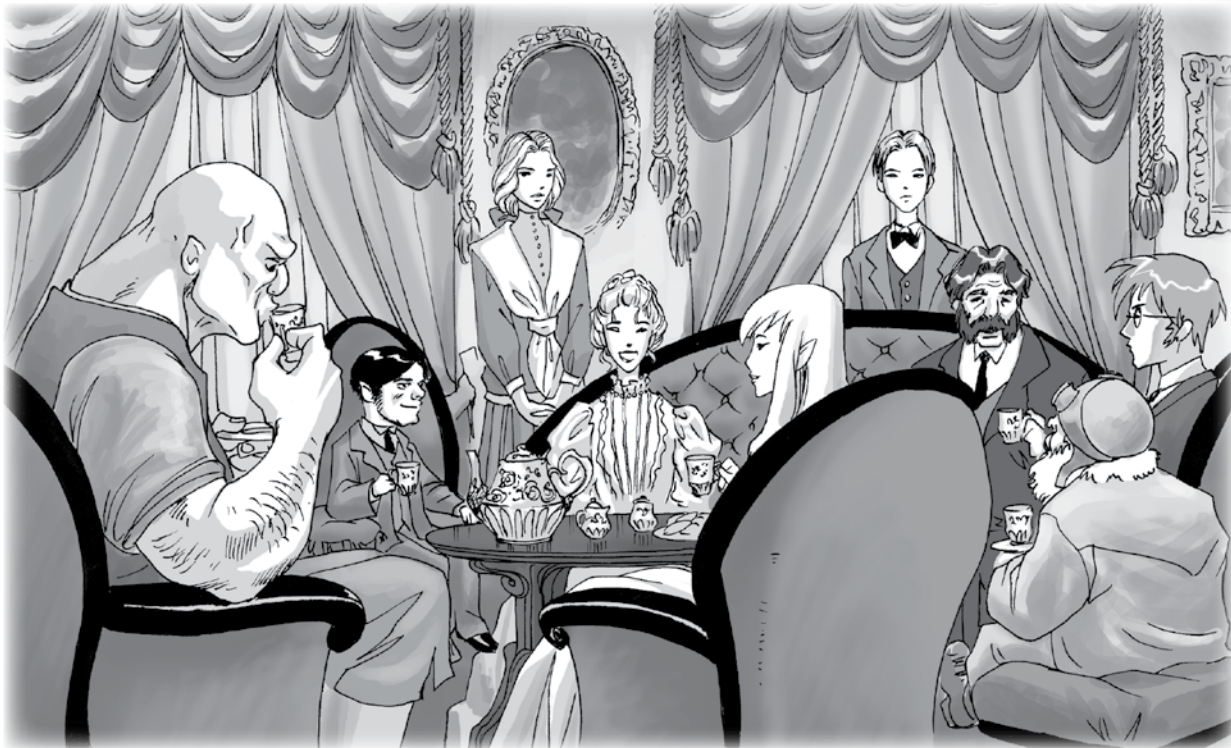


Invite

We request your presence at our home next Saturday for dinner. We wish to honour you for your services to our humble household and express our gratitude to you for rescuing our children from harm and our family name from scandal. If you would join us for an informal gathering at 8pm, we would be very pleased.

Gracefully yours

Henry Michael Doyle and wife



EXPERIENCE REWARDS

The following are suggested rewards, for each participant - if you feel they deserve more or less for what they do then you are probably right. You should also think about giving them points for good roleplaying, as well as points for great ideas or stunts.

4 xp for finding and saving the children.

1 xp for retrieving the dragon

1 xp for negotiating a truce with the tong

2 xp for realising Mr. Harrington's involvement before they talk to Mr. Sheffield.

1 xp for helping Dylan with the missing actor

1 xp for tricking their way into Croyle's warehouse peacefully.

1 xp for getting to the warehouse without resorting to the 'Freckles' Fiona solution.



CONTACTS & FAVOURS:

As a GM you might also judge that they might gain some contacts or favours through their different actions. And they may also have gained an enemy or two. As this list would probably include every member of the cast, we encourage you to consider the actions and performance of your players (and their character) in relation to the different NPCs. If you believe they have made a good enough impression on one or two of the cast to make them an asset to the PCs in further adventure, do not hesitate to grant them this. The

same goes for enemies, there are a lot of chances to really annoy people in this story, and some might think themselves wronged seriously enough to seek retribution, in which case you shouldn't hesitate to grant the players the enemy complication (without any of the option points that you would normally give, of course).

FURTHER ADVENTURES:

The whole point of this little story was to give you as a GM a starting point for adventures with your players. The characters and places they have encountered throughout their investigation have become allies, enemies and mere acquaintances. Their backgrounds make it possible for you to use them to further your campaign, without having to resort to introducing new NPCs every session. Here are a few ideas to perhaps get you started on a few things:

ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN

Henry Michael Doyle suspects that his wife has had an affair. Why else did the children come so late in their marriage? Maybe they aren't his at all. This is something that has to be handled with great care by the PCs. What will they discover? And what will they do with this information?

DYLAN IN TROUBLE.

Dylan seeks out the PCs for help. Apparently she suspects someone following her. What if someone from her past life, like her husband, has managed to track her down? Or perhaps the PCs are hired by her husband's family to track her down, not knowing who she really is...

MARTIN CROYLE, A MENACE?

What is Martin Croyle up to? And what is he building? Will he be a threat to decent society, endangering law and order with his crazy scheme? Or is he the working man's saviour, with a brilliant plan? What if he needs spare parts for his machine, and the only suitable parts known to him reside within Babbage Analytical Engine #6 at the Bow Street Police station?

THE REVEREND

What is he digging for beneath his church, and why is he doing it? Who is controlling him? If people related to the church starts disappearing, what is his involvement and how does it all tie together?

THE DARK LADY

Miriam is also a wealth of possible adventures – who is she, and what does she want? The players might be hired or otherwise inspired to investigate who she is. Such an investigation will probably take them out of England and through Europe. Perhaps to Italy...

TONGS AND THE OPIUM WARS... OH MY

Of course you could also have your players delve even further into the murkier aspects of the British Empire that is just hanging around the corner in the story. Mr. Doyle's involvement in the Opium Wars and his relations to the Tong is worth at least an adventure or two.

MARTIAL ARTS

ADDITIONAL COMBAT RULES FOR VICTORIANA



PLAYING A MARTIAL ARTIST

A player character Martial Artist should consider how he spends his *option points*, and which complications he takes. He is certainly an *Outsider*, he no doubt has an *Allies* rating (varying with just how far away his homeland or monastery is). Our character should also take a new talent described here: *Martial Artist*, which allows him to choose his first abilities. The Martial Artist talent costs 3 option points at character creation, and can be purchased multiple times, the talent *must be bought at character creation* in order to learn Martial Arts abilities at a later date. Each purchase of the talent allows the character to choose an additional ability from the Abilities List, as long as the requisites of the ability have been met. As the character gains experience the talent can be bought again at a cost of 9 XP, allowing additional abilities to be learnt as the character develops.

Abilities represent the special feats that make your Martial Artist unique, they might grant bonuses to hit rolls, bonuses to damage, or other abilities. Every Time you take the Martial Artist Talent, you choose an additional ability. Some Gamesmasters may wish to enforce study & practice for a period before the ability can be used in play (see Victoriana, p186).

MARTIAL ARTISTS AS OPPONENTS

So, martial artists are rare compared to guns and swords, but fortunately you don't need to take your characters all the way to China to get beaten up by them. London has a reasonably large Chinese community, and players interfering with them might be faced by a couple of martial artists. The orient isn't the only place to encounter the martial disciplines; there are dervishes in the Ottoman Empire, the Czarina Pyetra in Russia, and Thuggee assassins from the Indian jungles. All these groups are indoctrinated and trained enough to qualify as Martial Artists. When your players face a martial artist for the first time they should be left reeling, confused and mauled, wondering just what hit them – even if they win the encounter out,

They might not be in the core rules, but martial artists do exist in the world of Victoriana. The omission from the rules was intentional, as Europe does not have a martial arts tradition and, in our game era so far, there has not been sufficient cultural contact with the Far East for the media to develop its fascination for the arts. Despite this if we gave him or her the choice we all know that every other player would have some far-flung reason for his character to have visited China or Japan and gain training from some exclusive dojo or monastery in five minutes flat.

However, for those who have seen *Shanghai Noon* and the recent *Shanghai Knights*, or even *Brotherhood of the Wolf* it cannot be denied that the martial artist offers a great deal of fun in a Victoriana game simply due to his nature as an social outsider.

So let's clear a few things up - Martial Arts do not simply represent the skills of a 'good fighter' – skill with a weapon is represented by a high weapon skill and enhanced by high dexterity. Martial Arts are something different, and they go beyond skill alone.

Martial arts abilities are the result of constant training since early childhood, the forging not only of body, but also of the mind. With discipline and deprivation the two are formed into a single cohesive weapon of destruction, focused and oblivious to pain or penalties. Few of those trained truly become martial Artists, many simply become exceptionally skilled warriors.



MARTIAL ARTS ABILITIES

Martial Strike The character has been trained in how to deliver an attack with greater force than a normal punch. A Martial Artist using this ability adds his skill rating in Martial Arts to his hand-to-hand damage.

Requisites: none

Break Fall The character has been trained how to fall without hurting himself, and can roll to his feet from most falls with no rolls required. All falling damage is halved.

Requisites: none

Defensive Strike This attack is more of a probe than a full-out attack. It can represent a jab, a quick strike, or any other attack where the attacker is more concerned about defending himself than really damaging his opponent. Adds +2 to the action roll to hit.

Requisites: none

Focused Strike With the proper training, and proper strength of will, some characters can make hand-to-hand attacks at range. As it is difficult to project your will over a great distance, the maximum range is Resolution x2 in yards

Requisites: Martial Strike, Resolution 4+

Lethal Strike This attacks allows the character to do lethal damage attacks without using a weapon. A lethal strike can be striking a limb to break it, a throat or kidney punch, the classic “karate chop,” or any other appropriate type of blow.

Requisites: Martial Strike

Kung Fu Weapons The character is trained in the use of martial arts weapons, and can use these weapons with his martial arts actions. Common weapons are swords, spears, and nunchuka (counts as large club). When using kung fu weapons, the character may make multiple attacks, and when he does so his multiple action penalties are 4 less than normal.

Requisites: Martial Strike

Martial Block This is a trained block. A character with this manoeuvre is very good at blocking melee attacks. Adds +2 to the action roll to parry.

Requisites: none

Martial Disarm The character has been trained to knock weapons (and other objects) out of his foes’ hands. A disarm will only affect items that are held with one hand; two-handed objects must be grabbed away. +2 to the action roll for the manoeuvre.

Requisites: Martial block, Martial Strike

Feather Fall The character has been trained how to fall without hurting himself, and can roll to his feet from most falls with no rolls required. All falling damage is halved Automatically, and a luck point may be expended to quarter the damage rolled instead.

Requisites: Break Fall, Luck 4+

Martial Dodge You’ve practiced getting out of the way of attacks. This dodge will work against ranged as well as melee attacks. Adds +5 to the action roll to dodge. Can be used in combination with all out dodge.

Requisites: Dodge skill of 4+

Martial Escape You’ve been taught how to get out of even the strongest grab or hold, adding +3 to body for escape purposes

Requisites: Dodge skill of 6+, Martial Dodge



they should think twice in the future before jumping into the fray with such dangerous foes – and as for corporeal mediums...

When you create a martial artist to face (or aide) your characters, create him as a character by giving him the *Martial Artist* talent – the beauty of being the gamesmaster is of course that you have a limitless amount of option points to play with, but don't get too carried away it can be easy to overkill and create a powerhouse individual your characters simply can't match. Martial arts should be reserved for character villains; the arts are too rare in Europe to be relegated to supporting cast, although a Martial Artist will often be accompanied by brethren who, if not martial Artists, are certainly deadly in their own right.

MARTIAL ARTS ABILITIES

Martial Grab

The character has been trained on how to grab and hold his foes, adding +3 to body for grappling purposes

Requisites: none

Martial Throw

Instead of striking, a character with the martial artist talent may declare he is throwing his opponent. The attacker makes a normal attack. If it is successful, he throws the target to the ground and does his normal strength damage. After being thrown, the defender is prone, and must act after the attacker next round regardless of their initiative rolls.

Requisites: Martial Grab

Nerve Strike

This is a strike targeted at the vulnerable nerve clusters of the human body. As such, the target does not get his fortitude versus this attack. Since a good deal of accuracy is needed to land these blows, the attacker must spend at least one round aiming at his target before using this attack. Does 2d6 damage, at -2 to the action roll to hit.

Requisites: none

Offensive Strike

This is an all-out attempt to mangle your target. An offensive strike covers a flying kick, a full-out haymaker, or any other 'full on' style attack. Adds Martial Arts rating x2 to basic damage, but at -4 to the action roll to hit.

Requisites: Martial Strike, Nerve Strike

Sacrifice Throw

This manoeuvre represents any move where the attacker falls to take down his opponent. It can be a judo throw, a sliding takedown, or any other move where both the attacker and his target end up on the ground. Martial throw, with +2 to the action roll to hit, target and attacker both knocked prone. If this attack missed, the attacker is on the ground at the feet of his opponent anyway. Not a good place to be.

Requisites: Martial Throw

VICTORIANA

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