

# The Havering Adventures

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Published by Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd

Riverside House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES, UK, Reg. no 6036414

[www.cubicle7.co.uk](http://www.cubicle7.co.uk)

## Special Thanks:

Many thanks to those who played these adventures at the many conventions we ran them. Your ideas, cunning plans and characterisations made each adventure enjoyable, unique, and never boring to run.

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# THE HAVERING ADVENTURES

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**THE HAVERING  
ADVENTURES**





# INTRODUCTION

*"It's not really gambling, unless you have something to lose..."*

*- Nathaniel Havering*

You may not have heard of the Havering family, but I've known them for a very long time.

When we began running the new version of Victoriana, we needed to see how people outside our playtest groups would react to it, and that meant running it at conventions. It was the best way to get a wide range of different gamers to play the new game and see what they thought. So we wrote an adventure (Lost Luggage) and we created some player-characters to play it, the Havering Family.

I designed the Havering Family with a couple of things in mind. Firstly, they would have to be a cohesive group to get the game going and allow them to trust each other at least a little. They also needed to come from a variety of social backgrounds so we could show how Victoriana worked in a group with several different social classes. Finally, I wanted a character group that expressed how I saw the game being played, the sort of characters I had in mind when I was writing the new edition of the game. So this is what the Havering family are to me. Nathaniel shows that the upper class characters need not be the ones in charge. Susanna shows that the upper classes need not always be proper. Jonathan proves that even the best of us can fall to terrible vice. Selina shows us that those who begin in the gutter can still survive, and need not sacrifice their morality to do so. Tobin shows that even an academic can have a criminal side, and Patterson shows us that every now and again you need someone to put the boot in.

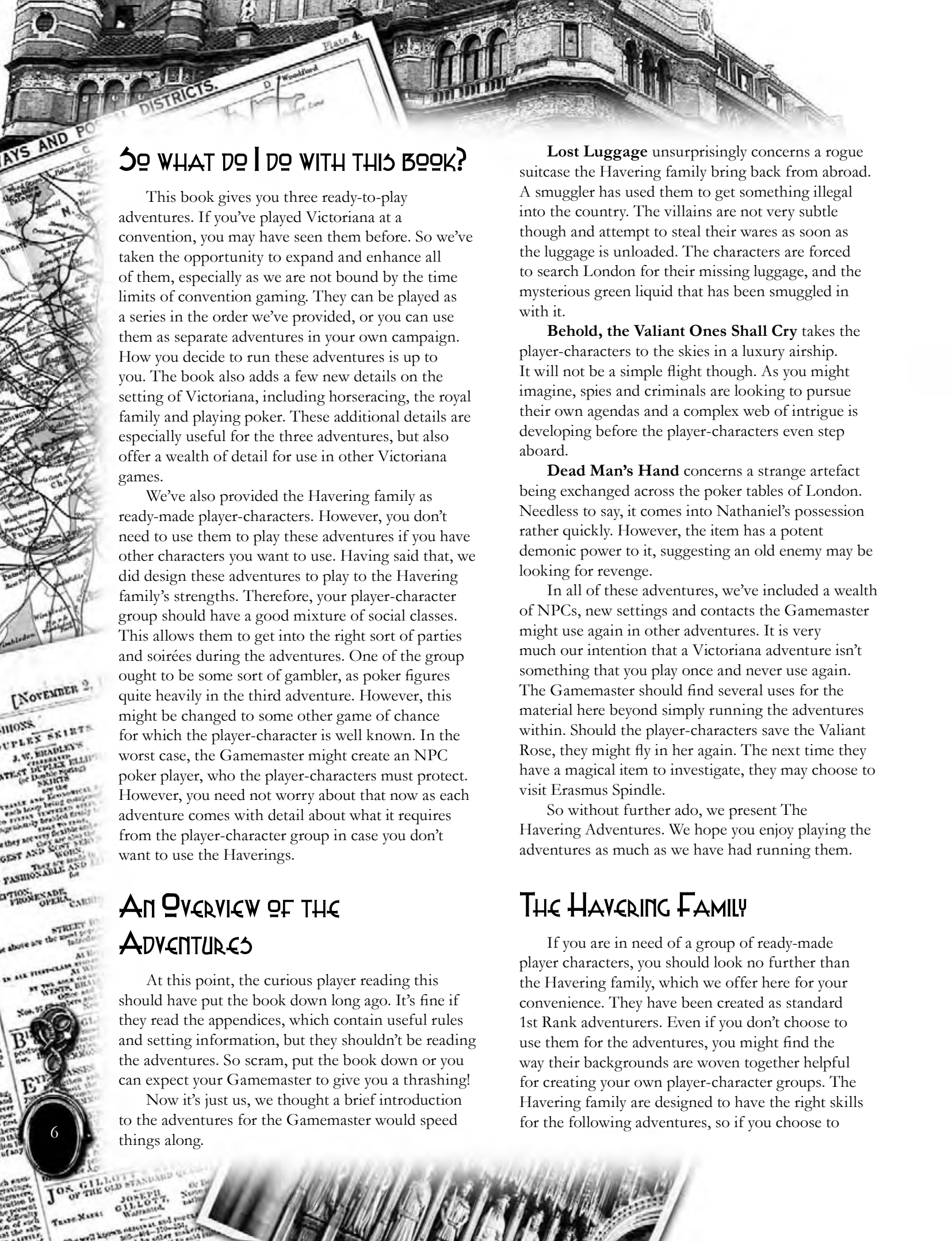
My friend Simson Leigh originally created the first adventure for the Havering Family, Lost Luggage. He and I ran the adventure for several groups at conventions and every time we ran it, we ironed it out a little more. We saw how different people tackled it in different ways and what they expected of both the characters and the game itself.

We gradually expanded the encounters and people as players went off on tangents and made us improvise to keep on track. One of the encounters in my first game became the example of combat in the Core Rulebook.

After a year or so, we figured it was time for something new. We were appearing at some of the same conventions and we didn't want to serve up the same adventure to people who might have seen it before. What we did know, though, was that we wanted to keep the Havering family. One of the most consistent responses to our games was that people really liked the characters, and I enjoyed seeing different people's interpretation as they played them.

So as another GenCon came around we put together a new adventure. Dead Man's Hand allowed us to continue the story of Lost Luggage and give the bad guys a chance for revenge. With that in mind I wrote a new adventure and Walter Ciechenowski added invaluable advice and creative skill to form it into something we could put in front of a group of players.

Not wanting to consign the Havering family and their adventures to an 'old convention adventures' archive, we decided they were worth producing into the book you have here. However, the two adventures we had needed something in between and our demo leader, Marc Faramond, had in the meantime created another adventure for the next series of conventions. Marc's adventure Behold, the Valiant Ones Shall Cry (which was originally entitled OHMSS as the Queen made an appearance) has been expanded here, for no better reason than I loved the idea and I can't stop fiddling with other people's work. It also provides a much-needed filling between the other two adventures.



## SO WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS BOOK?

This book gives you three ready-to-play adventures. If you've played Victoriana at a convention, you may have seen them before. So we've taken the opportunity to expand and enhance all of them, especially as we are not bound by the time limits of convention gaming. They can be played as a series in the order we've provided, or you can use them as separate adventures in your own campaign. How you decide to run these adventures is up to you. The book also adds a few new details on the setting of Victoriana, including horseracing, the royal family and playing poker. These additional details are especially useful for the three adventures, but also offer a wealth of detail for use in other Victoriana games.

We've also provided the Haverling family as ready-made player-characters. However, you don't need to use them to play these adventures if you have other characters you want to use. Having said that, we did design these adventures to play to the Haverling family's strengths. Therefore, your player-character group should have a good mixture of social classes. This allows them to get into the right sort of parties and soirées during the adventures. One of the group ought to be some sort of gambler, as poker figures quite heavily in the third adventure. However, this might be changed to some other game of chance for which the player-character is well known. In the worst case, the Gamemaster might create an NPC poker player, who the player-characters must protect. However, you need not worry about that now as each adventure comes with detail about what it requires from the player-character group in case you don't want to use the Haverlings.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE ADVENTURES

At this point, the curious player reading this should have put the book down long ago. It's fine if they read the appendices, which contain useful rules and setting information, but they shouldn't be reading the adventures. So scram, put the book down or you can expect your Gamemaster to give you a thrashing!

Now it's just us, we thought a brief introduction to the adventures for the Gamemaster would speed things along.

**Lost Luggage** unsurprisingly concerns a rogue suitcase the Haverling family bring back from abroad. A smuggler has used them to get something illegal into the country. The villains are not very subtle though and attempt to steal their wares as soon as the luggage is unloaded. The characters are forced to search London for their missing luggage, and the mysterious green liquid that has been smuggled in with it.

**Behold, the Valiant Ones Shall Cry** takes the player-characters to the skies in a luxury airship. It will not be a simple flight though. As you might imagine, spies and criminals are looking to pursue their own agendas and a complex web of intrigue is developing before the player-characters even step aboard.

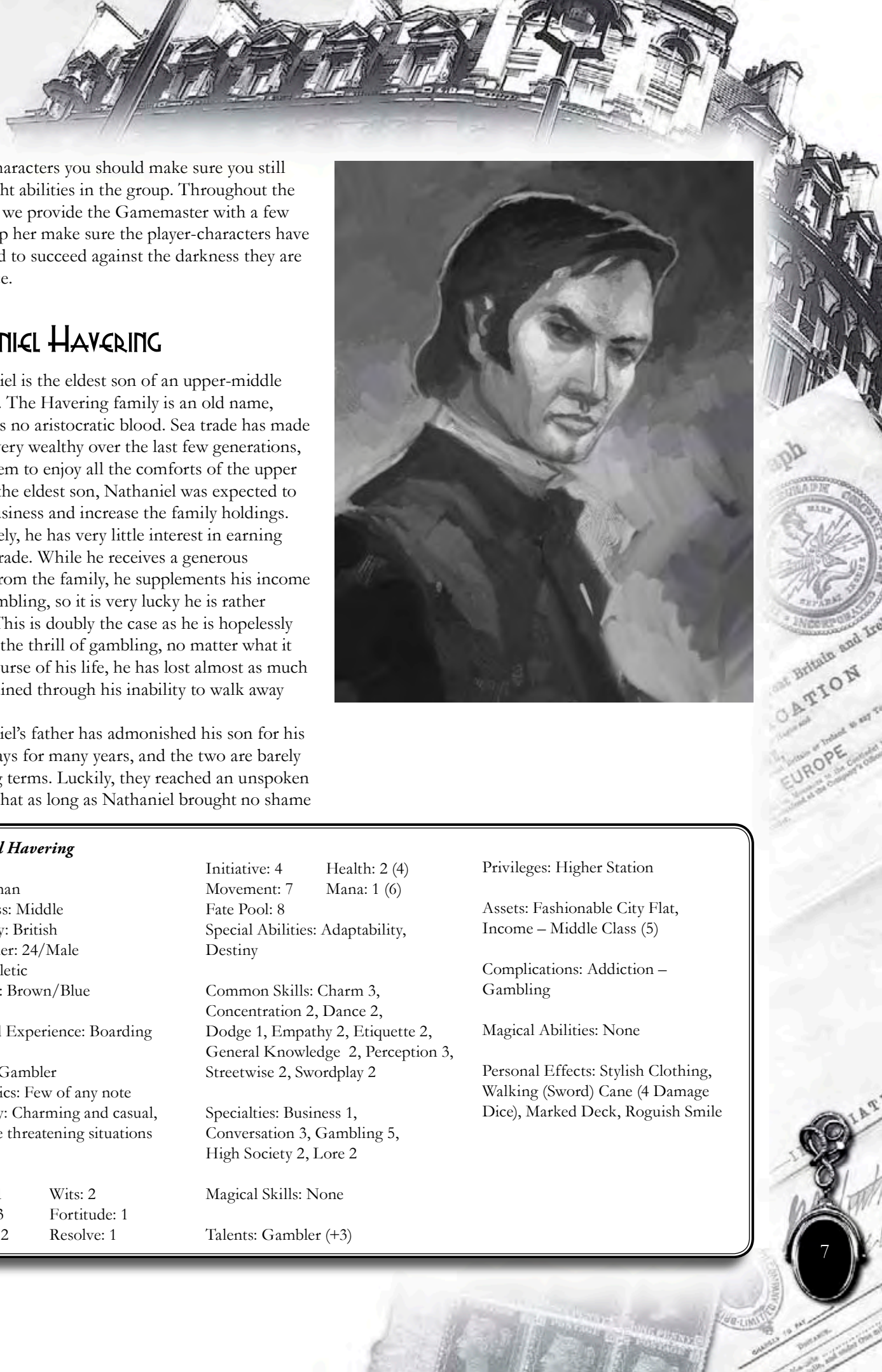
**Dead Man's Hand** concerns a strange artefact being exchanged across the poker tables of London. Needless to say, it comes into Nathaniel's possession rather quickly. However, the item has a potent demonic power to it, suggesting an old enemy may be looking for revenge.

In all of these adventures, we've included a wealth of NPCs, new settings and contacts the Gamemaster might use again in other adventures. It is very much our intention that a Victoriana adventure isn't something that you play once and never use again. The Gamemaster should find several uses for the material here beyond simply running the adventures within. Should the player-characters save the Valiant Rose, they might fly in her again. The next time they have a magical item to investigate, they may choose to visit Erasmus Spindle.

So without further ado, we present The Haverling Adventures. We hope you enjoy playing the adventures as much as we have had running them.

## THE HAVERLING FAMILY

If you are in need of a group of ready-made player characters, you should look no further than the Haverling family, which we offer here for your convenience. They have been created as standard 1st Rank adventurers. Even if you don't choose to use them for the adventures, you might find the way their backgrounds are woven together helpful for creating your own player-character groups. The Haverling family are designed to have the right skills for the following adventures, so if you choose to

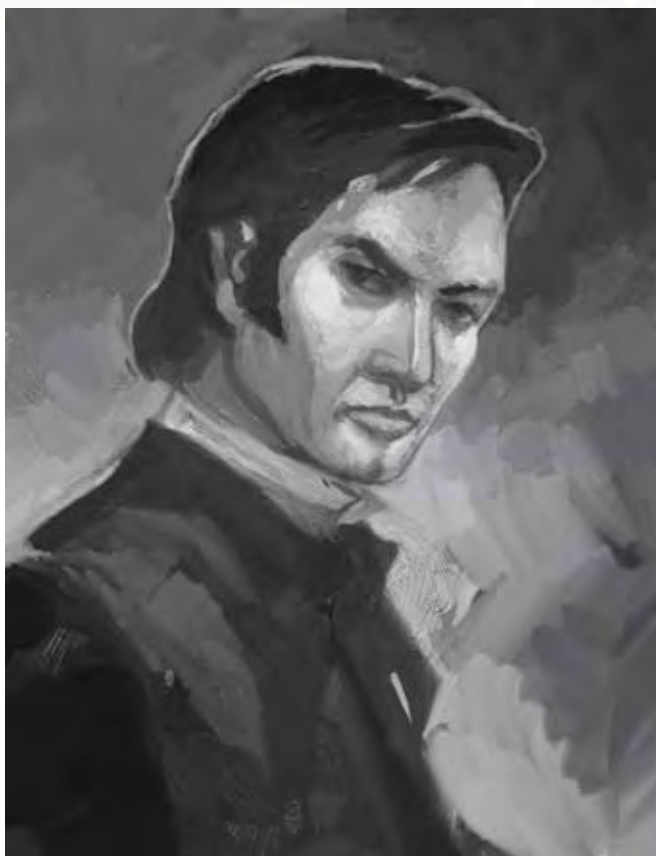


use other characters you should make sure you still have the right abilities in the group. Throughout the adventures, we provide the Gamemaster with a few notes to help her make sure the player-characters have all they need to succeed against the darkness they are about to face.

## NATHANIEL HAVERING

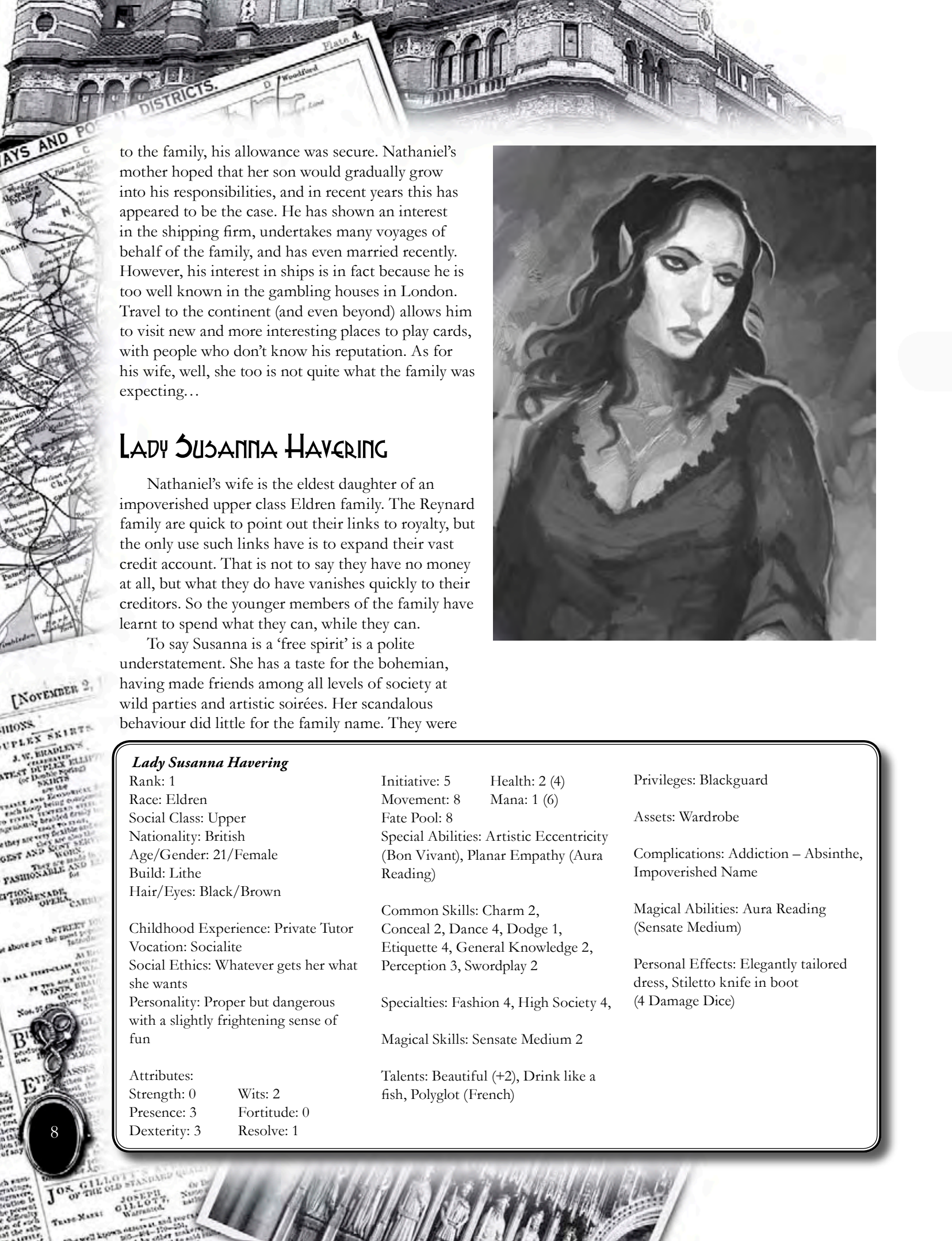
Nathaniel is the eldest son of an upper-middle class family. The Havering family is an old name, even if it has no aristocratic blood. Sea trade has made the family very wealthy over the last few generations, allowing them to enjoy all the comforts of the upper classes. As the eldest son, Nathaniel was expected to learn the business and increase the family holdings. Unfortunately, he has very little interest in earning a living in trade. While he receives a generous allowance from the family, he supplements his income through gambling, so it is very lucky he is rather good at it. This is doubly the case as he is hopelessly addicted to the thrill of gambling, no matter what it is. In the course of his life, he has lost almost as much as he has gained through his inability to walk away from a bet.

Nathaniel's father has admonished his son for his decadent ways for many years, and the two are barely on speaking terms. Luckily, they reached an unspoken agreement that as long as Nathaniel brought no shame



<b><i>Nathaniel Havering</i></b>		
Rank: 1	Initiative: 4	Health: 2 (4)
Race: Human	Movement: 7	Mana: 1 (6)
Social Class: Middle	Fate Pool: 8	Privileges: Higher Station
Nationality: British	Special Abilities: Adaptability, Destiny	Assets: Fashionable City Flat, Income – Middle Class (5)
Age/Gender: 24/Male	Common Skills: Charm 3, Concentration 2, Dance 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 2, Etiquette 2, General Knowledge 2, Perception 3, Streetwise 2, Swordplay 2	Complications: Addiction – Gambling
Build: Athletic	Specialties: Business 1, Conversation 3, Gambling 5, High Society 2, Lore 2	Magical Abilities: None
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Blue	Magical Skills: None	Personal Effects: Stylish Clothing, Walking (Sword) Cane (4 Damage Dice), Marked Deck, Roguish Smile
Childhood Experience: Boarding School	Talents: Gambler (+3)	
Vocation: Gambler		
Social Ethics: Few of any note		
Personality: Charming and casual, even in life threatening situations		
Attributes:		
Strength: 1	Wits: 2	
Presence: 3	Fortitude: 1	
Dexterity: 2	Resolve: 1	





to the family, his allowance was secure. Nathaniel's mother hoped that her son would gradually grow into his responsibilities, and in recent years this has appeared to be the case. He has shown an interest in the shipping firm, undertakes many voyages of behalf of the family, and has even married recently. However, his interest in ships is in fact because he is too well known in the gambling houses in London. Travel to the continent (and even beyond) allows him to visit new and more interesting places to play cards, with people who don't know his reputation. As for his wife, well, she too is not quite what the family was expecting...

## LADY SUSANNA HAVERING

Nathaniel's wife is the eldest daughter of an impoverished upper class Eldren family. The Reynard family are quick to point out their links to royalty, but the only use such links have is to expand their vast credit account. That is not to say they have no money at all, but what they do have vanishes quickly to their creditors. So the younger members of the family have learnt to spend what they can, while they can.

To say Susanna is a 'free spirit' is a polite understatement. She has a taste for the bohemian, having made friends among all levels of society at wild parties and artistic soirées. Her scandalous behaviour did little for the family name. They were



### *Lady Susanna Havering*

Rank: 1	Initiative: 5	Health: 2 (4)	Privileges: Blackguard
Race: Eldren	Movement: 8	Mana: 1 (6)	Assets: Wardrobe
Social Class: Upper	Fate Pool: 8		Complications: Addiction – Absinthe, Impoverished Name
Nationality: British	Special Abilities: Artistic Eccentricity (Bon Vivant), Planar Empathy (Aura Reading)		Magical Abilities: Aura Reading (Sensate Medium)
Age/Gender: 21/Female			Personal Effects: Elegantly tailored dress, Stiletto knife in boot (4 Damage Dice)
Build: Lithe	Common Skills: Charm 2, Conceal 2, Dance 4, Dodge 1, Etiquette 4, General Knowledge 2, Perception 3, Swordplay 2		
Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown	Specialties: Fashion 4, High Society 4,		
Childhood Experience: Private Tutor	Magical Skills: Sensate Medium 2		
Vocation: Socialite			
Social Ethics: Whatever gets her what she wants	Talents: Beautiful (+2), Drink like a fish, Polyglot (French)		
Personality: Proper but dangerous with a slightly frightening sense of fun			
Attributes:			
Strength: 0	Wits: 2		
Presence: 3	Fortitude: 0		
Dexterity: 3	Resolve: 1		

keen to see her married and off their hands, but could never hope to afford a dowry for her. She and Nathaniel were drawn together when they both met as guests of Parisian society. They instantly embarked on a whirlwind affair, fuelled by absinthe and gambling rather than romance. Neither can remember who actually proposed, but they were both surprised when their families approved of the match. The Haverings were happy to finally marry into the upper class, albeit the lower end of it. The Reynards were even more overjoyed that the family name was enough of a dowry for Susanna.

Since her marriage, Susanna has learnt to maintain the pretence of dutiful wife. However, this is mainly as it helps Nathaniel get closer to more respectable high stakes games. She has lost none of her passion and the two of them love to abscond from society to indulge in wild parties and decadent living. Unfortunately, such a lifestyle has taken its toll and Susanna now harbours a habit for absinthe.

## JONATHAN HAVERING

Nathaniel's younger brother was not blessed with the same abilities as his elder sibling in games of chance. He tried to learn, many times, but simply had no flair for the cards. As a young boy, he idolised Nathaniel and always accompanied him on his travels



### *Jonathan Havering*

Rank: 1  
 Race: Human  
 Social Class: Middle  
 Nationality: British  
 Age/Gender: 22/Male  
 Build: Thin  
 Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown

Childhood Experience: Boarding School  
 Vocation: Police Detective  
 Social Ethics: Almost painfully Middle Class  
 Personality: Pragmatic, especially in terms of catching criminals

#### Attributes:

Strength: 1      Wits: 2  
 Presence: 1     Fortitude: 2  
 Dexterity: 2     Resolve: 2

Initiative: 4      Health: 4 (8)  
 Movement: 7     Mana: 2 (12)  
 Fate Pool: 8  
 Special Abilities: Adaptability, Destiny  
 Common Skills: Athletics 2, Charm 2, Disguise 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 4, Etiquette 2, Firearms 4, Fisticuffs 3, General Knowledge 2, Hide & Sneak 2, Perception 2, Swordplay 2

Specialties: Bribery 2, Conversation 2, Criminology 3, High Society 1, Interrogation 3, Politics 1

Magical Skills: None

Talents: Deduction (+2)

Privileges: Ear of the Street, Higher Station, Private Club Membership

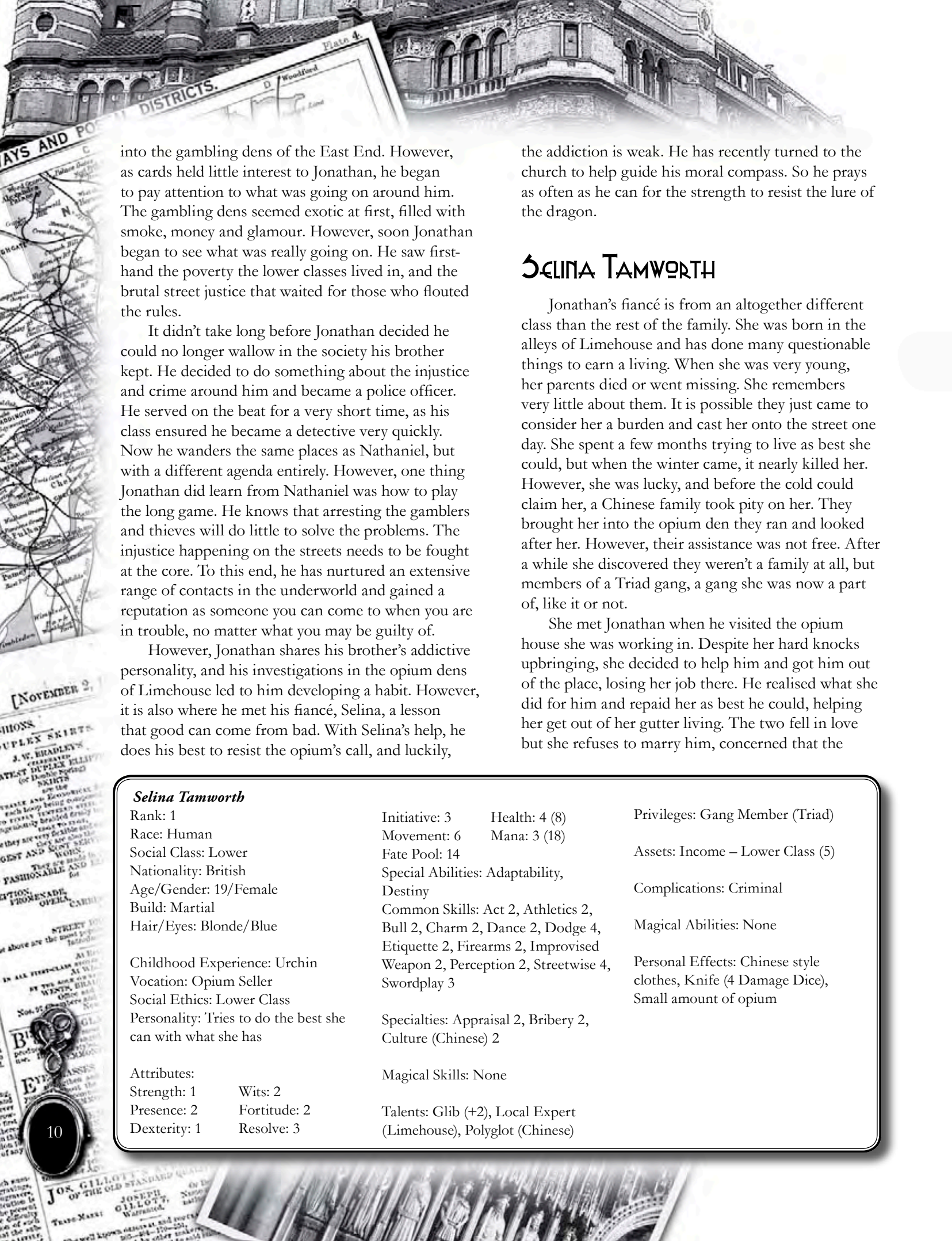
Assets: Income – Middle Class (2)

Complications: Addiction (Opium), Responsibilities (Police Detective)

Magical Abilities: None

Personal Effects: Well tailored suit, Small Revolver (8 Damage Dice), Police Detective ID





into the gambling dens of the East End. However, as cards held little interest to Jonathan, he began to pay attention to what was going on around him. The gambling dens seemed exotic at first, filled with smoke, money and glamour. However, soon Jonathan began to see what was really going on. He saw firsthand the poverty the lower classes lived in, and the brutal street justice that waited for those who flouted the rules.

It didn't take long before Jonathan decided he could no longer wallow in the society his brother kept. He decided to do something about the injustice and crime around him and became a police officer. He served on the beat for a very short time, as his class ensured he became a detective very quickly. Now he wanders the same places as Nathaniel, but with a different agenda entirely. However, one thing Jonathan did learn from Nathaniel was how to play the long game. He knows that arresting the gamblers and thieves will do little to solve the problems. The injustice happening on the streets needs to be fought at the core. To this end, he has nurtured an extensive range of contacts in the underworld and gained a reputation as someone you can come to when you are in trouble, no matter what you may be guilty of.

However, Jonathan shares his brother's addictive personality, and his investigations in the opium dens of Limehouse led to him developing a habit. However, it is also where he met his fiancé, Selina, a lesson that good can come from bad. With Selina's help, he does his best to resist the opium's call, and luckily,

the addiction is weak. He has recently turned to the church to help guide his moral compass. So he prays as often as he can for the strength to resist the lure of the dragon.

## SELINA TAMWORTH

Jonathan's fiancé is from an altogether different class than the rest of the family. She was born in the alleys of Limehouse and has done many questionable things to earn a living. When she was very young, her parents died or went missing. She remembers very little about them. It is possible they just came to consider her a burden and cast her onto the street one day. She spent a few months trying to live as best she could, but when the winter came, it nearly killed her. However, she was lucky, and before the cold could claim her, a Chinese family took pity on her. They brought her into the opium den they ran and looked after her. However, their assistance was not free. After a while she discovered they weren't a family at all, but members of a Triad gang, a gang she was now a part of, like it or not.

She met Jonathan when he visited the opium house she was working in. Despite her hard knocks upbringing, she decided to help him and got him out of the place, losing her job there. He realised what she did for him and repaid her as best he could, helping her get out of her gutter living. The two fell in love but she refuses to marry him, concerned that the

### Selina Tamworth

Rank: 1	Initiative: 3	Health: 4 (8)	Privileges: Gang Member (Triad)
Race: Human	Movement: 6	Mana: 3 (18)	Assets: Income – Lower Class (5)
Social Class: Lower	Fate Pool: 14	Special Abilities: Adaptability, Destiny	Complications: Criminal
Nationality: British	Common Skills: Act 2, Athletics 2, Bull 2, Charm 2, Dance 2, Dodge 4, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Improvised Weapon 2, Perception 2, Streetwise 4, Swordplay 3	Magical Abilities: None	Personal Effects: Chinese style clothes, Knife (4 Damage Dice), Small amount of opium
Age/Gender: 19/Female	Specialties: Appraisal 2, Bribery 2, Culture (Chinese) 2	Magical Skills: None	
Build: Martial			
Hair/Eyes: Blonde/Blue			
Childhood Experience: Urchin			
Vocation: Opium Seller			
Social Ethics: Lower Class			
Personality: Tries to do the best she can with what she has			
Attributes:			
Strength: 1	Wits: 2		
Presence: 2	Fortitude: 2	Talents: Glib (+2), Local Expert (Limehouse), Polyglot (Chinese)	
Dexterity: 1	Resolve: 3		





family will see her as a gold-digger just looking to get the family money.

While her feelings are real, she hasn't told Jonathan that their meeting was no accident. A few months before she met Jonathan, she met Susanna, on one of her frequent visits to the mysterious joys of Limehouse. The two developed a tentative trust and met to exchange gossip and news from their different worlds on occasion. The night Jonathan came to the opium den, Susanna discovered what he had been up to and asked Selina to get him out, for which she was well paid. She still hasn't told Jonathan that their meeting was no accident, fearing that if he found out, she might lose his love. However, what none of the others knows is that the Triads didn't just allow Selina to leave. They made it clear she would owe them a debt they expected her to repay if her new circumstances opened up certain opportunities.

## SELINA'S GANG – THE SMOKE LANTERN

The Gamemaster might like to involve the triad gang Selina is a part of. Creating street gangs is detailed in *Faces in the Smoke Part 2 – Shadows and Steel*. So we present some detail on the gang following the systems presented there.

The gang operate from a small string of opium dens in Limehouse. Most of the members are muscle or employees of the small family who run it. The gang has connections to the Hong Kong triads, but they are a long way away. However, they are a useful threat to keep the lower members in line. Essentially, the gang provides decadent delights to those who can pay them, and they shy away from violence where possible, more due to the trouble it causes than any moral objections. Most of the gang sees their work as business rather than criminal activity.

Community: Ethnic (Chinese)

Size: Large (around 30 members)

Range: District (Limehouse)

Activities: Entertainment, Extortion, Opium, Prostitution, Trade

## PATTERSON BRIGGS

Briggs is the overworked Dwarven servant who serves Nathaniel and his new wife. He has never served the Havering family itself, having always been employed by Nathaniel. He has yet to master the manners of a servant; he often fails to be appropriately polite or understated. However, he is very good at lifting and carrying things, although he is no dumb brute.

Many years ago, he lost a lot of money to Nathaniel in a poker game and offered his services in payment to cover the debt. Nathaniel wasn't very keen to accept, but saw he was unlikely to get anything else in payment from the Dwarf. However, Briggs turned out to be more useful than Nathaniel had first thought. Briggs was once a sailor, and supplemented his meagre income by boxing in underground fights.





So he knows a lot of the faces across the trading ports of Europe, faces that a gambler like Nathaniel is always keen to meet. While Briggs didn't win that many bouts in the ring, he knows how to look after himself. He has had to fight off Nathaniel's enemies on more than one occasion, and accounted very well for himself.

By the time the debt was repaid, the two men had already formed a bond and trusted each other. Nathaniel employed Briggs properly as his full-time servant, and he supplements his official income with a cut of any deals he helps to broker. Briggs enjoys the lifestyle that travelling with Nathaniel allows him to enjoy, he will do nothing to endanger it.

## TOBIN CHARTERTON

This Gnome scholar is the most unlikely part of the group. He is quiet, well spoken and polite, apparently harbouring no illicit addiction or dangerous vice. He is employed by Nathaniel's father to teach Nathaniel sorcery. Thaumaturgy is one of the marks of the upper classes, and as the eldest son, Nathaniel, should have an occult education if the family can afford it.

Sadly, despite Tobin's best efforts, Nathaniel shows no aptitude or interest in magic, and even less

### *Patterson Briggs*

Rank: 1  
 Race: Dwarf  
 Social Class: Lower  
 Nationality: British  
 Age/Gender: 27/Male  
 Build: Solid  
 Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown

Childhood Experience: Urchin  
 Vocation: Boxer  
 Social Ethics: Lower Class  
 Personality: Likes to keep things simple, and punching is as simple as you can get

Attributes:  
 Strength: 3      Wits: 1  
 Presence: 1      Fortitude: 3  
 Dexterity: 1      Resolve: 2

Initiative: 5      Health: 5 (10)  
 Movement: 6      Mana: 2 (12)  
 Fate Pool: 8  
 Special Abilities: Little Legs, Stubborn as a...

Common Skills: Athletics 2, Blunt Weapons 3, Bull 2, Dodge 3, Drive Carriage 2, Empathy 2, Etiquette 1, Fisticuffs 5, Intimidate 2, Might 2, Perception 2, Streetwise 3

Specialties: Boating 1, Bribery 1, Legal Matters 1

Magical Skills: None

Talents: Combat Sense (+3)

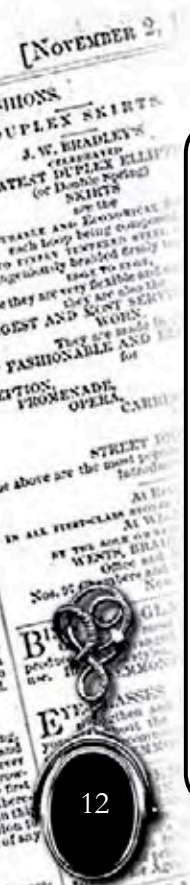
Privileges: Pub Regular

Assets: Income – Lower Class (5), Servant's quarters

Complications: None

Magical Abilities: None

Personal Effects: Good suit, Cosh-life preserver (3 Damage Dice), Surly attitude





for academic study. Just getting Nathaniel to sit down without dealing out a deck of cards is hard enough.

Tobin comes from a good middle class family, although he is not so well off as the Haverings. He was taught Thaumaturgy by his father, who also saved enough money to get Tobin certified by the Guild as a member so that he could practice his skills. Most people who meet Tobin assume he cannot afford to lose the lucrative teaching job the Haverings employ him to do. However, Tobin's first love is not magic, but trade. He travels with Nathaniel looking for objects of magical interest to sell either legitimately or on the black market.

Nathaniel is glad to have Tobin around as he recognises the usefulness of having a magician in his entourage. A few times Nathaniel has won strange items at cards, which he needs appraised and identified. Each time they return to London, Tobin uses his magical contacts to fence anything they have acquired of magical significance on their trip, offering Nathaniel a cut. Both men recognise the usefulness of keeping Nathaniel's father happy. So Nathaniel and Tobin keep up the pretence that Nathaniel is learning magic, but that it is a long and slow road to power. In the meantime, Nathaniel makes use of Tobin's skills for his own agenda, and Tobin makes the same use of Nathaniel.



***Tobin Charterton***

Rank: 1  
 Race: Gnome  
 Social Class: Middle  
 Nationality: British  
 Age/Gender: 34/Male  
 Build: Spindly  
 Hair/Eyes: Grey/Black

Childhood Experience: Private Tutor  
 Vocation: Guild Associate  
 Social Ethics: Lower Class  
 Personality: Quiet and observant, always looking for his chance

Attributes:  
 Strength: 0      Wits: 4  
 Presence: 1      Fortitude: 0  
 Dexterity: 1      Resolve: 4

Initiative: 5      Health: 2 (4)  
 Movement: 6      Mana: 4 (24)  
 Fate Pool: 8  
 Special Abilities: Frail Physique, Little Legs, Night Creature

Common Skills: Concentration 3,  
 Dodge 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2,  
 General Knowledge 3, Perception 2

Specialties: Accounting 2,  
 Appraisal 4, High Society 1, History 2,  
 Lore 2, Research 3, Teaching 2,

Magical Skills: Thaumaturgy 4

Talents: Thaumaturgist (+3 additional spells)

Privileges: Thaumaturgical Doctorate

Assets: Income – Middle Class (2),  
 Respectable Boarding House

Complications: Irksome Neighbours

Magical Abilities: Thaumaturgy  
 (Spells: Darkness of Ages, Etheric Bolt, Heal, Magic Tobacconist)

Personal Effects: Neat suit, Long pipe of strange smelling tobacco, Notebook and pen



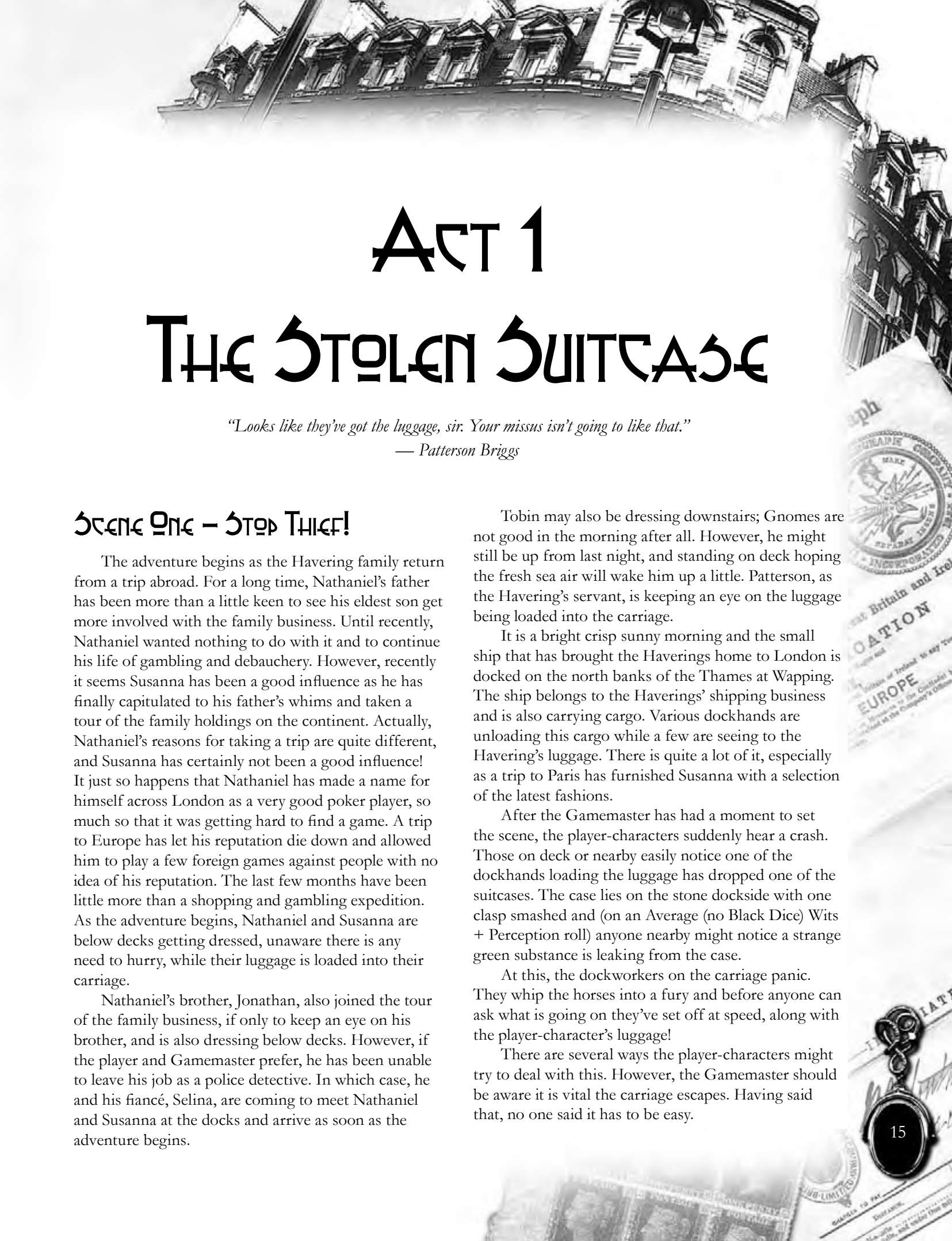




## CHAPTER ONE

# LOST LUGGAGE

*In which the Havering family suffer a theft  
leading to a dastardly plot in high society.*



# ACT 1

## THE STOLEN SUITCASE

*“Looks like they’ve got the luggage, sir. Your missus isn’t going to like that.”*

— Patterson Briggs

### SCENE ONE – STOP THIEF!

The adventure begins as the Havering family return from a trip abroad. For a long time, Nathaniel’s father has been more than a little keen to see his eldest son get more involved with the family business. Until recently, Nathaniel wanted nothing to do with it and to continue his life of gambling and debauchery. However, recently it seems Susanna has been a good influence as he has finally capitulated to his father’s whims and taken a tour of the family holdings on the continent. Actually, Nathaniel’s reasons for taking a trip are quite different, and Susanna has certainly not been a good influence! It just so happens that Nathaniel has made a name for himself across London as a very good poker player, so much so that it was getting hard to find a game. A trip to Europe has let his reputation die down and allowed him to play a few foreign games against people with no idea of his reputation. The last few months have been little more than a shopping and gambling expedition. As the adventure begins, Nathaniel and Susanna are below decks getting dressed, unaware there is any need to hurry, while their luggage is loaded into their carriage.

Nathaniel’s brother, Jonathan, also joined the tour of the family business, if only to keep an eye on his brother, and is also dressing below decks. However, if the player and Gamemaster prefer, he has been unable to leave his job as a police detective. In which case, he and his fiancé, Selina, are coming to meet Nathaniel and Susanna at the docks and arrive as soon as the adventure begins.

Tobin may also be dressing downstairs; Gnomes are not good in the morning after all. However, he might still be up from last night, and standing on deck hoping the fresh sea air will wake him up a little. Patterson, as the Havering’s servant, is keeping an eye on the luggage being loaded into the carriage.

It is a bright crisp sunny morning and the small ship that has brought the Haverings home to London is docked on the north banks of the Thames at Wapping. The ship belongs to the Haverings’ shipping business and is also carrying cargo. Various dockhands are unloading this cargo while a few are seeing to the Havering’s luggage. There is quite a lot of it, especially as a trip to Paris has furnished Susanna with a selection of the latest fashions.

After the Gamemaster has had a moment to set the scene, the player-characters suddenly hear a crash. Those on deck or nearby easily notice one of the dockhands loading the luggage has dropped one of the suitcases. The case lies on the stone dockside with one clasp smashed and (on an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Perception roll) anyone nearby might notice a strange green substance is leaking from the case.

At this, the dockworkers on the carriage panic. They whip the horses into a fury and before anyone can ask what is going on they’ve set off at speed, along with the player-character’s luggage!

There are several ways the player-characters might try to deal with this. However, the Gamemaster should be aware it is vital the carriage escapes. Having said that, no one said it has to be easy.





## IF YOU ARE NOT USING THE HAVERING'S

As we've mentioned before, these adventures were all written with the Havering family in mind. However, you may well not be using them when you run the adventure. Therefore, you'll find a few sidebars as we go through the adventure pointing out ways to use other characters as well as certain skills and abilities they might need.

While your group might not have a family business in sea trade, they might still have just taken a trip abroad. This might have been a holiday or possibly another adventure. The group should have a decent mix of social classes that put them in similar positions at the beginning of the adventure; those positions being the well-to-do characters getting dressed below, and the lower class characters possibly earning their passage loading crates or seeing to transport.

None of the player-characters should be near enough to be able to jump aboard the carriage. There is no reason for any of them to handle the luggage, even the lower class characters, who have their own things to attend to.

Those that decide to give chase are going to have to work for it. A carriage has a base speed of 25, and is 'Close by' at best.

Ranged weapons are usually the resort of most player-characters in this situation and there are plenty of potential targets. Hanging onto the top of the carriage are five men, any one of which might draw the ire of a player-character's firearm. A Difficult (3 Black Dice) shot using Dex + Firearms scores a decent hit. However, anyone injured enough to fall from the carriage is knocked insensible by the fall onto the cobbles. He certainly won't be in a fit state to interrogate anytime soon if he survives. Each round the carriage also gets further away, so the Gamemaster should add an additional Black Dice to the difficulty per round.

Finally, the player-characters might look to give chase in some other form of transport. As it happens, they are in luck. Two Ogres are loading a small cart with barrels across the street. The horse is harnessed

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and ready to go. However, the Ogres don't allow the player characters to just run off with their cart. The Gamemaster should play this small scene for laughs as the Ogres are not just gullible but also very stupid. Engaging them in conversation to try to buy or commandeer the cart is met with painfully slow deliberation. It isn't their cart after all and they don't want to get in trouble. Should the player-characters get over-enthusiastic and try to take the cart the Ogres do their best to pluck them off it and throw them to the ground. All the while, the carriage with the luggage gets farther and farther away.

At some point, the characters may want to take a look at the suitcase that has fallen from the carriage. It is a plain brown case, which now has one of its locks broken and snapped open by the fall. If moved, the sound of broken glass inside is very recognisable. However, what should make the characters very trepidations is the green liquid that is seeping out through the case.

As it happens the liquid, which is thick and green with a slightly luminous tinge, is harmless to the touch. Anyone who drinks or tastes it may be quite ill, see page 23, 'The actual effects of the liquid' for more detail. If they fail to investigate the case, one of the remaining dockhands takes a look and makes a huge fuss when he gets the stuff on his hand (insisting it burns or that it might be cursed).

When someone plucks up the courage to open the case, they find inside it has several dividers to hold glass vials. In the fall, most have been broken but one remains intact. All the vials contain (or contained) the same green liquid.

What is going on?

The broken case and another identical one were added to the Haverings' luggage in France as part of a smuggling operation. As few upper class people see to their own luggage, and many carry more than they need, two extra cases were easily slipped in without anyone noticing.

The bad guys at the other end were looking to be more subtle. They made sure they were on the unloading gang and made straight for the Haverings' ship. They intended to load the luggage, take the Haverings home and sneak off with the two cases the Haverings wouldn't miss, as they weren't looking for them.

Unfortunately, one of the crew was rushing and one of the cases dropped during loading. The gang panicked, and knowing they had at least one case they made a run for it.

## BENNY AND CHARLIE - TWO VERY THICK OGRES

These two Ogres are loading a cart with barrels of cider they are to deliver to several different pubs across Whitechapel. They don't want to get in trouble or be late, so have no desire to stop what they are doing or give up their cart (or Reggie, the horse that pulls it). They will consider offers though, but very slowly.

### *Benny and Charlie - Rank 3 Ogre Dockhands (Specialist)*

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +1

Initiative: 4

Health: 10 Dice (20 pips)\*

Mana: 0 Dice

Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Fisticuffs +2,

Horse riding +1, Might +3, Streetwise +1

Traits: Strong +4, Slow +3, Law abiding +1

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Fists like concrete (7 Dice)

Damage: Fists (5 Dice)

\*Ogre bonus

The thieves are part of a new gang in the East End that is run by a Wolfman called Abraham Tallow. Tallow is the only one who knows where and to whom the vials are to be delivered. However, the remaining dockhands may be able to tell the player-characters that the men who unloaded their ship forced out the union men due to work that ship.

## SCENE TWO - A BRUSH WITH THE LAW

While the player-characters are investigating the case and gathering their wits they are approached by a police constable called Griffiths. The furore of the theft has attracted his attention and he wants to know what is going on. His attitude to the player-characters very much depends on how they have behaved. Players being what they are, the Haverings may well be surrounded by dead bodies and wreckage (although not their luggage). They might even still be waving



## CONSTABLE GRIFFITHS

Griffiths is a decent man, but a poor and overworked one, not unlike many of the coppers on the beat. Given that there is no anti-corruption department, taking a few shillings to look the other way is very tempting. However, given the terrible conditions the police suffer under, few men join the force without a dedicated sense of justice.

### *Constable Griffiths - Rank 6 Copper on the take (Generalist)*

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +4

Initiative: 6

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Mana: 0 Dice

Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Blunt Weapons +2, Fisticuffs +2, Intimidate +1, Legal matters +2, Perception +2, Streetwise +3

Traits: Dishonest +1, Law abiding +1, Troubled +3

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Truncheon (7 Dice)

Damage: Truncheon (4 Dice)

guns around. However, there may have been no loud noises and they are simple victims of theft.

Unfortunately, for the player characters, it is not a co-incidence this policeman has turned up. While he is a real policeman, Constable Griffiths is also a slightly corrupt one. He isn't usually on the take, but he has been given £5 by Tallow (on behalf of Tallow's patron) to perform a small service. They simply want the Haverings held up to make sure the gang gets away. Griffiths isn't a bad man, but he has mouths to feed and holding up a few toffs isn't really such a bad thing to do, or so he keeps telling himself.

If the player characters have been reasonable and not spilt any blood, Griffiths doesn't have a lot to go on. All he can do is ask them to come with him to the local police station to report the crime properly. He is very insistent, especially as Jonathan is a detective and he should know how important it is. "If you can help clear your name it'll be much easier for you."

Griffiths spots the suitcase and the strange liquid unless it has been well hidden or disposed of. In which case he can claim the player characters are in

possession of some strange or arcane substances that they need to explain at the station.

If the player characters have been up to their usual tricks and there are dead bodies around, Griffiths can put them all under arrest and take them back to the police station by force. Just waving guns around is enough for him to have 'due cause' to take them in for questioning.

If the player characters resist, Griffiths is only one man, and he's not being paid enough to risk his life. However, he can blow his whistle, summoning aid in around five minutes. If other police arrive, he finds it easier to insist they need to be taken into custody. If the player characters try to make a run for it he gives chase, but not for too long. After all, them running around London certainly serves as the distraction Griffiths has been paid for.

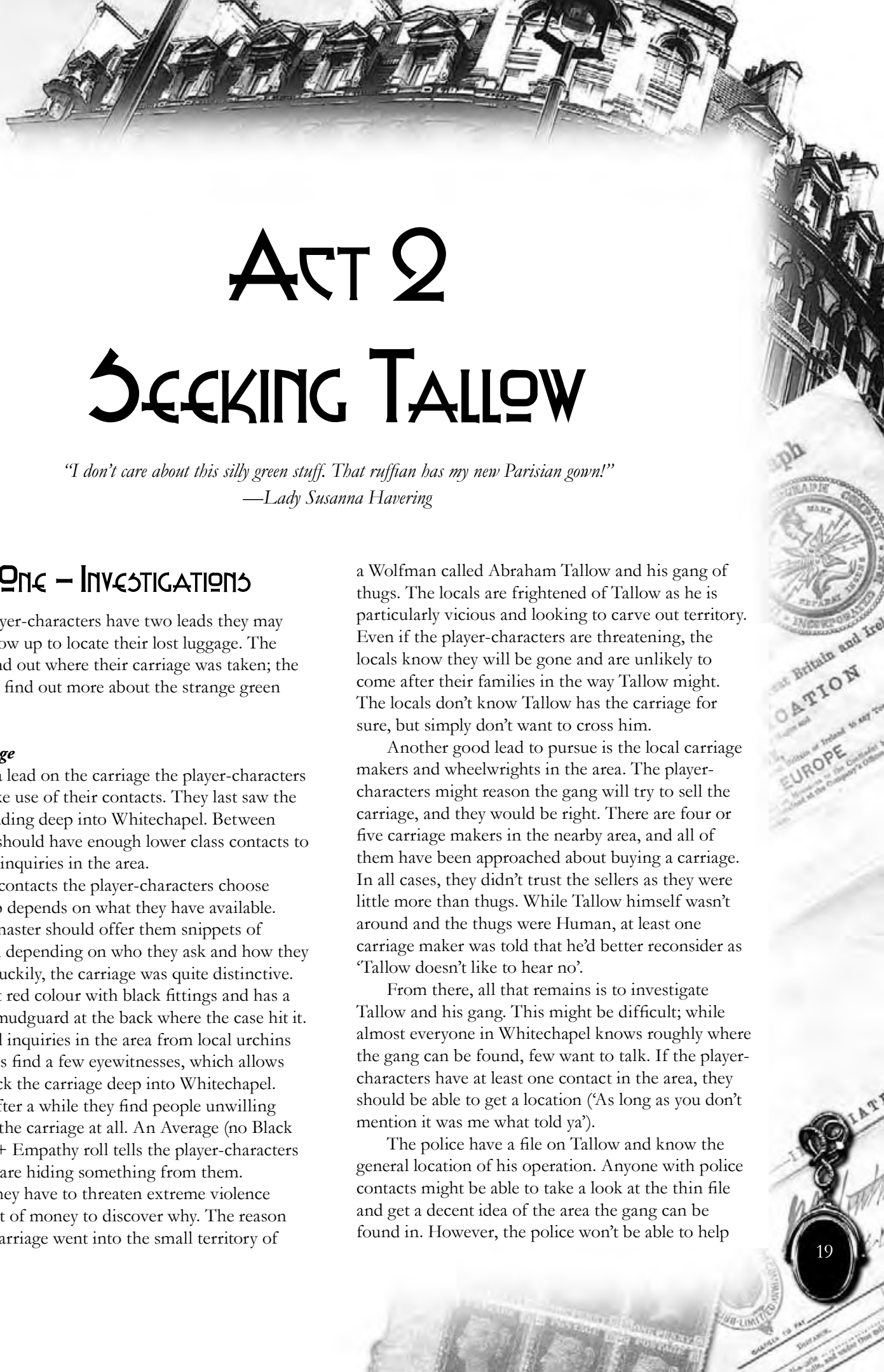
If the player characters go with Griffiths to the police station, it is not a long walk. There is a small police station a few streets away. Griffiths takes the player characters' names and addresses. He then asks them to wait while he gets his superintendant. The waiting room he offers is one of the cells. He hopes the player characters will do as they are told and wait there (and he locks the door if he can – "just procedure, sir"). Then he leaves them there for a few hours to keep his end of the deal. After that, he lets them out, apologises for the inconvenience and says they are free to go as they are under no suspicion due to their story checking out.

At any point, the player characters might be belligerent or difficult and by doing so they walk a fine line. Griffiths has little real reason to hold them and he finds it difficult to enforce his authority. However, if the player characters become violent or threatening they may give Griffiths a good reason to lock them in the cells for as long as he likes.

The player characters might find a way to escape the cell and make a run for it. As this will no doubt take time, Griffiths won't report it or try to give chase unless he has to. Any investigation gets him into trouble too, which he can ill afford. The player characters won't know the police aren't really after them though!

Eventually, the player characters are free. They will probably want to return to their homes to clean up (and possibly tool up) before they go out in search of their luggage and the mystery of the green liquid.





# ACT 2

## SEEKING TALLOW

*“I don’t care about this silly green stuff. That ruffian has my new Parisian gown!”*  
—Lady Susanna Havering

### SCENE ONE – INVESTIGATIONS

The player-characters have two leads they may want to follow up to locate their lost luggage. The first is to find out where their carriage was taken; the second is to find out more about the strange green liquid.

#### *The Carriage*

To get a lead on the carriage the player-characters have to make use of their contacts. They last saw the carriage heading deep into Whitechapel. Between them, they should have enough lower class contacts to make a few inquiries in the area.

Which contacts the player-characters choose to follow up depends on what they have available. The Gamemaster should offer them snippets of information depending on who they ask and how they ask them. Luckily, the carriage was quite distinctive. It is a bright red colour with black fittings and has a badly bent mudguard at the back where the case hit it.

General inquiries in the area from local urchins and peddlers find a few eyewitnesses, which allows them to track the carriage deep into Whitechapel. However, after a while they find people unwilling to mention the carriage at all. An Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Empathy roll tells the player-characters that people are hiding something from them. However, they have to threaten extreme violence or offer a lot of money to discover why. The reason is that the carriage went into the small territory of

a Wolfman called Abraham Tallow and his gang of thugs. The locals are frightened of Tallow as he is particularly vicious and looking to carve out territory. Even if the player-characters are threatening, the locals know they will be gone and are unlikely to come after their families in the way Tallow might. The locals don’t know Tallow has the carriage for sure, but simply don’t want to cross him.

Another good lead to pursue is the local carriage makers and wheelwrights in the area. The player-characters might reason the gang will try to sell the carriage, and they would be right. There are four or five carriage makers in the nearby area, and all of them have been approached about buying a carriage. In all cases, they didn’t trust the sellers as they were little more than thugs. While Tallow himself wasn’t around and the thugs were Human, at least one carriage maker was told that he’d better reconsider as “Tallow doesn’t like to hear no’.

From there, all that remains is to investigate Tallow and his gang. This might be difficult; while almost everyone in Whitechapel knows roughly where the gang can be found, few want to talk. If the player-characters have at least one contact in the area, they should be able to get a location (“As long as you don’t mention it was me what told ya’).

The police have a file on Tallow and know the general location of his operation. Anyone with police contacts might be able to take a look at the thin file and get a decent idea of the area the gang can be found in. However, the police won’t be able to help





### The Scientist – Harcourt Nielson

Nathaniel and Tobin have a scientist contact who might be able to help. Harcourt is a Halfing renowned for being rather experimental in his laboratory work. He lives in an attic apartment in a fairly decent area of Spitalfields. As the characters approach the lodgings they hear a loud explosion and see smoke pouring out of the top floor windows.

Luckily, Nielson hasn't blown up the house with his latest experiment, but his landlady, Mrs Plumworthy, doesn't know this. She is beside herself wondering if the house is going to come down on top of her. She welcomes any help to make sure the place is still safe, and looks forward to giving Mr Nielson a proper scolding once more. The player-characters can use the confusion to gain access to the building if they handle it right and ingratiate themselves with Mrs Plumworthy.

## HARCOURT NIELSON

Nielson is an eccentric middle class Halfing scientist, who seems to have little regard for his own safety. He is constantly happy and excited, and dedicated to his obsession, which is simply discovery. Each day, he wakes up wondering how something scientific works and spends the rest of the day trying to figure it out. These experiments never last more than a day, as another idea distracts him the next morning. Luckily, he has had enough good ideas to fund his lifestyle, even if he rarely has any money.

### *Harcourt Nielson - Rank 4 Halfing Bampot Scientist (Focussed)*

Physical Competence: +2

Mental Competence: +5

Initiative: 6

Health: 3 Dice (6 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Demolitions +2, Dodge +3, Perception +2, Science (several disciplines) +3, Streetwise +3

Traits: Investigator +3, Careful -6, Good-natured +3

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: None, Harcourt isn't a fighter so he'll run if he has to

When they get to the attic rooms, the player-characters find Harcourt covered in black soot from head to foot and grinning wildly. He is in a very buoyant mood, as his latest experiment went better than expected (even if it nearly killed him). Therefore, he happily helps the player-characters and runs some tests on the liquid for them, especially if they have helped to mollify Mrs Plumworthy.

After an hour or so, Harcourt can tell the player-characters the following about the liquid:

–It appears to be a natural concoction, although he has no magical skills to be sure.

–It isn't poisonous, although it is very powerful and concentrated.

–It is designed to be imbibed.

–If you drink it, it would kick your system into overdrive as if hit with an unhealthy surge of adrenaline. Far too dangerous for a human-sized person to make any use of even diluted.

## MRS PLUMWORTHY

The redoubtable Mrs Plumworthy is a force to be reckoned with. Those who are rude and difficult find her a brick wall; however, those who are patient and charming find her easily assuaged. She worries about what the neighbours (and her long dead husband, killed in India several years ago) might think.

### *Mrs Adele Plumworthy - Rank 3 Stern Landlady (Generalist)*

Physical Competence: +3

Mental Competence: +3

Initiative: 6

Health: 3 Dice (6 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

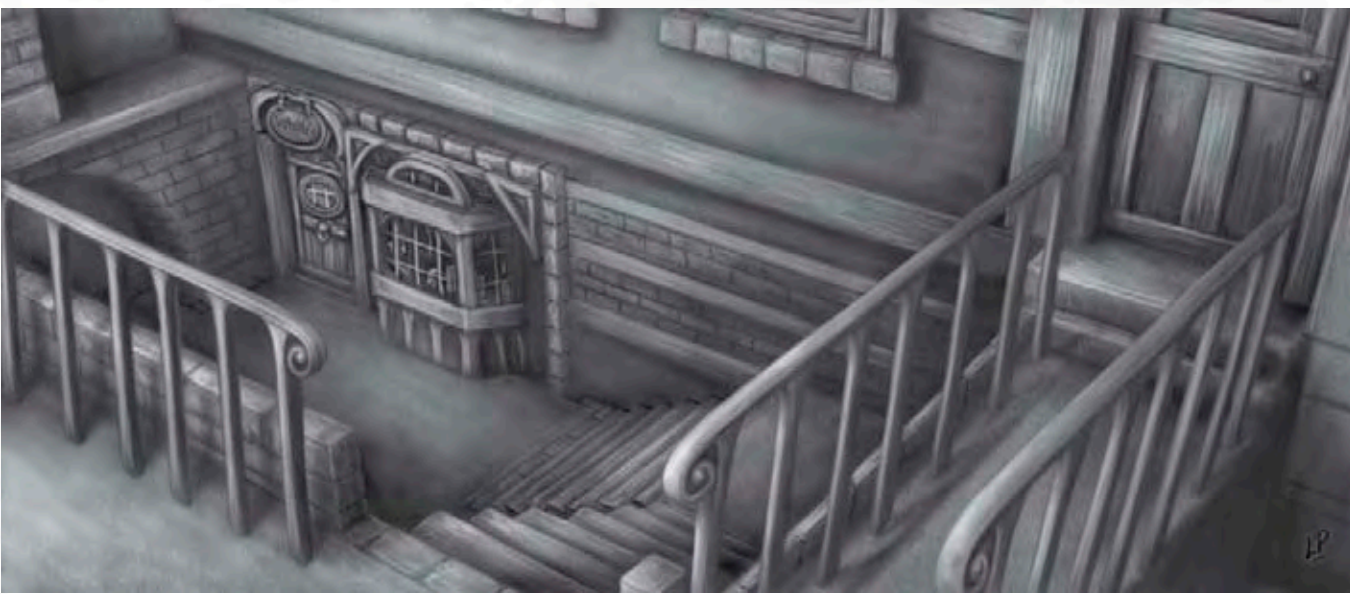
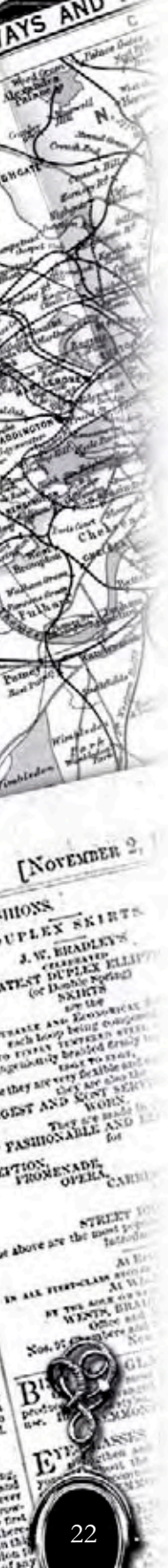
Signature Skills: Craft (Cooking) +3, Etiquette +1, Fisticuffs +1, Intimidate +3, Perception +2, Streetwise +1

Traits: Worrier +3, Social Climber +2

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: She most likely throws a tea tray at any attacker and runs away as fast as her short legs can carry her.





**The Magician – Erasmus Spindle**

Anyone familiar with the more criminal elements in magical society has heard of Erasmus Spindle. This weasel of a man is renowned for dealing in barely legal magical ephemera and has a certain skill in sorcery himself. He might have a despicable reputation but, for the right price, he can usually be relied on to do as he is told and not alert the authorities.

Spindle’s magic shop (or Emporium, as he likes to call it) is located on the very edge of Bishopsgate, around the back of Wormwood Street where the best and brightest magical suppliers can be found. The shop is in a basement with a front door located at the bottom of a set of steps surrounded by black railings. A dirty sign hung above is the only evidence such a shop exists.

Spindle is a deeply unpleasant man, utterly obsequious to those of a higher station and yet horribly above himself. His middle class airs also make him rude and short with anyone he considers beneath him, such as lower class characters and anyone who isn’t Human or Eldren. He flips from off-handed disgust to fawning obedience in a moment depending on who he is speaking to, and assumes any truly mannered nobility has the same attitude as him to the lower orders.

For the cost of 2 shillings, he analyses the liquid. Although, if there are no upper or at least middle class characters in the group the price is 4 shillings and a request to leave the premises. If only lower class characters wait for the results, he constantly pokes his head into the shop from his backroom lab to make

sure they aren’t stealing or touching anything. In which case, the job takes him half an hour longer. If the players feel physically sick after their dealing with Erasmus, you have played him right.

**ERASMUS SPINDLE**


This weasel of a man has run a shop in Bishopsgate for a very long time, and is renowned among the magical community as a low-grade fence and information broker. Spindle is very knowledgeable in the ways of both the dark and light sides of magic. However, he lacks the willpower to cast anything but the weakest spells.

***Erasmus Spindle - Rank 8 Toadying Magic shop proprietor (Specialist)***

Physical Competence: +2  
 Mental Competence: +9  
 Initiative: 8  
 Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)  
 Mana: 6 Dice (36 pips)  
 Signature Skills: Charm -2, Conceal +2, Demonology +2, High Society +1, Legal Matters +2, Lore +5, Necromancy +2, Perception +3, Streetwise +3, Thaumaturgy +3  
 Traits: Coward +2, Devious +3, Dishonest +3, Weasel +6  
 Special Abilities: None  
 Combat Abilities: None, he pleads, screams and runs, possibly at the same time.







After an hour of work in the back room, Spindle can tell the player-characters the following:

–The liquid is non-magical.

–It is made from a selection of herbs and other ingredients, many of which can only be found on the continent in hot climes.

–Drinking it would be inadvisable as it is a very powerful concoction that might make your heart explode.

### **The Actual Effects of the Liquid**

We shouldn't need to suggest that drinking the liquid is a bad idea. However, player-characters might try several things themselves to discover what it is meant to do. The liquid itself is a non-magical concoction that kicks the body into overdrive, racing the heart and powering muscles for speed. It is too powerful for a human being (and even a Dwarf) and is designed to be used on horses.

The liquid has a sweet smell, almost reminiscent of almonds (which should panic players who know what cyanide is meant to smell like). It is rather viscous and glutinous, but has no effect if it is touched or smeared on bare skin. If anyone drinks it, they are in trouble though. It is designed to kick horses into overdrive so on a small system it is rather overpowering. Anyone who takes a decent sized sip feels their heart begin to pound faster and they break out in a slightly sweet smelling sweat. If they drink a serious amount (like a gulp or two) they must make a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Resolve + Might roll. If they fail, they throw up and pass out taking 1D6 of Health pips of damage. If they succeed, they take 1D6 damage as above, but may add 1 additional die to any running or sprinting actions for every success they made. Both effects (the boost and unconsciousness) last for 2 hours, after which the subject crashes and their Resolve drops by 2. It recovers at 1 point per hour until restored. If anyone is foolish enough to drink a whole bottle in one go, they automatically throw up and pass out, taking 2D6 Health pips of damage. After 4 hours, they awake in the same state described above.

## **SCENE TWO – SHOWDOWN WITH TALLOW'S GANG**

Eventually, the player-characters should be able to find their way to Tallow's gang's hiding place, a

moderately sized old warehouse deep in Whitechapel. The warehouse's height is the equivalent of two stories and stands alone, unconnected to any of the other buildings that crowd around it, so the player-characters cannot gain access from another building. However, they might jump onto the roof from one of the nearby buildings, which cluster quite close. Such an attempt would require an Average (no Black Dice) Dexterity + Athletics roll.

The warehouse has only three potential entrances (unless the player-characters decide to make a hole in one of the walls). At the back is a small side-door, which, while unlocked, is barred from the inside. If no one removes the bar from inside it will require a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Strength + Might roll to break down. On the roof is a small skylight that might easily be broken. Unfortunately, there is quite a drop to the floor (20 feet). Having said that, a jumper might try to jump onto the carriage inside and then to the floor, which would be a fall of 12 feet. Jumping onto the carriage requires an Average (no Black Dice) Dex + Athletics roll, which if failed becomes a fall of 20 feet. At least, three successes are required to land quietly. The main entrance is at the front and is a large double door, which has a more convenient small door set into it. The main double door is barred in the same way as the back door. However, the small inset door is unlocked.

Inside, the warehouse is one open room, which now contains the Havering's carriage and luggage. A group of six ruffians are rummaging through the luggage and sorting out what is worth selling. At least one of them is dancing around with one of Susanna's new Parisian dresses! All the men have been drinking, but none are so drunk as to be an easy target. The player-characters might approach this situation in a number of ways. A frontal assault is a popular option, but would be more successful if they manage to gain some intelligence about what they might find within the warehouse beforehand. The Ruffians are not especially clever but do not instantly attack anyone who knocks at the door for a chat. However, the Gamemaster should roll 1D6 for each Ruffian, and should they roll a success the Ruffian recognises the player-characters as the people they robbed that morning.

If a fight ensues (and who are we kidding here, we know it's going to happen sooner or later), the Ruffians happily engage. Their recent success in the area under Tallow has made them all very cocky and





confident and they are not used to a real fight. Should the player-characters dispatch half of them, the rest attempt to run out of the back door (or front if that is clear). If cornered they fight for their lives, but if one or two are left on their own with no escape route, they surrender.

It is a good plan for the player-characters to do their best not to kill all the Ruffians, after all, they need to know what is going on. By now, they should have discovered that Tallow is a Wolfman making his absence quite evident. None of the Ruffians know his plan, but they do know he had been employed to make sure the liquid got to a buyer. They also know he left an hour ago with two of the gang and a vial of liquid (from the second case the gang did manage to get hold of) to meet the buyer at Epsom racecourse. It is at this point the penny might drop for the player-characters about what the green liquid is intended for.

The player-characters are then free to wreak whatever revenge on the remains of the gang they like. They can also reclaim their lost luggage. However, they should also decide to follow Tallow to Epsom and stop whatever he is planning, whether for the sake of curiosity or simply revenge.



## RUFFIANS

All the ruffians are simple thugs who work for Tallow. They aren't really evil, just selfish and not especially clever. They are all bullies, who love being part of a group that preys on the weak. It's about time someone gave them all what for! The Ruffians are mostly Human, but a Ratman or Weaselman might be in the mix. They are all armed with knives.

### *Ruffians - Rank 3 Thugs (Focused)*

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +2

Initiative: 6

Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Fisticuffs +2, Intimidate +1, Perception +2, Streetwise +2, Swordplay +3

Traits: Nasty +2, Arrogant +2,

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Knife (7 Dice)

Damage: Knife (5 Dice)





# ACT 3

## A DAY AT THE RACES

*"It should be a nice day out, as long as no one tries to kill us."*

*—Nathaniel Havering*

### SCENE ONE – TAKING THE TRAIN

Now they have their luggage back, even if it is a little ransacked, the Haverings should want to get to the bottom of the mystery. There is nothing to stop them walking away and calling the authorities. After all, they have what they came for. However, they may be curious to see how far this goes, and at least claim a little vengeance for the inconveniences they have suffered.

Trains to Epsom Downs leave from London Victoria Station every half hour to forty minutes; although after 1:55pm they leave hourly. If the characters catch a train a little farther down the line at Clapham Junction station they might catch a train a little more often.

The journey takes around an hour, and leaving from London Victoria, the train passes through Kensington, Clapham Junction, London Bridge, West Croydon, Mitcham Junction and Sutton stations before reaching Epsom. It then continues on to Horsham (for another hour) by way of Leatherhead, Dorking, Holmwood, Ockley and Warnham. Faster trains run to Horsham, but Epsom is one of the stations they do not call at on the way.

The entire group might fit into a single compartment in the first class carriages. However, those of a lower station might be better suited to a second or even third class seat. All the trains to Epsom have several carriages, so the player-characters will all be on the same train at least.

As you might expect, the train journey should be quite uneventful. However, the Gamemaster might be tempted to throw in an encounter on the train, as there are few places more dramatic for a fight in the Victorian era than the roof of a speeding steam train! It is quite possible that another couple of Tallow's men weren't in the warehouse and came back to find their mates done over by the player-characters. They follow them to the train station and buy third class tickets. Then they either waylay the lower class characters there, or make their way across the top of the train and break into the player-character's first class carriage. Few things are as unsettling as a Weaselman crashing through the window of your compartment when you are trying to read the paper.

If the Gamemaster decides to throw such an encounter at the player-characters, it is up to her how many of the ruffians set upon them. There should be enough to create an exciting encounter, not murder the group. If the group are injured from the previous fight, the Gamemaster should go a little easy on them. There should be no more than one ruffian for each player-character. Each ruffian has the same statistics as those found in the warehouse previously.

If they are not engaged in fisticuffs, the player-characters might talk to some of their fellow commuters. Most people are making quite mundane journeys on the train. However, some are travelling to Epsom for the races, as are the player-characters. Epsom is famed for the 'Derby' races, but these take place in early June. There are plenty of other fixtures during the year, but nothing very exciting is taking



## AN UPPER CLASS PARTY

The Gamemaster is free to create as many noble characters in the first class compartments as required to interact with the player-characters. However, to help her out, here is a little detail on the occupants of the next compartment. They might be conversed with, or mollified, when they come to find out what all the noise is next door!

**Lord Alfred Stockhaven** – a slightly grumpy aristocrat, who is a little older and more overweight than he should be. He doesn't like travel and he would rather read his paper in peace. This trip to the races is to indulge his wife.

**Lady Helen Stockhaven** – a lot younger than her husband, and while over thirty, acts like a little girl. This is her first trip on a train and she is finding the experience quite exhilarating. She loves the races and social events and believes her husband is being a sourpuss.

**Lieutenant Edward Daring** – has come back from the Crimea to marry his childhood sweetheart. He cuts a dashing and military figure, even though he is out of uniform. While upper class, he has seen enough hardship in the Crimea to be less stuck up.

**Mrs Isabelle Daring** – still flushed from marrying the love of her life recently. This trip is part of their honeymoon and it shows. She dotes on his every word, but she is secretly making a list of things about him she needs to change.

**Reverend Doonfolly** – an Aluminate Priest, who is a friend of the Stockhavens. He also married the Darings recently. He is being taken out as a treat, but he spends most of the journey asleep. This is a mercy, as he loves to quote the Bible when awake.

If you require actual statistics for any of these characters, you should pick one of the NPCs provided in the Core Rulebook.

place today. However, if the player-characters seem to be upper class they may learn of another unscheduled event. Should they converse with another upper class party in another carriage they might discover that today in the day Lady Dashingham is attending the races. Her husband always organises a very exclusive soirée for her, and many of the cream of the upper class are attending this informal gathering. A secret (only shared with apparently upper class characters that manifest a remarkable amount of charm) is that

Lady Dashingham only places a bet on one race at the end of the day, but she always picks the winner. It is not vital the characters obtain this information, as it becomes evident later on. However, it will do the player-characters good to practice polite conversation.

Should they survive the train journey the player-character arrive at Epsom Station. Epsom Downs Racecourse is about three quarters of a mile from the station, and the road goes straight there. It is a very nice day so they may choose to walk, but are free to hire a carriage to speed up their journey. They might share some form of transport with other race-goers if they have made friends on the train.

## SCENE TWO – EXPLORING EPSOM DOWNS

When the player-characters arrive at the racecourse, they are free to wander around and investigate the area for signs of Tallow or his mysterious patron. Generally, the party may find themselves having to split up depending on their social class, as some characters will find it easier to get into certain areas than others will. There is a lot of ground to explore at the racecourse, but it is mainly wide-open spaces so there are few actual areas for the group to check out.

Tallow has gone to the stables area, which may be the first point of call for a player-group sharp enough to believe the green liquid is to be used to enhance the performance of one of the horses. If the player-characters make for that area, move to Scene Three, Facing Tallow.

Most of the racecourse area is one large field, with the racecourse itself marked off by a white fence. Around the course are many spectators and gamblers. Most are lower and middle class people, who cannot afford the grandstand. However, many upper class characters mix into the throng, looking to get closer to the action. It is quite thrilling to see the horses power past at a gallop, and many of the ladies might seem flushed with excitement on the arm of their escort. Generally, the racecourse is quite crowded and the area contains a broad mixture of people, who often only have a love of gambling or horses in common.

Nathaniel Havering (or any other gambler in the group if you are not using the Havering family) knows



## TOLLBRIDGE SHANKS, GOATMAN Bookie

This Goatman can be found at the trackside standing on a small box to see over the crowds and signal to other bookies in Tic-tac (a sign language used to communicate odds). Tollbridge is a down-to-earth fellow happy to engage with his patrons, especially if they know something about the races and might offer him some tips.

### *Tollbridge Shanks - Rank 5 Goatman Track Bookie (Generalist)*

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +4

Initiative: 6

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 2 Dice (12 pips)

Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Animal Handling +2, Appraisal +2, Fisticuffs +2, Gambling +3, Perception +3, Streetwise +3

Traits: Talkative +2, Distracted +1, Conspiratorial +2

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Not if he can help it.

the bookies in the area reasonably well. If you need a particular contact, you can use Tollbridge Shanks, noted in the nearby sidebar. Tollbridge, and the rest of the bookies, are waiting for the rush on the 7:40pm race. There is nothing special about the race as far as Epsom is concerned. However, everyone knows this is the race on which Lady Dashingham intends to place a bet. She has done this twice a year in each summer season for the last five years, and won every time. Few people believe she studies form or knows anything about horses. Most assume she is simply very lucky indeed. Either way, plenty of people want to know where she is placing a bet, and the bookies drop their odds very swiftly once word gets around as to which she has picked. The first people to know are those attending the Dashingham's soiree, so at 7:30pm, all eyes will be on that enclosure.

The grandstand is designed for those who see this as a day out in society rather than a sporting event. It is situated next to the finishing line, so those who wish to see the start of a race have to use binoculars. The front area contains rows of tiered seating (fenced off from the ground), filled with the middle classes







and many of the upper class. On Derby day, even the upper classes would be packed in here like sardines, but today it is simply full. Behind the tiered seating is the grandstand itself, which stands around three stories high, and has more tiered seating on the roof. The grandstand also contains several private rooms where the upper classes can hold soirées and watch the races from the wide balconies.

Next to the Grandstand are several enclosures, outside areas that can be closed for private functions. These areas are popular for being close to the action of the racecourse, but separate from the lower orders. It is in one of these enclosures that Lord and Lady Dashingham are holding their own gathering. The player-characters may have heard of the Dashingham's gathering already and be interested to take a look. What they may not yet know is that Lord Dashingham is Tallow's secret patron. We detail what the player-characters might find going on at the enclosure in Scene Four, The Ritual of Society.

A little way away from the Grandstand, towards the stables, is the paddock where all the horses for each race are paraded so the enthusiasts can appraise them before placing a bet. Bets can be placed inside the grandstand or with one of several bookies offering odds from small podiums across the ground. Generally, the more reputable ones can be found nearer the grandstand.

The rest of the grounds stretch for a mile or so in almost every direction. The racecourse itself stretches around for around a mile and a half, offering plenty of space to get a free view of the race away from the Grandstand. This means that the farther from the Grandstand you go, the more you come across the lower classes enjoying a day in the sun.

## SCENE THREE – FACING TALLOW

If the player-characters look for Tallow, they might eventually come across him at the stables. Tallow's patron has employed him to administer the green liquid to one of the horses in a very specific race, the 7:40pm one. The patron is Lord Dashingham and his wife will be picking a winner for this race. Lord Dashingham intends to ensure his wife's lucky streak continues.

Tallow's instructions are to wait for word from a servant as to which horse Lady Dashingham has picked. Lord Dashingham has no desire to have any contact with the likes of Tallow so will be sending a servant as his intermediary. This means that when Tallow has managed to enter the stables area he finds a place to wait for his contact to appear.

Neither Tallow nor the player-characters are allowed in the stables, although security isn't especially tight. This is mainly due to there being quite a few people around the stables area, jockeys, stable-hands and even the occasional owner. At the main gate to the stables, there are two Epsom employees checking the credentials of those trying to enter. Anyone dressed as a jockey or who might claim ownership of a horse might convince them that they should be allowed in. Dressing as a stable-hand might work, although the gatekeepers know all the stable-hands quite well as they all work for the racecourse. The Gamemaster should call for Presence + (Bull or Charm) rolls with a difficulty depending on how likely the player-character's story sounds to get past the gatekeepers.

## TALLOW AND THE DASHINGHAMS

It is highly likely that the player-characters may be forced to separate as only upper class or at least well-to-do characters are allowed into the Dashingham's soirée. This leaves the lower class characters searching around for Tallow. While the group may stay together, you may find Scenes Three and Four run almost simultaneously. So to help the Gamemaster keep track, here is a quick outline of the events going on between the two scenes.

- The Dashingham's host their soirée in one of the enclosures.
- Tallow and two members of his gang find their way to the stables and wait.
- Lady Dashingham announces her choice of horse.
- Lord Dashingham dispatches a servant to the stables to find Tallow.
- The servant locates Tallow and gives him the name of the horse he is to administer the green liquid to.
- Tallow administers the potion but waits in the stables
- After the race (if the horse wins), the servant is dispatched by Lord Dashingham to deliver payment to Tallow at the stables.





stables built inside the area in lines. It is a relatively simple matter to climb onto the roof of the outside stable block and jump down into the courtyard and inner stables. However, it still requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll at an Average (no Black Dice) difficulty. This is how Tallow entered the compound. The servant contact will be coming through the front gate, as Lord Dashingham is a patron of the racecourse and can send servants where he pleases.

Once inside, the player-characters are free to search for Tallow. He, and at least two of his thugs, wanders the area looking for a place to wait unseen for their contact. Anyone searching for them should make Wits + Perception roll. If they get at least two successes, they spot Tallow. However, Tallow is on the alert as well and if they do not attempt to move stealthily around the area (making a Dexterity + Hide & Sneak roll with no Black Dice and gain at least two successes) then Tallow sees them.

What happens next depends on who has seen whom first. If a player-character spots Tallow but he is unaware of them, they might try a sneak attack, or watch him to see what happens. If Tallow sees them first, he watches to see what they are up to, and may choose to attack if

Luckily, the gatekeepers are not armed, but they will resort to physical force to remove troublemakers. Failing that, they call for help. There are no policemen wandering the ground, but plenty of burly employees of the racecourse and stable-hands, who might eject the player-characters from the stables. Interestingly, most of this backup comes from stable-hands working in the area. So, if some player-characters are making a ruckus at the gate, other members of the group might have an easier time sneaking in another way.

Generally, the security at the course is designed to stop people stealing the horses. This means that getting in anywhere except for the main gate is a little simpler, as you can't easily take a horse through a small hole in a fence or over a wall. While the area isn't fortified, the stables are arranged in such a way as to form a wall all the way around the compound. The stables form a large square, with several more

they don't look too dangerous. Both groups might sneak around trying to hide from each other or watch each other for quite some time. Tallow's assumption is that the player-characters are working for the law, but clever characters might convince him they are agents of his patron.

Should both groups spot each other at the same time, it is likely that combat ensues. However, Tallow is happy to talk if the group looks dangerous and he hasn't got the element of surprise. Even so, he does not give away his plans and contact unless the player-characters can force it out of him. Should neither party manage to spot the other one, they could wander the stables area for a while. However, the player-characters might be led to Tallow when Lord Dashingham's servant arrives to look for him.

The outcome of any conflict with Tallow very much defines how the adventure might be resolved

## ABRAHAM TALLOW

The leader of the gang is a ragged looking Wolfman with a dangerous demeanour. He appears to be constantly snarling and nothing about his character implies the opposite. He is a cold-blooded killer eager to make a name for himself in the criminal underworld, although he is intelligent enough to focus his murderous nature and gang of thugs where they will do the most good.

### *Abraham Tallow - Rank 8 Wolfman Gang Leader (Generalist)*

Physical Competence: +6

Mental Competence: +5

Initiative: 8

Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)

Mana: 2 Dice (12 pips)

Signature Skills: Appraise +2, Athletics +2, Fisticuffs +2,

Intimidate +3, Legal matters +1, Perception +3, Streetwise +3, Swordplay +3

Traits: Vicious +3, Dedicated +3, Ambitious +4

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Knife (9 Dice)

Damage: Knife (5 Dice)

### *Ruffians - Rank 3 Thugs (Focused)*

*(There will generally be two thugs, but the Gamemaster might add more if the player-characters are numerous and dangerous. They all have the same stats as the previous Ruffians.)*

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +2

Initiative: 6

Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Fisticuffs +2, Intimidate +1,

Perception +2, Streetwise +2, Swordplay +3

Traits: Nasty +2, Arrogant +2,

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Knife (7 Dice)

Damage: Knife (5 Dice)

in regards to his patron. If Tallow and his gang are killed, the player-characters learn nothing from them. Their only hope is to force some confession from the servant, who will be very hard to convince to turn against his master. So, the player-characters should try and make sure they take someone alive, preferably Tallow. His thugs know the plan and can reveal the name of the patron. However, Tallow makes a better

witness for the authorities. Tallow is hard to convince to reveal the name of his patron. However, he is only loyal insofar as he is being paid. Offers of money eventually loosen his tongue.

Interestingly, he offers the player-characters actual evidence of Lord Dashingham's involvement if they do him a favour. Tallow has kept a note that Dashingham foolishly signed that asks for a meeting. The paper isn't very damning on its own, but coupled with a well-made accusation it might be very damaging to Lord Dashingham. Unfortunately, Tallow wants more than money for this evidence. He wants the player-character's help in expanding his territory against some of the other gangs in Whitechapel. Should they strike a deal, this can lead on to further adventures with the player-characters working with Tallow as a partner. He is no worse than some of the other gangs, but it is up to the player-character's own morals to decide if they can offer the help he is asking for.


## SCENE FOUR - THE RITUAL OF SOCIETY

At the same time as some of the group are seeking Tallow, some of the upper class characters might try to infiltrate the Dashingham's soirée. The gathering is being held in an open-air enclosure with a good view of the racetrack. There are many of the cream of society in attendance and champagne and footmen from the Dashingham household are serving food. There is only one opening in the three-foot fence, guarded by a large footman. Characters might try to jump the fence

somewhere, but wherever they do, there is someone to see them and raise the alarm. Unless they can sneak in invisibly, they have to go in through the front gate.

Luckily, the footmen are well versed in dealing with high society and are not expecting anything as vulgar as a written invitation. They are expected to 'know' who should be in attendance. So player-





characters looking to bluff their way in must first make an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + High Society roll to think of the right person to imitate. It then takes a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Presence + Charm roll to talk their way past the footmen using their new role. Needless to say, any acts of violence have the characters swiftly ejected and possibly arrested. The event is also not open to any servants or aides (as evident by the current gathering), so only those who look upper class or well-to-do have any hope of getting inside.

If that all seems rather tricky, the player-characters might attach themselves to another party, who have been invited. Following a group in requires a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Presence + Hide & Sneak roll. However, convincing the group in question that they are already invited requires an Average (no Black Dice) Presence + High Society roll. Once part of a group, the footmen have no option but to allow them in. However, if they try and subsequently fail to get in, but later manage to gain entry they are recognised. The footmen do not cause a scene, but inform Lord Dashingham. If they prove civil and polite, Lord Dashingham allows them to stay, possibly even bookmarking them as potential agents. Should they put a foot out of place though, they are asked to leave in the strongest terms. Being thrown out does not do their social reputations any good at all. There are easily enough footmen to ensure belligerent player-characters are removed eventually.

The soiree itself is an opportunity to gossip and drink fine champagne on a rare sunny English day. However, it becomes very obvious that all of the guests are eagerly awaiting Lady Dashingham to announce her choice for the 7:40 race. The money isn't important, just the winning. For most of the guests, simply getting into this gathering places them among the elite, even if they care nothing for the race. However, pretty much everyone has someone outside the fence, waiting to be told who to place a sum of money on. As many of the sums are small, it is hard for the bookies to figure out which horse to lower the odds on very quickly. Even so, some people get greedy and make the horse obvious.

The gathering is no more than an opportunity to drink and talk with social peers until 7:20 when Lady Dashingham announces she is about to place a bet. Word swiftly moves around the gathering of the forthcoming announcement and quickly a circle develops around Lady Dashingham. Player-character

who succeed in an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Perception roll notice Lord Dashingham dispatch a footman off on some errand in a secretive manner. The footman is going to the stables to find Tallow and tell him the name of the horse Lady Dashingham has chosen, her husband being the first to hear her selection. Lady Dashingham seems unaware of her husband's clandestine activity.

Getting to the front of the circle proves a little difficult as everyone wants to be in it. Generally, the gentlemen make a path for their lady to take a place in the circle, so those jostling to be in a good position are mostly female. In some places, some well placed heels and elbows are becoming quite vindictive, as there is greater social honour in being the first to hear. When the crowd around Lady Dashingham has arranged itself, she moves around the circle, tapping her glass to the glass of the person next in line around the circle and whispering the name of the horse she has picked in their ear. Even though it is not hard to overhear and she has the attention of the entire gathering, it is made to appear as if she is passing a secret quietly onto a friend. To the upper classes present, this is all part of a marvellous game and the ritual is all part of the fun. It also allows some people to hear before others and no Perception roll is required to notice people dispatching servants off to the bookies around the racecourse.

Unfortunately, all is not as it appears. It is actually Lady Dashingham, and not her husband, who is the true villain of the piece. This apparently improvised social ritual has a definite and demonic purpose. If Susanna (or another Medium, if you are not using the Havering family) gets into the centre of the circle, she begins to see a darkness gather around Lady Dashingham. If she succeeds in an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Sensate/Channelling Medium roll she sees this darkness forming a pattern inside the circle. The pattern is easily recognised by anyone with skill in Demonology, Thaumaturgy or can make an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Lore roll. It is the sigil of the demon lord, Dantallon, the Lord of Greed.

As Lady Dashingham moves around the circle, at each chink of her glass the darkness snakes from her onto the person to whom she whispers the horse's name. Utterly unaware of what has passed, that person slides away to place their bet. The darkness has little effect in itself; it is simply a demonic mark. While it stains an aura for some time, it only has an effect on those who actually bet on Lady



## LORD ARTHUR DASHINGHAM

The supposed villain of the piece is not especially dangerous. While he has a keen mind and considerable social standing, Arthur has led a closeted life among the elite. He has no real skills or understanding of the real world and relies on his wife's direction for most of his actions. Lord Arthur isn't really a bad man, his greatest failing to his utter blindness to his wife's despicable evil.

### *Lord Arthur Dashingham - Rank 6 Amateur Crime Patron (Focussed)*

Physical Competence: +3

Mental Competence: +6

Initiative: 6

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Mana: 0 Dice

Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Business +2, Etiquette +2, Fisticuffs +1, High Society +3, Streetwise +1, Swordplay +1

Traits: Charming +2, Proper +3, Well-turned out +3

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: He carries a swordcane, which he uses if his footmen cannot protect him (4 Dice)

Damage: Swordcane (5 Dice)

Dashingham's horse. However, if one of the player-characters is in the circle and is infected by it, the Gamemaster should play up the potential paranoia of the situation. The player-character should think carefully about running from the circle as doing so causes a scene in such a gathering and is considered quite rude. Lady Dashingham also defiantly notices their departure and easily guesses as to its nature...

### *What is really going on*

Lady Dashingham is a servant of Dantallon, and begun this ritual as a way to claim soul energy for her lord. Each person she marks in the ritual offers a little piece of their soul to Dantallon if they later gamble on the horse Lady Dashingham has picked. Their greed forms a channel the magic uses to steal their essence. Lady Dashingham has picked a horse that she knows will win because she has already used demonic sorcery to make sure it does.

However, things got complicated when her husband began to notice how much these soirées added to their standing in society. Being the centre

## LADY ELEANOR DASHINGHAM

The true evil behind the curtain is Lady Eleanor, a charming and black-hearted villainess and Demonologist. Her service to the Lord of Greed has granted her power and position, which she uses to glorify her master. There is no depravity to which she will not sink, but she would never be seen to do it herself. Lady Eleanor is elegant and charming; playing the 'little wife' extremely well, even though she is really the one in charge.

### *Lady Eleanor Dashingham - Rank 12 Mistress of Demonology (Focussed)*

Physical Competence: +6

Mental Competence: +9

Initiative: 11

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)

Signature Skills: Act +3, Athletics +2, Charm +4, Dance +2, Demonology +4, Etiquette +3, Fashion +2, Firearms +2, High Society +3, Intimidate +2, Lore +2, Perception +4, Politics +3, Streetwise +1

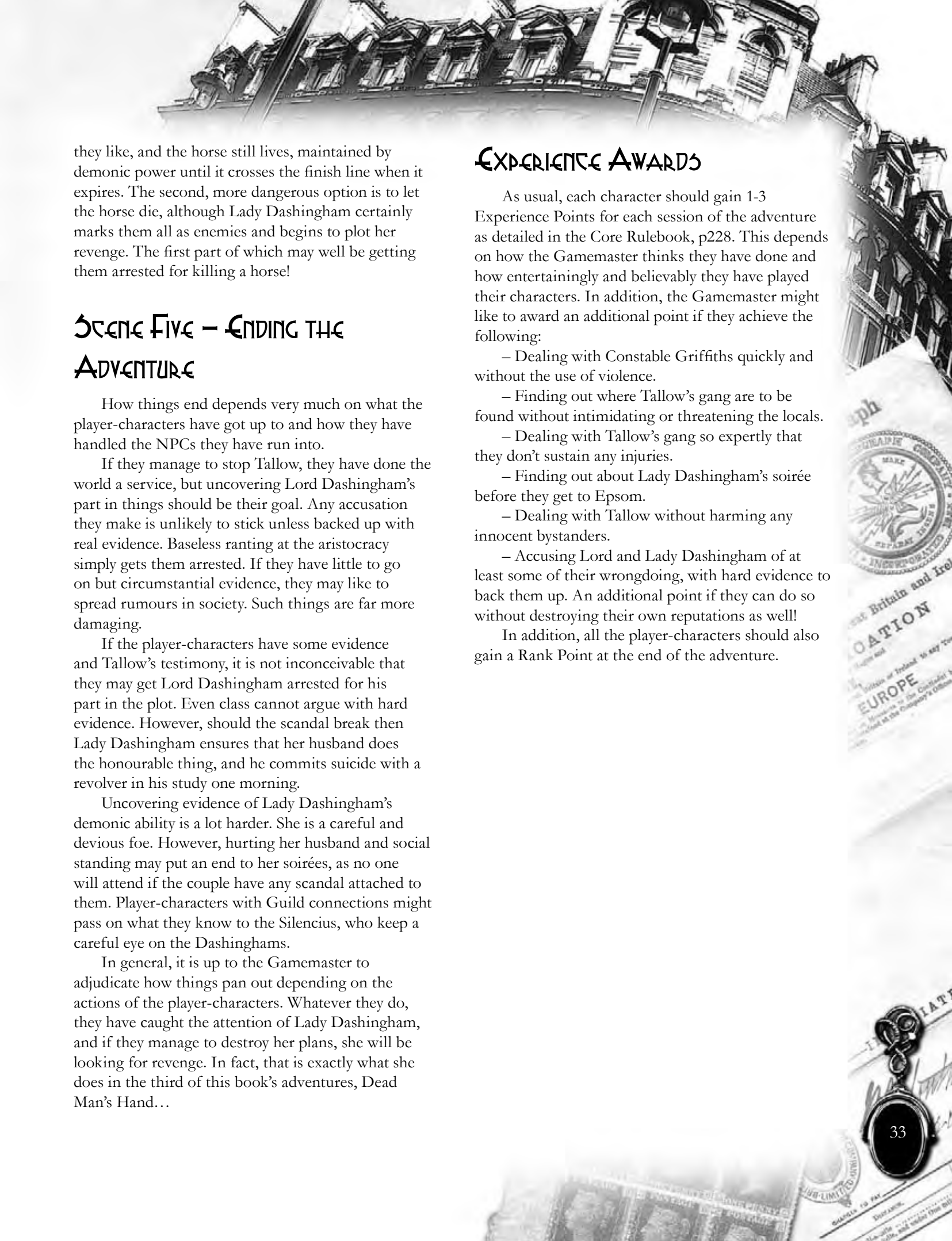
Traits: Graceful +2, Devious +4, Apparently Unthreatening +4

Special Abilities: Demonology spells – Ether Ribbons, Ethereal Cloak, Protected Domain, Whispering Colours, Fleeting Messenger, Summon First Circle Demon

Combat Abilities: She uses her spells if cornered, but prefers to put other people between her and harm's way.

of attention makes you important and he very much enjoys the reputation he and Lady Dashingham are acquiring. However, not being aware of his wife's demonic power he has become paranoid that it will all end when her luck runs out. So, he has gone to a remarkable amount of trouble hiring Tallow and finding the green liquid to make sure her horse wins. The irony of it all is that no matter what the player-characters do, the horse still wins. If they have worked hard trying to stop Tallow, the look on your player's faces should be priceless as you describe Lady Dashingham's horse crossing the finishing line first! The player-characters might go as far as trying to kill the horse. In which case, the Gamemaster has two options. The first is to allow them to try anything





they like, and the horse still lives, maintained by demonic power until it crosses the finish line when it expires. The second, more dangerous option is to let the horse die, although Lady Dashingham certainly marks them all as enemies and begins to plot her revenge. The first part of which may well be getting them arrested for killing a horse!

## SCENE FIVE – ENDING THE ADVENTURE

How things end depends very much on what the player-characters have got up to and how they have handled the NPCs they have run into.

If they manage to stop Tallow, they have done the world a service, but uncovering Lord Dashingham's part in things should be their goal. Any accusation they make is unlikely to stick unless backed up with real evidence. Baseless ranting at the aristocracy simply gets them arrested. If they have little to go on but circumstantial evidence, they may like to spread rumours in society. Such things are far more damaging.

If the player-characters have some evidence and Tallow's testimony, it is not inconceivable that they may get Lord Dashingham arrested for his part in the plot. Even class cannot argue with hard evidence. However, should the scandal break then Lady Dashingham ensures that her husband does the honourable thing, and he commits suicide with a revolver in his study one morning.

Uncovering evidence of Lady Dashingham's demonic ability is a lot harder. She is a careful and devious foe. However, hurting her husband and social standing may put an end to her soirées, as no one will attend if the couple have any scandal attached to them. Player-characters with Guild connections might pass on what they know to the Silencius, who keep a careful eye on the Dashinghams.

In general, it is up to the Gamemaster to adjudicate how things pan out depending on the actions of the player-characters. Whatever they do, they have caught the attention of Lady Dashingham, and if they manage to destroy her plans, she will be looking for revenge. In fact, that is exactly what she does in the third of this book's adventures, *Dead Man's Hand*...

## EXPERIENCE AWARDS

As usual, each character should gain 1-3 Experience Points for each session of the adventure as detailed in the Core Rulebook, p228. This depends on how the Gamemaster thinks they have done and how entertainingly and believably they have played their characters. In addition, the Gamemaster might like to award an additional point if they achieve the following:

- Dealing with Constable Griffiths quickly and without the use of violence.
- Finding out where Tallow's gang are to be found without intimidating or threatening the locals.
- Dealing with Tallow's gang so expertly that they don't sustain any injuries.
- Finding out about Lady Dashingham's soirée before they get to Epsom.
- Dealing with Tallow without harming any innocent bystanders.
- Accusing Lord and Lady Dashingham of at least some of their wrongdoing, with hard evidence to back them up. An additional point if they can do so without destroying their own reputations as well!

In addition, all the player-characters should also gain a Rank Point at the end of the adventure.



# APPENDIX— HORSE-RACING IN VICTORIANA

Hors racing has been a popular pursuit of the upper classes in England for a very long time. It is believed that around 200AD Roman soldiers stationed in what would become Yorkshire began the sport. However, the first recorded race meetings were in the 12th century during the reign of Henry II in Smithfield, London.

Since that time, horseracing has only grown, quickly becoming a sport associated with the gentry and upper echelons of society. By the 19th century, it is already established as ‘the sport of kings’ with many prestigious race events established as important social events rather than sporting ones.

Most racecourses follow a similar layout to Epsom as described in *Lost Luggage*. The course itself takes up most of the area and is delineated by a simple fence. Spectators can gather anywhere they like around the course, although the best positions are around the winning post. As few courses are a full circle, the start of the race may be quite some distance from the finishing line. Enthusiasts who want to see the start and the finish of a race might watch from inside the curve of the track rather than outside it. This allows them to watch the start and then run across the centre of the course to see the horses get to the finish line.

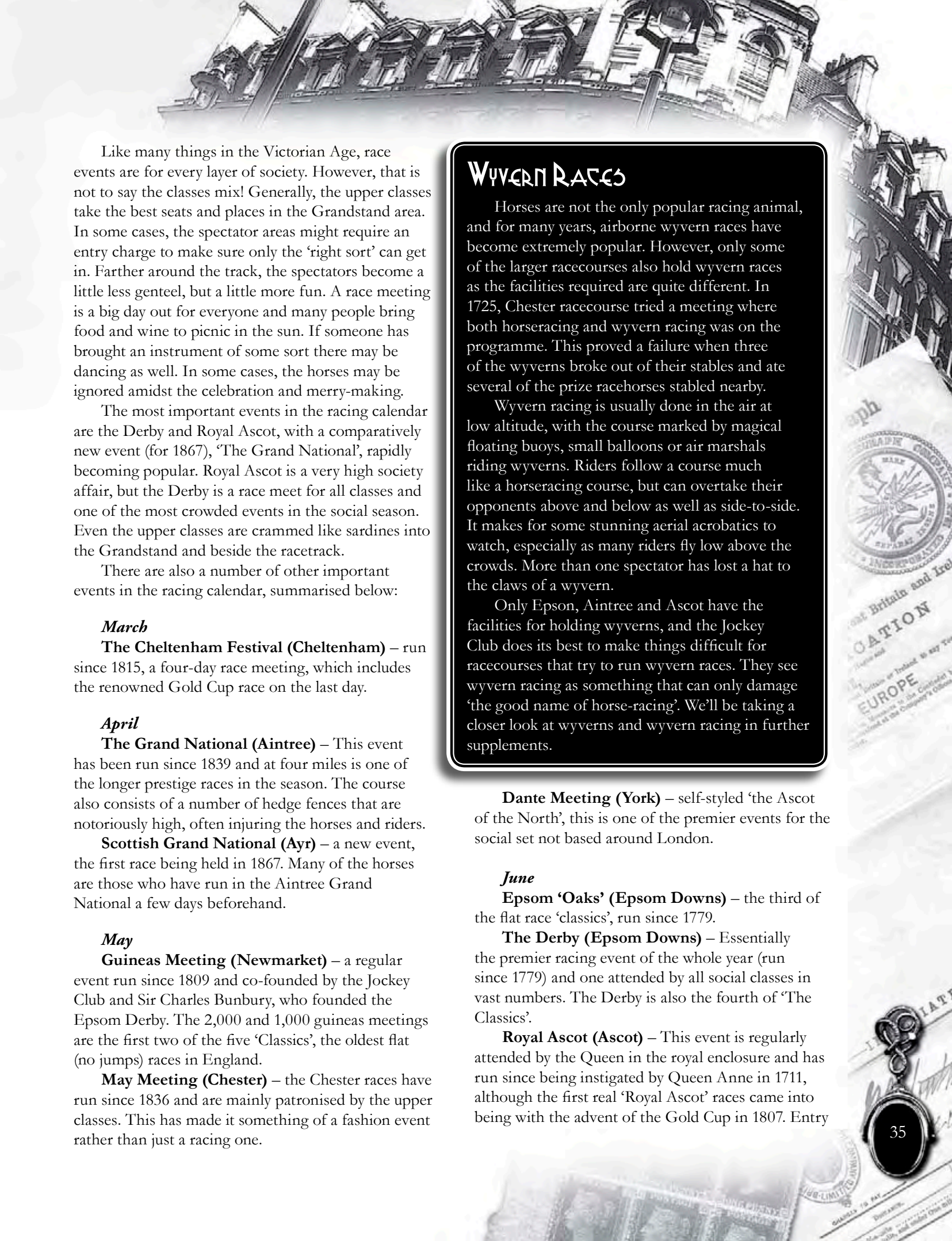
Since the main spectator positions are by the finish line, this is where the Grandstand is usually situated. The grandeur of the grandstand depends very much on the course in question. However, the wealth of the Victorian Age has allowed most courses to build quite large Grandstands or improve what

they already have. Many are not simply seating stands, but they also afford refreshments and opportunities to bet as well as shelter from the unpredictable British weather.

The horses themselves are often kept well away from the public areas. However, they are brought down for each race early so they might be paraded around the Paddock. This small fenced-in area allows spectators to take a look at a horse they intend to bet on and make a more informed decision. However, the public are not allowed to do anything more than observe the horses from the fence.

Race events are governed by ‘The Jockey Club’, which was founded around 1750 by a ‘group of gentlemen’ who wanted to set down some solid rules and standards for racing. These ‘gentlemen’ were not simply enthusiasts, but were well-regarded figures in the business of racing, granting their new group a lot of shared power in the sport. The society began meeting in Pall Mall and soon established a permanent office for itself at Newmarket racecourse; it now maintains its own offices in London as well. The Jockey Club has swiftly risen to power as the arbiter of racing standards and the regulator of English racing, mainly due to the individual power its small actual membership wields in the sport. The Jockey Club will remain the governing power in racing until 1993 when it will hand power over to the more publically accountable British Horseracing Board, although it remains involved in racing to this day.





Like many things in the Victorian Age, race events are for every layer of society. However, that is not to say the classes mix! Generally, the upper classes take the best seats and places in the Grandstand area. In some cases, the spectator areas might require an entry charge to make sure only the 'right sort' can get in. Farther around the track, the spectators become a little less genteel, but a little more fun. A race meeting is a big day out for everyone and many people bring food and wine to picnic in the sun. If someone has brought an instrument of some sort there may be dancing as well. In some cases, the horses may be ignored amidst the celebration and merry-making.

The most important events in the racing calendar are the Derby and Royal Ascot, with a comparatively new event (for 1867), 'The Grand National', rapidly becoming popular. Royal Ascot is a very high society affair, but the Derby is a race meet for all classes and one of the most crowded events in the social season. Even the upper classes are crammed like sardines into the Grandstand and beside the racetrack.

There are also a number of other important events in the racing calendar, summarised below:

### *March*

**The Cheltenham Festival (Cheltenham)** – run since 1815, a four-day race meeting, which includes the renowned Gold Cup race on the last day.

### *April*

**The Grand National (Aintree)** – This event has been run since 1839 and at four miles is one of the longer prestige races in the season. The course also consists of a number of hedge fences that are notoriously high, often injuring the horses and riders.

**Scottish Grand National (Ayr)** – a new event, the first race being held in 1867. Many of the horses are those who have run in the Aintree Grand National a few days beforehand.

### *May*

**Guineas Meeting (Newmarket)** – a regular event run since 1809 and co-founded by the Jockey Club and Sir Charles Bunbury, who founded the Epsom Derby. The 2,000 and 1,000 guineas meetings are the first two of the five 'Classics', the oldest flat (no jumps) races in England.

**May Meeting (Chester)** – the Chester races have run since 1836 and are mainly patronised by the upper classes. This has made it something of a fashion event rather than just a racing one.

## WYVERN RACES

Horses are not the only popular racing animal, and for many years, airborne wyvern races have become extremely popular. However, only some of the larger racecourses also hold wyvern races as the facilities required are quite different. In 1725, Chester racecourse tried a meeting where both horseracing and wyvern racing was on the programme. This proved a failure when three of the wyverns broke out of their stables and ate several of the prize racehorses stabled nearby.

Wyvern racing is usually done in the air at low altitude, with the course marked by magical floating buoys, small balloons or air marshals riding wyverns. Riders follow a course much like a horseracing course, but can overtake their opponents above and below as well as side-to-side. It makes for some stunning aerial acrobatics to watch, especially as many riders fly low above the crowds. More than one spectator has lost a hat to the claws of a wyvern.

Only Epsom, Aintree and Ascot have the facilities for holding wyverns, and the Jockey Club does its best to make things difficult for racecourses that try to run wyvern races. They see wyvern racing as something that can only damage 'the good name of horse-racing'. We'll be taking a closer look at wyverns and wyvern racing in further supplements.

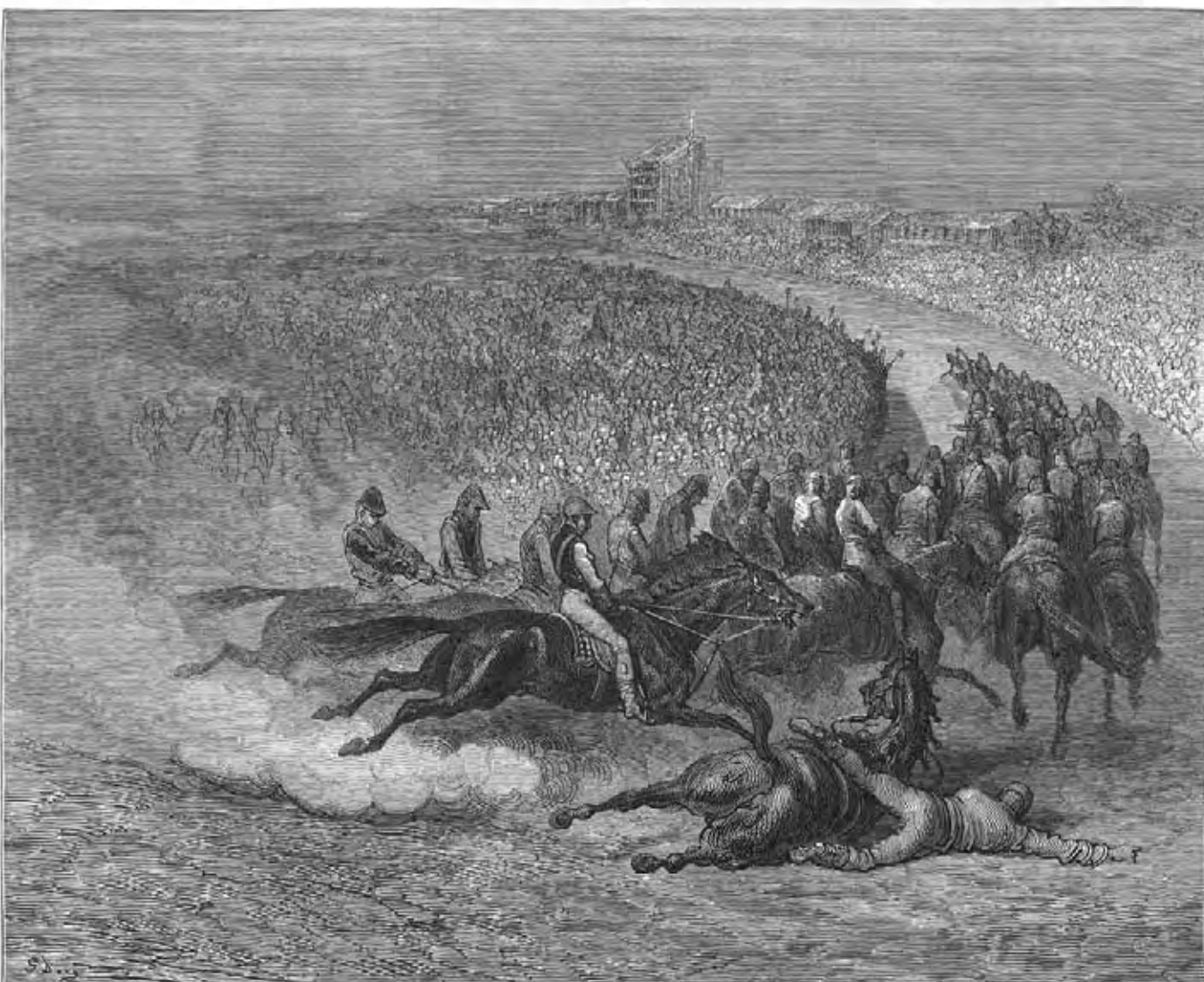
**Dante Meeting (York)** – self-styled 'the Ascot of the North', this is one of the premier events for the social set not based around London.

### *June*

**Epsom 'Oaks' (Epsom Downs)** – the third of the flat race 'classics', run since 1779.

**The Derby (Epsom Downs)** – Essentially the premier racing event of the whole year (run since 1779) and one attended by all social classes in vast numbers. The Derby is also the fourth of 'The Classics'.

**Royal Ascot (Ascot)** – This event is regularly attended by the Queen in the royal enclosure and has run since being instigated by Queen Anne in 1711, although the first real 'Royal Ascot' races came into being with the advent of the Gold Cup in 1807. Entry



[NOVEMBER 2]

DUPLICATIONS

COMPLEX SKIRTS

J. W. BRADLEY'S

CREATED

LATEST DUPLEX SKIRTS

(or Double Piping)

SKIRTS

SEE THE

FRANCE AND ENGLAND

each long being compared

to every other and with

signifying that they are

they are very flexible and

they are also

GEST AND SCOT'S

WORKS

They are made

FASHIONABLE AND

for

SECTION

PROMENADE

OPERA

CARRIAGE

STREET

at above are the most popular

introduces

At the

BY THE

WESTON

Office

Nov. 25

BE

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no. 11

EYE

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gravings

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of 1821

of the

little

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original

300-404-170-101

after

and

JOS. GILLOTT

OF THE GOLD STANDARD

TRADE-MARK

JOSEPH

GILLOTT

Warranted

of the

Scotch

Warranted

to the royal enclosure requires a strict and very formal dress code. The attendance of royalty, and an array of high fashions, means that often the social event far overshadows the racing one.

**July**

**July Meeting (Newmarket)** – the first event of the venerable Newmarket yearly seasons.

**Goodwood Cup (Goodwood)** – ‘Glorious Goodwood’ is a venerable fixture run since 1808.

**August**

**Ebor Festival (York)** – run since 1840 this event ensures the northerners don’t miss all the racing each season. The premier event of the year for the prestigious York racecourse.

**September**

**St. Leger Stakes (Doncaster)** – the last of the five ‘classics’ to be run each year, and somewhat of an epilogue rather than a major event. Named after its instigator, who began the fixture in 1776.

**Western Meeting (Ayr)** – one of the northernmost meetings of the calendar, but also one of the oldest.

**October**

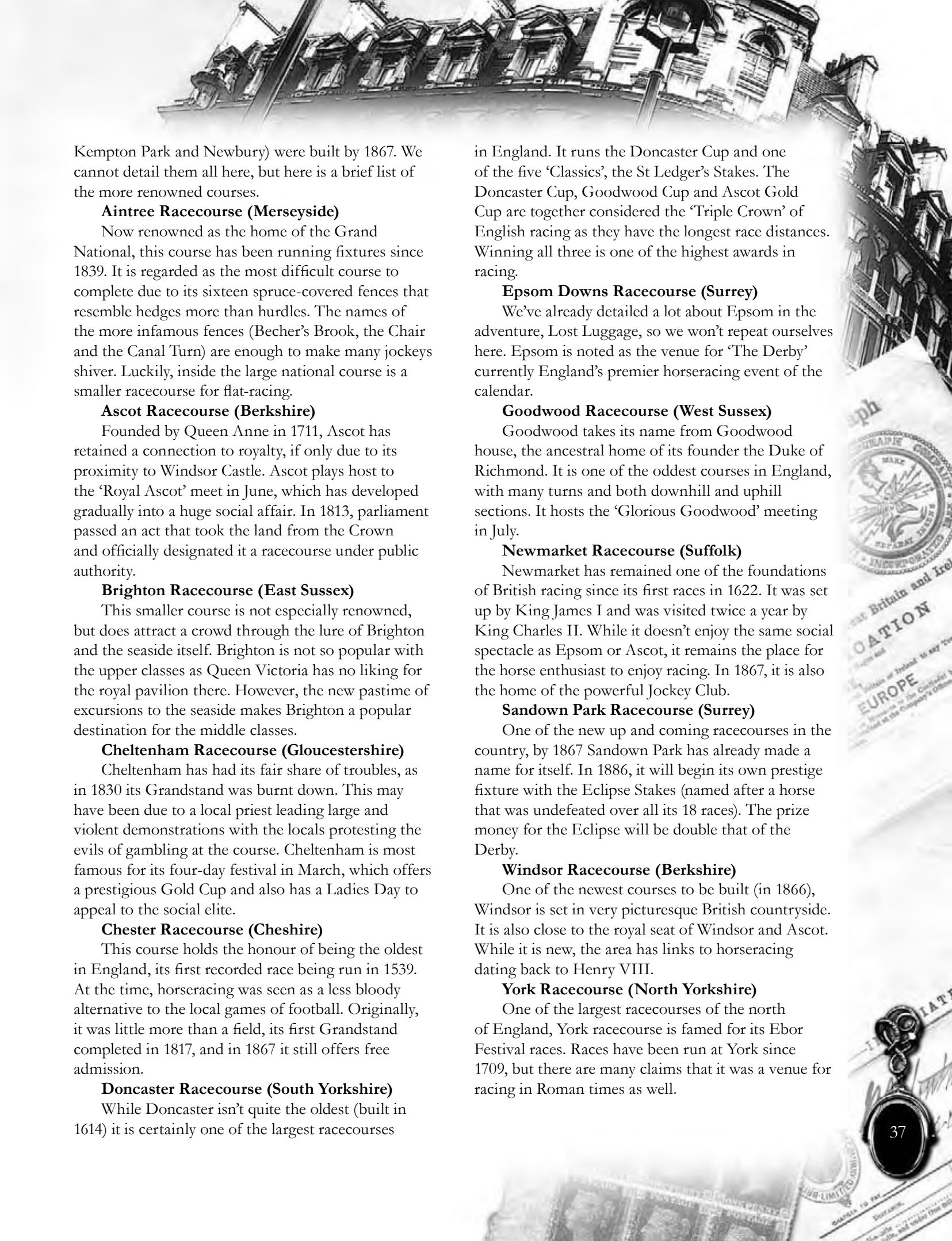
**October Meeting (Newmarket)** – the second of the two main meetings at Newmarket

**Racecourses**

There are a growing number of racecourses across the British Isles, more than fifty in fact. However, not all of the most famous racecourses of today (such as







Kempton Park and Newbury) were built by 1867. We cannot detail them all here, but here is a brief list of the more renowned courses.

#### **Aintree Racecourse (Merseyside)**

Now renowned as the home of the Grand National, this course has been running fixtures since 1839. It is regarded as the most difficult course to complete due to its sixteen spruce-covered fences that resemble hedges more than hurdles. The names of the more infamous fences (Becher's Brook, the Chair and the Canal Turn) are enough to make many jockeys shiver. Luckily, inside the large national course is a smaller racecourse for flat-racing.

#### **Ascot Racecourse (Berkshire)**

Founded by Queen Anne in 1711, Ascot has retained a connection to royalty, if only due to its proximity to Windsor Castle. Ascot plays host to the 'Royal Ascot' meet in June, which has developed gradually into a huge social affair. In 1813, parliament passed an act that took the land from the Crown and officially designated it a racecourse under public authority.

#### **Brighton Racecourse (East Sussex)**

This smaller course is not especially renowned, but does attract a crowd through the lure of Brighton and the seaside itself. Brighton is not so popular with the upper classes as Queen Victoria has no liking for the royal pavilion there. However, the new pastime of excursions to the seaside makes Brighton a popular destination for the middle classes.

#### **Cheltenham Racecourse (Gloucestershire)**

Cheltenham has had its fair share of troubles, as in 1830 its Grandstand was burnt down. This may have been due to a local priest leading large and violent demonstrations with the locals protesting the evils of gambling at the course. Cheltenham is most famous for its four-day festival in March, which offers a prestigious Gold Cup and also has a Ladies Day to appeal to the social elite.

#### **Chester Racecourse (Cheshire)**

This course holds the honour of being the oldest in England, its first recorded race being run in 1539. At the time, horseracing was seen as a less bloody alternative to the local games of football. Originally, it was little more than a field, its first Grandstand completed in 1817, and in 1867 it still offers free admission.

#### **Doncaster Racecourse (South Yorkshire)**

While Doncaster isn't quite the oldest (built in 1614) it is certainly one of the largest racecourses

in England. It runs the Doncaster Cup and one of the five 'Classics', the St Ledger's Stakes. The Doncaster Cup, Goodwood Cup and Ascot Gold Cup are together considered the 'Triple Crown' of English racing as they have the longest race distances. Winning all three is one of the highest awards in racing.

#### **Epsom Downs Racecourse (Surrey)**

We've already detailed a lot about Epsom in the adventure, Lost Luggage, so we won't repeat ourselves here. Epsom is noted as the venue for 'The Derby' currently England's premier horseracing event of the calendar.

#### **Goodwood Racecourse (West Sussex)**

Goodwood takes its name from Goodwood house, the ancestral home of its founder the Duke of Richmond. It is one of the oddest courses in England, with many turns and both downhill and uphill sections. It hosts the 'Glorious Goodwood' meeting in July.

#### **Newmarket Racecourse (Suffolk)**

Newmarket has remained one of the foundations of British racing since its first races in 1622. It was set up by King James I and was visited twice a year by King Charles II. While it doesn't enjoy the same social spectacle as Epsom or Ascot, it remains the place for the horse enthusiast to enjoy racing. In 1867, it is also the home of the powerful Jockey Club.

#### **Sandown Park Racecourse (Surrey)**

One of the new up and coming racecourses in the country, by 1867 Sandown Park has already made a name for itself. In 1886, it will begin its own prestige fixture with the Eclipse Stakes (named after a horse that was undefeated over all its 18 races). The prize money for the Eclipse will be double that of the Derby.

#### **Windsor Racecourse (Berkshire)**

One of the newest courses to be built (in 1866), Windsor is set in very picturesque British countryside. It is also close to the royal seat of Windsor and Ascot. While it is new, the area has links to horseracing dating back to Henry VIII.

#### **York Racecourse (North Yorkshire)**

One of the largest racecourses of the north of England, York racecourse is famed for its Ebor Festival races. Races have been run at York since 1709, but there are many claims that it was a venue for racing in Roman times as well.



CHAPTER TWO

BEHOLD,  
THE VALIANT ONES  
SHALL CRY

*In which a trip across the ocean in the most august company becomes a fight for survival in the skies.*



# ACT 1

## YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

*"Have you seen who else is going to be on board, my dear? It looks like we're going to have to behave ourselves."*  
- Lady Susanna Havering

In this adventure, the characters are invited on the trip of a lifetime aboard the new airship the *Valiant Rose*. However, plenty of plots are being laid around this historical voyage which threaten to drag the player-characters into their web. As many of the NPCs in this adventure are posing as something else or manipulating events, the Gamemaster should read their true natures detailed with their descriptions at the end of the adventure for an overview.

### SCENE ONE – THE TALK OF THE TOWN

It is a pleasant day and the Havering family are sitting in their drawing room taking morning tea. The Gamemaster should allow the players a little time to get into character, possibly relating some of their recent exploits. Once the scene is established, there is a knock at the door. One of the maids (a common, but polite girl of 16 called Sally), comes into the room with a curtsy and announces that a messenger has just delivered a letter for Nathaniel. Sally may remark that the messenger in question was very well turned out, suggesting he was on an errand from a very well-to-do employer. The letter is an invitation and is handwritten on very expensive paper.

Any player-character that can succeed in an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + High Society roll recognises the name. Sir Peter is a renowned shipping mogul, and a

#### HAMPSON'S LETTER

*Sir,*

*You are hereby cordially invited to witness the event of a lifetime first-hand, the Christening ceremony and maiden voyage of the pride of the Hampson Line, the airship 'Valiant Rose'! A lady of great import and regal bearing shall be launching the ship, so you will appreciate that we may require certain formalities and arrangements for the security of our royal guest. The launch ceremony is to be followed by a celebration meal and then you and your party shall board the Valiant Rose for her maiden flight. The flight will cross the Atlantic Ocean in six days to arrive in New York where after another two days we will be pleased to return all our guests to London.*

*RSVP*

*Yours,*

*Sir Peter Hampson, CBE*

personal friend of Nathaniel and Jonathan's father, who was once his partner before setting up his own business.

No roll is required to have heard of the *Valiant Rose*, the largest and most luxurious airship ever constructed. The player-characters would have been lucky to see her from afar, let alone be present for her maiden flight. This promises to be the social event of the decade and anyone who is anyone in the elite aristocratic circles is likely to be attending the launch of this, the most

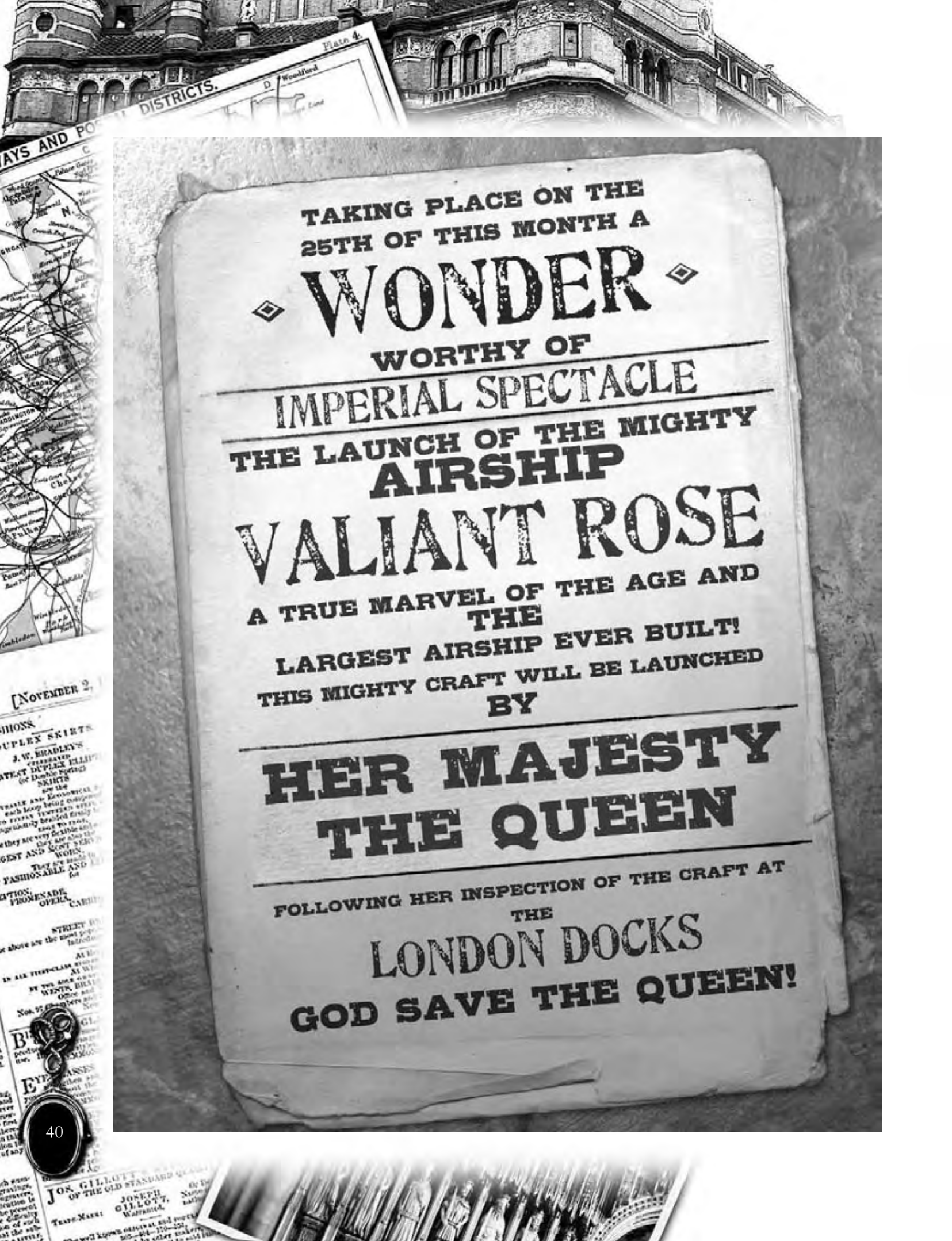


Plate 4  
DISTRICTS.

AYS AND PO



[NOVEMBER 2,

IONS  
PLEX SKIRTS  
J. W. BRADLEY'S  
CREATED  
LATEST DUPLEX ELLIPTICAL  
(or Double Rippled)  
SKIRTS  
See the  
TRADE AND ECONOMICAL  
each being being designed  
to resist tearing and  
significantly better than  
they are very flexible and  
they are also the  
BEST AND MOST SILENT  
WORK  
They are made to  
FASHIONABLE AND  
for  
SECTION  
FRENCH  
OPERA  
CARRIAGE

STREET  
at above are the most popular  
introduced  
At the  
IN ALL STEEL-CLAM  
BY THE  
WENTIN BRADLEY  
Office and  
Nos. 95 and 96  
B  
GILLOTT  
EYE  
GLASSES



TAKING PLACE ON THE  
25TH OF THIS MONTH A

◇ **WONDER** ◇

WORTHY OF  
**IMPERIAL SPECTACLE**

THE LAUNCH OF THE MIGHTY  
**AIRSHIP**

**VALIANT ROSE**

A TRUE MARVEL OF THE AGE AND  
**THE**  
LARGEST AIRSHIP EVER BUILT!  
THIS MIGHTY CRAFT WILL BE LAUNCHED  
BY

**HER MAJESTY  
THE QUEEN**

FOLLOWING HER INSPECTION OF THE CRAFT AT  
**THE**


**LONDON DOCKS**

**GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!**

JON GILLOTT  
OF THE OLD STANDARD  
TRADE MARK  
JOSEPH GILLOTT  
Warranted  
We will know ourselves and yours  
305-311-170-151  
the other trade  
the other trade







illustrious airship yet built. Even then, only a few of those lucky enough to be invited to the launch ceremony will actually be privileged enough to be permitted to board this luxury aircraft and travel aboard on her maiden voyage to the Americas.

The player-characters might wonder if there is more going on than simply luck and connections to get them such an invitation. They would be correct, but they won't discover why for quite some time. The Gamemaster should be happy to feed their paranoia as she sees fit, especially as this is not an event they are able to attend armed.

There has been a great deal of buzz in social circles about the *Valiant Rose*, especially its size and expense, and it is a great honour for the characters to have been chosen to be among the select few passengers who are to be aboard for her maiden voyage. This new airship is no 'fly by night' thing and it is a great and prestigious honour to be selected to travel alongside some of the most wealthy and famous in the land. There are rumours that even blue-blooded aristocracy from Europe are having trouble getting invites to this event.

The launch ceremony is not until the end of the week so the characters have enough time to conduct their normal day-to-day business and get their affairs in order before the big day arrives. The Gamemaster should let the players have their characters do what they wish during this time, such as shopping for new clothes. If the players have no desire to do anything before the big day, the Gamemaster can skip to the next scene.

If the player-characters want to investigate the invitation and the Hampson Line, they have plenty of time to do so. The Gamemaster might like to remind them that getting caught ransacking the Hampson Line's offices is a good way to get their invitations revoked! However, they are free to ask around after Hampson Line and the *Valiant Rose* at their club or through other contacts, or even from the Hampson offices should they personally deliver their reply to the invitation. Should they choose to investigate, the following information is easily available.

### ***The Hampson Line***

The Hampson Line is a very successful business that has been trading since 1756. Its offices have always been in London's Docklands, although they have expanded considerably as its fortunes have risen. The company is run by a board of eight directors,

## **IF YOU ARE NOT USING THE HAVERINGS**

If you are using your own group of characters, you need to find a reason for them to be invited on the voyage. If you have a good crop of upper class characters, one of them might easily have the contacts to be sent such an invitation. If you have wealthy middle class characters in the group, who have connections in the shipping industry, they might get an invitation for the same reasons as the Haverings do. The only problems arise if the group are exclusively lower class. They are certainly not going to be invited aboard as guests.

In which case you should begin the adventure with a small scene where the player-characters rescue Sir Peter Hampson from a gang of street thugs. This can also be used as an alternative opening for a mixed group, or just if you feel you need a bit more action to open the scenario. He has decided to go for a stroll in the wrong part of the city and is set upon by ne'er-do-wells. If any of the player-characters are gentry, he might then offer them an invitation as thanks. However, if they are all lower class, he offers them passage as crew, promising it will be good work and an amazing experience. The adventure continues in much the same way, but with the player-characters working as crew rather than mingling with the guests. The same opportunities exist for them to be called on for their assistance, as Sir Peter makes it known to those he trusts that they can be counted on in a crisis.

chaired by Sir Peter Hampson. Originally, the firm made its fortune in trade, especially with China and the Far East. It was one of several companies that pressured the government into starting the Opium Wars as much of its money was being made from the trade. Hampson's holdings in India brought it into conflict with the British East India Company, a battle the Hampson Line was not equipped to fight. While they were not forced to withdraw their influence, they realised there was a need to diversify. In 1858, they bought five steamships, which were refitted as passenger liners to take travellers to the Far East using the company's trade infrastructure. Aware they could not compete in bulk passenger transport with





other lines, Hampson decided to cater to the wealthy. Each of their passenger ships was designed to take few passengers, but make the journey an enjoyable experience in the company of wealthy peers. Many wealthy people needed to travel to India and China to manage their holdings. The Hampson Line offered rich middle class businessmen the opportunity to travel like the upper classes, and conspicuously display their new wealth. Ironically, the more the Hampson Line charged for their tickets, the more popular they became. Prestige passenger transport has now become the mainstay of the Hampson Line's business. They are looking to expand their fleet and operate routes to America as well as their usual routes to the East. As a part of this, they have decided to risk putting vast sums into the construction of the *Valiant Rose*. Should the *Valiant Rose* fail to attract customers, it might spell the end of the company if rumours of the cost of the airship are to be believed.

If the player-characters really dig (with a Very Difficult (6 Black Dice) Wits + Streetwise/High Society roll) they may come across the rumour that the blueprints to the *Valiant Rose* have recently been stolen. The Hampson Line insists it is an ugly rumour started by their competitors; however, it is sadly true. If Sir Peter trusts the player-characters, he might share this information with them, and ask them to see if they can find some clue on the coming voyage. He believes that while the theft may be simply to learn the secrets of the *Valiant Rose*'s construction, it may also be for some nefarious plot against her maiden voyage. The plans were stolen by Bismarck's agents (Svenson and Spies – see page 61), who have the blueprints in their cabin. However, if Miss Boyd (see page 60) can get hold of them (as she too has heard rumours and is on the lookout for them), she can do a lot more damage with her explosives.

The *Valiant Rose* represents the pinnacle of airship engineering and design. The Hampson Line has spared no expense to make it safe, fast and well appointed. Their plan is to operate a fleet of five

airships like the *Valiant Rose*, built over the next ten years, if the *Valiant Rose* proves successful. The airship has been built in a facility in the Swale countryside in Kent.

As well as inquiring about the Hampson Line and the *Valiant Rose*, the characters may wish to equip themselves and prepare for the journey. Needless to say, they should not be tooling up for war, but they may want to go shopping nevertheless. The Gamemaster might take this opportunity for them to run across Mr Cooper, one of the eight directors of the Hampson Line, while out and about or while visiting the Hampson Line offices. Mr Cooper has been keeping an eye on them recently and may welcome an opportunity to make contact. He is extremely personable and charming, happy to share his excitement about the forthcoming trip. He hints that he will need their assistance later on. However, they meet him soon enough if not now.

## SCENE TWO – AN ELEGANT SOIRÉE

At the end of the week, the day of the launch arrives. A carriage is sent for the Haverings courtesy of the Hampson Line, which takes them to the Hampson Line's offices at the London docks. The streets for miles leading to the docks are lined with throngs of cheering everyday people, many of whom are waving flags and most are in their Sunday best clothes. There is bunting draped over the streets and as the characters' carriage approaches the docks, the sound of music can clearly be heard wafting down towards them. Many ordinary people have come to enjoy the spectacle of the *Valiant Rose*, other more affluent people are green with envy that they cannot make the trip. The Gamemaster should allow the player-characters to bask in the 'red carpet' treatment, waving to the crowds and posing for photographs as part of the elite taking the trip. After walking down the red carpet, the player-characters enter the main offices of the Hampson Line with a glitz of fanfare from the band standing ready in the wings.

The characters are ushered from their carriage across the red carpet to the entrance of the Hampson Line offices. There are no searches for weapons or the like, but the Gamemaster should warn the players they had best be very careful and discrete about

### THE VALIANT ROSE

- Length: 882 ft
- Beam: 92 ft
- Height: 175 ft
- Crew: 130 (50 operational, 80 passenger service)
- Passengers: 400 standard or 100 first class





## CELEBRITIES

The Gamemaster should allow herself to be self-indulgent and populate the rooms with several famous characters. While most of the guests are simply the wealthy or the social elite, there are a few celebrities among the crowd. Quite a few have been invited to the reception, but are not taking the journey to America.

**Charles Darwin** – is a controversial figure in 1867, but ironically not nearly as controversial as his work is today! His *Origin of Species* was published in 1859, so by 1867 the initial storm of controversy has blown over. Mr Darwin is not taking the voyage as he is not in good health.

**Charles Dickens** – is loudly holding court in one of the rooms, and doing so most entertainingly. Many of the guests ask him for renditions from some of his novels. Mr Dickens is about to embark on a reading tour of the States so is taking the voyage. However, underneath his bravado he is extremely nervous, having been involved in a terrible train accident only last year.

**Isambard Brunwell** – is conspicuous by his absence. He claims he cannot spare the time as he is in the process of overseeing the construction of the SS *Great Britain* in Bristol. However, many believe he is sour he had no part in the construction of the *Valiant Rose*. In our world, the SS *Great Britain* was constructed before the *Great Eastern*, but in Victoriana the *Great Britain* will be Brunwell's greatest ship, far mightier than its real world counterpart.

**Sir Richard Francis Burton** – the noted adventurer received an invitation, but he is in Brazil working for the diplomatic corps. Sir Peter had hoped to convince him to visit England to take the flight and tell of his past exploits. Sadly, Burton is quite happy staying in one place these days; his greatest adventures behind him, he has earned a rest.

**Christina Rosetti** – the noted poet is being escorted by her brother, the renowned pre-Raphaelite painter, Dante Gabriel Rosetti. Christina is the most respected female poet of the time since the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1861. Christina is quite an intense young woman and would be considered a feminist by today's standards. She is also very opposed to slavery and cruelty to animals. Her brother, who she addresses as Gabriel, has little conversation beyond his current obsession, wombats. Both the Rosettis are taking the voyage, and are hoping the journey in the clouds will inspire them with new projects.

Wealthy and landed gentry (including the eight directors of the Hampson Line) make small talk with socialites, and artists talk about current trends and pastimes with lords. It seems that the room is filled with a 'Who's Who' of the social elite.





## ART IN THE RECEPTION ROOMS

The art on display in the reception rooms might prove a useful talking point for the characters to break the ice with the various NPCs in attendance. So we recommend the Gamemaster finds a few examples of paintings online that she can print out and hand to the players, so the players can see what their characters are looking at. Several of the NPCs are enjoying the paintings and they might ask them for their opinion if the player characters aren't mingling very much. Artists the Gamemaster should consider looking for are: Claude Monet, James Jacques Tissot, Frank Holl or William Powell Frith. Other renowned artists of the time are listed in the appendix in the Core Rulebook.

carrying weapons. The Hampson Line offices are a very large building that looks almost out of place at the dockside. It is a reasonably new construction, but looks more suited to a street in Whitehall than the working docks of the city of London. As well as housing the Hampson Line's business offices, the building has a series of reception rooms designed purely for entertaining dignitaries. They are so well appointed, and conveniently placed near the Thames, that on occasion the Government has hired these rooms to host gatherings for foreign leaders. Four reception rooms surround a main ballroom that can be set out as a dining room. The reception rooms are all open to the player-characters, and all the connecting doors have been opened to allow guests to move freely around them. All the rooms are elegantly lined in expensive wood panelling and have an abundant selection of sofas, chairs and chaise longue. Each room also has a collection of very expensive paintings on display, making it a joy to walk around the rooms taking a look at the art on display. However, if art does not impress the player-characters, they may be pleased to see that a selection of very fine brandies and other liquors are available in every room. For the sake of the ladies, gentlemen are only allowed to smoke in one of the rooms, which also offers some excellent cigars for those who wish to partake.

If the player-characters have not met Mr Cooper previously in the adventure, now is a good time to introduce the character to them. Sir Peter likely introduces him along with the other members of the Hampson Line board of directors. Sir Peter is

spending a lot of his time introducing the board to the assembled guests and celebrities. If they have already met, Mr Cooper might approach the player-characters himself. When he meets them, Mr Cooper smiles warmly at the characters as he extends his hand, and grips with a strength that defies his thin and gaunt stature. Obviously, the man hasn't worked in an office all his life and isn't one for not getting his hands dirty.

Mr Cooper is extremely well dressed with impeccable manners and seems to be very enamoured with any of the female members of the party, though makes conversation with all of the player-characters. He is also very keen on what they have to say about the current world events or the party itself. However, after a little small talk, he tells the player-characters, conspiratorially, that he is the one responsible for ensuring they were invited on this trip. He has heard they have proved able to 'deal with sensitive problems with discretion'. He has concerns about the security of the voyage and wants them to keep on their guard. While he could call on the police, he doesn't want to arouse suspicion or provoke any potential scandal for this important voyage. If questioned he simply says there seems to be a lot of shady characters involved in the voyage and he wants someone on board who can keep an eye on things. Actually, this is a lie. The only danger Mr Cooper knows of to the player-characters is Mr Cooper himself. He is toying with them for his own enjoyment, and savouring every moment.

Generally, Mr Cooper is most polite, though eventually makes his excuses before the main event begins and crosses over the room to speak with one of the other guests, a very beautiful-looking young woman. After his behaviour with the ladies in the party, it is unlikely this will appear suspicious!

### *Lunch is Served*

The merriment continues unabated for two hours until the guests are cordially invited into the dining room for a formal lunch. As they enter the splendid ballroom (now furnished as a dining room with a long table), the player-characters notice a very ornate looking chair at the head of the table with what appears to be a royal crest. The guests are all invited to take their places at the large banqueting table where they find themselves sat together near the middle of the table. While the characters are separated so they might talk to other guests, they are close enough to converse across the table. They are



## SEPARATING THE ROOMS

If the Gamemaster wants to add more flavour and interaction to the adventure, she might give each of the four reception rooms a slightly different style of occupant. Several groups have clustered together creating a mood for each of the areas, even though everyone is free to go where they wish.

**Room 1 – The Host's Room.** As the first room the guests arrive in, either the host or hostess (Sir Peter or his wife, Rebecca) can be found in attendance here at all times. The conversation is a little lacking here as the room is mostly full of people a little too timid to dive into the social whirl; often this might be a young lady with an elderly chaperone. The host and hostess are very talkative, but never remain with any guest longer than a few moments.

**Room 2 – The Ladies' Room.** With the sunlight coming directly through this room, it has the best view and the lightest atmosphere. It is also far from the smoking room so the wives of the smokers have all gathered here. Many are discussing the latest fashions, but plenty are also discussing gossip and their husbands. This sort of conversation is either fascinating or tedious depending on each character.

**Room 3 – The Art Room.** As it contains some of the more contemporary paintings, as well as some of the more famous works, the artistic set (mostly bohemian young men) has gravitated here. Most people are discussing the paintings or what they think of art in the modern world, in general. Some of the conversations are getting quite heated.

**Room 4 – The Smoking Room.** This room is covered in a thick layer of cigar smoke even though the windows are open. The room is a little chilly as the sea air is blowing in. The occupants of the room are all men enjoying cigars (which would be inappropriate for a lady). If one of the female player-characters decided to join the smokers, she gains a lot of attention; however, her social reputation suffers unless she is already an American. The men are all talking in a tedious way about their various businesses and networking furiously with each other.

seated alternately male and female and may be placed near some of the more famous guests. Only upper or middle class characters and their guests are invited to the meal, lower class characters are fed separately with the servants in a less formal arrangement near the kitchen. Good quality ale may well be involved...

When they are seated, the player-characters may notice the mysterious chair at the head of the table remains unoccupied. As the aroma of exquisite food washes over your palette and beings to make their mouths water, a very distinguished looking gentleman in military uniform stands at the far end of the main table and taps his wine glass with a silver spoon.

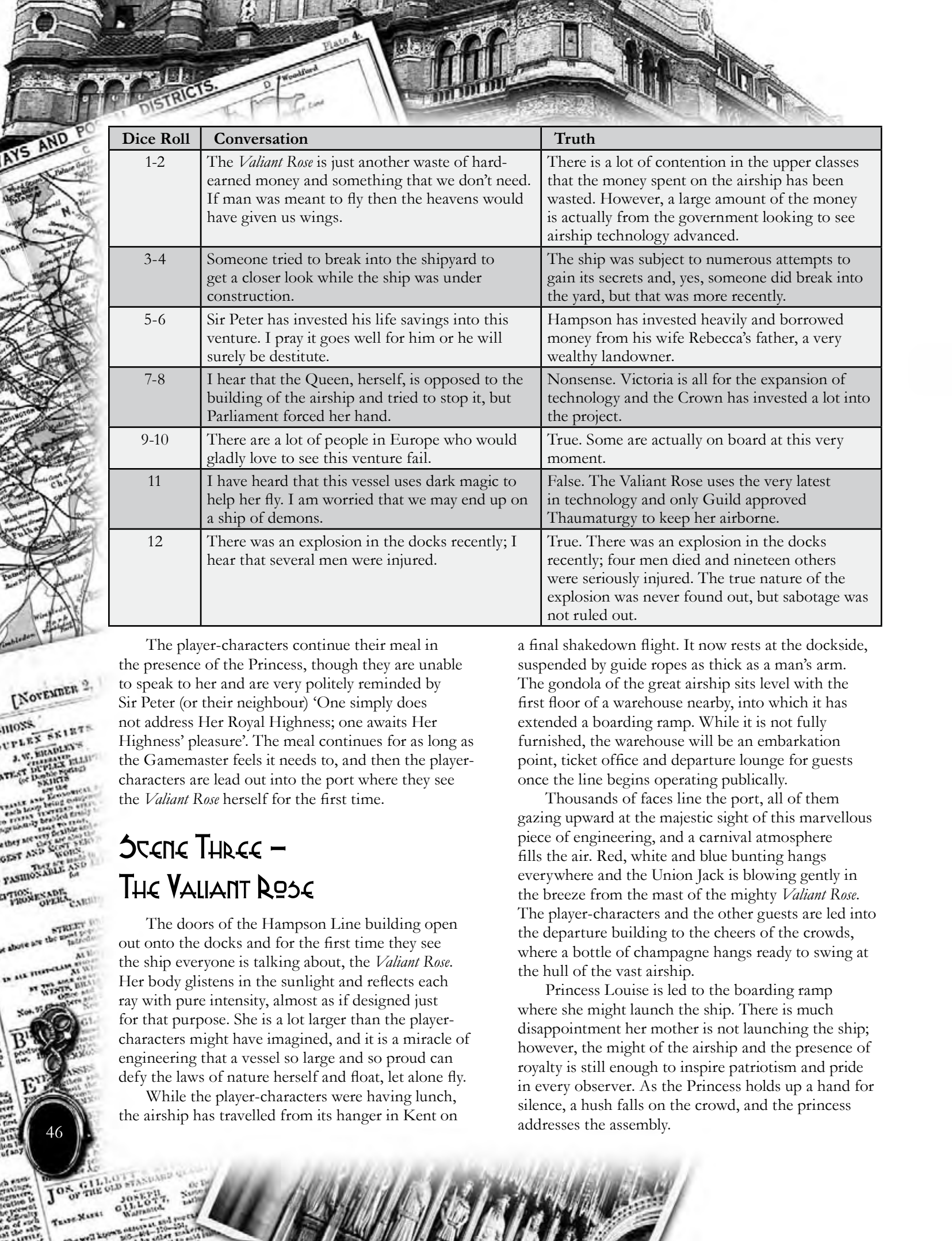
“My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, please rise for Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise.” As one, the entire room rises to their feet as the vast doorway opens and, flanked by her small entourage of attendants and servants in waiting, the regal figure of Victoria's fourth daughter, Louise, glides into the room. The Gamemaster should impress upon the players how incredible it is to be in the presence of the princess. She is a woman with a commanding presence and characters should be pretty much stunned to be in attendance. In 1867, the royal family are like movie stars. However, the player-characters

might catch some murmuring around the table as Princess Louise takes her seat at the table.

Before sitting, she addresses the assembly, “Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your warm reception. I thank Sir Peter for the opportunity to see this new wonder, and I bring my mother's apologies that she could not join us. She is sadly not well, although there is no cause for concern, and she has been advised to rest.” Louise is then seated as are the gathering and lunch is served.

Most of the gathering is rather annoyed at the appearance of the princess, as they were all expecting her mother. Few believe the story of Victoria's ill health, as the Queen has avoided royal engagements since the death of her husband. Sir Peter cannot admit to it, but he is rather slighted by her absence as the palace said the Queen would be able to launch the *Valiant Rose*. This last minute change has left him with egg on his face as the gathering was led to believe the Queen would be lunching with them. Having said that, Princess Louise is still a member of the royal family, and an important one too.

There is quite a bit of chitchat and conversation going on and characters can pick up on the following titbits, some of which are totally bogus. Roll 2D6 and consult the chart overleaf:



Dice Roll	Conversation	Truth
1-2	The <i>Valiant Rose</i> is just another waste of hard-earned money and something that we don't need. If man was meant to fly then the heavens would have given us wings.	There is a lot of contention in the upper classes that the money spent on the airship has been wasted. However, a large amount of the money is actually from the government looking to see airship technology advanced.
3-4	Someone tried to break into the shipyard to get a closer look while the ship was under construction.	The ship was subject to numerous attempts to gain its secrets and, yes, someone did break into the yard, but that was more recently.
5-6	Sir Peter has invested his life savings into this venture. I pray it goes well for him or he will surely be destitute.	Hampson has invested heavily and borrowed money from his wife Rebecca's father, a very wealthy landowner.
7-8	I hear that the Queen, herself, is opposed to the building of the airship and tried to stop it, but Parliament forced her hand.	Nonsense. Victoria is all for the expansion of technology and the Crown has invested a lot into the project.
9-10	There are a lot of people in Europe who would gladly love to see this venture fail.	True. Some are actually on board at this very moment.
11	I have heard that this vessel uses dark magic to help her fly. I am worried that we may end up on a ship of demons.	False. The <i>Valiant Rose</i> uses the very latest in technology and only Guild approved Thaumaturgy to keep her airborne.
12	There was an explosion in the docks recently; I hear that several men were injured.	True. There was an explosion in the docks recently; four men died and nineteen others were seriously injured. The true nature of the explosion was never found out, but sabotage was not ruled out.

The player-characters continue their meal in the presence of the Princess, though they are unable to speak to her and are very politely reminded by Sir Peter (or their neighbour) 'One simply does not address Her Royal Highness; one awaits Her Highness' pleasure'. The meal continues for as long as the Gamemaster feels it needs to, and then the player-characters are lead out into the port where they see the *Valiant Rose* herself for the first time.

## SCENE THREE - THE VALIANT ROSE

The doors of the Hampson Line building open out onto the docks and for the first time they see the ship everyone is talking about, the *Valiant Rose*. Her body glistens in the sunlight and reflects each ray with pure intensity, almost as if designed just for that purpose. She is a lot larger than the player-characters might have imagined, and it is a miracle of engineering that a vessel so large and so proud can defy the laws of nature herself and float, let alone fly.

While the player-characters were having lunch, the airship has travelled from its hanger in Kent on

a final shakedown flight. It now rests at the dockside, suspended by guide ropes as thick as a man's arm. The gondola of the great airship sits level with the first floor of a warehouse nearby, into which it has extended a boarding ramp. While it is not fully furnished, the warehouse will be an embarkation point, ticket office and departure lounge for guests once the line begins operating publically.

Thousands of faces line the port, all of them gazing upward at the majestic sight of this marvellous piece of engineering, and a carnival atmosphere fills the air. Red, white and blue bunting hangs everywhere and the Union Jack is blowing gently in the breeze from the mast of the mighty *Valiant Rose*. The player-characters and the other guests are led into the departure building to the cheers of the crowds, where a bottle of champagne hangs ready to swing at the hull of the vast airship.

Princess Louise is led to the boarding ramp where she might launch the ship. There is much disappointment her mother is not launching the ship; however, the might of the airship and the presence of royalty is still enough to inspire patriotism and pride in every observer. As the Princess holds up a hand for silence, a hush falls on the crowd, and the princess addresses the assembly.



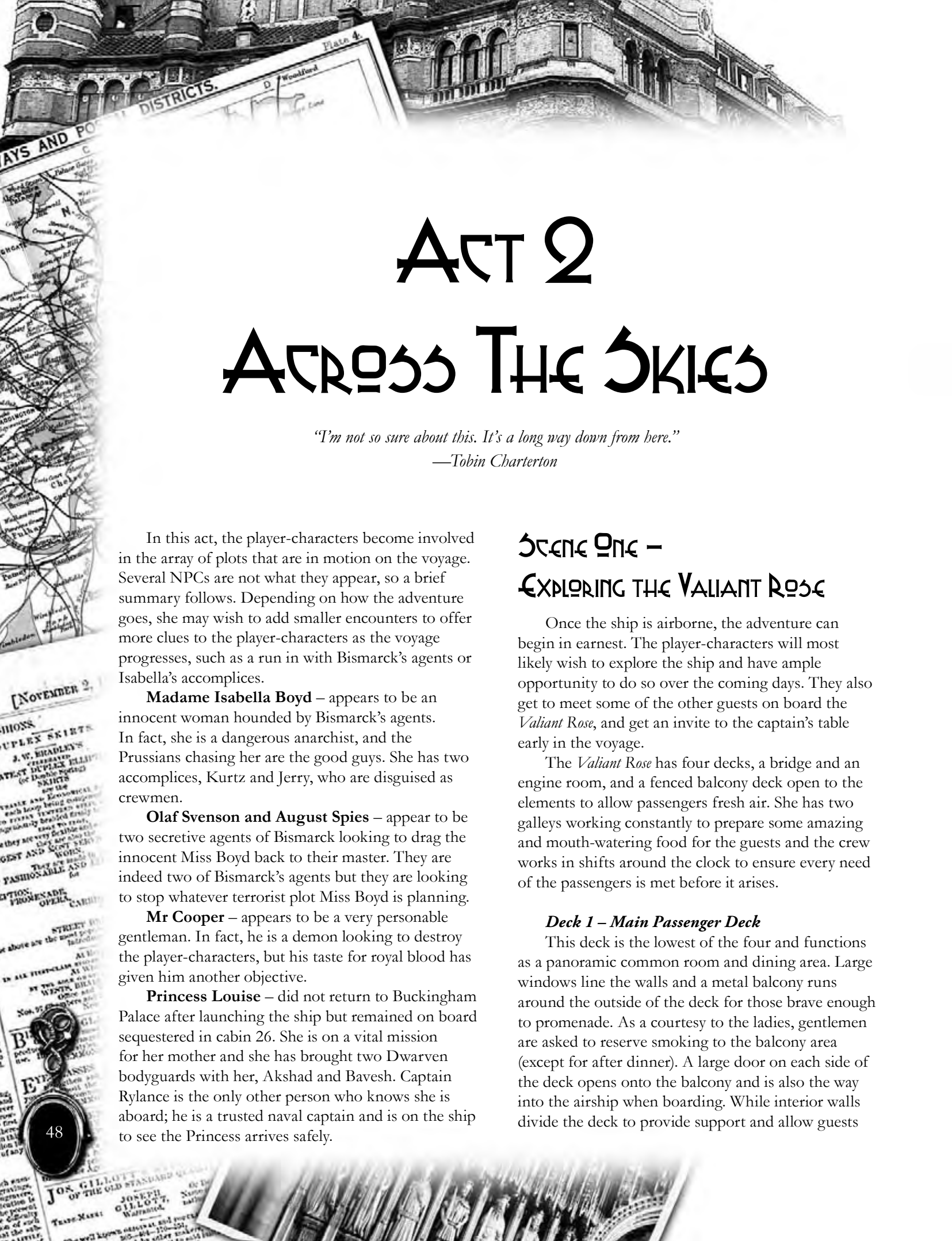
“Our future is laid out in front of us, a future that our determination and hard work has justly brought our noble country. Our future lies with great marvels, such as this mighty vessel, and with the prosperity it brings. Our future lies within the grasp of all of us, and we are proud to be the vassals for this undiscovered country. The path ahead will not be easy for the road is always uncertain, but we are British and we shall prevail. In the name of the British Empire and Her Majesty Queen Victoria, I name this vessel the *Valiant Rose*, may she be kept by the grace of heaven and may all who sail in her be forever protected!”

As she finishes speaking, the Princess pulls a lever and a bottle of the very finest champagne sails on the end of a tether and smashes against the iron clad plating of the *Valiant Rose*, to a cheer, the likes of which has rarely ever been heard before, from the crowd below. All the guests come aboard the airship for a brief tour (including the Princess Louise), even if they are not to be joining the journey to America. They are led across the boarding ramp to the cheers and applause of the gathered crowds. The airship is large, well lit and capable of carrying four times the amount of passengers she is taking on her maiden voyage. The interior of the *Valiant Rose* is grand and exquisite in the finest detail. Murals and paintings line the gangway as the guests board the vessel. Its entry lobby (which doubles as a common room) is vast and spacious and covered in the finest (plaster) statues and paintings one could imagine.

After a brief tour for the Princess, the characters are led to their cabins by a bellboy; they are rather grand and well lit with small circular porthole windows looking outwards on a panoramic vista below. Each room can be divided into two separate rooms, so first class passengers can have large rooms and standard class passengers can use half a room. For this voyage, all the rooms are set in the larger arrangement. However, some passengers might close off a smaller room for any servants they have brought. The characters' quarters are berthed together (appropriately for their station and marital situation!) with the Havering family sharing three double rooms (Tobin and Patterson both share a well decorated and spacious room, but not as impressive as their masters).



Once the player-characters have settled into their rooms a voice booms out of nowhere over a speaker system. “This is Captain Rylance speaking, Ladies and Gentlemen, would you please say your farewells to any companions who are not departing with us, and could all those not travelling with us make their way off the ship as quickly as possible. We are about to leave, all hands to departure stations!” Ten minutes later each of the player-characters feel a strange sensation in the pit of their stomach as the vessel lifts off to a triumphant cheer from the thousands of onlookers below. The *Valiant Rose* rises from her moorings and takes her place in the history books!



# ACT 2

## ACROSS THE SKIES

*"I'm not so sure about this. It's a long way down from here."*  
—Tobin Charterton

In this act, the player-characters become involved in the array of plots that are in motion on the voyage. Several NPCs are not what they appear, so a brief summary follows. Depending on how the adventure goes, she may wish to add smaller encounters to offer more clues to the player-characters as the voyage progresses, such as a run in with Bismarck's agents or Isabella's accomplices.

**Madame Isabella Boyd** – appears to be an innocent woman hounded by Bismarck's agents. In fact, she is a dangerous anarchist, and the Prussians chasing her are the good guys. She has two accomplices, Kurtz and Jerry, who are disguised as crewmen.

**Olaf Svenson and August Spies** – appear to be two secretive agents of Bismarck looking to drag the innocent Miss Boyd back to their master. They are indeed two of Bismarck's agents but they are looking to stop whatever terrorist plot Miss Boyd is planning.

**Mr Cooper** – appears to be a very personable gentleman. In fact, he is a demon looking to destroy the player-characters, but his taste for royal blood has given him another objective.

**Princess Louise** – did not return to Buckingham Palace after launching the ship but remained on board sequestered in cabin 26. She is on a vital mission for her mother and she has brought two Dwarven bodyguards with her, Akshad and Bavesh. Captain Rylance is the only other person who knows she is aboard; he is a trusted naval captain and is on the ship to see the Princess arrives safely.

### SCENE ONE – EXPLORING THE VALIANT ROSE

Once the ship is airborne, the adventure can begin in earnest. The player-characters will most likely wish to explore the ship and have ample opportunity to do so over the coming days. They also get to meet some of the other guests on board the *Valiant Rose*, and get an invite to the captain's table early in the voyage.

The *Valiant Rose* has four decks, a bridge and an engine room, and a fenced balcony deck open to the elements to allow passengers fresh air. She has two galleys working constantly to prepare some amazing and mouth-watering food for the guests and the crew works in shifts around the clock to ensure every need of the passengers is met before it arises.

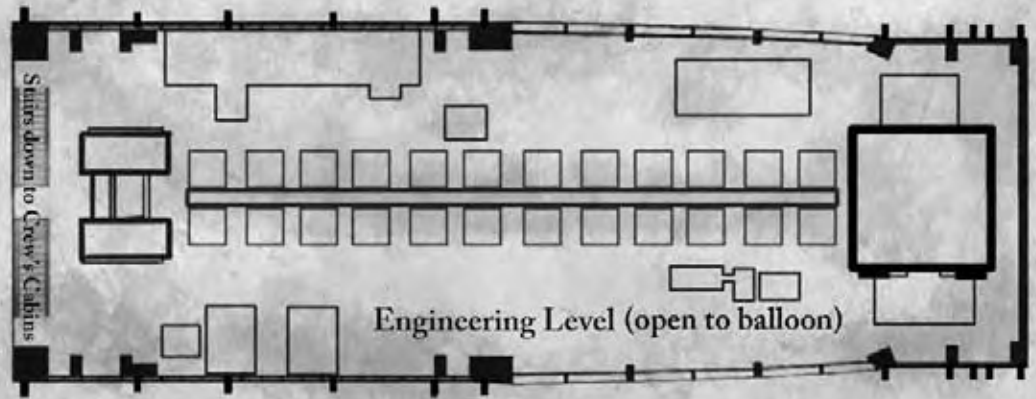
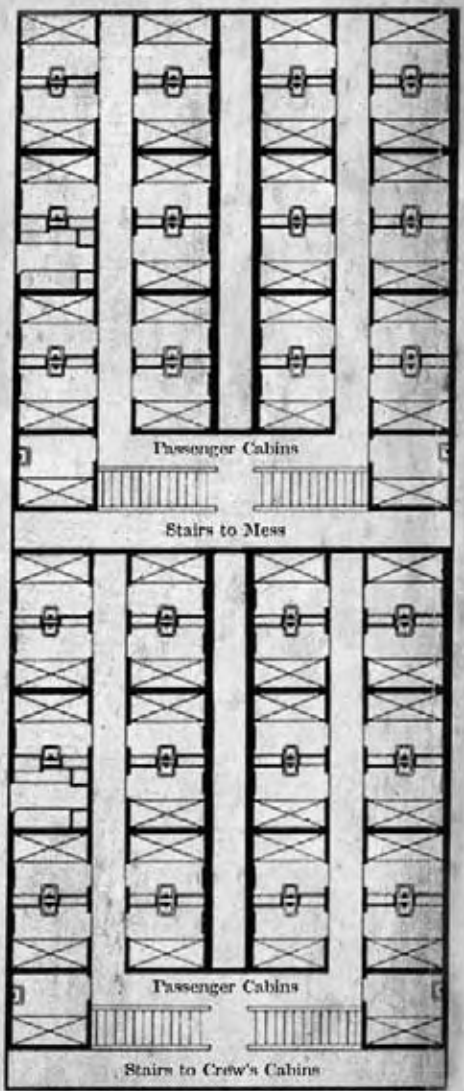
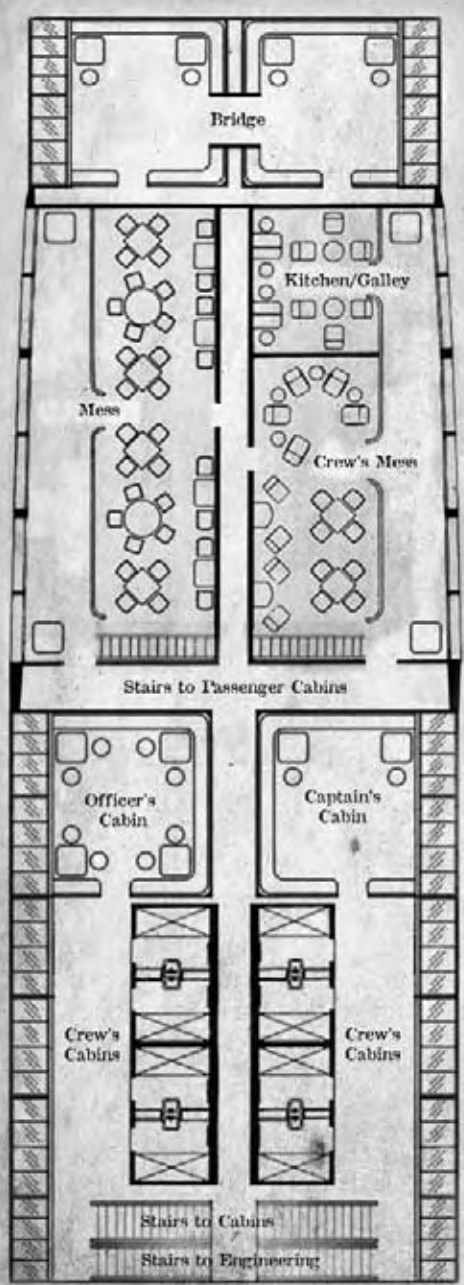
#### *Deck 1 – Main Passenger Deck*

This deck is the lowest of the four and functions as a panoramic common room and dining area. Large windows line the walls and a metal balcony runs around the outside of the deck for those brave enough to promenade. As a courtesy to the ladies, gentlemen are asked to reserve smoking to the balcony area (except for after dinner). A large door on each side of the deck opens onto the balcony and is also the way into the airship when boarding. While interior walls divide the deck to provide support and allow guests



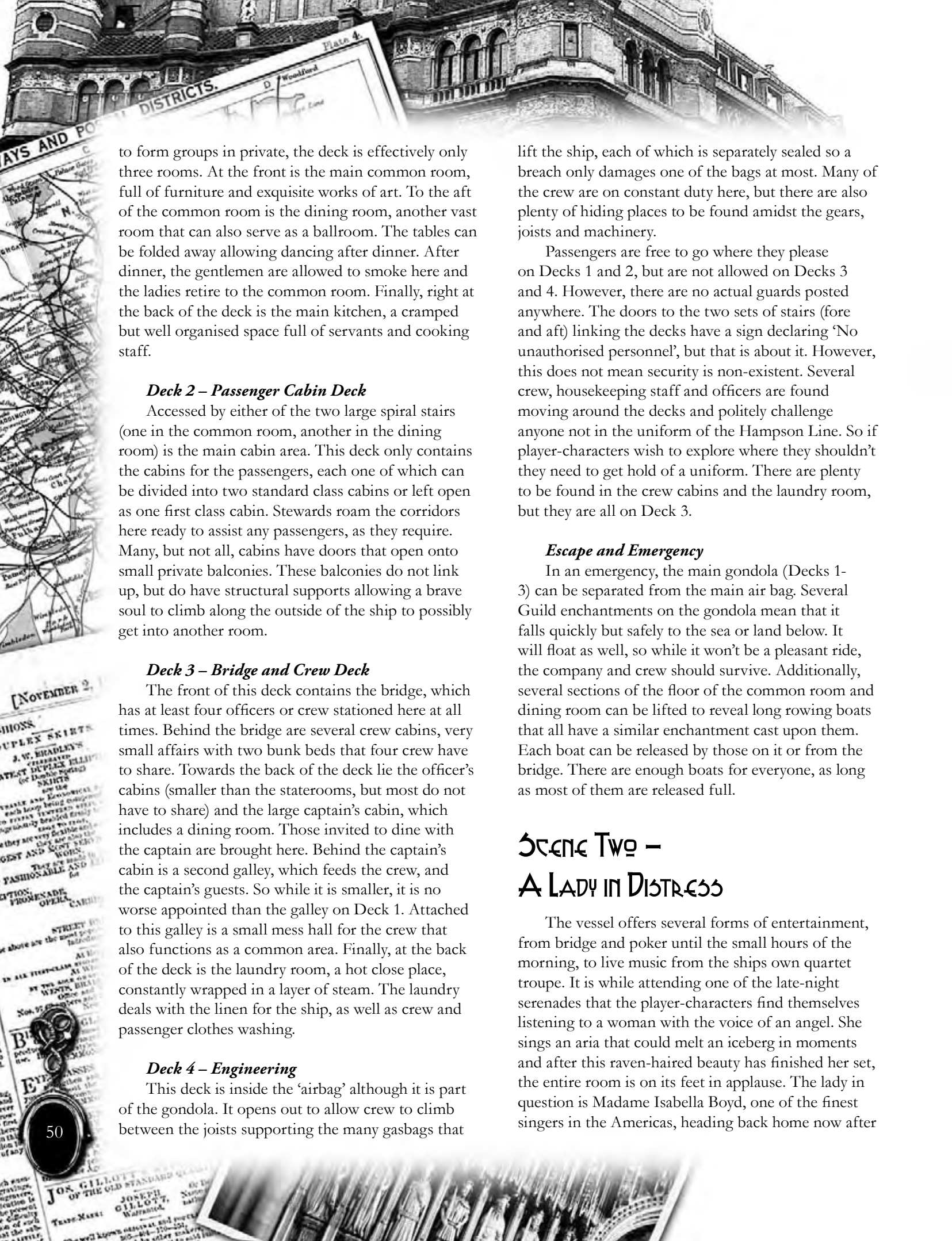


# Valiant Rose Airship Deck Plans



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INCORPORATED  
Great Britain and Ireland  
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Stations or Ireland to any  
EUROPE  
Members to the Continent  
at the Company's Office





to form groups in private, the deck is effectively only three rooms. At the front is the main common room, full of furniture and exquisite works of art. To the aft of the common room is the dining room, another vast room that can also serve as a ballroom. The tables can be folded away allowing dancing after dinner. After dinner, the gentlemen are allowed to smoke here and the ladies retire to the common room. Finally, right at the back of the deck is the main kitchen, a cramped but well organised space full of servants and cooking staff.

***Deck 2 – Passenger Cabin Deck***

Accessed by either of the two large spiral stairs (one in the common room, another in the dining room) is the main cabin area. This deck only contains the cabins for the passengers, each one of which can be divided into two standard class cabins or left open as one first class cabin. Stewards roam the corridors here ready to assist any passengers, as they require. Many, but not all, cabins have doors that open onto small private balconies. These balconies do not link up, but do have structural supports allowing a brave soul to climb along the outside of the ship to possibly get into another room.

***Deck 3 – Bridge and Crew Deck***

The front of this deck contains the bridge, which has at least four officers or crew stationed here at all times. Behind the bridge are several crew cabins, very small affairs with two bunk beds that four crew have to share. Towards the back of the deck lie the officer’s cabins (smaller than the staterooms, but most do not have to share) and the large captain’s cabin, which includes a dining room. Those invited to dine with the captain are brought here. Behind the captain’s cabin is a second galley, which feeds the crew, and the captain’s guests. So while it is smaller, it is no worse appointed than the galley on Deck 1. Attached to this galley is a small mess hall for the crew that also functions as a common area. Finally, at the back of the deck is the laundry room, a hot close place, constantly wrapped in a layer of steam. The laundry deals with the linen for the ship, as well as crew and passenger clothes washing.

***Deck 4 – Engineering***

This deck is inside the ‘airbag’ although it is part of the gondola. It opens out to allow crew to climb between the joists supporting the many gasbags that

lift the ship, each of which is separately sealed so a breach only damages one of the bags at most. Many of the crew are on constant duty here, but there are also plenty of hiding places to be found amidst the gears, joists and machinery.

Passengers are free to go where they please on Decks 1 and 2, but are not allowed on Decks 3 and 4. However, there are no actual guards posted anywhere. The doors to the two sets of stairs (fore and aft) linking the decks have a sign declaring ‘No unauthorised personnel’, but that is about it. However, this does not mean security is non-existent. Several crew, housekeeping staff and officers are found moving around the decks and politely challenge anyone not in the uniform of the Hampson Line. So if player-characters wish to explore where they shouldn’t they need to get hold of a uniform. There are plenty to be found in the crew cabins and the laundry room, but they are all on Deck 3.

***Escape and Emergency***

In an emergency, the main gondola (Decks 1-3) can be separated from the main air bag. Several Guild enchantments on the gondola mean that it falls quickly but safely to the sea or land below. It will float as well, so while it won’t be a pleasant ride, the company and crew should survive. Additionally, several sections of the floor of the common room and dining room can be lifted to reveal long rowing boats that all have a similar enchantment cast upon them. Each boat can be released by those on it or from the bridge. There are enough boats for everyone, as long as most of them are released full.

**SCENE TWO –  
A LADY IN DISTRESS**

The vessel offers several forms of entertainment, from bridge and poker until the small hours of the morning, to live music from the ships own quartet troupe. It is while attending one of the late-night serenades that the player-characters find themselves listening to a woman with the voice of an angel. She sings an aria that could melt an iceberg in moments and after this raven-haired beauty has finished her set, the entire room is on its feet in applause. The lady in question is Madame Isabella Boyd, one of the finest singers in the Americas, heading back home now after



singing for the crown heads of Europe. Rumour can inform the player-characters that she has recently come from Prussia and she was an instant hit there.

As the passengers retire to dress for dinner, one of the player-characters hears a knock on their cabin door and they are surprised to see Madame Boyd standing there, her face streaked with tears, apparently in mortal dread for her life. While she apparently seeks the protection of a strong male character, she is unwilling to confide in anyone but a sympathetic female character.

Madame Boyd has been touring Europe for the past six months or so and has been singing and performing for the crown heads of many countries and singing to thousands of common people. She performs arias and operettas and is one of the most successful and popular singers in the Americas at the moment. She is making her way home on the *Valiant Rose* and is performing as part of her journey home.

However, she has a problem. While in Prussia, she found herself performing for Count Otto von Bismarck. The Prussian leader expressed a very keen interest in the beautiful young American woman and was soon showering her with gifts; it was very clear he wished to take her as a mistress. She was due to go to France and perform there for another month, but concerned at Bismarck's attentions she cut her tour short and made a deal with Sir Peter Hampson to appear as a special guest and sing for her passage back to the Americas.

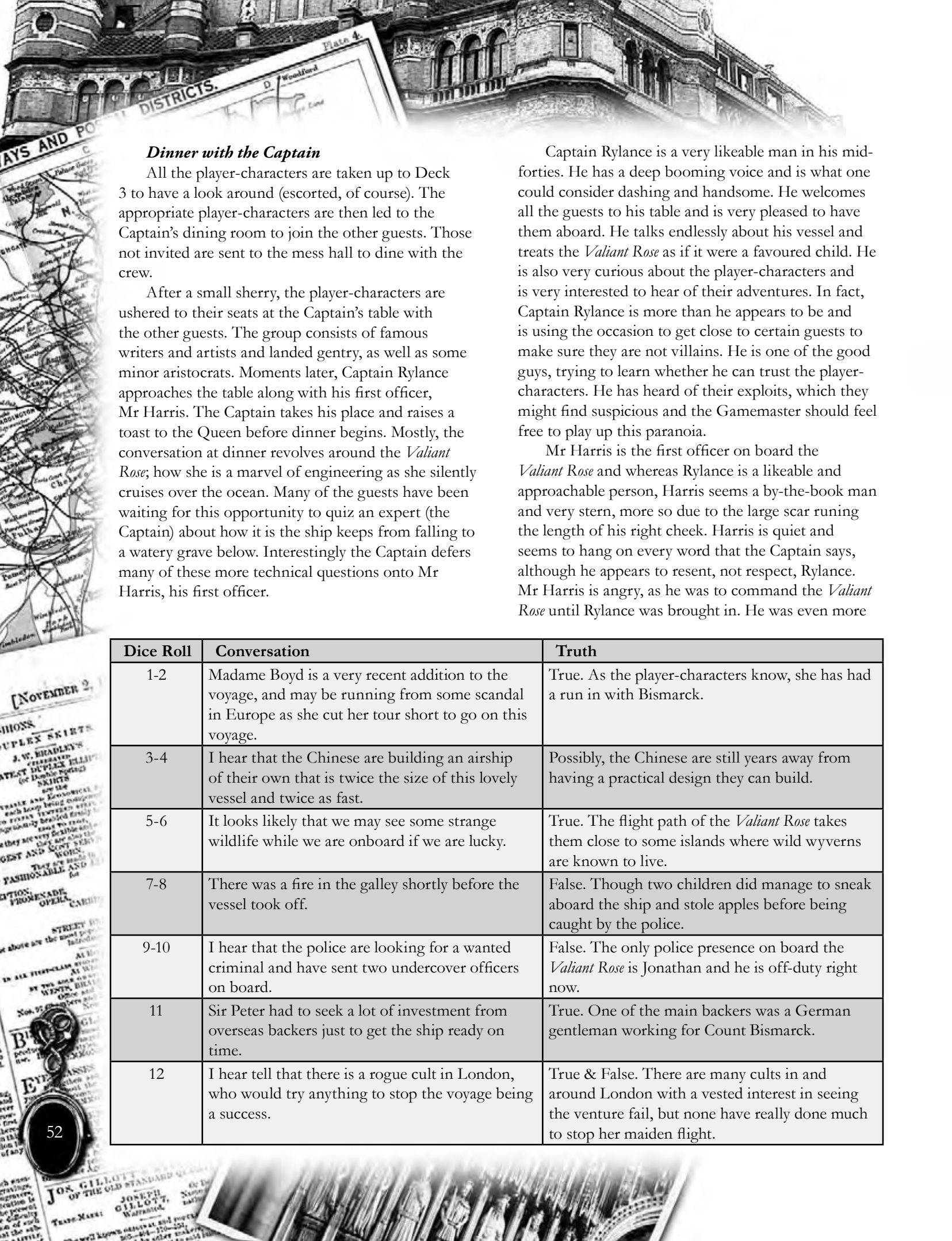
What has frightened her is that during the trip to England she was followed by two men she is sure are in the employ of Bismarck. Just as she was passing the player-character's room, she was sure she saw one of the men and, in terror, knew she must get out of sight (hence knocking on the door). She believes the men are looking to attempt to take her by force to their master!

After a while, she calms down and begins to wonder if she was simply mistaken, as she was so 'on edge'. Once she is calm and settled, she asks the player-characters to escort her to her quarters where she insists she'll be fine. However, she does ask the player-characters to keep an eye out for the mysterious Prussian men and to make sure she is safe.



## SCENE THREE - DINING AMONG THE CLOUDS

The player-characters are invited to dine with the captain a day or so into the voyage. This is not especially unusual as the captain is endeavouring to invite most of the guests to dine at some point. Even so, there will be a few ruffled feathers among those not invited during the voyage when the ship reaches America. While the invitation brings all the player-characters to the upper decks, only upper class and high-ranking middle class characters dine with the captain. For these characters, the Gamemaster should run the scene Dinner with the Captain. Lower class and shabby middle class characters don't miss out completely though. For them, the Gamemaster should run the scene Compo and Clegg, instead.



### Dinner with the Captain

All the player-characters are taken up to Deck 3 to have a look around (escorted, of course). The appropriate player-characters are then led to the Captain's dining room to join the other guests. Those not invited are sent to the mess hall to dine with the crew.

After a small sherry, the player-characters are ushered to their seats at the Captain's table with the other guests. The group consists of famous writers and artists and landed gentry, as well as some minor aristocrats. Moments later, Captain Rylance approaches the table along with his first officer, Mr Harris. The Captain takes his place and raises a toast to the Queen before dinner begins. Mostly, the conversation at dinner revolves around the *Valiant Rose*; how she is a marvel of engineering as she silently cruises over the ocean. Many of the guests have been waiting for this opportunity to quiz an expert (the Captain) about how it is the ship keeps from falling to a watery grave below. Interestingly the Captain defers many of these more technical questions onto Mr Harris, his first officer.

Captain Rylance is a very likeable man in his mid-forties. He has a deep booming voice and is what one could consider dashing and handsome. He welcomes all the guests to his table and is very pleased to have them aboard. He talks endlessly about his vessel and treats the *Valiant Rose* as if it were a favoured child. He is also very curious about the player-characters and is very interested to hear of their adventures. In fact, Captain Rylance is more than he appears to be and is using the occasion to get close to certain guests to make sure they are not villains. He is one of the good guys, trying to learn whether he can trust the player-characters. He has heard of their exploits, which they might find suspicious and the Gamemaster should feel free to play up this paranoia.

Mr Harris is the first officer on board the *Valiant Rose* and whereas Rylance is a likeable and approachable person, Harris seems a by-the-book man and very stern, more so due to the large scar running the length of his right cheek. Harris is quiet and seems to hang on every word that the Captain says, although he appears to resent, not respect, Rylance. Mr Harris is angry, as he was to command the *Valiant Rose* until Rylance was brought in. He was even more

Dice Roll	Conversation	Truth
1-2	Madame Boyd is a very recent addition to the voyage, and may be running from some scandal in Europe as she cut her tour short to go on this voyage.	True. As the player-characters know, she has had a run in with Bismarck.
3-4	I hear that the Chinese are building an airship of their own that is twice the size of this lovely vessel and twice as fast.	Possibly, the Chinese are still years away from having a practical design they can build.
5-6	It looks likely that we may see some strange wildlife while we are onboard if we are lucky.	True. The flight path of the <i>Valiant Rose</i> takes them close to some islands where wild wyverns are known to live.
7-8	There was a fire in the galley shortly before the vessel took off.	False. Though two children did manage to sneak aboard the ship and stole apples before being caught by the police.
9-10	I hear that the police are looking for a wanted criminal and have sent two undercover officers on board.	False. The only police presence on board the <i>Valiant Rose</i> is Jonathan and he is off-duty right now.
11	Sir Peter had to seek a lot of investment from overseas backers just to get the ship ready on time.	True. One of the main backers was a German gentleman working for Count Bismarck.
12	I hear tell that there is a rogue cult in London, who would try anything to stop the voyage being a success.	True & False. There are many cults in and around London with a vested interest in seeing the venture fail, but none have really done much to stop her maiden flight.



annoyed to discover that Rylance seems to know little about how the ship works, even though he is an experienced naval captain. Harris is a loyal officer though and, for all his jealousy, the safety of the ship and passengers is his first concern.

The other guests at the table make small talk. Most notable among them are Sir Peter and his wife, Rebecca, Charles Dickens and the Rosettis. However, the player-characters' new friend Madame Isabella Boyd isn't at dinner as she is entertaining in the common room. Also present at the meal is Mr Butler Lambert III the designer of the *Valiant Rose*. He helps Mr Harris explain the more technical aspects of the ship.

Once again, the characters find that they can learn a few bits and pieces of information here.

Roll 2d6 and consult the chart on page 52.

### **Compo and Clegg**

Lower and down-at-heel middle class characters have to dine with the crew. At dinner, they are likely to end up next to two crewmen, called Compo and Clegg, mainly as the rest of the crew are a little unwelcoming. Compo and Clegg are two Ratmen, who have been working aboard the *Valiant Rose* for the past few months. They are inseparable friends, who know every single inch of the vessel, as both of them were part of the building crew as well. Both Compo and Clegg are a little drunk when the player-characters encounter them, so they are more than likely to share their concerns. They know about Mr Harris being replaced at the last moment by Captain Rylance. They prefer Rylance, as he seems a decent enough sort, and they've both had run-ins with Harris. However, they have also noticed several of the crew have been replaced just before this voyage, and by crewmen that seem to be ex-navy but know little about airships. In fact, Rylance has brought a few men he can trust on board, even though they don't have the right experience.

If the player-characters can make friends with Compo and Clegg, the two Ratmen tell them they know all manner of secret ducts and passages that can get them anywhere on the ship. If the player-characters want to go somewhere they shouldn't, these two Ratmen are the perfect guides.

Compo and Clegg also have their suspicions about a few other areas on the ship. They've caught a couple of Prussians nosing around, a Human and a Weaselman. They say they are lost, but that excuse is

## COMPO AND CLEGG

These two entertaining but slightly disreputable Ratmen are among the most experienced crew on the *Valiant Rose*. They are good men, loyal to the ship and their country, but they don't see any problems in breaking a few rules to make their lives a little easier.

### **Compo and Clegg - Rank 4 Ratmen Layabouts (Generalist)**

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +3

Initiative: 6

Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Airship Crewman +3, Athletics +2,

Boating +2, Bull +2, Fisticuffs +2, Gambling +1,

Hide & Sneak +3, Perception +2, Streetwise +2

Traits: Dodgy +4, Hedonistic +3, Workers +1

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Claws (6 Dice) if they are backed in a corner

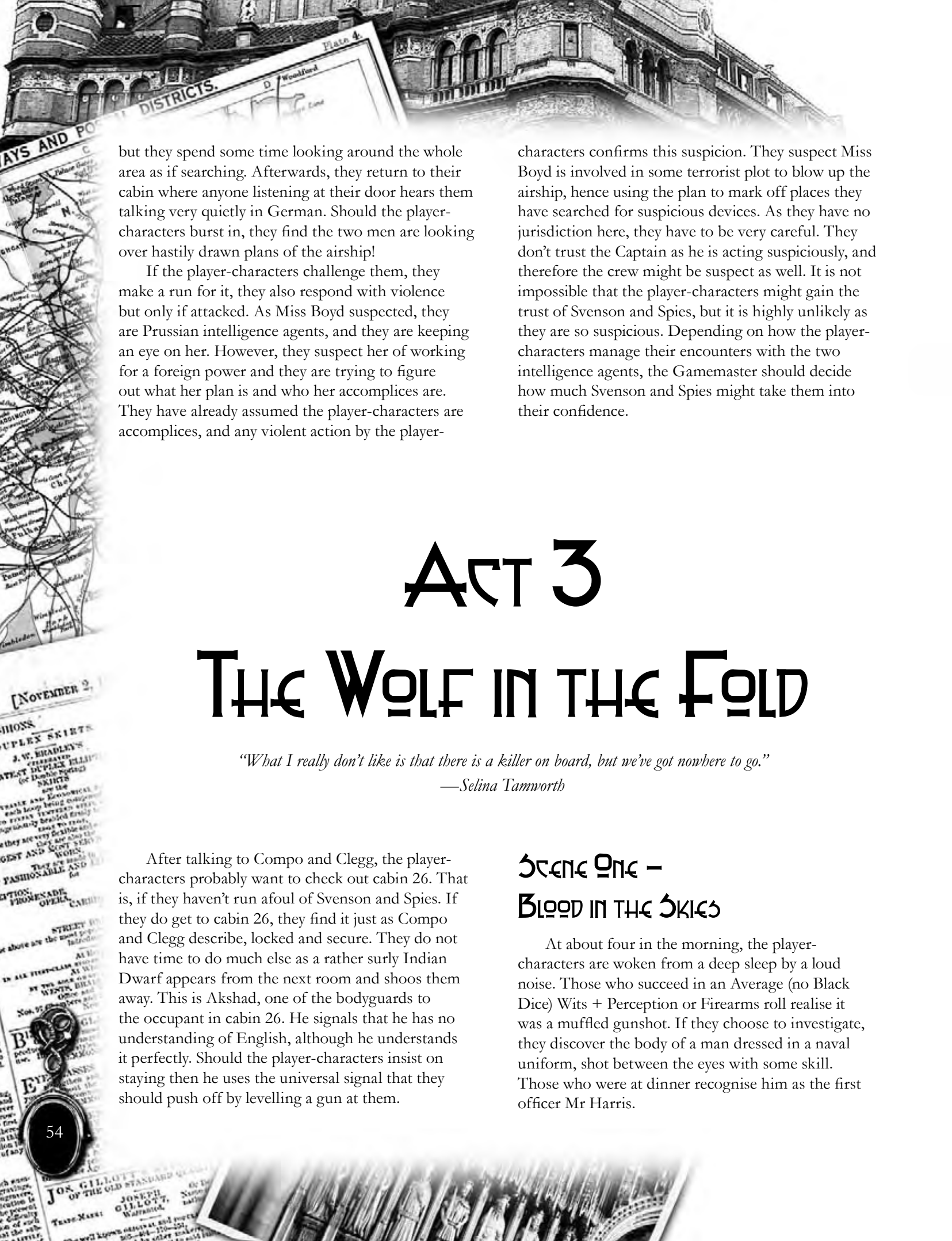
Damage: Claws (5 Dice)

wearing thin, although they've not caused any trouble. The other curious thing is that something is going on in cabin 26. No member of the crew is allowed to go there, and the manifest claims the room is empty. However, food is still sent to the room and laundry comes out, although two Dwarves travelling in cabin 25 deal with such things. Someone must be using cabin 26, but who?

### **Following the Weasel**

Among the guests at the Captain's table are two gentlemen, who both speak with Germanic accents, who could be the men that Miss Boyd mentioned. One is called Olaf Svenson, who is quite tall and handsome with a shock of white in his dark hair; the other is August Spies, a Weasel Beastman. The Captain speaks very little to them, even though it is their first dinner invitation, too. After dinner, they take their time returning to the lower decks. Once they have all re-grouped and depending on how they leave dinner (or what state they leave Compo and Clegg), the player-characters might decide to tail the two Prussians.

If the player-characters follow them (requiring Average (no Black Dice) Presence + Hide & Sneak rolls), they do not see them go anywhere important



but they spend some time looking around the whole area as if searching. Afterwards, they return to their cabin where anyone listening at their door hears them talking very quietly in German. Should the player-characters burst in, they find the two men are looking over hastily drawn plans of the airship!

If the player-characters challenge them, they make a run for it, they also respond with violence but only if attacked. As Miss Boyd suspected, they are Prussian intelligence agents, and they are keeping an eye on her. However, they suspect her of working for a foreign power and they are trying to figure out what her plan is and who her accomplices are. They have already assumed the player-characters are accomplices, and any violent action by the player-

characters confirms this suspicion. They suspect Miss Boyd is involved in some terrorist plot to blow up the airship, hence using the plan to mark off places they have searched for suspicious devices. As they have no jurisdiction here, they have to be very careful. They don't trust the Captain as he is acting suspiciously, and therefore the crew might be suspect as well. It is not impossible that the player-characters might gain the trust of Svenson and Spies, but it is highly unlikely as they are so suspicious. Depending on how the player-characters manage their encounters with the two intelligence agents, the Gamemaster should decide how much Svenson and Spies might take them into their confidence.

# ACT 3

## THE WOLF IN THE FOLD

*"What I really don't like is that there is a killer on board, but we've got nowhere to go."*

—Selina Tamworth

After talking to Compo and Clegg, the player-characters probably want to check out cabin 26. That is, if they haven't run afoul of Svenson and Spies. If they do get to cabin 26, they find it just as Compo and Clegg describe, locked and secure. They do not have time to do much else as a rather surly Indian Dwarf appears from the next room and shoos them away. This is Akshad, one of the bodyguards to the occupant in cabin 26. He signals that he has no understanding of English, although he understands it perfectly. Should the player-characters insist on staying then he uses the universal signal that they should push off by levelling a gun at them.

### SCENE ONE – BLOOD IN THE SKIES

At about four in the morning, the player-characters are woken from a deep sleep by a loud noise. Those who succeed in an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Perception or Firearms roll realise it was a muffled gunshot. If they choose to investigate, they discover the body of a man dressed in a naval uniform, shot between the eyes with some skill. Those who were at dinner recognise him as the first officer Mr Harris.





Captain Rylance is already at the scene before the player-characters arrive, a fact they might find suspicious, although he only arrived moments before. The murderer is one of Miss Boyd's henchmen (Kurtz and Jerry). Not only did they suspect Harris might be onto them, but they have also realised he is the only officer aboard who really understands the airship. As Captain Rylance doesn't really know how the ship works, the loss of his chief advisor is crippling. The killers don't know if Harris is dead though as they knew the sound of gunfire would bring people running. So they shot Harris at close range and ran.

Captain Rylance asks the player-characters to help him remove the body so as not to cause a panic among the guests. He keeps the crew at bay, and he gives them a key to cabin 14, which is empty. Rylance is occupied telling the other guests, who have come out, that the noise was simply a mechanical glitch his crew are fixing and nothing to be concerned about. The player-characters should get the body of Harris there where it is out of the way. As Harris deserves a proper burial it is not appropriate to just throw him over the side. Your players may suggest it as the easy way out!

The Gamemaster can play this scene for laughs if she likes, having the characters scampering about trying to avoid being caught by passengers or crew with a dead body in their arms. Several Difficult (3 Black Dice) Perception + Hide & Sneak rolls should be called for in the process. However, the operation shouldn't be too hard, as their success proves them to Captain Rylance.

## SCENE TWO – A ROYAL INVITATION

If the player-characters manage to hide the body of Harris, and have behaved like good and loyal Englishmen to Rylance (when he questioned them over dinner), he decides to take them into his confidence. The characters are given a note in the morning by a crewman, which asks them to meet Captain Rylance at cabin 25 after breakfast.

If the player-characters go to the rendezvous they are quickly ushered into cabin 25 by two Dwarves, one of whom may have sent them on their way only recently. When they enter the room they find Captain





Rylance waiting for them, and the two Dwarves swiftly lock the door behind them and stand guard.

Captain Rylance sits the player-characters down and lights a cigar, after taking a long sharp intake, he asks for their word on a matter of great secrecy. "I guess there is no point in beating around the bush now is there? Given the circumstances of the situation, I feel it only apt that I bring you up to speed with the true nature of this voyage. But, firstly, I must have your word that you are loyal to the British Empire and that you swear to keep secret everything you are about to hear."

The player-characters are free to refuse, in which case those who do are asked to leave. Captain Rylance won't say any more than he has without their word that he can trust them. If they swear to keep his confidence, Captain Rylance takes them to the door that adjoins cabin 26 and asks them to step through. Inside, they find two very well-to-do ladies. One, they instantly recognise as Princess Louise (having had dinner only days ago with her). Those who succeed in a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Wits + High Society roll also recognise her lady-in-waiting, the Lady Amelia Davasham. The player-characters should have a moment to kneel, bow or curtsy before Captain Rylance continues.

Rylance introduces Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise and her lady-in-waiting, the Lady Amelia, to the player-characters and tells them Her Highness is travelling in secret to attend talks with several members of the American government on behalf of her mother. He was given command of the *Valiant Rose* so he might see to her protection. However, the murder of Mr Harris has proved the vessel is a nest of spies and he needs the help of people he can trust. With difficulty, he has come to the decision that the Princess will be safer among the crowds of passengers where the assassin can be forced into the open, rather than alone in this room. However, while a public place makes assassination difficult it is not impossible and Rylance will have less control over the area. So he needs the player-characters to act as secret bodyguards for the Princess.

The Princess agrees with Rylance, and is determined not to sit and wait for an assassin but to bring the fight to the traitor herself. She trusts Rylance implicitly, and if he vouches for the player-characters, that's good enough for her. "Captain Rylance tells me you have all proved your loyalty and

good character. For now, we ask nothing more than you stay at hand to aid my bodyguards should some plot reveal itself. Your loyalty shall be handsomely rewarded I promise you."

The player-characters are free to ask Princess Louise and Rylance any questions they like, as long as they remain polite. The Princess is not one for formality and is very personable and down to earth in person. She is a keenly intelligent young woman with an artistic soul, which makes her a fascinating and intriguing person to converse with. However, she cannot and will not divulge the details of her mission. The player-characters might also choose this moment to divulge any of the things they have learnt from the journey so far. Rylance can add nothing to what they know, but hearing their suspicions makes him all the more certain he has done the right thing by bringing them into his confidence.

Once everything is settled, the player-characters are asked to go ahead to the common room, so they are in place for when the Princess arrives to announce to the guests she is aboard. These will be the last peaceful moments for the player-characters as things are about to become very complicated indeed...

## SCENE THREE - IT'S ALL GETTING A BIT MESSY

As the player-characters enter the common room they can see through the vast windows that there are dark and stormy clouds ahead. Most of the guests have gathered to see the storm, although it is as frightening as it is exciting for most of them. Sadly, for the player-characters, the various plots being carried out on the vessel have all chosen this moment to come to a head.

### ***Terrorist Attack***

Moments before the Princess arrives in the common room, the easily recognisable voice of Madame Boyd comes over the speaker system. "Ladies and Gentlemen, or should I say 'worthless parasites of a decadent and corrupt empire', I have taken control of this vessel in the name of the people. We will no longer be arriving in New York, instead we are travelling to a free land where every man earns what he has and does not steal from those they make slaves of. Here, you will answer for your crimes,



and your families will fund the new revolution if you wish to see you alive again. I urge you not to attempt to escape. I will jettison all the life rafts if they are tampered with, and I can destroy this ship if need be. I do not want to die, but I will sacrifice my life for the message that your deaths in the sky will send. Remain calm and do as you are told and you will be treated well. Resistance will not be tolerated. Further instructions will be given as we approach our destination.”

Miss Boyd is now in control of the bridge. She and her two associates, Kurtz and Jerry, entered the bridge while Captain Rylance was away and shot the men on duty. Isabella then barricaded herself in and Kurtz and Jerry then went to Deck 4 where they killed more crew and barricaded themselves in. They intend to take the ship to a facility in Greenland where they have allies. The ship will be refitted with weapons and the passengers held hostage to blackmail more funds.

The crew could begin to break down the barricades, but the terrorists have the ability to explode four devices hidden around the ship. Isabella is quite serious in her intensions and calling her bluff will be disastrous. While she would like an escape option, the first demonstration of her intention is to release several or all of the lifeboats. If cornered, she detonates the explosives.

While Captain Rylance is needed to lead the crew, it should be up to the player-characters to locate and disable the bombs. They have to run around searching the ship for the devices, and overcome some resistance.

Two of the devices are located in the airbag on the Engineering Deck (Deck 4), one in the fore compartment and one aft. The stairs to the deck have been shut off. Battering in the door is a Difficult (3 Black Dice) extended skill test (see page 182 of the Core Rulebook) using Strength + Might. The player-characters can roll as many times as they like but need to get 12 successes in total to break down the door. The longer they take, the more time Jerry and Kurtz have to prepare their response.

Once through the door, the player-characters find five on-duty crewmen are dead, but two are alive. The two living ones are Kurtz and Jerry, who pretend to have shot the two terrorists. The bodies they point to are Svenson and Spies (if they are still alive and not been captured by the player-characters earlier), who figured out the plot but were just too late. Luckily,

## KURTZ AND JERRY

These two fanatics are utterly loyal to Isabella and her cause to free the working man. They are very capable agents though and they were handpicked for this mission, something of which they are both very proud. Their disgust for the upper and middle classes is apparent though and may be their undoing.

### ***Kurtz and Jerry - Rank 6 Fanatical Assassins (Generalist)***

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +4

Initiative: 7

Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)

Mana: 2 Dice (12 pips)

Signature Skills: Act +3, Airship Crewman +1, Athletics +3, Bluff +2, Fisticuffs +2, Firearms +3, Hide & Sneak +3, Perception +2, Politics +2

Traits: Fanatical +4, Murderous +2, Reckless +3

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Small pistols (8 Dice) they are itching to use on the bourgeoisie

Damage: Pistol (5 Dice)

they are both alive, although badly injured and playing possum. Kurtz and Jerry were going to finish them off to make sure, but then the player-characters arrived.

Both terrorists have been hurt in the fight, but this was not due to bravery but the failure to take all the crew by surprise. Hoping the player-characters are convinced Svenson and Spies were the terrorists, they attempt to lead the player-characters away from the devices and wait for a chance to ambush them. If they don't think they can stop the player-characters discovering one of the devices, they attempt to detonate the other one. Both are utter fanatics, even more so than Isabella, and can only think of dying for their cause. This fanaticism might show through in their encounter with the player-characters, dropping a vital clue. Both terrorists are armed with small pistols hidden about their persons.

After a while, Svenson and Spies come to and try to take down the terrorists. They might still be convinced the player-characters are in with the terrorists, although they look to take down the known terrorists as a priority. The scene could go a number of different ways, depending on whether the player-



characters attempt to talk as bullets whizz across the crowded engineering section and ricochet off the myriad crossbeams and machinery. If they survive, Svenson and Spies could be vital allies if the player-characters can convince them they are not terrorists.

The third device is hidden in a pile of clean linen in the laundry room. A concerted search of the laundry room finds the device relatively easily. It can be discovered on a successful Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Perception roll, although each attempt takes ten minutes. The hiding place is not a good choice as the steam may interfere with the device giving it a 30% chance it fails to detonate. If it does detonate, it blows out one side of the gondola and breaks several of the support cables. While the ship remains airborne, the gondola hangs askew in its suspension system. So the player-characters have to go about their business with the added difficulty of all the floors being at a 30-degree angle (which adds 2 Black Dice to any actions the Gamemaster decides might be affected).

The final device is hidden in a very inaccessible place; it is underneath the gondola. If it detonates, it destroys almost all of Deck 1 and kills most of the passengers. It can only be accessed by climbing outside and hanging under the ship by the cables that run underneath the gondola. It takes three rounds to get to the device, which must first be found with a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Wits + Perception roll.

Climbing out of the Gondola onto the wires is not especially difficult, requiring only an Average (no Black Dice) Dexterity + Athletics roll. However, hanging under the ship swinging on the wires is

very difficult. Each round, the player must make a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Fortitude + Athletics roll to keep hanging on. If they fail, they fall, so they had better make sure they use a safety line, as it is a long way down. As long as they have a rope tied around them and it is held securely, they won't fall to a watery grave, but they may be left hanging and require pulling back to the start.

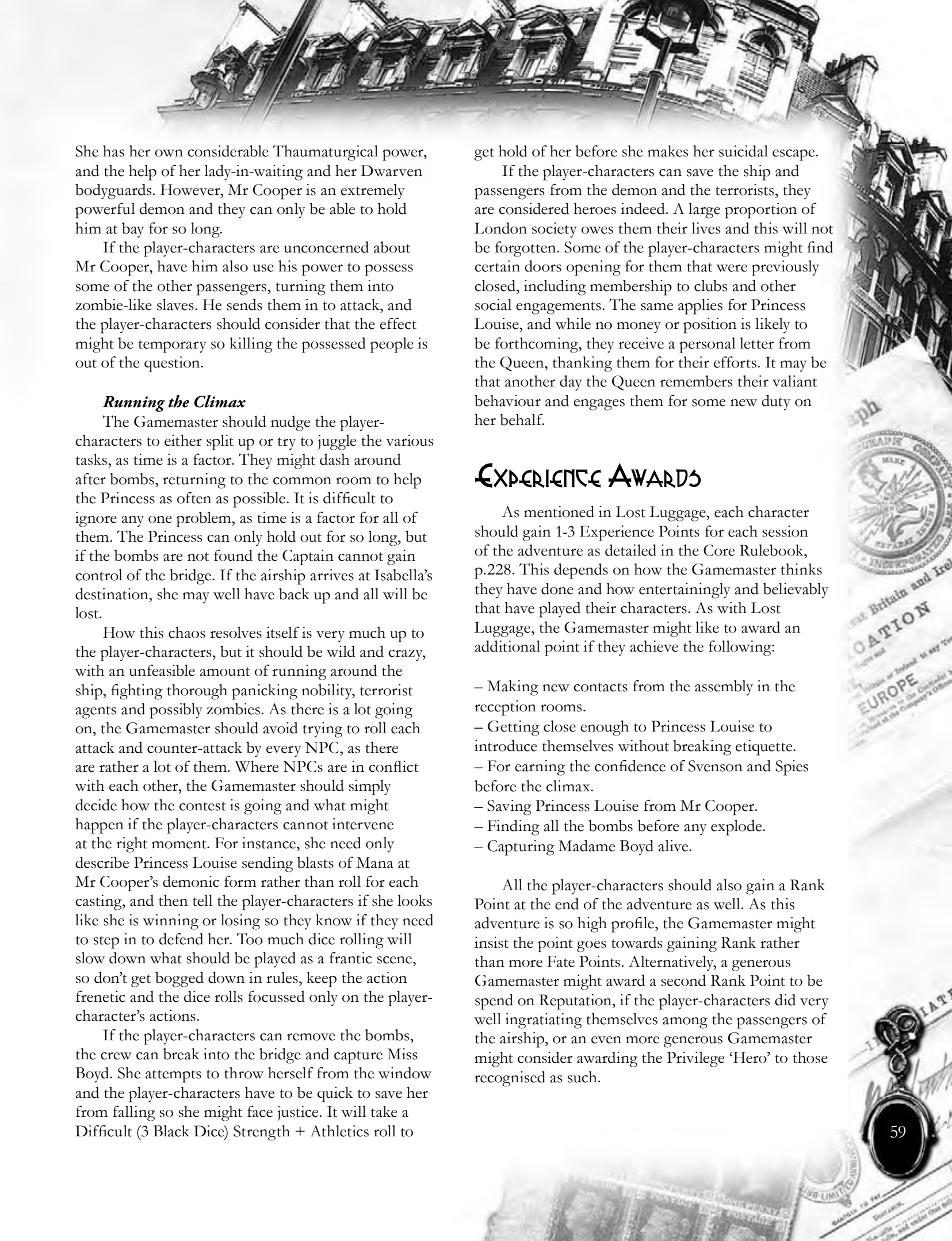
The Gamemaster might add a fourth terrorist to the adventure, who comes down after the player-character going for the bomb. In which case, they might engage in a dramatic fight to get to the bomb, miles above the Atlantic Ocean.

### *The Bloodthirsty Gentleman*

Unfortunately, the terrorists are not the only problem facing the characters. Shortly after Isabella's announcement, Princess Louise comes into the common room, ushered by Captain Rylance who is eager to get to the bridge to appraise the situation. As soon as the Princess appears, Mr Cooper realises what the delicious aroma he has been sensing all voyage is and hunger gets the better of him. He turns to the player-characters and says "I'm terribly sorry, but you are just going to have to wait", then, smiling a terrible grin he raises his hat to them and transforms into a huge, clawed demonic form. He then rushes for the Princess with lightning speed. However, instead of crushing the royal lady in an instant, he is met with a powerful bolt of etheric energy from the Princess and her lady-in-waiting.

At this point, it is up to the player-characters what to do. They might help the Princess defend herself.





She has her own considerable Thaumaturgical power, and the help of her lady-in-waiting and her Dwarven bodyguards. However, Mr Cooper is an extremely powerful demon and they can only be able to hold him at bay for so long.

If the player-characters are unconcerned about Mr Cooper, have him also use his power to possess some of the other passengers, turning them into zombie-like slaves. He sends them in to attack, and the player-characters should consider that the effect might be temporary so killing the possessed people is out of the question.

### ***Running the Climax***

The Gamemaster should nudge the player-characters to either split up or try to juggle the various tasks, as time is a factor. They might dash around after bombs, returning to the common room to help the Princess as often as possible. It is difficult to ignore any one problem, as time is a factor for all of them. The Princess can only hold out for so long, but if the bombs are not found the Captain cannot gain control of the bridge. If the airship arrives at Isabella's destination, she may well have back up and all will be lost.

How this chaos resolves itself is very much up to the player-characters, but it should be wild and crazy, with an unfeasible amount of running around the ship, fighting through panicking nobility, terrorist agents and possibly zombies. As there is a lot going on, the Gamemaster should avoid trying to roll each attack and counter-attack by every NPC, as there are rather a lot of them. Where NPCs are in conflict with each other, the Gamemaster should simply decide how the contest is going and what might happen if the player-characters cannot intervene at the right moment. For instance, she need only describe Princess Louise sending blasts of Mana at Mr Cooper's demonic form rather than roll for each casting, and then tell the player-characters if she looks like she is winning or losing so they know if they need to step in to defend her. Too much dice rolling will slow down what should be played as a frantic scene, so don't get bogged down in rules, keep the action frenetic and the dice rolls focussed only on the player-character's actions.

If the player-characters can remove the bombs, the crew can break into the bridge and capture Miss Boyd. She attempts to throw herself from the window and the player-characters have to be quick to save her from falling so she might face justice. It will take a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Strength + Athletics roll to

get hold of her before she makes her suicidal escape.

If the player-characters can save the ship and passengers from the demon and the terrorists, they are considered heroes indeed. A large proportion of London society owes them their lives and this will not be forgotten. Some of the player-characters might find certain doors opening for them that were previously closed, including membership to clubs and other social engagements. The same applies for Princess Louise, and while no money or position is likely to be forthcoming, they receive a personal letter from the Queen, thanking them for their efforts. It may be that another day the Queen remembers their valiant behaviour and engages them for some new duty on her behalf.

## **EXPERIENCE AWARDS**

As mentioned in *Lost Luggage*, each character should gain 1-3 Experience Points for each session of the adventure as detailed in the Core Rulebook, p.228. This depends on how the Gamemaster thinks they have done and how entertainingly and believably that have played their characters. As with *Lost Luggage*, the Gamemaster might like to award an additional point if they achieve the following:

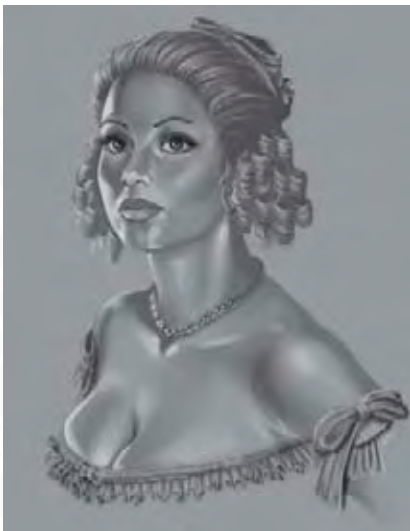
- Making new contacts from the assembly in the reception rooms.
- Getting close enough to Princess Louise to introduce themselves without breaking etiquette.
- For earning the confidence of Svenson and Spies before the climax.
- Saving Princess Louise from Mr Cooper.
- Finding all the bombs before any explode.
- Capturing Madame Boyd alive.

All the player-characters should also gain a Rank Point at the end of the adventure as well. As this adventure is so high profile, the Gamemaster might insist the point goes towards gaining Rank rather than more Fate Points. Alternatively, a generous Gamemaster might award a second Rank Point to be spend on Reputation, if the player-characters did very well ingratiating themselves among the passengers of the airship, or an even more generous Gamemaster might consider awarding the Privilege 'Hero' to those recognised as such.

# ANTAGONISTS AND PROTAGONISTS

Rather than present the NPCs in the adventure text, we've collated them here, as some of them are present in only one or two scenes. This way the Gamemaster knows to refer to this section for most of the statistics she might need during the course of the adventure. It is worth the Gamemaster reading over some of these characters before the adventure, as few are what they seem on their first appearance. If the Gamemaster is able to expand the adventure, she can use the information below to add additional encounters with the various NPCs throughout the journey in the *Valiant Rose* so the player-characters have a chance to gain more clues as to their various agenda.

## MADAME ISABELLA MARIE BOYD



At only 23 years old, Madame Boyd has an amazing vocal talent and is an accomplished actress and singer, a talent that has taken her across the world. However, Miss Belle Boyd is also an American spy, and a terrorist. Under her stage name, her ability

to travel among the heads of state gained her the attention of her government, who initially wanted an agent in Europe. Her remit was to watch and report

if she found other factions of the American states looking for allies in the civil war brewing over there. Recently, she has been touring the troubled states of the Prussian Confederation. However, this was mainly so she could spy on the new Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck.

Unfortunately, Isabella has moved beyond simply observing and reporting, and decided to act. As she was born into poverty, she has been appalled and disgusted at the behaviour and decadence of the upper classes, in whose salons she has been lavished with praise and attention for her performances. She has come to loathe those she sings for, but is such a consummate actress she has hidden it well. In Prussia, she contacted some extreme political groups and (without telling her government) has used American money to fund her plan to form a terrorist organisation. She and two accomplices have

### ***Madame Isabella Boyd - Rank 8 Deceitful Performer (Focussed)***

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +7

Initiative: 7

Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Act +4, Art (Singing) +6, Athletics +3, Bluff +2, Charm +3, Etiquette +2, Firearms +3, Hide & Sneak +3, High Society +2, Perception +2, Politics +3

Traits: Angry +2, Revolutionary +4, Wolf-in-sheep's-clothing +5

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: While using it would break her cover, she does have a small pistol (7 Dice)

Damage: Pistol (5 Dice)



managed to smuggle the parts to build four explosive devices, which over the first few days of the trip they have secreted around the ship. Miss Boyd has a small base in Greenland, ready to receive the airship and possibly fit it out for war. While her group (who don't even have a name yet) numbers only another ten or so people, they have hope of gathering many more. If her plan to capture the assembly fails, she hopes to have all but one of the lifeboats released so she and her accomplices can escape, and then blow up the ship, striking a blow against the oppressive dictators of the upper classes that will shake the world!

## BISMARCK'S AGENTS

Otto von Bismarck is not a fool. While he was entranced with Isabella's performance, he also keeps a close eye on everyone who gets close to him. He discovered she was planning something with several anarchist groups and so he dispatched two agents to find out what her plan is. The agents know she has the ability to build explosives, but don't really know what she plans to do with them. They suspect she is intending to move against Prussia, which is why they haven't figured out her true plan.

## OLAF SVENSON

Olaf Svenson is an amazing swordsman and weapons master. He is as skilled with the blade as he is with the pistol or rifle and is considered a crack shot. Svenson is of Danish descent and he has spent most of his adult life either teaching the fine art of the sword to the wealthy nobles of Europe or hiring himself out as a mercenary to those who can afford him. He is deadly in combat and he has survived over forty duels over a course of twelve years.

## AUGUST SPIES

August Spies is a Weasel Beastman, who was born in Prussia although his parents emigrated to the Americas when he was a babe in arms. Everywhere that Spies goes, trouble seems to follow and he was hounded out of America and deported back to his native land when he was still a teenager. His troublesome past made him an excellent deep-cover agent to move around the political groups that

threaten Bismarck's regime. August Spies is a master with explosives and has an uncanny knack of being able to get himself out of tight situations, which made him the perfect agent to send with Svenson.

### ***Olaf Svenson - Rank 10 Master Duellist (Focused)***

Physical Competence: +8

Mental Competence: +5

Initiative: 9

Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Athletics +3, Bluff +2, Fisticuffs +2, Firearms +3, Hide & Sneak +3, Perception +3, Politics +2, Swordplay +4,

Traits: Dedicated +2, Loyal +3, Secretive +2

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: a Pistol (11 Dice) he is ready to use if his Sword (12 Dice) isn't enough

Damage: Pistol (7 Dice), Sword (8 Dice)

### ***August Spies - Rank 10 Weaselman Criminal Agent (Focused)***

Physical Competence: +8

Mental Competence: +5

Initiative: 9

Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Act +4, Athletics +3, Bluff +2, Demolitions +4, Fisticuffs +2, Firearms +2, Hide & Sneak +3, Perception +3, Pick Locks +2, Politics +2, Traits: Loyal +3, Deceitful +3

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: a Pistol (11 Dice) that he will happily use to defend himself

Damage: Pistol 7 Dice, Sword 8 Dice

## MR COOPER

Known only to the passengers and crew of the *Valiant Rose* as Mr Cooper, one of the Hampson Line's board of directors, this strange and handsome man is in fact a member of the Pale Court. Mr Cooper always appears well dressed and is extremely polite, but often has a strange odour to him that reminds one of burnt leaves.



**Mr Cooper - Rank 12 Creature of the Pale (Focussed)**

Physical Competence: +9

Mental Competence: +6

Initiative: 10

Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Act +3, Charm +3, Demonology +2, Etiquette +2, Fisticuffs +4, Firearms +2, Perception +3, Politics +2, Swordplay +3, Tactics +4  
Also, in Demon form: Intimidate +4, Might +4, Traits: Rage and Violence +3, Hungry +4, Urbane +2  
Special Abilities: Creature Qualities (Ageless, Armour (8 points of tough hide), Fear, Huge), Mental Domination\*

Combat Abilities: Huge Clawed Hands (15 dice), Whip-like Tail (15 dice).

Damage: Claws (8 dice), Tail (4 dice)

\*Mr Cooper's Mental Domination is a powerful ability that he can use to turn nearby people into zombie-like slaves. As an additional action each round, he can reach out to anyone he can make eye contact with and take control of their mind. He rolls his Mental Competence against his victim's Mental Competence (or their Presence + Resolve). If he gains more successes that person becomes his mental slave for one hour for each success by which Mr Cooper beat his victim's roll. The slaves cannot perform anything more than simple tasks (such as 'attack'), but there is no limit to the number of people Mr Cooper can dominate in this way. When under his control the victim's skin goes pale and grey and they can do little more than groan and shuffle as they fight inside to regain control of their own body. To most people they appear to be zombies, although a medical inspection reveals their heart still beats and their skin is warm to the touch, if you can get that close!

However, Mr Cooper is not the same man who joined the Hampson Line. The original Mr Cooper was a Demonologist, who used his powers to gain wealth and position. Unfortunately, he pushed his abilities too far and summoned a creature he could not control. The demon possessed Mr Cooper and gradually consumed his soul from the inside out. The original Mr Cooper's powerful position was attractive to the demon, who has maintained the possession to

enjoy the benefits of Cooper's rank. While a vicious demon, Mr Cooper does not deliberately show his hand unless forced to do so. However, he uses all of his unholy powers to fulfil his unearthly desires or has little recourse.

Initially, Mr Cooper was contacted by Lady Dashingham (or another enemy of the player-characters), who asked if he'd do her the favour of destroying the player-characters, just to be on the safe side. Not wanting to blow his cover as a respectable human, Mr Cooper has been playing the long game, and rather enjoying the excursion. He saw to it they were invited on the *Valiant Rose*, as it will be a nice out-of-the-way place to destroy them. However, he does have a weakness, a craving for the taste of royal blood. He has smelt it on board and he is eager to taste it. When he finds the opportunity to consume Princess Louise, he cares little about anyone seeing that he is a demonic creature. He has no concern for his body being destroyed, as it simply returns him to the Pale Court, although he'd prefer not to return just yet. If he can kill and eat the Princess he'll consider it a good day, destroying the player-characters is just gravy.



## PRINCESS LOUISE

The beautiful and intelligent sixth child of Victoria, Princess Louise is something of a radical for the day and age. She is well versed in the arts, history and philosophy and has been highly educated like all her siblings. She is often outspoken, and has little time for ceremony and class division (although she expects to be treated with the respect due her position). She is likely to look favourably and respectfully to any independently minded and active female character during the crisis. As her personal secretary, Victoria has asked her beloved daughter to travel to New York and to be present at an important





series of speeches the union leaders are about to give, and to act as her eyes and ears overseas. While Louise is looking to diffuse any hostile situation that may be growing in the Americas, her primary duty is to British colonial interests.

While she has led a very privileged life, Princess Louise is a very accomplished woman, and not only in feminine pursuits. She has learnt a few martial skills from her brothers, and is a talented artist. She also holds a degree in Thaumaturgy from the Guild and is one of the most accomplished magicians in the royal family. She sees magic in a very prosaic rather than arcane way, simply as a tool to be used when necessary. This means her level of skill is often underestimated, as she does not surround herself with the usual overstated occult trappings of a mage.

***HRH Princess Louise - Rank 8 Royal Artistic Thaumaturgist (Focussed)***

Physical Competence: +4  
Mental Competence: +7  
Initiative: 8  
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)  
Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)  
Signature Skills: Art (Painting, Sculpture) +3, Charm +3, Conversation +4, Etiquette +4, Firearms +1, Intimidate +2, Instrument (Piano) +3, Horse Riding +3, Lore +2, Perception +3, Politics +2, Thaumaturgy +4  
Traits: Practical +3, Noble +3, Well-bred +3, Pragmatic +5  
Special Abilities: Thaumaturgy spells (any she needs)  
Combat Abilities: Magic (usually Etheric Bolt)  
Damage: by spell

## THE LADY AMELIA DAVASHAM

Lady Amelia is a young girl (18 years old) from a very wealthy family, with her father an Earl. As she is as yet unmarried and the youngest daughter of the Davasham family, she was granted a position in the royal household as Princess Louise's lady-in-waiting. She expected a life of glamour amidst the royal court, but never expected to have exciting adventures. While well brought up, the excitement is making her a little giddy and she may well do something she regrets later if she isn't careful.

Amelia is also finding that Princess Louise is very different to what she expected. Louise has taken the girl under her wing and educated her in many things she never expected to learn. While she has had a basic Guild education, she has learnt more from Louise on magic than the Guild ever taught her. All these things have galvanised this inexperienced young girl into someone ready to stand and defend her lady, rather than scream and run as she might have done before.

***Lady Amelia Davasham - Rank 4 Lady-in-Waiting (Focussed)***

Physical Competence: +2  
Mental Competence: +5  
Initiative: 6  
Health: 3 Dice (6 pips)  
Mana: 2 Dice (12 pips)  
Signature Skills: Art (Painting) +2, Charm +2, Etiquette +3, Instrument (Violin) +3, Horse Riding +3, Lore +1, Perception +2, Politics +2, Thaumaturgy +2  
Traits: Young +3, Adventurous +1, Cloistered +2  
Special Abilities: Thaumaturgy spells (Etheric Bolt, Groom, Instant Beauty)  
Combat Abilities: Magic (usually Etheric Bolt)  
Damage: by spell

## AKSHAD AND BAVESH

These two dark-skinned Dwarves are two of the most dangerous fighters to serve in the British army. They were born in the Punjab and, like many Sikhs, they joined the British army when they were old enough. Even before their military service they were skilled warriors, but their training in the military added a professional edge to their skills and widened their choice of weaponry. Their skills drew them to the attention of a more specialised unit of the British Army, who sent the pair around India seeking out cells of the mysterious Thuggee cult. Eventually, their work brought them to London and they once again proved themselves by uncovering a sect before they could mount an attack on the Queen. As a reward for this service, they were made Princess Louise's personal bodyguards and they are fiercely loyal to her. This is not only due to their loyalty to the Crown, but also to a personal loyalty that they have developed to Louise herself.

It is difficult to tell the two brothers apart as they dress almost exactly the same in very neat traditional Indian Sikh dress. Both are swarthy with dark Indian features, this coupled with their rather taciturn nature adds a certain air of mystery to the brothers. While they both speak perfect English, they often allow people to believe they do not to gain the advantage.

### ***Akshad and Bavesh - Rank 12 Dedicated Dwarven Bodyguards (Focussed)***

Physical Competence: +9  
 Mental Competence: +6  
 Initiative: 11  
 Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)  
 Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)  
 Signature Skills: Athletics +3, Bluff +2, Fisticuffs +3, Firearms +3, Hide & Sneak +3, Perception +4, Politics +2, Swordplay +4  
 Traits: Taciturn +3, Loyal +5, Grimly Experienced +3  
 Special Abilities: None  
 Combat Abilities: Both carry pistols (12 Dice) and knives (13 Dice) and use them in an instant  
 Damage: Pistol (7 Dice), Bich'hwa, a double-curved Indian dagger (5 Dice)

## CAPTAIN DAVID MYLES RYLANCE

A member of the Royal Naval Corps, Captain Rylance is a man of high virtue and above reproach. He is now in his mid-fifties, though looks much younger and has served the royal family for many years as their naval advisor. For nearly twenty years, Rylance has been working closely with the Queen's personal bodyguards and ensured that she is safe at all times, and though he is still on active duty in the Naval Corps, he has special orders that put him almost above the law. He was assigned as the Captain of the *Valiant Rose* to act as an escort to Princess Louise on her mission to America.

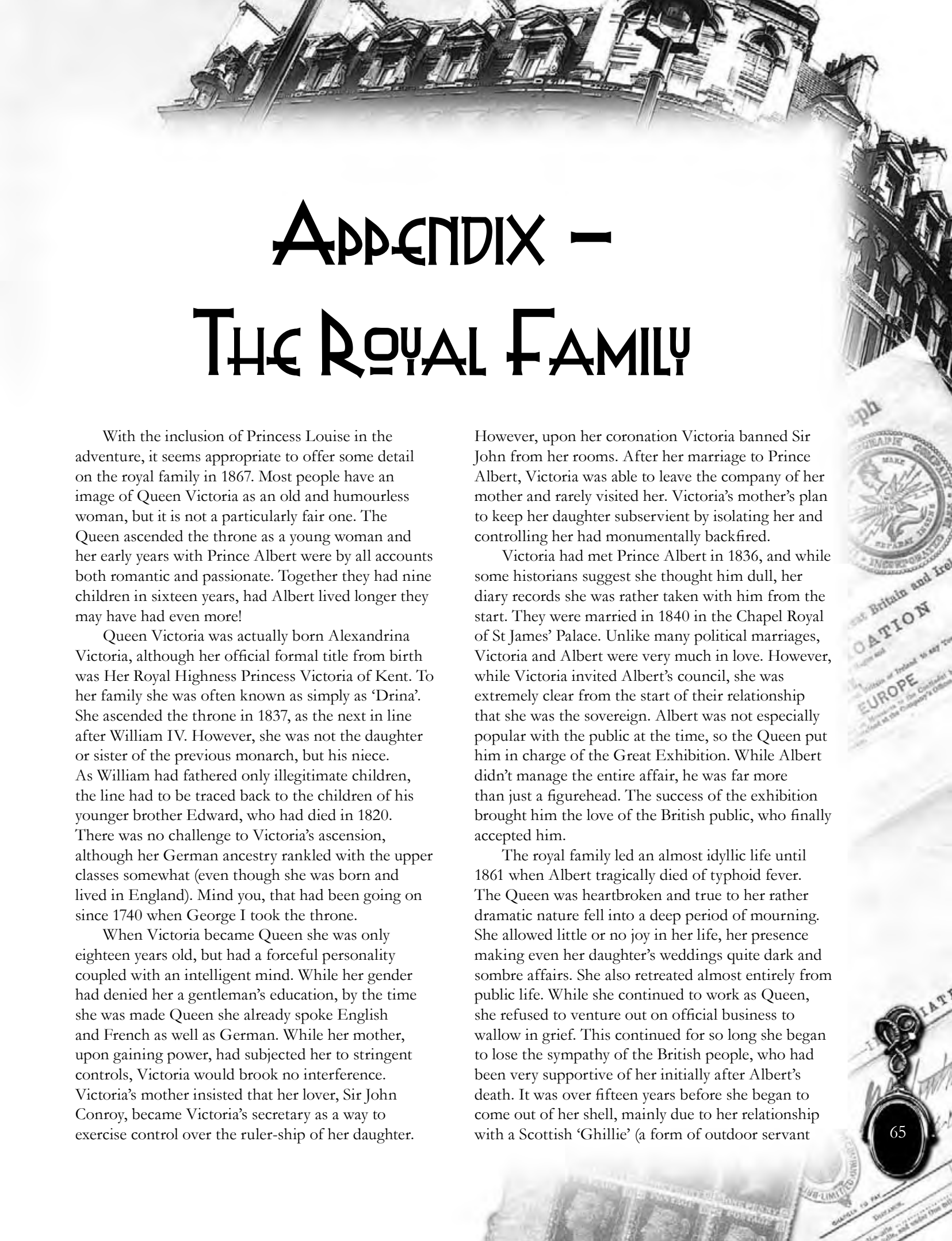


While his naval experience makes him a qualified commander, he finds Mr Harris an essential advisor. He knows that someone stole the blueprints to the *Valiant Rose* recently (Bismarck's Agents), which tells him something is afoot. While his primary mission is to protect Louise, he also needs to see to it that the blueprints are returned.

### ***Captain Rylance - Rank 15 Naval Commander (Generalist)***

Physical Competence: +9  
 Mental Competence: +9  
 Initiative: 11  
 Health: 9 Dice (18 pips)  
 Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)  
 Signature Skills: Act +2, Airship Crewman +1, Athletics +3, Boating +4, Bluff +2, Fisticuffs +3, Firearms +4, Interrogation +3, Perception +3, Politics +1, Swordplay +2  
 Traits: Old Salt +4, Dedicated +3, Plotter +3  
 Special Abilities: None  
 Combat Abilities: Military issue sidearm (13 Dice) for the defence of Queen and Country  
 Damage: Pistol (8 Dice)





# APPENDIX – THE ROYAL FAMILY

With the inclusion of Princess Louise in the adventure, it seems appropriate to offer some detail on the royal family in 1867. Most people have an image of Queen Victoria as an old and humourless woman, but it is not a particularly fair one. The Queen ascended the throne as a young woman and her early years with Prince Albert were by all accounts both romantic and passionate. Together they had nine children in sixteen years, had Albert lived longer they may have had even more!

Queen Victoria was actually born Alexandrina Victoria, although her official formal title from birth was Her Royal Highness Princess Victoria of Kent. To her family she was often known as simply as 'Drina'. She ascended the throne in 1837, as the next in line after William IV. However, she was not the daughter or sister of the previous monarch, but his niece. As William had fathered only illegitimate children, the line had to be traced back to the children of his younger brother Edward, who had died in 1820. There was no challenge to Victoria's ascension, although her German ancestry rankled with the upper classes somewhat (even though she was born and lived in England). Mind you, that had been going on since 1740 when George I took the throne.

When Victoria became Queen she was only eighteen years old, but had a forceful personality coupled with an intelligent mind. While her gender had denied her a gentleman's education, by the time she was made Queen she already spoke English and French as well as German. While her mother, upon gaining power, had subjected her to stringent controls, Victoria would brook no interference. Victoria's mother insisted that her lover, Sir John Conroy, became Victoria's secretary as a way to exercise control over the ruler-ship of her daughter.

However, upon her coronation Victoria banned Sir John from her rooms. After her marriage to Prince Albert, Victoria was able to leave the company of her mother and rarely visited her. Victoria's mother's plan to keep her daughter subservient by isolating her and controlling her had monumentally backfired.

Victoria had met Prince Albert in 1836, and while some historians suggest she thought him dull, her diary records she was rather taken with him from the start. They were married in 1840 in the Chapel Royal of St James' Palace. Unlike many political marriages, Victoria and Albert were very much in love. However, while Victoria invited Albert's council, she was extremely clear from the start of their relationship that she was the sovereign. Albert was not especially popular with the public at the time, so the Queen put him in charge of the Great Exhibition. While Albert didn't manage the entire affair, he was far more than just a figurehead. The success of the exhibition brought him the love of the British public, who finally accepted him.

The royal family led an almost idyllic life until 1861 when Albert tragically died of typhoid fever. The Queen was heartbroken and true to her rather dramatic nature fell into a deep period of mourning. She allowed little or no joy in her life, her presence making even her daughter's weddings quite dark and sombre affairs. She also retreated almost entirely from public life. While she continued to work as Queen, she refused to venture out on official business to wallow in grief. This continued for so long she began to lose the sympathy of the British people, who had been very supportive of her initially after Albert's death. It was over fifteen years before she began to come out of her shell, mainly due to her relationship with a Scottish 'Ghillie' (a form of outdoor servant



and gamekeeper) called John Brown. Many rumours suggest the two were secretly in love and even married, but whatever the case, John Brown's company helped the Queen move on from Albert's death. While she never cast off her mourning habit, she gradually became a more public queen until her death in 1901.

In 1867, the Queen is still in deep mourning and shows no signs of letting up. Many in society are beginning to wonder if she will ever take a more active role again. People are also beginning to feel slighted rather than sympathetic when she fails to appear at important events. As her secretary, the Princess Louise is shouldering much of the burden of her mother's grief, as well as her royal duties.

Victoria had nine children in all. Most were married off to European nobility, but some became active in politics. Victoria herself outlived three (nearly four) of them, and 11 of her 42 grandchildren. The family spread a legacy of connections across Europe that survives to this day.

***Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa (1840-1901, aged 27 in 1867)***

The Queen's eldest child took after her for wit and intelligence and was a precocious child. As the eldest daughter of the Queen, she was also named Princess Royal. Aged only 14 she was engaged to the Crown Prince of Prussia, and they married three years later in 1858. In 1861, the King of Prussia died, and Victoria's husband, Frederick, ascended the throne of Prussia and was to preside as its king over the three wars of German unification. Victoria and her husband were often at odds with Chancellor von Bismarck due to their anglophile views. She died of breast cancer aged 61 in 1901, only seven months after her mother's death.

***Albert Edward (1841-1910, aged 26 in 1867)***

As the eldest male child, Edward was named Prince of Wales, and upon Queen Victoria's death in 1901 became King Edward VII. Unlike his elder sister, he was not an academic, but he was blessed with excellent social skills and charm. This led to him gaining a reputation as a playboy, even after his marriage! As King Edward VII, he ruled for less than ten years, as his excessive cigar smoking brought on terminal bronchitis in 1910.

***Alice Maud Mary (1843-1878, aged 24 in 1867)***

Alice is regarded as the most sensitive and caring of the family, becoming her father's nurse for the last stages of his illness. She was also a champion of women's causes and hospital reform, inspired by the actions of Florence Nightingale. Alice married a minor German noble in 1862, although the death of her father the previous year made it a rather muted ceremony. Despite not marrying into great riches, she was very happy with her husband. Sadly, Alice died of diphtheria in 1878 when the disease struck her whole family. Tragically, she watched the illness claim four of her children before it finally took her.

***Alfred Ernest Albert (1844-1900, aged 23 in 1867)***

Alfred was not especially remarkable, although his affable nature earned him the nickname 'Affie' from his family. He took an interest in the navy at a young age and joined in 1856. He served in the navy for the rest of his life, becoming a talented tactician and a respected officer. He was offered the throne of Greece in 1862, although the British government blocked the ascension. However, he did take on his father's old title of Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Alfred married the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia in 1874, although it was not a happy marriage and Marie's arrogance over her own nobility caused friction between the families. Her most lasting legacy is the popular 'Marie Biscuit' (a variant of the 'Rich Tea' biscuit) made by a small bakery in England to commemorate her wedding.

***Helena Augusta Victoria (1846-1923, aged 21 in 1867)***

One of the least remarkable children of Victoria, Helena distinguished herself by being one of the most active of them. She was dedicated to helping the new profession of nursing, even though she went against Florence Nightingale on the issue of nurse registration. Helena was also involved in promoting needlework becoming a president of the (now Royal) Society of Needlework. Her romances caused controversy in her early years, especially a flirtation with the Royal Librarian that was instantly quashed by the Queen, who sacked her paramour. She was happily married in 1865, although this marriage was controversial. This was because Helena's fiancé was heir to two principalities whose ownership was disputed by many of the heads of Europe, many of whom had marital links to the royal family.



## THE ROYAL FAMILY AND THAUMATURGY

As you might imagine in Victoriana, there is nothing stopping the royal family from learning the secrets of magic like any other upper class family. However, not all the family are equal in the arcane arts.

Victoria, herself, has a basic understanding of magic, but she has never studied it properly. Become Queen at a young age meant her time was spent learning the protocols of her role rather than arcane ephemera. Her husband, Albert, made a basic study of magic as a young man. However, he was not especially adept and lacked the will to cast spells.

The three boys of the royal family have proved to have little or no magical aptitude. Much to Victoria's dismay, Edward proved to have no talent or interest whatsoever. Albert and Arthur attained much the same level as their father before giving up and pursuing their military careers. Leopold showed great promise as a sorcerer, but his health stood against him and his early death ended what promise he showed.

Of the girls, Alice and Helena showed little interest in magic. Beatrice studied it as a hobby while alone with her mother. She proved an adept pupil and in her later years researched several new spells, although her ability at practical magic was unimpressive. Louise showed a natural aptitude and found magic came easily to her. She is a talented magician, although not as good as she would be if she focused on it. While she enjoyed magical academia, her love for art has always taken precedence.

However, the eldest daughter, Victoria, has proved to be a powerful and adept sorceress. Her keen mind easily mastered magical theory and her strong will has made her a powerful spell caster. She pursues magical study at every opportunity and she has studied with many of the Guilds best tutors. It is said she is one of the premier sorcerers of the age.

### *Louise Caroline Alberta (1848-1939, aged 19 in 1867)*

Considered the most attractive of the princesses, Louise was also a talented artist and dancer. While it was unfitting for her to take up a career as an artist, she was allowed to study art under the sculptress, Mary Thornycroft in 1862, and then the National Art Training School in 1863. Louise was uninterested in royal engagements and ceremony, and also had little patience with her mother's excessive mourning. Until her marriage in 1871, Louise took over from Helena as her mother's unofficial secretary (as the eldest unmarried daughter) and proved highly adept at it. Louise followed Helena in romantic controversy as well. She fell in love with her brother Leopold's tutor, the Reverend Duckworth (a close friend of Charles Dodgson, who wrote as Lewis Carroll), who was instantly dismissed by the Queen. She chose John Campbell (a Marquis and heir to a Dukedom) as her fiancé, which caused controversy, as he was a subject of the Queen rather than a member of European nobility. However, the Queen decided that the family needed new blood, and approved the match. Such a match had not had royal approval since 1515. Louise was regarded as the most 'down to earth' of the royals, eschewing regal and class formality as often as possible and treating her servants as valued employees rather than serfs. She lived until 1939 when at 91 her age finally caught up with her.

### *Arthur William Patrick Albert (1850-1942, aged 17 in 1867)*

As the seventh child and third son of Victoria, Arthur was unlikely to ever be an heir to the throne. Like his elder brother, Alfred, he took a liking to the military life and joined the army in 1868 as a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers after studying for two years at the royal military college in Woolwich. He continued with a military career, moving into the artillery and later rifle regiments. Arthur had no desire to take on more royal duties and removed himself from the line of succession of the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg when he became next in line in 1874. However, like so many of his family he married into the Prussian nobility in 1879. His military career brought him to the Governor General-ship of Canada in 1911 where he presided for the First World War. Arthur was a soldier first and a royal second, and on the advent of war, against the wishes of the Canadian Prime Minister, he put on his uniform to address the



troops. As a friend of Lord Baden-Powell, he was also a strong supporter of the Scout movement. Like his sister, Louise, he lived to be 91, passing away in England in 1942.

**Leopold George Duncan Albert (1853-1884, aged 14 in 1867)**

Prince Leopold was noteworthy at his birth due to the Queen using the new anaesthesia (chloroform), a medical advance in need of the royal stamp of approval to gain popularity. Unlike his brothers, he felt no urge to join the armed forces, mainly as he was not a well child. He was diagnosed with haemophilia and it has been suggested he may have also suffered from mild epilepsy. His health kept him close to home, where he took over the duties of personal secretary to his mother and also became a renowned patron of the arts. He was romantically linked to Alice Liddell (the girl for whom Charles Dodgson wrote Alice in Wonderland) and her elder sister, Edith. After links to other royal ladies that were considered unsuitable by the Queen, he finally married in 1882. The marriage was brief as an accident in Cannes in 1884 after a knee injury caused his death at the age of just 31.

**Beatrice Mary Victoria Feodore (1856-1944, aged 11 in 1867)**

As the last of Victoria's children, Beatrice was born into a comparatively empty house with so many of her siblings married off or away at college. She also saw little of her mother in anything but mourning, with her father passing away before she was five years old. She proved as adept as her sisters in art and dance, but she was most talented at the piano and played to a professional standard. As her last remaining child, Victoria held onto Beatrice, fearful of being left alone and without a companion. She declared Beatrice would never marry, and discouraged suits made towards her. However, after almost being resigned to live unmarried, Beatrice met and fell in love with Prince Henry of Battenburg after meeting away from Victoria's gaze. When Beatrice told her mother of her intentions, Victoria refused to speak to her for seven months, and only blessed the marriage if Beatrice and her husband remained with Victoria in England. Beatrice and Henry acceded to Victoria's demands and they were married in 1885. While they (especially Henry) found the Queen's interference annoying, they were possibly the most happily married of Victoria's children. Sadly, the marriage did not last long, as Henry died of malaria in 1886 while away from his wife on a military expedition in Africa. Devastated, Beatrice returned to her role as her mother's companion and the two remained very close for their remaining years. Upon Victoria's death, Beatrice became her unofficial biographer, transcribing and collecting all her mother's letters and journals. Beatrice died in 1944 aged 87, the last of the family to pass away.

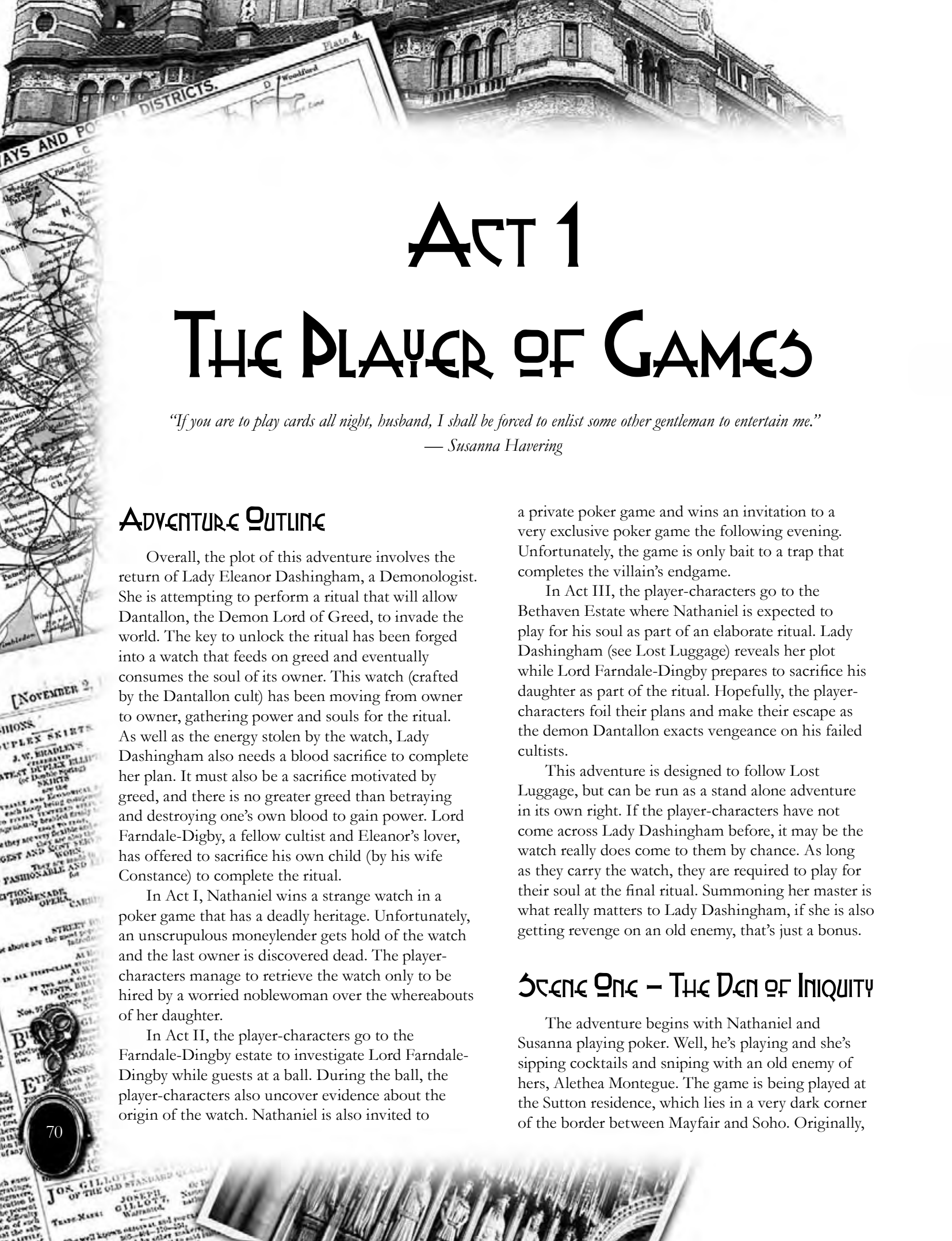




CHAPTER THREE

DEAD MAN'S  
HAND

*In which an unusual pocket watch arrives  
and an old enemy returns.*



# ACT 1

# THE PLAYER OF GAMES

*"If you are to play cards all night, husband, I shall be forced to enlist some other gentleman to entertain me."*

— Susanna Havering

## ADVENTURE OUTLINE

Overall, the plot of this adventure involves the return of Lady Eleanor Dashingham, a Demonologist. She is attempting to perform a ritual that will allow Dantallon, the Demon Lord of Greed, to invade the world. The key to unlock the ritual has been forged into a watch that feeds on greed and eventually consumes the soul of its owner. This watch (crafted by the Dantallon cult) has been moving from owner to owner, gathering power and souls for the ritual. As well as the energy stolen by the watch, Lady Dashingham also needs a blood sacrifice to complete her plan. It must also be a sacrifice motivated by greed, and there is no greater greed than betraying and destroying one's own blood to gain power. Lord Farndale-Digby, a fellow cultist and Eleanor's lover, has offered to sacrifice his own child (by his wife Constance) to complete the ritual.

In Act I, Nathaniel wins a strange watch in a poker game that has a deadly heritage. Unfortunately, an unscrupulous moneylender gets hold of the watch and the last owner is discovered dead. The player-characters manage to retrieve the watch only to be hired by a worried noblewoman over the whereabouts of her daughter.

In Act II, the player-characters go to the Farndale-Dingby estate to investigate Lord Farndale-Dingby while guests at a ball. During the ball, the player-characters also uncover evidence about the origin of the watch. Nathaniel is also invited to

a private poker game and wins an invitation to a very exclusive poker game the following evening. Unfortunately, the game is only bait to a trap that completes the villain's endgame.

In Act III, the player-characters go to the Bethaven Estate where Nathaniel is expected to play for his soul as part of an elaborate ritual. Lady Dashingham (see Lost Luggage) reveals her plot while Lord Farndale-Dingby prepares to sacrifice his daughter as part of the ritual. Hopefully, the player-characters foil their plans and make their escape as the demon Dantallon exacts vengeance on his failed cultists.

This adventure is designed to follow Lost Luggage, but can be run as a stand alone adventure in its own right. If the player-characters have not come across Lady Dashingham before, it may be the watch really does come to them by chance. As long as they carry the watch, they are required to play for their soul at the final ritual. Summoning her master is what really matters to Lady Dashingham, if she is also getting revenge on an old enemy, that's just a bonus.

## SCENE ONE - THE DEN OF INIQUITY

The adventure begins with Nathaniel and Susanna playing poker. Well, he's playing and she's sipping cocktails and sniping with an old enemy of hers, Alethea Montegue. The game is being played at the Sutton residence, which lies in a very dark corner of the border between Mayfair and Soho. Originally,



## IF YOU ARE NOT USING THE HAVERING'S

While this adventure follows on from *Lost Luggage*, you need not play the Havering family. However, you should use the characters you played in *Lost Luggage*, if you can. It is not necessary to have played *Lost Luggage* before *Dead Man's Hand*, but a little adaptation might be required if you don't. In the case of *Lost Luggage*, the Dashingam's should be renamed as the villains will have been dealt with in this adventure. There are plenty of demonists in London to choose from, despite what the Aluminat Church may think!

It is important to have a poker-player connected to the player-character group. The best option is that this is one of the player-characters (like Nathaniel Havering). However, a personal friend of the player-characters could take the place of Nathaniel and end up with the watch. It is vital this NPC is a good friend to the player-characters though, as there is no adventure should they abandon him to his fate!

Nathaniel Havering (or the poker-player) will be playing poker for a lot of the adventure. So if he is a player-character he should be played by someone who prefers role-play over action. The same goes for Susanna as she is likely to be his '+1' for most of the game. However, for many of the poker games she is free to join the others, and often forms a vital link between Nathaniel and the rest of the group.

As always a good mixture of social class is to the player-characters' advantage. They need to be able to access the cream of society as well as the dregs to get the clues they need.

the London residence of country squire Reginald Sutton, the house has since been turned into a discreet gambling club after Mr Sutton used the home as collateral on a debt he could not repay. The house is currently run by Lord Richard Farndale-Digby. While the Lord does not gamble, he has a fascination with poker as a spectator sport. Rumour has it he often bankrolls players just for the entertainment of seeing them play. High society players also know that Lord Farndale-Digby has set up a highly exclusive game with particularly high stakes two nights from now.



This evening's game is winding down as the adventure begins and six players remain, including Nathaniel Havering. The other players are:

— **Col. Nigel Hawthorpe**, a retired military Fox Beastman, who has a top reputation at military card games, but who is a little out of his depth in this more social company.

— **Lady Contessa Vasquez y Morello**, a darkly beautiful Spanish Eldren, whose poker style is as inscrutable as her professed aristocratic nature. She flirts outrageously with Nathaniel, which Alethea might use to annoy Susanna.

— **Gerald Casington**, a middle class gentleman, who is an old friend of Nathaniel's. He is the current bearer of the watch.

— **Father Mapleton**, a rather decadent Aluminat priest, who has smoked and drunk too much this evening.

— **Virgil Cleveland**, a loud and rich cigar smoking Texan Dwarf, who wears a large Stetson hat and is accompanied by the socialite Alethea Montegue.

Standing around the table are some of the players that have already been knocked out of tonight's tournament, along with their companions and



## THE GAMBLING STATISTICS

It is unlikely the Gamemaster will need any statistics for the various gamblers and their entourage. However, player-characters can often turn the simplest social occasions into a frontal assault. So rather than provide an array of statistics for each character, the Gamemaster can use the following stock NPC templates from the Core Rulebook if she requires them.

**Col. Nigel Hawthorpe** (Fashionable Gentleman, p.329), a retired military Fox Beastman

**Lady Contessa Vasquez y Morello** (Fashionable Lady, p.330), a darkly beautiful Spanish Eldren

**Gerald Casington** (Fashionable Gentleman, p.329), a middle class gentleman

**Father Mapleton** (Priest, p.332), a rather decadent Aluminat priest

**Virgil Cleveland** (Fashionable Gentleman, p.329), a loud and rich cigar smoking Texan Dwarf

**Alethea Montegue** (Courtesan, p.328), socialite and Susanna's nemesis

For the same reasons, you may later need statistics for two more NPCs in Scene Four, The Widow and the Watch.

**Hettie Pearson** (Housemaid, p.331), a Halfling maid in the Casington household

**Fiona Casington** (Fashionable Lady, p.330), newly widowed Human middle class lady

Finally, Lady Constance and her maid appear twice in the adventure (in Act II Scene Two, A Distressed Mother, and Act III Scene Three, The Forest of Doom).

**Lady Constance Farndale-Digby** (Fashionable Lady, p.330), the tearful wife of one of the villains of the piece

**Margaret Higgins** (Housemaid, p.331), Lady Constance's fiercely loyal maid

servants. A few courtesans also abound in the hopes that some of the losers may still have coin to spend. A few unofficial games are going on as well; Patterson and Tobin are enjoying a dice game with other bodyguards and servants in the back bedroom, which has been converted into a secondary parlour. Tobin would prefer the most erudite company next door, but the cigarette smoke is giving him a headache and the servants have better beer.

### *Insults and Invitations*

Susanna is exchanging barbs with Alethea Montegue as the game has already begun to bore her. Alethea is a standard society bitch, but has a particular dislike of Susanna as she suspects Susanna may have had an affair with her previous lover. Actually the lover wishes he had, but Susanna probably hasn't even noticed him. He wasn't nearly as interesting as he was rich, which Alethea was happy to settle for. Alethea wants to snipe at Susanna without showing herself up in front of her new cash cow (the American, Virgil Cleveland).

During the evening, Lord Farndale-Digby speaks with Susanna (or possibly Tobin) and gives her and Nathaniel an invitation to the ball he is holding at his Hertfordshire estate tomorrow evening. Lady Farndale-Digby is looking forward to Susanna's company, and they should feel free to bring additional guests (meaning the other player-characters). Lord Farndale-Digby also mentions that he's arranged for a poker game during the ball, and he would love Nathaniel to attend as he is very impressed with his skill. If Nathaniel enters and wins the poker tournament at the ball, there may be an invitation to a 'very exclusive game' the following night.


Jonathan and Selina are at the police station and arrive a little later in the evening. The Gamemaster should skip to Scene Two when Scene One is established (and then run both scenes together) to introduce Jonathan and Selina to the game. They probably want to speak to Nathaniel soon, so they should arrive at the poker game before Casington bets the watch.

### *The Game Concludes*

The game has not been going well for Mr Casington. However, this round he has an excellent hand and only he and Nathaniel remain to contest the pot, the other players having folded. Convinced he can win, Gerald asks to be allowed to bet a gold watch, which he has on his person and puts on the table. As the players are all gentlemen, Nathaniel (and the other players) are hard pushed not to accept his word, and even from a distance it is a very fine watch indeed.

The watch has an aura of magic to it for those who can detect such things, but they need to handle it to get a proper reading (such as if it is good or bad). Handling it suggests they are inspecting it to make a valuation, which might be considered very rude as this





assumes the gentleman offering it is trying to offer a substandard wager. The watch cannot be destroyed and belongs to whoever won it, no matter if they accept it or take it with them. It cannot be given away, only won. It radiates magic, but only a proper reading shows it is demonic, and the images the reader gets are not pleasant at all.

Casington bets the watch 'all in', but Nathaniel wins the round which leaves Casington shocked. Like most players, Casington thought he would win, but on a Very Difficult (6 Black Dice) Wits + Empathy roll anyone can tell he was banking on more than his hand. He asks if he might have a private word with Nathaniel before he leaves (his money being gone he is out of the game). Alone with Nathaniel, Casington claims the watch is a family heirloom and he asks Nathaniel if he might keep the watch and cover the debt in cash later on instead. If Nathaniel comes to visit tomorrow afternoon he'll happily receive him just after lunchtime if that is convenient. If he cannot cover the debt the watch then he will give Nathaniel the watch. There is no reason to suspect Casington will waltz on the bet as he has a good reputation. He desperately wants to find something to sell to cover the debt and keep the watch. His attempts tonight bring him again to the attention of Vincent Staples.



## No, it's mine!

Nathaniel's player might insist on keeping the watch until he is paid, but Casington is verging on frantic and he is a friend so it is only polite to let him keep it. He has given his word the watch or money will be forthcoming tomorrow. Should Nathaniel's player insist on keeping the watch, the Gamemaster may not need to use the later scene where Vincent Staples' pawnbroker's shop is levelled. Lady Dashingham won't need to make sure the watch gets to Nathaniel as he already has it. The player-characters still need to claim their money for the scene, The Widow and the Watch, although Mrs Casington won't be telling them she sold it to the pawnbroker. She might tell the player-characters Staples was interested in it (so they can sell it to get their money). In which case they might visit Staples and possibly sell him the watch, at which point he gets a visit from Lady Dashingham. Selling the watch does not get rid of it; it can only acquire a new owner through a poker match.

The evening's game should end with three players, Virgil, Father Mapleton and Nathaniel. As Virgil loses his last chips Father Mapleton says, "It's getting rather late and I'm not in a greedy mood, let's split the pot and call it a night". Splitting the pot is when both players agree to end the game and take an equal share of the remaining money. Nathaniel has done well tonight so should have no problem ending the game here. It would be rude not to. The option to split the pot is a vital clue that might save Nathaniel in the final climax.

## SCENE TWO – AN EVENING SPOILT BY MURDER

Jonathan and Selina are at the police station. Jonathan is finishing up a late shift and preparing to take Selina out for a night on the town. Unfortunately, the chief investigator hands him a list of recent deaths to add to his caseload. All of the murders have the same characteristics. All appear to have died from heart attacks, yet someone bothered to burn out their eyes soon afterward. The Chief Inspector wants to know if murder is involved and, if so, the motive. So



## FORMER WATCH OWNERS

If the players demand to know the names on the list, you can offer them the following. The deaths have all occurred in the last six months and the victims have no links outside of poker. Anyone who played the circuit knows of their names. The last four on the list (and Gerald Casington) form the zombie party that play the final game.

**Thomas Challerton** – Petty thief

**Millie Polly** – Low class prostitute

**Davis Archtripe** – Factory\* foreman

**Barrington Smythe** – Wealthy middle class factory\* owner

**Simon Truecastle** – Rich young gentleman about town

**Desiree Forkampton** – American Socialite

\*the same factory, a textile mill in south London

## I DON'T HAVE A POLICEMAN!

If your group doesn't have a policeman, there are other ways the player-characters can learn of the recent murders. If one of the characters is a journalist, the list could easily be brought to them as something to investigate for their next story. A Lawyer or Doctor character might have dealt with one of the murders and discovers their case was not the only one. Failing a professional connection, the list might easily be printed in the evening edition of one of the London papers the player-characters pick up during or after the game.

If you are not using Nathaniel, all the victims have recently played poker with the character or NPC taking Nathaniel's place in the adventure. Any of his close friends are aware of the people he has played poker with recently. However, if not, he should see the list at some point and exclaim this fact to the player-characters.

when Selina arrives at the station, she is faced with her finance trapped behind a pile of papers instead of being ready to leave. As she looks over the case-files, she notices a list of the murder victims, all of whom have recently played poker with Nathaniel.

Jonathan and Selina are aware that Nathaniel is playing poker tonight. So the Gamemaster should gently hint that they should probably go to warn him about the murders. Nathaniel's life could be in danger! They should arrive during the final game, perhaps speaking with Patterson, Tobin, or Susanna first when they get to the game.

The heart attacks are indeed murder. The deceased are all previous owners of the watch and, once they lost it, their souls were forfeit. Dantallon induced heart attacks and left his mark on the bodies (as greed usually starts with covetous eyes).

## SCENE THREE – A BAND OF THUGS

As the group leaves, they are approached by a nasty looking group of thugs. They ask politely if they are speaking to Nathaniel Havering, although they are certain they have the right man if the player-characters tell them they've never heard of Nathaniel. It turns out Gerald Casington has recently borrowed heavily from their employer and it is time to pay. They believe since Nathaniel recently won Casington's money, he should be the one to reimburse them. They are a nasty bunch looking for a fight, so no logical argument sways them from their plan to hit the player-characters until they hand over all their cash. If the player-characters decide to pay them off too easily, the thugs get greedy and demand the rest of what they have on them (as well as 'some time in that alley with one of those nice ladies you have with you').

The thugs should be easily dispatched (at least one per character, with maybe two more) and interrogation tells the group they work for the moneylender, Vincent Staples. The characters might try to pay a visit to Staples at this point, but he lives in Holborn, a little close to the St Giles Rookery. Not a good place to go to after dark.

If the player-characters leave with Gerald Casington the thugs set upon him. If they are a little behind Casington they might come upon the thugs giving him a beating. He cracks under the pressure, and tells them he has lost all his money to Nathaniel, thinking they will leave him alone. Instead they turn their attention to the player-characters. Gerald is very glad of the rescue, but might scuttle off if left with an escape route.





## SCENE FOUR – THE WIDOW AND THE WATCH

The next day the player-characters have two potential leads they might want to follow. They have an appointment to visit Gerald Casington to claim the watch or the cash, and they may wish to pay a visit to Vincent Staples. After all, depending on how their encounter with his thugs went they may have a score to settle. Since Jonathan (or the group's policeman) is on the murder case, he is contacted by the police around luncheon, informing him a new murder has been discovered with similar characteristics (they'd waited for the coroner's report), which is sadly Gerald Casington. He may be contacted earlier if you wish to dissuade the characters from going to see Staples too early. Only a police character gets a message about Casington's death early, a journalist first gets the story upon visiting the Casington residence.

The Casington home is in Marylebone. The exterior is pristine, the steps have recently been repaved and a new door sporting a polished brass knocker has been installed. The door is answered by Hettie, a female Halfling servant, who looks distressed and politely asks the player-character's business. She leads them into the richly adorned parlour to await Mrs Casington. While waiting in the Casington home, an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Appraisal check reveals that some of the furnishings and wallpapers are brand new, others are very old and possibly even broken. This suggests Casington had fallen on hard times, but recently come into money.

### STAPLES' THUGS

These bullies are a little more professional than your usual run of the mill thugs, but they are not so different in terms of skill and ability.

#### *Thugs - Rank 3 Ruffians (Focused)*

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +2

Initiative: 6

Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Fisticuffs +2, Intimidate +1, Perception +2, Streetwise +2, Swordplay +3

Traits: Nasty +2, Arrogant +2,

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: Knife (7 Dice)

Damage: Knife (5 Dice)

The housemaid is Hettie Pearson, a maid-of-all-work that was looking forward to limiting her duties to just being the cook. The increasingly wealthy Gerald Casington had promised her the position once he'd finished refurbishing his home and was able to hire more servants. Those hopes were dashed when Gerald passed away last evening. His eyes were burned out (there are no signs of forced entry) and the coroner soon discovered that the victim died of a heart attack. Hettie apologises on behalf of her mistress that the master (Mr Casington) passed away



this morning and asks them to wait in the parlour while she fetches the mistress. It is not her place to describe how he died or what the body looked like, they will have to ask Mrs Casington. However, a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Wits + Empathy roll reveals Hettie seems more upset at the thought of how Casington was found rather than the fact of his death. Should a player-character ask if his eyes were burnt out, she drops her tray, gasps in horror and runs from the room. She refuses to talk further with the player-characters and possibly informs the police that they knew what the body looked like before being told.

Fiona Casington joins the player-characters in the parlour soon after they arrive, wearing the black dress of a woman in mourning. Hettie brings tea and sandwiches shortly after (even if the player-characters have upset her). Fiona is an attractive human woman in her early 30s, and is tearful and shocked, but coping with true British stoicism. Fiona is not surprised the player-characters were owed money. Indeed, she had assumed that the characters have come to settle debts, debts she is willing to settle in as much as she is able to avoid scandal. When asked about the watch, Fiona remembers it. It was a peculiar device that never kept time well. Gerald came by it in a game not long ago. The good news is it must be valuable. However, she only knows this as a moneylender called Vincent Staples came by this morning and took the watch in payment of quite a large debt Gerald owed. Staples suggested the debt be covered by gold or jewellery and after examining the watch, accepted it in payment. Fiona thought this strange as it didn't look worth half of the debts Gerald owed Staples. However, she was just happy to get the odious man out of her house. She is very apologetic about selling the watch when she shouldn't have; Gerald told her nothing of his wagering the watch last night. However, there is little she can do. She would love to simply pay them what Gerald owed them, but this whole morning has involved settling debts and she may not cover even what her husband owes if she sells the house.

Much of what Fiona tells the characters depends on how mannered they are to her in her bereaved state. She talks about her situation as she desperately needs advice, although she does not get personal with people she doesn't feel she can trust. If the player-characters do gain her trust she reveals Gerald had a bit of a gambling problem and the debts will be hard to keep behind closed doors. Her brief investigations

into the true state of their finances have been deeply concerning. Gerald ran up huge debts, although recently he had been paying off many due to huge wins at poker (a vice she had tried and failed to get him to stop). Sadly, his winning streak only made him risk and borrow more money.

The player-characters may take pity on the poor widow and the Gamemaster can create several more adventures as the player-characters try to help her pay off her husband's debts. Gerald got involved with some unpleasant criminal types the player-characters may need to see off if Fiona is to be safe.

## SCENE FIVE – CASHING IN WITH THE MONEYLENDER

The player-characters will certainly want to visit Staples after talking to Fiona Casington. How this scene plays out depends on whether Staples does have the watch (he cannot get it from Mrs Casington if the player-characters didn't let Gerald leave the game with it) and what time of day they arrive. In the morning, Staples makes his 'rounds' with some of his gang. He stops by the Casington residence early to demand his money. Fiona, unwilling to spark a scandal, offered the watch as payment. By noon, Staples is back at his office.

Staples' Financial Services is a tall but thin building in an impoverished section of Holborn near St. Giles. The office rests on the ground floor, while Staples' home comprises the first and second floor. It is an old building, probably built not long after the Great Fire, but there have been improvements made to the windows and awning.

Unless the player-characters arrive at dawn, Vincent Staples is not in residence. He is spending the morning making the rounds with his Ogre 'servant' to collect debts owed. Instead, a young Beastman (bulldog), Harrison Gable, is behind the desk. He claims Vincent Staples will not be in until after luncheon. If pressed, Harrison (use the thug stats from Scene One) can be persuaded to tell them Gerald Casington is on the list for this morning. This should push them to visit the Casington residence as noted in Scene Four. It is likely they have just missed Staples.

If the characters manage to meet Staples in the morning, he simply says Casington owes him a great



## VINCENT STAPLES

Staples was brought up on the street, but not in the gutter. He has built a nice little business and there is little he will not do to protect it. However, he is not a thug, and knows that brute force is best wielded carefully. Corpses bring questions so violence is a last resort, but not something he balks at. Staples knows the watch is important and assumes it is magical, but that is all he knows. He feigns ignorance of any of its powers in front of the player-characters. Staples dresses in tatty clothing like his gang, although his tattered clothes were stolen from a gentleman of quality.

### *Vincent Staples - Rank 6 Petty Crimelord (Focused)*

Physical Competence: +3

Mental Competence: +6

Initiative: 6

Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)

Mana: 3 Dice (18 pips)

Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Empathy +2, Fisticuffs +2, Intimidate +2, Perception +2, Streetwise +3, Swordplay +1

Traits: Polite +2, Businessman-like +3, Ruthless +3

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: He keeps a knife (4 Dice) hidden close at hand

Damage: Knife (5 Dice)

deal of money and not only did Casington fail to pay him, but he'd heard rumours that Casington had come into money. Staples felt it was time to get paid. Assuming they leave him be, Staples still visits the Casington residence as planned.

Staples is a businessman first and foremost. He doesn't want to threaten or fight the player-characters if he doesn't have to. In fact, he is apologetic (but not obsequious) that his men have been a bit overzealous on his behalf. However, he does not take kindly to threats, and has a goodly amount of thugs to protect his business. If things remain polite he happily talks to them. He knows the watch is special, which is why he's been tracking it across the poker games of London. However, he doesn't know why. He doesn't tell the player-characters this unless forced or given some other incentive. Instead, he says he took it from

Mrs Casington as he took pity on her, so he cannot sell it to the player-characters for anything but a large sum of money. He already has a collector lined up so he cannot break a deal anyway.

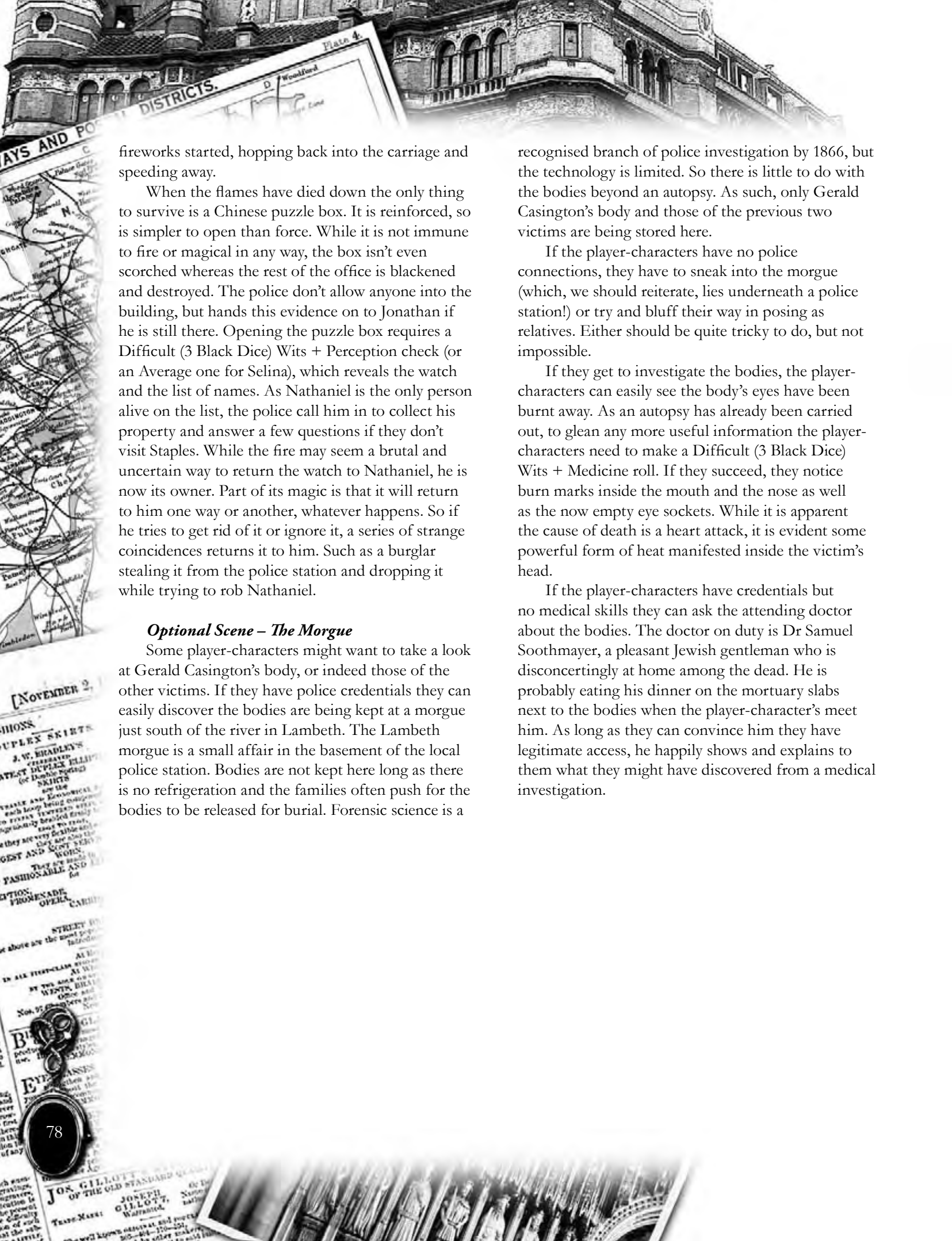
If the player-characters get a look at Staples' office secretly, they notice he has a list of the murder victims. He has labelled the list 'Watchbearers'. The Gamemaster might use this to confuse any characters familiar with 'The Adventurer's Society' (see Faces in the Smoke Volume II). Unlike other murder lists, Staples list finishes with Gerald Casington and then adds Nathaniel Havering with a question mark after it. If Staples has the watch, he places it inside an oriental puzzle box (see later) with the list.

### *Fire and Flame*

If Staples has got hold of the watch his victory is short lived. Lady Dashingham is very keen to see the watch remains with Nathaniel now he is the official owner. So she visits Staples and destroys the building (along with Staples and his associates) just after lunchtime. If the player-characters arrive just after lunch Lady Dashingham lets them leave, and when they are long gone she destroys the building to make sure the watch isn't there. Satisfied Nathaniel must have the watch she leaves things be after that. The player-characters may well read about the fire in the paper that evening.

If the player-characters arrive just after the fire, a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Wits + Perception check allows them to glimpse a lady speeding away in a carriage as they arrive on the scene. That isn't especially unusual as no we-to-do person would want to linger in this area if they didn't have to. They won't be able to make out her features though and the scene of the devastated pawnbrokers quickly grabs their attention.

Two policemen have arrived and are trying to keep the gathering crowd at bay so no one gets hurt. Windows are still exploding and the fire is raging in the building. However, it is refusing to spread to the adjacent buildings. An Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Thaumaturgy/Demonology roll suggests the flames are magical in origin. The Bobbies assert control but defer to Jonathan once he makes his presence known. If Jonathan is not there, the Bobbies secure the area "until a proper detective arrives," which should be a cue to get Jonathan. Questioning witnesses reveals that a wealthy woman had entered the office with a couple of servants and raced out just after the



fireworks started, hopping back into the carriage and speeding away.

When the flames have died down the only thing to survive is a Chinese puzzle box. It is reinforced, so is simpler to open than force. While it is not immune to fire or magical in any way, the box isn't even scorched whereas the rest of the office is blackened and destroyed. The police don't allow anyone into the building, but hands this evidence on to Jonathan if he is still there. Opening the puzzle box requires a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Wits + Perception check (or an Average one for Selina), which reveals the watch and the list of names. As Nathaniel is the only person alive on the list, the police call him in to collect his property and answer a few questions if they don't visit Staples. While the fire may seem a brutal and uncertain way to return the watch to Nathaniel, he is now its owner. Part of its magic is that it will return to him one way or another, whatever happens. So if he tries to get rid of it or ignore it, a series of strange coincidences returns it to him. Such as a burglar stealing it from the police station and dropping it while trying to rob Nathaniel.

### *Optional Scene – The Morgue*

Some player-characters might want to take a look at Gerald Casington's body, or indeed those of the other victims. If they have police credentials they can easily discover the bodies are being kept at a morgue just south of the river in Lambeth. The Lambeth morgue is a small affair in the basement of the local police station. Bodies are not kept here long as there is no refrigeration and the families often push for the bodies to be released for burial. Forensic science is a

recognised branch of police investigation by 1866, but the technology is limited. So there is little to do with the bodies beyond an autopsy. As such, only Gerald Casington's body and those of the previous two victims are being stored here.

If the player-characters have no police connections, they have to sneak into the morgue (which, we should reiterate, lies underneath a police station!) or try and bluff their way in posing as relatives. Either should be quite tricky to do, but not impossible.

If they get to investigate the bodies, the player-characters can easily see the body's eyes have been burnt away. As an autopsy has already been carried out, to glean any more useful information the player-characters need to make a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Wits + Medicine roll. If they succeed, they notice burn marks inside the mouth and the nose as well as the now empty eye sockets. While it is apparent the cause of death is a heart attack, it is evident some powerful form of heat manifested inside the victim's head.

If the player-characters have credentials but no medical skills they can ask the attending doctor about the bodies. The doctor on duty is Dr Samuel Soothmayer, a pleasant Jewish gentleman who is disconcertingly at home among the dead. He is probably eating his dinner on the mortuary slabs next to the bodies when the player-character's meet him. As long as they can convince him they have legitimate access, he happily shows and explains to them what they might have discovered from a medical investigation.





# ACT 2

## HEARTS AND DIAMONDS

*“No. I don’t dance.”*  
—Patterson Briggs


It should now be apparent something is going on in poker circles. However, the player-characters are now low on clues. While it might not seem the right thing to do, to go to a party, they can be certain the cream of the city’s poker players will be at Lord Farndale-Digby’s gathering the next night. Here, they may gain valuable clues, and they are closer than they expect to the heart of the conspiracy, slowly being drawn into its web.

Lord Farndale-Digby should be of interest to the player-characters as he has recently organised a number of big poker tournaments for many socialites. His fortunes have risen recently and (those who indulge in gossip at the ball may discover) it is suggested someone is funding him. In fact, he is a cultist of Dantallon (the Demon Lord of Greed) and a servant (and lover) of Lady Dashingham. She is funding him as she now has access to her deceased husband’s full fortune after he mysteriously committed suicide after a horse race. Gossip circles indicated that he’d been fixing the races. The actual story depends on what happened when you played *Lost Luggage* previously. However, even if the players really messed things up, Lady Dashingham has simply decided to do away with her husband as he was no more use to her.

### SCENE ONE – A GRAND BALL

The Farndale Manor is a large estate just north of London in Hertfordshire, easily reached via carriage. It is a large country home built in the Tudor style, which sits on a hill overlooking a nearby village. When the player-characters arrive it is pouring with rain, and the front yard is eerily lit by lamps as carriage drivers and footmen quickly usher their employers into the foyer. The player-characters are met by Lord Farndale-Digby’s footmen bearing umbrellas. The footmen stoically get soaked as they assist guests into the foyer, where they are relieved of their coats and politely asked to produce their invitation. When ready they are then shown into the grand ballroom where the soirée is in full swing. The ballroom is a huge affair built in white marble, with a balcony that extends all the way around supported on grand pillars.

Not long after he arrives, one of the player-characters receives a letter from Margaret, one of the maidservants (who is actually Lady Farndale-Digby’s personal maid). Which player-character gets the note depends on the group you have playing the game. If you are using the Havering family then Jonathan, as a policeman, is the most likely. However, another society lady, or a professional such as a Doctor or Lawyer might be trusted instead. However, any player-character with a good reputation for honour and discretion will do, hopefully your group contains at least one!



The note is written in a lady's hand and says the following:

*I am in dire need of your assistance and your discretion. Please, I beg you, find me this evening when I am away from my husband. The life of an innocent child may hang in the balance.*

*Yours,  
C F-D*

Obviously, Jonathan (or the player-character who received the note) will want to find out who wrote the note. The maid is gone by the time they finish reading. However, if they inquire after Lady Farndale-Digby, it is a simple matter to find out her name is Constance. Speaking to her in the first hour of the soirée is difficult as Lord Farndale-Digby is at her side, mingling with the guests. An Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Empathy check reveals Constance Farndale-Digby is putting on a brave face, but is clearly worried about something (Susanna's Aura Reading ability may also detect this). After the first hour, she has an intense but quiet conversation with her husband and leaves the party. Lord Farndale-Digby escorts her out and upon his return a few minutes later simply claims his wife has taken a little ill but should be well after a good night's sleep. The stress of organising the wonderful affair has sadly taken its toll on her delicate constitution. If the player-character with the note goes to look for her, that encounter is detailed in Scene Two.

The party is a good occasion to allow for casual roleplay. If desired, many of the same personages from the evening before can return, including Susanna's nemesis, Alethea. Asking around about Lord Farndale-Digby could garner the following information:

- Lord Farndale-Digby is the only son of the family.
- His only other living relative is his bedridden father (who is upstairs and practically in a coma).
- His family had very little money until recently.
- Various rumours circulate about his new-found wealth, from striking oil to being paid by the government for some secret service.
- He is a great fan of poker, but never plays. This has led to suspicion that he uses the games to launder money for the criminal underworld.
- His wife is the youngest daughter of a very wealthy family. Her dowry was considerable, and may have been why he proposed as they don't seem very happily married.


The player-characters may wish to snoop around the house; such actions are detailed in Scene Four. However, they have ample time to enjoy the dancing and canapés as the poker game is yet to begin, which will occupy Lord Farndale-Digby. The Gamemaster should also remind the players this is a private residence, and characters clearly acting suspiciously will either be thrown out or held while the local police are summoned (this would be a last resort, as Lord Farndale-Digby does not wish to draw attention to himself).

The Gamemaster can occupy the player characters with several opportunities for role-playing and dice rolls during the party.

- Opposed Presence + Fashion rolls between the ladies establishes who is the best dressed. Being better dressed than anyone you are talking to gives a lady an additional die for any social roll at the party.
- A Wits + Fashion roll can be made to see who has kept up with the latest fashions, and more importantly, who hasn't.
- Dexterity + Dance rolls can be made when taking a turn about the hall. Each partner can only count as many successes as the person they are dancing with, and their combined score shows how impressive they are. If they manage 8-10 successes between them, they find people step aside to watch their expertise and a round of applause follows.
- Those who have skill in a musical instrument might perform, but this is a little unseemly for anyone of the upper classes. The instrument should be appropriate, and a lower class character trying to serenade the gathering with a penny whistle will be removed no matter how good he is.
- Those who wish to stir the social cauldron might like to introduce gossip and scandal about the other guests (real or imagined). To do so requires a Wits + Conversation roll (or possibly Wits + High Society, if the Gamemaster prefers). Finding out some dirt on the other guests might also appeal, which requires a Presence + Conversation roll. The amount of successes gained determines how juicy the gossip to be spread or learned is.

A few minutes before nine o'clock, Lord Farndale-Digby withdraws to the upstairs poker room, ordering two servants to round up the players. If they haven't already done so, the absence of Lord Farndale-Digby is a good opportunity to sneak about the house or seek out his lady wife. However, the poker player is invited to join the game (and it is a terrible social faux pas if they refuse).





## SCENE TWO – A DISTRESSED MOTHER

If one (or more) of the player-characters goes to visit Constance Farndale-Digby, she is not hard to find. After arguing with her husband she has gone to her rooms on the first floor, far from the music of the ballroom. Her maid, Margaret (the same one that gave the player-character the message), is in attendance and ready to shoo away any unwelcome visitors. For anyone but the person she gave the note, Margaret answers the door and explains that her mistress is well but needs her rest. If the visitor is the player-character she is expecting she ushers them quickly inside without a word. Any associates are also ushered in quickly (better than to have them lurking in the corridor), but Margaret remains on her guard until she is sure they are friends.

Constance Farndale-Digby is a very attractive society lady, who married very young. She is several years younger than her husband, although this is not unusual in the upper classes. Constance is very distressed and has trouble maintaining her composure as she speaks with Jonathan (or the other player-character who gained her confidence). The source of her distress is her eight-year old daughter “Lottie” (Charlotte), who disappeared from her bed last evening. Lord Farndale-Digby promised to take care of it, but the local police found no signs of forced entry. Her husband was seemingly more concerned with the ball and poker game than the welfare of his own daughter, so when she realised that Jonathan (who may have been hailed in the paper not long ago for cracking a horse race-fixing scheme) was on the guest list, she knew she needed to beg him for help. She is willing to pay any fee he requests.

Lady Constance allows Jonathan to snoop around, instructing her trusted servants to give him access. She warns him not to draw the attention of her husband, however, for he is an aristocrat (and it will be bad for Jonathan’s career to accuse a noble without hard evidence). She believes her husband is frightened of the scandal, so she has to deny the player-characters are working for her if they are caught. She will do her best to help in any way she can though.

Lady Farndale-Digby also knows the following information:

- She suspects her husband is having an affair with another Lady. She has seen the woman but

does not know her name. If they ask, her description matches the woman fleeing Staples’ place, but only really so much as they have the same hair colour. The lady is Eleanor Dashingham, who is indeed having an affair with Lord Farndale-Digby although it is mainly to control him.

- Constance did overhear her husband talking to his valet about things being prepared at ‘Bethaven’, whether that is anything to do with things she has no idea. She didn’t hear what the preparations were, but they did not sound as if they were pleasant.

## SCENE THREE – THE GAME

Just before 9:00 in the evening a selection of gentlemen are discreetly informed of the poker game they have been waiting for. Nathaniel is one of them (and possibly Susanna), and should make his way up to the poker room by 9:00pm sharp. The game is to be played in two rounds. In the first round, there are 25 players arranged in five tables of five. For the second round, all but one table is cleared away (giving the players a break which Nathaniel may use to check on the others or do some snooping of his own). The air is thick with cigar smoke during play.

Lord Farndale-Digby personally receives Nathaniel and Susanna, offering him a drink and a cigar (for Nathaniel) before the game gets started. Lord Farndale-Digby conspiratorially tells him the real prize for tonight (along with the money) is a seat at a very exclusive poker game the next evening. Not only will the stakes be high, but the company will be extremely exclusive. He will hint the Prince of Wales (a renowned hedonist) will be in attendance. If the poker player is a player-character, they may want to sit this game out, being suspicious of Lord Farndale-Digby. This is very hard as Lord Farndale-Digby is very insistent that the poker player joins them. However, the Gamemaster should impress on the player that the reward for winning is considerable. It brings access to a game he might never have the opportunity of playing in. This is the sort of game where he might not only win a vast sum of money, but also real estate and even noble title (which is bestowed in the New Year’s honours list).

During the game, Susanna is free to watch the game of talk to the other ‘+1s’ in attendance. However, she is welcome to return to the ball at any time and come and go as she pleases. This makes her



## PLAYING THE GAME

It is entirely up to the Gamemaster and the poker player as to how they want to run the poker sequences in the adventure. If they enjoy running the actual game we have provided rules for doing so in the appendix at the end of the adventure. However, this sort of play is not always to everyone's taste so the Gamemaster might simply inform the poker player how well he is doing as the game goes on, and allow him several opportunities for role-play with the other players. In general, a mixture of both is probably the best option so play doesn't get bogged down in too much poker.

As Nathaniel has to win the Gamemaster should cheat on his behalf when required. If the player questions this he can be told (with a mysterious smile from the Gamemaster) that it is very odd indeed...

very useful for passing messages to Nathaniel without arousing suspicion. However, if she whispers in his ear too much the other players may think she is telling him what their cards are!

The Poker Room is large and well appointed with several tables prepared to receive players. A bar runs alongside one wall and servants move around the tables ready to be signalled to refill any player's glass and offer refreshment. If the player-characters investigate the room (before the game or somehow during it) there are no signs of any planned cheating (secret mirrors, enchanted/marked decks, etc). However, a strange magical symbol is carved on the underside of each table. If the player-character can make an Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Demonology roll or a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Wits + Thaumaturgy roll they realise the symbol is used in Demonology and is designed to transfer power or magical energy. The symbol itself is non-magical, but it does help draw souls towards to watch. While not an enchantment itself, it has been ritually prepared. Players acting oddly here may be suspected of setting up some sort of cheat so they will have to be careful.

It should come as no surprise that when Nathaniel plays the final table he wins the poker match, earning the chance to play for very high stakes tomorrow night. Lord Farndale-Digby gives him a cheque for the evening's winnings and everyone toasts him. Lord Farndale-Digby has no problem doing this. The banks are closed tomorrow (Saturday) and he believes Nathaniel will be dead by tomorrow

evening. He will be able to keep the money as the cheque will never be cashed. The details of tomorrow evening's game will be sent with a carriage as soon as it is arranged tomorrow. The reasoning behind this is that it is for the security of the important people involved. While this is true to a certain extent, Lord Farndale-Digby doesn't want the player-characters snooping around before they are ready.

## SCENE FOUR - SNOOPING AROUND

Throughout this act, some characters may go looking around the mansion. In addition to the Poker Room (as described in Scene Three), there are several locations that might reveal valuable clues. It is important to remember that while Jonathan may have Lady Farndale-Digby's blessing, Lord Farndale-Digby will not tolerate any snooping around. As the host and a powerful member of the nobility, he can end Jonathan's investigation on the spot if he is discovered. One message to Jonathan's bosses will get him pulled from the case entirely. This counts for any of the player-characters with a profession. Forcing Lord Farndale-Digby to make an enemy of them has professional consequences as he has powerful friends.

### *The Wine Cellar*

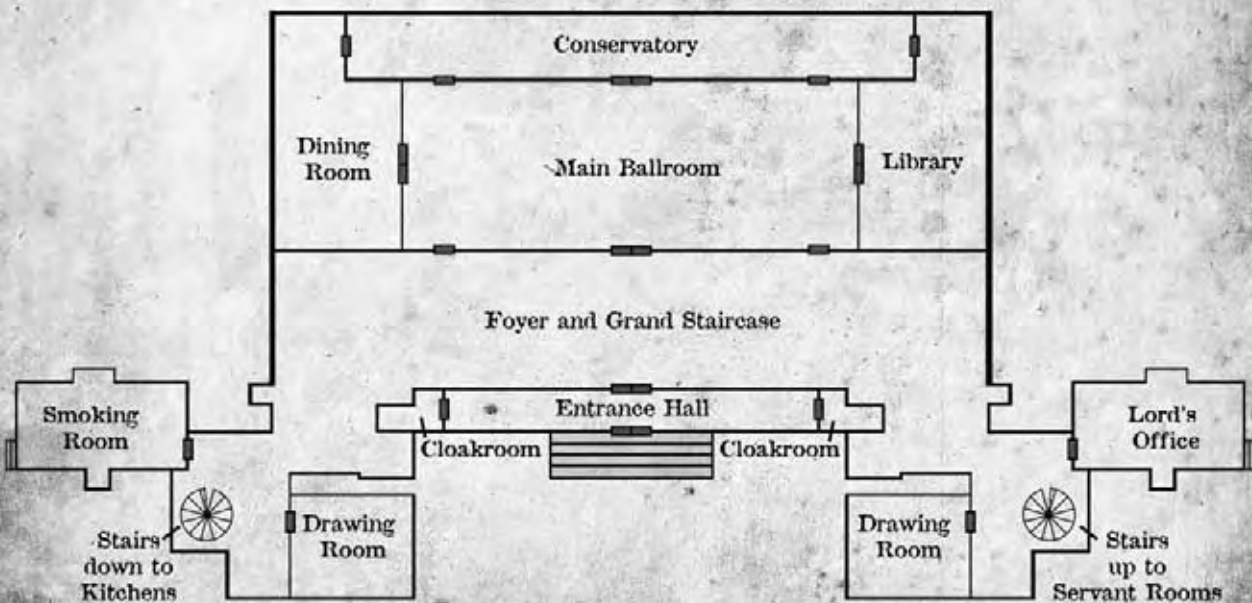
Tonight, the wine cellar is sporadically occupied by servants retrieving wine. However, it can be accessed and has a secret room. The entrance is disguised behind a rack of wines that are all very substandard (in fact, moving the rack breaks them). In such a well stocked cellar they look very odd to a connoisseur. An Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Appraisal roll should reveal this fact. Inside the room is a small, well-ordered workshop.

There are many small and delicate tools and parts in the workshop. An Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Appraisal or Craft (Clockwork) check reveals these tools and parts are useful in watch-making. The servants and Lady Farndale-Digby can confirm that Lord Farndale-Digby had hired a noted Gnome watchmaker, George Popplewick, to craft a watch for him six months ago. In truth, Popplewick crafted two watches. One is the cursed watch Nathaniel owns, while Lord Farndale-Digby holds the other (this is his cover story if questioned about Mr. Popplewick). The fate of Popplewick is up to the Gamemaster. He might be part of the cult, floating somewhere in the Thames, or unaware of whom and what he was really working for.

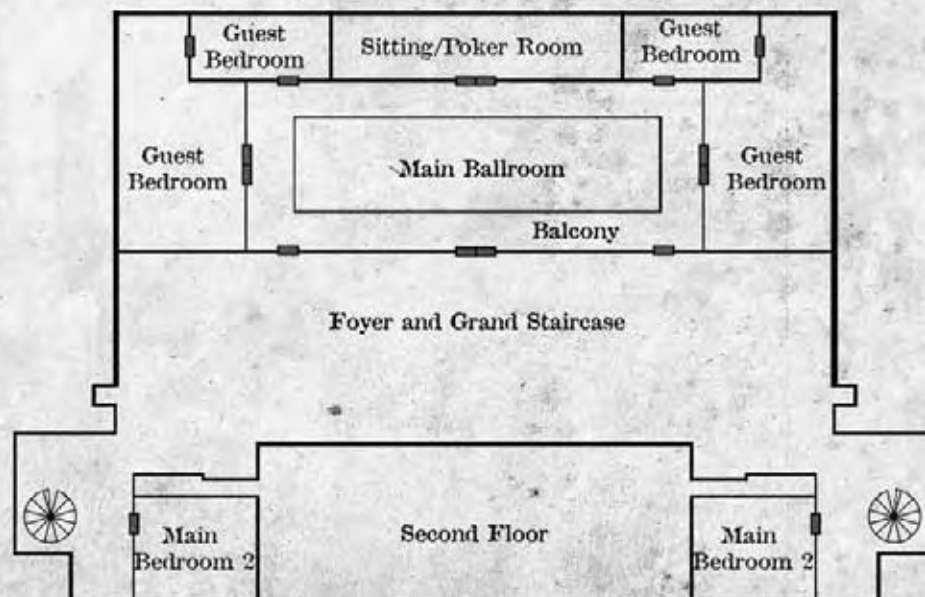




# The Farndale Digby Home

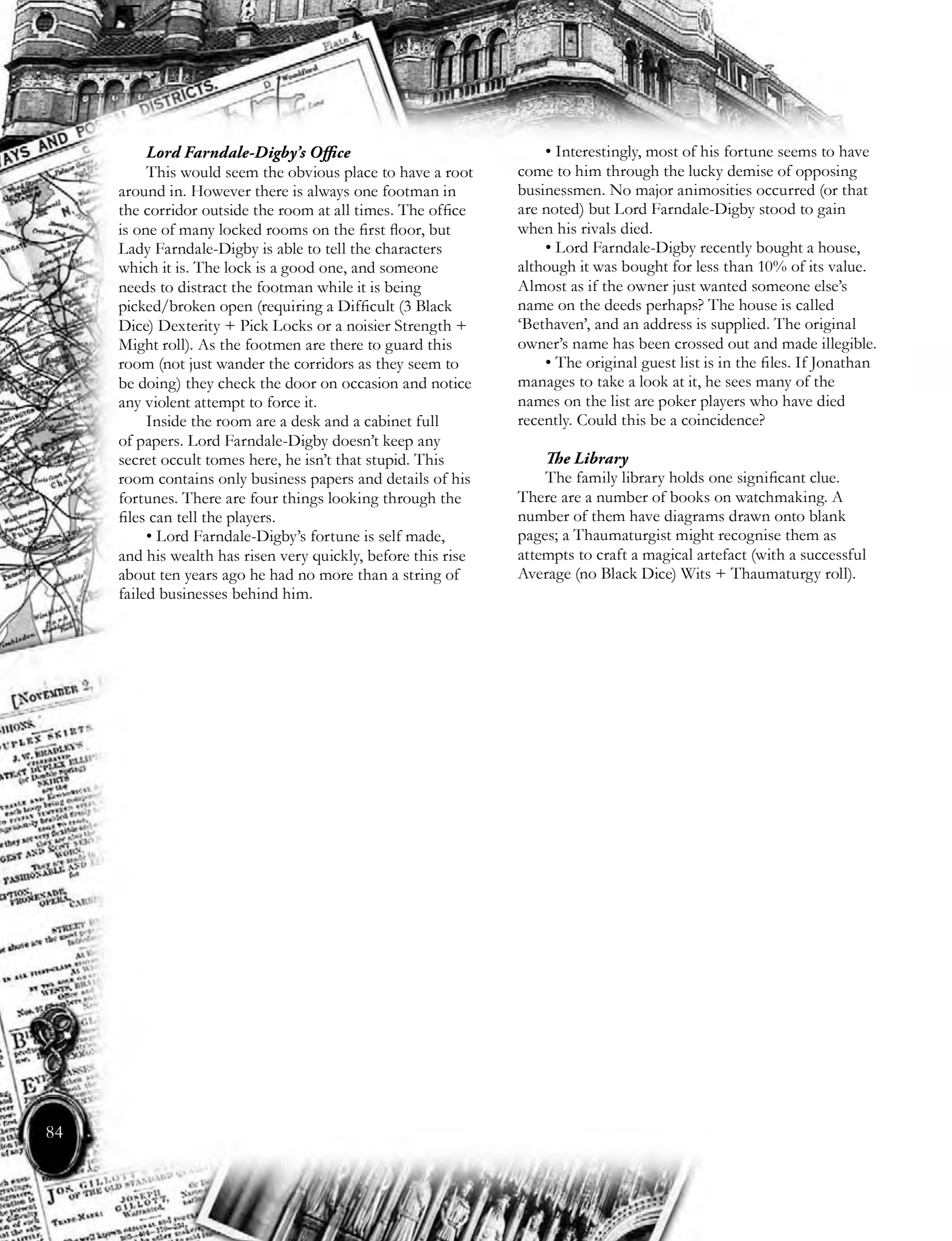


# The Farndale Digby Home



ph  
TRADE MARK  
REGISTERED  
MADE IN IRELAND  
SEPARATE TRADE MARK  
INCORPORATED  
Great Britain and Ireland  
COATION  
The Union of Ireland to any  
EUROPE  
The Members of the Committee  
of the Company's Office





### ***Lord Farndale-Digby's Office***

This would seem the obvious place to have a root around in. However there is always one footman in the corridor outside the room at all times. The office is one of many locked rooms on the first floor, but Lady Farndale-Digby is able to tell the characters which it is. The lock is a good one, and someone needs to distract the footman while it is being picked/broken open (requiring a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Dexterity + Pick Locks or a noisier Strength + Might roll). As the footmen are there to guard this room (not just wander the corridors as they seem to be doing) they check the door on occasion and notice any violent attempt to force it.

Inside the room are a desk and a cabinet full of papers. Lord Farndale-Digby doesn't keep any secret occult tomes here, he isn't that stupid. This room contains only business papers and details of his fortunes. There are four things looking through the files can tell the players.

- Lord Farndale-Digby's fortune is self made, and his wealth has risen very quickly, before this rise about ten years ago he had no more than a string of failed businesses behind him.

- Interestingly, most of his fortune seems to have come to him through the lucky demise of opposing businessmen. No major animosities occurred (or that are noted) but Lord Farndale-Digby stood to gain when his rivals died.

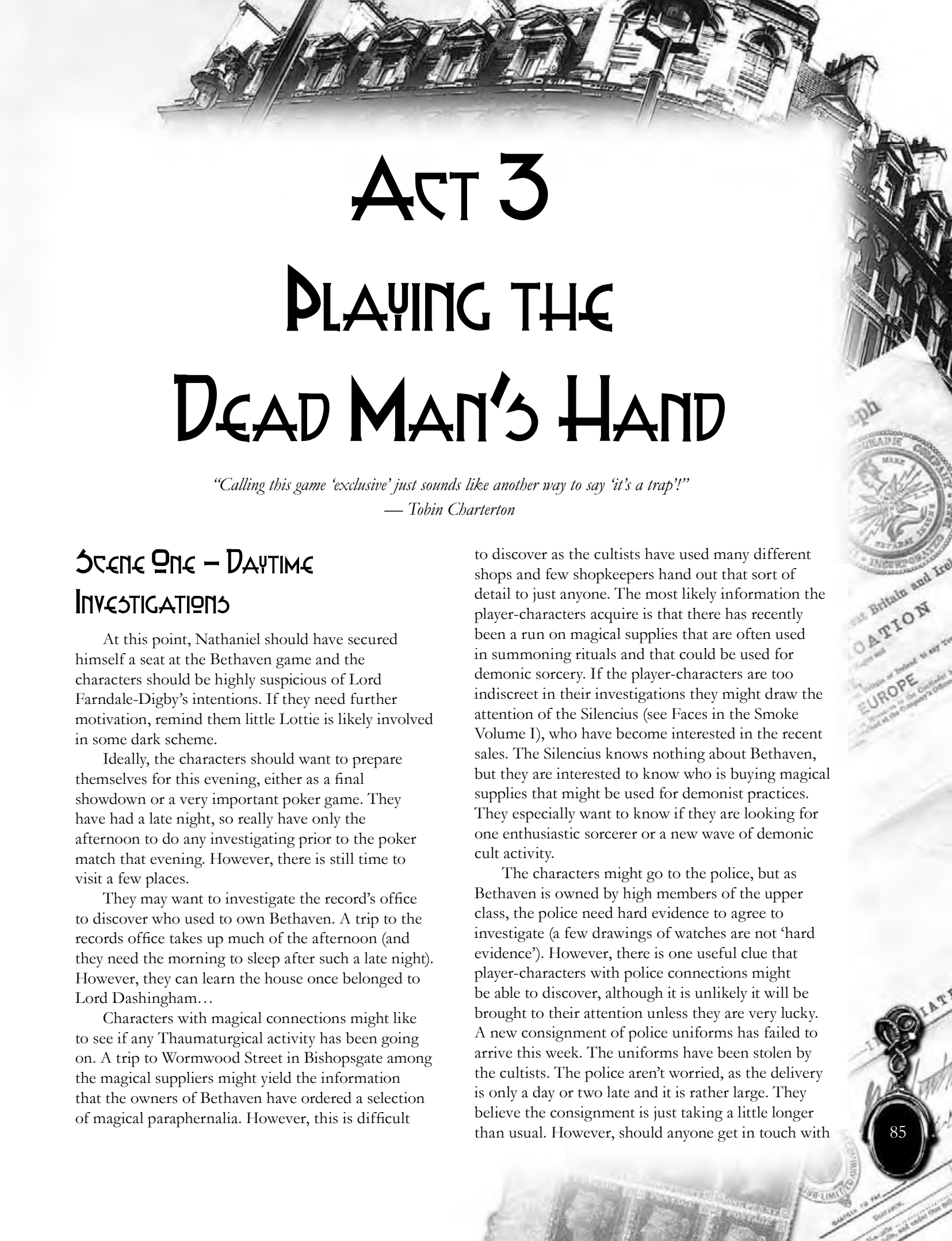
- Lord Farndale-Digby recently bought a house, although it was bought for less than 10% of its value. Almost as if the owner just wanted someone else's name on the deeds perhaps? The house is called 'Bethaven', and an address is supplied. The original owner's name has been crossed out and made illegible.

- The original guest list is in the files. If Jonathan manages to take a look at it, he sees many of the names on the list are poker players who have died recently. Could this be a coincidence?

### ***The Library***

The family library holds one significant clue. There are a number of books on watchmaking. A number of them have diagrams drawn onto blank pages; a Thaumaturgist might recognise them as attempts to craft a magical artefact (with a successful Average (no Black Dice) Wits + Thaumaturgy roll).





# ACT 3

## PLAYING THE DEAD MAN'S HAND

*"Calling this game 'exclusive' just sounds like another way to say 'it's a trap!'"*  
— Tobin Charterton

### SCENE ONE – DAYTIME INVESTIGATIONS

At this point, Nathaniel should have secured himself a seat at the Bethaven game and the characters should be highly suspicious of Lord Farndale-Digby's intentions. If they need further motivation, remind them little Lottie is likely involved in some dark scheme.

Ideally, the characters should want to prepare themselves for this evening, either as a final showdown or a very important poker game. They have had a late night, so really have only the afternoon to do any investigating prior to the poker match that evening. However, there is still time to visit a few places.

They may want to investigate the record's office to discover who used to own Bethaven. A trip to the records office takes up much of the afternoon (and they need the morning to sleep after such a late night). However, they can learn the house once belonged to Lord Dashingham...

Characters with magical connections might like to see if any Thaumaturgical activity has been going on. A trip to Wormwood Street in Bishopsgate among the magical suppliers might yield the information that the owners of Bethaven have ordered a selection of magical paraphernalia. However, this is difficult

to discover as the cultists have used many different shops and few shopkeepers hand out that sort of detail to just anyone. The most likely information the player-characters acquire is that there has recently been a run on magical supplies that are often used in summoning rituals and that could be used for demonic sorcery. If the player-characters are too indiscreet in their investigations they might draw the attention of the Silencius (see *Faces in the Smoke* Volume I), who have become interested in the recent sales. The Silencius knows nothing about Bethaven, but they are interested to know who is buying magical supplies that might be used for demonist practices. They especially want to know if they are looking for one enthusiastic sorcerer or a new wave of demonic cult activity.

The characters might go to the police, but as Bethaven is owned by high members of the upper class, the police need hard evidence to agree to investigate (a few drawings of watches are not 'hard evidence'). However, there is one useful clue that player-characters with police connections might be able to discover, although it is unlikely it will be brought to their attention unless they are very lucky. A new consignment of police uniforms has failed to arrive this week. The uniforms have been stolen by the cultists. The police aren't worried, as the delivery is only a day or two late and it is rather large. They believe the consignment is just taking a little longer than usual. However, should anyone get in touch with



the manufacturer, they insist the delivery was sent out three days ago and should be there. It is up to the Gamemaster if the player-characters are likely to come across this snippet as it apparently has nothing to do with their investigations.

The players may want to scope out the house during the day. They won't know the address of the poker gathering until 5:00pm, but if they know the address of Bethaven it is not much of a leap to guess they are one and the same. The house is locked and guarded as the cultists are preparing. Sensible players wait until the evening when they may have an in. However, it isn't impossible to sneak in ahead of the game. If they do and don't get captured, they eventually find Lady Dashingham beginning the ritual preparations. She tells them if threatened that Nathaniel has already lost part of his soul and has to win it back – which puts things back on track for the evening poker game.

Lady Dashingham is very dangerous and is supported by a large number of cultists. The player-characters will be unable to threaten any of them as failing to please Dantallon is the worst thing any of them can imagine (and with good reason!).

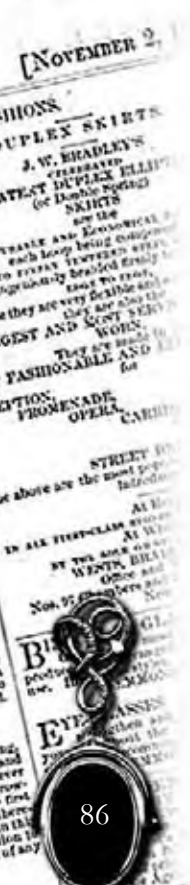
However they occupy themselves in the afternoon, one of Lord Fardale-Digby's footmen arrives at around 5:00pm with an elegantly written note detailing the address of the poker match that evening. The footman knows nothing in case the player-characters attempt to interrogate him! The note also informs them a coach will be sent to pick them up at around 6:30pm.

## SCENE TWO – AN EXCLUSIVE EVENING

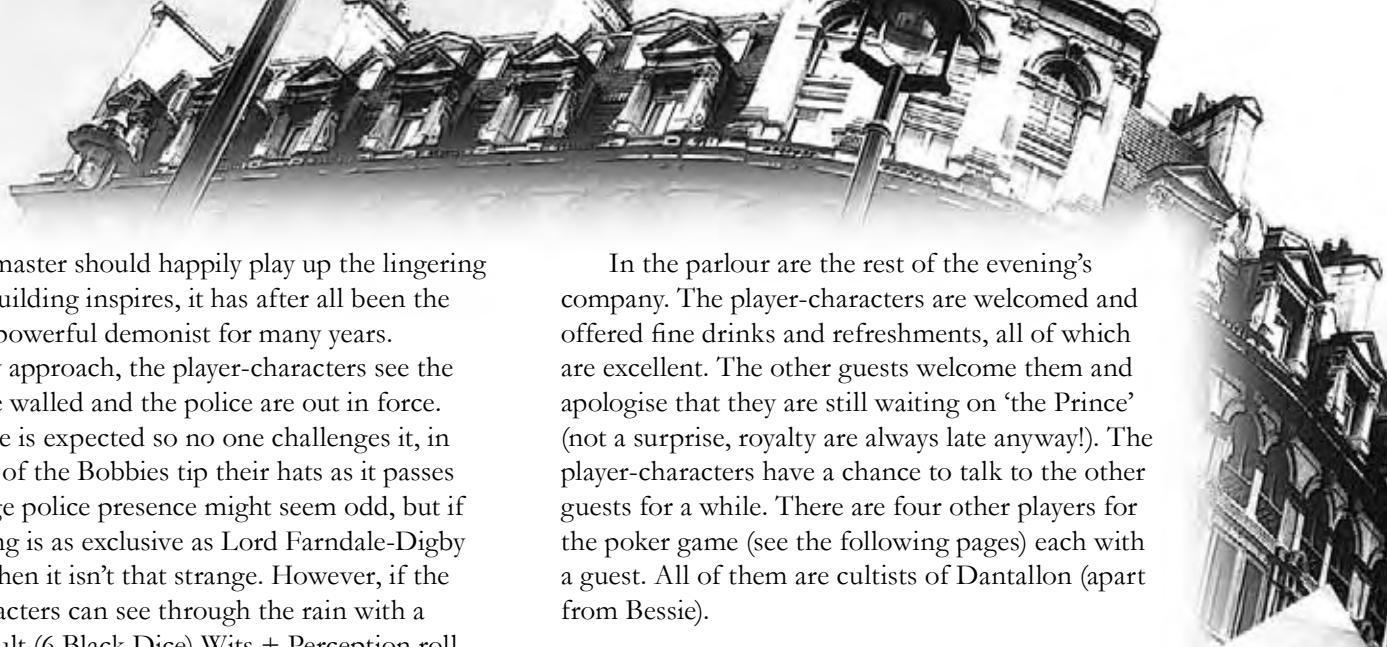
The next part of the adventure may involve the player-characters splitting up, the poker player and his guest going to the poker game, and the rest of the group setting off to sneak into the house. The following scene is for the poker player and his guest, for the other player-characters the Gamemaster should run Scene Three below concurrently (depending on when the player-characters decide to make their move). As the adventure continues the Gamemaster should alternate between the two groups frequently to keep the momentum going as events move to a climax.

At 6:30pm precisely a richly appointed carriage arrives for Nathaniel and his guest. Inside the carriage is a bottle of the finest champagne. While paranoid players may have nothing to do with it, it is not poisoned and is very fine indeed. While it was raining hard last night, tonight's storm makes last night's rain seem like a slight drizzle. The sky is thick with dark clouds and torrential rains batter the carriage as it drives to Bethaven Manor, just outside the city to the north in Highbury.

The carriage journey takes about an hour, and while it is a comfortable journey the rain refuses to let up. Bethaven is an ancient home, the foundations of which were set just after the Norman invasion. The house seems more castle than country manor, and it is eerily outlined in the dark by flashes of lightning.







The Gamemaster should happily play up the lingering dread the building inspires, it has after all been the abode of a powerful demonist for many years.

As they approach, the player-characters see the grounds are walled and the police are out in force. The carriage is expected so no one challenges it, in fact several of the Bobbies tip their hats as it passes by. The large police presence might seem odd, but if the gathering is as exclusive as Lord Farndale-Digby made out, then it isn't that strange. However, if the player-characters can see through the rain with a Very Difficult (6 Black Dice) Wits + Perception roll, they notice the police are all wearing Metropolitan uniforms even though the manor sits outside their jurisdiction. Unsurprisingly, the police are all cultists in stolen uniforms (something Jonathan might have been able to discover). They are under orders to let the carriage through but no one else (the other villains are already assembled).

The carriage travels the gravel path through the manor grounds to the front door, over which a large awning has been rigged up to protect guests from the rain. The poker player and his guest are welcomed by extremely well mannered servants, who lead them to a large and very well appointed parlour. The servants are insistent the player-characters follow them to the parlour. This is because the rest of the house is oddly deserted, and any investigation of the other rooms finds them empty or covered in dust sheets. Only a few rooms in the manor have been made habitable for this evening. This is not unusual for nobles down on their luck, but it is very suspicious.

In the parlour are the rest of the evening's company. The player-characters are welcomed and offered fine drinks and refreshments, all of which are excellent. The other guests welcome them and apologise that they are still waiting on 'the Prince' (not a surprise, royalty are always late anyway!). The player-characters have a chance to talk to the other guests for a while. There are four other players for the poker game (see the following pages) each with a guest. All of them are cultists of Dantallon (apart from Bessie).

## SCENE THREE - THE FOREST OF DOOM

With the poker player and his guest at the house, the rest of the player-characters are going to have to sneak their way in if they are going to solve the mystery. Unfortunately, the grounds are guarded, not only by a selection of Dantallon cultists dressed as policemen, but by vicious hellhounds.

Getting into the grounds is tricky as there is only one gate in the thick wall that surrounds the house. There are four guards on the closed iron gate, two of which have hellhounds, so getting in there will be very tricky. However, the wall is not too hard to climb, requiring only an Average (no Black Dice) Strength + Athletics roll. There is a 1-in-6 chance one of the patrolling cultists spots any attempts to climb the wall. For every three rolls that get made to climb





## THE GUESTS

It is unlikely the Gamemaster will need any more than the guests' combat statistics at the climax of the adventure. However, should any of them escape they might return to haunt the player-characters and look for revenge. They are all very powerful and well placed people who might make life very difficult for the Haverings if they survive the evening with their reputations intact.

### ***Count Albert Barrington and Countess Leticia Barrington***

The count and his wife are both renowned members of the upper class. They regularly dine with royalty and their family has been part of English nobility since the 12th century. Both the count and countess are in their 40s and joined the cult of Dantallon quite late in life, more out of boredom and ennui than a lust for power. Their children know nothing of their corruption, and would be horrified to discover what they get up to now. The count and countess are both dressed in the very latest evening fashions, although neither wears their clothes with any particular elegance or style.

#### **Count Albert Barrington – Rank 8 Bored Cultist (Focused)**

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +7

Initiative: 7

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Demonology +1, Etiquette +2, High Society +2, Intimidate +2, Perception +2, Swordplay +1

Traits: Polite +2, Arrogant +3, Petty +3

Special Abilities: Spell – Ether Ribbons

Combat Abilities: A small revolver (4 dice) and a swordcane (5 dice) he barely knows how to use

Damage: Pistol (6 Dice), Swordcane (5 Dice)

#### **Countess Leticia Barrington – Rank 8 Tired Socialite (Focused)**

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +7

Initiative: 7

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Demonology +1, Etiquette +2, High Society +2, Fashion +2, Firearms +1, Perception +2,

Traits: Bored +3, Distant +2, Arrogant +2

Special Abilities: Spell: Ethereal Cloak

Combat Abilities: A small revolver (6 dice) she practices shooting at servants with

Damage: Pistol (6 Dice)

### ***Sir Francis Toving and 'Hans'***

Sir Francis is the British Ambassador to France, and as such is a powerful figure on the world stage. He is a regular at the most celebrated events in both England and France. He is a thin man, immaculately dressed, of around 30 years of age with a delicately styled goatee. He wears evening dress and an ambassadorial sash this evening complete with a ceremonial sword (which is anything but ceremonial). Sir Francis' companion is an immaculately dressed young page boy called Hans. Hans says nothing and does as Francis tells him to. While appearing angelic, Hans is a skilled knife fighter and has a taste for hurting people.

#### **Sir Francis Toving – Rank 9 Corrupt Ambassador (Focused)**

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +8

Initiative: 8

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)



### **Sir Francis Toving (continued)**

Signature Skills: Charm +3, Demonology +1\*, Etiquette +2, Fisticuffs +2, Firearms +2, High Society +2, Intimidate +2, Perception +2, Swordplay +3

Traits: Treacherous +3, Vindictive +3, Power-hungry +4

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: His ceremonial sword (7 dice) is more than serviceable

Damage: Sword (7 Dice)

\*but no spell ability

### **'Hans' – Rank 5 Child Assassin (Focused)**

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +3

Initiative: 6

Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)

Mana: 2 Dice (12 pips)

Signature Skills: Demonology +1\*, Etiquette +1, High Society +1, Perception +2, Swordplay +3

Traits: Killer +2, Vicious +4, Innocent -3

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: A long knife (8 dice) he is itching to use on someone

Damage: Knife (5 Dice)

\*but no spell ability

### ***Duke Thomas Sylen and Bessie***

The duke is a large and powerful man, who obviously never met a meal he didn't like. His large dinner suit is bursting at the seams, and he is a sour man, who seems to constantly dribble. The duke is both wealthy and greedy, the epitome of what you would expect from a Dantallon cultist. While he is married he hasn't brought his wife this evening, instead he has brought a tuppenny whore called Bessie. He intends to bed her after the game, and kill her afterwards should she survive his predilections. Bessie is rather slow on the uptake and thinks the whole evening a lark. She is unaware of the danger she is in as she is so unaccustomed to upper class affairs she thinks this is just what is done.

### **Duke Thomas Sylen – Rank 7 Corpulent Cultist (Focused)**

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +6

Initiative: 5

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 3 Dice (18 pips)

Signature Skills: Appraisal +2, Charm -3, Demonology +1, High Society +2

Traits: Greedy +3, Disgusting +5, Opinionated +2

Special Abilities: Spell: Whispering Colours

Combat Abilities: None but his spells and a small emergency revolver (4 dice)

Damage: Pistol (6 Dice)

### **Bessie Tranter – Rank 2 Victim-in-waiting (Generalist)**

Physical Competence: +3

Mental Competence: +2

Initiative: 7

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Etiquette +2, Empathy +1, Streetwise +1, Swordplay +1

Traits: Cheery +2, Stupid +1, Out of her depth +4

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: She could possibly handle a knife (4 dice) if she had one, but she'd rather run

Damage: None until she finds a weapon

## CULTISTS

Several lesser members of the cult of Dantallon are roaming the grounds disguised as policemen. For the most part they are simply thugs, and none have any spell casting ability. However, they are all dedicated to the cause and fear what Lady Dashingham (let alone Dantallon) will do to them if they fail. All any of them know is that 'the end of all things' is coming tonight and 'they will all ascend'.

### **Cultist – Rank 4 Fake Policemen (Generalist)**

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +3

Initiative: 5

Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Blunt weapons +2,

Demonology +1\*, Fisticuffs +2, Hide & Sneak +2,

Perception +1, Swordplay +1

Traits: Dedicated +1, Corrupt +3, Greedy +2

Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: They all have truncheons (6 Dice) for the disguise and knives (5 Dice) as a backup

Damage: Truncheon (4 Dice), Knife (5 Dice)

\*but no spell ability

the wall, roll 1D6 and on a 1 they have been spotted by a patrolling cultist. The group has to engage the cultist quickly to stop him raising the alarm, or scatter into hiding. Luckily, the grounds around the house are extensive and filled with rather overgrown forest. Trees and unkempt vegetation in the badly managed garden provide lots of cover for those trying to sneak around.

The Gamemaster should call for several Dexterity/Wits + Hide & Sneak rolls as the player-characters make their way across the grounds. It is dark and the cultists are not particularly observant or on their guard as they believe their real job is to stop anyone escaping, not breaking in. This changes if the alarm has been raised though! If they come across the player-characters the cultists play the part of policemen and try to get the player-characters to quietly leave. The cultists assume they are just random scoundrels rather than friends of the poker player.

Unfortunately, the roaming Hellhounds are not so easily fooled. As the player-characters get close

## HELLHOUNDS

These creatures were once normal (if large) dogs, but they have been infused with demonic energy. They have been bound to a minor demon and live only to kill for their masters. They only serve those pledged to their demonic masters, and require a lot of blood and meat for food (something the player-characters may provide if they are not careful).

### **Hellhound**

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +6

Initiative: 8

Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)

Signature Skills: +1 fire breath

Special Abilities: Creature Qualities (Armour – tough hide 4, Flame Breath)

Combat Abilities: Bite (5 dice) or Fire Breath (6 dice)

Damage: Bite (4 Dice), Fire Breath\* (8 Dice)

\*Fire Breath can only be used once every three rounds

to the house they are assaulted by at least two of these creatures, who have picked up their scent. If the player-characters use firearms the noise brings another 1D6 cultists to the scene in five combat rounds. Should they defeat the Hellhounds, or simply run away, they should decide how they are going to access the house. The front door is guarded with more cultists; however, the back door is not, although it is locked (an Average (no Black Dice) Dexterity + Pick Locks roll gets it open, or a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Strength + Might roll to kick it down).

The player-characters might attempt to climb the outside of the building looking for a window to get in through. There is one lit room on the first floor, but the rest are in darkness. While all of the windows are securely fastened, the lit room is occupied by Lady Farndale-Digby and her maid, Margaret. If the player-characters somehow make themselves known, Margaret can open the window for them, although they are locked in the room. Climbing up to the window requires a Difficult (3 Black Dice) Dexterity + Athletics roll, but failure results in a nasty fall. From two stories the damage is 12 Dice unless the character can halve this with an Average (no Black



Dice) Dexterity + Athletics roll, see p.223 of the Core Rulebook.

If the player-characters search around the back of the house they might find (on a Very Difficult (6 Black Dice) Wits + Perception roll) a wooden trapdoor hidden among the vegetation that leads into the basement. It was designed to receive deliveries to the kitchen, but now leads to the catacombs below.

## SCENE FOUR – THE VILLAIN REVEALED

Returning to Nathaniel (or the poker player) and his guest, after finishing their drinks, the other poker players suggest they begin the game as ‘the Prince’ is obviously running late. Everyone is brought into the grand ballroom, a huge room now draped in red and black. A single lone table sits in the centre of the room, surrounded by a ritual circle full of arcane signs and symbols, as well as lit black and red candles. It should be obvious to the poker player and his guest that something is not right!

Unfortunately, escape is very difficult as the other poker players quickly draw weapons on Susanna (or whoever is the poker player’s companion). The poker player is told to take a seat at the table or their companion will be killed, it should be apparent he has little choice in the matter. If they are reticent the other poker players may wound Susanna to make their point, such as a shot to the arm or leg.

As the poker player sits, the far door opens and in walks the beautiful Lady Dashingham dressed in red and black robes. She smiles at the poker player with cold eyes. If they haven’t met before she introduces herself; then, in true villain style, she happily explains a little of her dastardly plan. What she is very clear about is that the poker player’s soul is already forfeit to the watch due to having played all those poker games. If he wants it back he has to play for it, the ultimate high stakes game. If he refuses both he and his guest will die, and the cult will find another way to release the energy that has been stored up. With no one to stop them, this should not be difficult.

As the poker player takes his seat, another five players shuffle in and join him. The real players are not the other supposed guests who now have guns trained on him, but the soulless zombies of other watch-bearers. Each has been exhumed or stolen

## SOULLESS POKER MINIONS

The other poker players are zombies for all intents and purposes. They are the animated corpses of men whose soul energy is bound to the watch due to their own greed. Each is now a rotting corpse, with little expression, dressed in the clothes they died or were buried in. While it is unlikely the player characters know their names beyond seeing them on a list of watch-bearers, they recognise Gerald Casington. The other players are:

**Davis Architripe** – (Factory foreman) dressed in the rags of a work overall

**Barrington Smythe** – (Middle class factory owner) a large man in what was once a fine suit

**Simon Truceastle** – (Rich young gentleman) a thin young man in tarnished evening wear

**Desiree Forkampton** – (American Socialite) who was once an attractive woman, now dressed in a tattered lace gown.

**Gerald Casington** – (Middle class gentleman) a constant reminder of a lost friend, dressed in the remains of his best suit.

### ***Zombie Poker Players – Rank 5 Tormented Soul***

Physical Competence: +3

Mental Competence: +3

Initiative: 4

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Gambling +3

Traits: Tormented +4, Soulless +3

Special Abilities: Creature Qualities (Ageless,

Immunity: poison, Immunity: mind-affecting

magic, Regeneration (until they lose the game))

Combat Abilities: None, they can only play poker and are unresponsive to anything else

Damage: None

from the morgue and resurrected with demonic power as part of the ritual. One is easily recognised as Gerald Casington. The zombie players cannot talk beyond what is needed to play, but they can understand everything. Demonic magic keeps them alive, so should a player-character try to release them by destroying them, they regenerate until well enough



to play and continue the game. They can only be destroyed when they are out of the game.

The game is now truly afoot! The poker player is the last link in the plan. He needs to be sacrificed in order to complete the circle of power and open a portal to hell. Lady Dashingham will get revenge and bring her master into the world at the same time (unless someone stops her!).

## SCENE FIVE – THY DAUGHTER'S BLOOD

If the other player-characters get into the house without raising the alarm, they can explore reasonably easily, as most of the occupants are involved in the ritual, which is taking place in the ballroom around the poker game. The only areas that are occupied are the upstairs bedroom, the ballroom, the grand parlour and the catacombs.

### *The Upstairs Bedroom*

As she seemed to be getting suspicious, Lord Farndale-Digby has drugged his wife and brought her here, just to be on the safe side. Constance is conscious, but only just, having little energy to even stand from the drugs she has been fed. However, her husband also brought Constance's maid, Margaret (as he was suspicious of her too). Margaret is not drugged, so she can see to her lady; however, she is not strong enough to carry her anywhere so they might escape. Margaret has been threatened with terrible punishments and is quite frightened. The two women have been locked in and are in dire need of rescuing. Unfortunately, Lady Constance will have to be carried if the group are to make an escape.

### *The Ballroom*

The player-characters might arrive here to observe from the balcony if they climbed in a window, or might arrive on the ground level sneaking through the house. The scene depends on the time they arrive. The poker guests are still in attendance with Lady Dashingham, and possibly a few servants (more cultists). So the player-characters have to fight to get to the poker player. However, his companion or the player himself might be involved in the game at this point and be the one to get the player-characters to run.

## LORD RICHARD FARNDALE-DIGBY

As the cult's 'official' leader, Lord Farndale-Digby considers himself Lady Dashingham's right hand man, he is really her pawn and patsy. He is besotted with power and the promises Lady Dashingham has made him. He cares nothing for anyone but himself and beneath his veneer of urbane social grace is a cold-hearted monster.

### *Lord Richard Farndale-Digby – Rank 10 Cult Leader (Focused)*

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +8

Initiative: 8

Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Charm +3, Demonology +3,

Etiquette +2, Fisticuffs +1, Firearms +2, Gambling

+2, High Society +2, Intimidate +2, Perception +2, Swordplay +3

Traits: Soulless +4, Power-hungry +5

Special Abilities: Demonology spells: Ethereal Cloak,

Fleeting Messenger, Summon First Circle Demon

Combat Abilities: He is armed with a large silver

sacrificial knife (8 Dice) that he is looking forward to using on his only daughter

Damage: Sacrificial Knife (6 Dice)

### *Cultists*

Accompanying Lord Farndale-Digby are several other members of the cult dressed in black and red robes. They have all been chanting and building themselves up for the ceremony and worked themselves up into a near frenzy to spill the blood of little Lottie and anyone who gets in their way. Some of these cultists come from high society, unlike those patrolling the grounds.

### *Cultist – Rank 4 Servant of Darkness (Generalist)*

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +3

Initiative: 5

Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)

Mana: 1 Dice (6 pips)

Signature Skills: Demonology +1\*, Etiquette +2,

Fisticuffs +2, High Society +2, Perception +1,

Swordplay +2

Traits: Bloodthirsty +3, Dedicated +1, Corrupt +3, Greedy +2

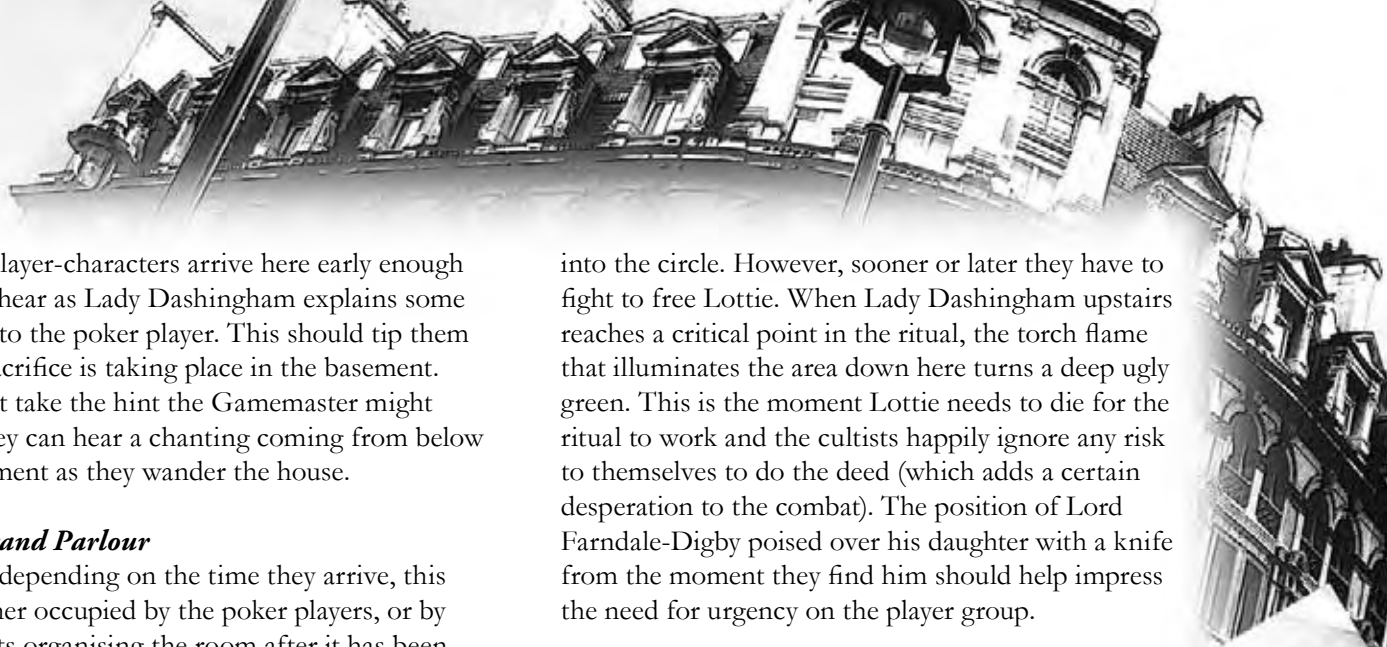
Special Abilities: None

Combat Abilities: They all have viciously sharp, jagged sacrificial knives (6 Dice) that they use on anyone who gets in their way

Damage: Knife (6 Dice)

\*but no spell ability





If the player-characters arrive here early enough they might hear as Lady Dashingham explains some of the plan to the poker player. This should tip them off that a sacrifice is taking place in the basement. If they don't take the hint the Gamemaster might mention they can hear a chanting coming from below in the basement as they wander the house.

### ***The Grand Parlour***

Again, depending on the time they arrive, this room is either occupied by the poker players, or by a few cultists organising the room after it has been vacated. Should the player-characters attack and subdue a cultist they only get fanatical ramblings that 'the master' is coming, followed by maniacal laughter.

### ***The Catacombs***

The basement and kitchens of the house lead into a series of catacombs under the house. In a cave directly under the ballroom, Lord Farndale-Digby and a few minions are getting ready to sacrifice his daughter, Lottie, at the appropriate hour. Lottie herself is chained to a stone altar in the centre of the cave, and is weeping audibly. A few cultists (slightly less than two for each player-character) in robes surround the altar chanting incantations. Lord Farndale-Digby stands over his daughter with a silver knife awaiting a sign that Dantallon is about to enter the world. This is when the torches lighting the room turn from amber flames to vivid green fire.

Clever player-characters might manage to ambush a cultist and steal their robes to allow them to sneak

into the circle. However, sooner or later they have to fight to free Lottie. When Lady Dashingham upstairs reaches a critical point in the ritual, the torch flame that illuminates the area down here turns a deep ugly green. This is the moment Lottie needs to die for the ritual to work and the cultists happily ignore any risk to themselves to do the deed (which adds a certain desperation to the combat). The position of Lord Farndale-Digby poised over his daughter with a knife from the moment they find him should help impress the need for urgency on the player group.

## **SCENE SIX – THE FINAL HAND**

While the battle rages in the basement, Nathaniel is literally playing for his soul. As the game goes on, Lady Dashingham begins the ritual to bring Dantallon into the world. This involves chanting, gesturing, and the occasional toss of incense and other ingredients into various braziers set around the room. She has a couple of cultists to protect her, but it quickly becomes clear interrupting her may have bad consequences for everyone, given the power she is calling up. She intends for the ritual to climax with the end of the poker game where she takes Nathaniel's soul and uses the energy of the other souls to open the gates, at which point, the sacrifice of innocent Lottie provides the blood sacrifice such a spell requires.

The poker player is in a desperate situation. The chips in front of each player are the remains of his



## LADY ELEANOR DASHINGHAM

After having her plans thwarted by the player-characters before, Lady Dashingham is looking for revenge. She has shielded herself from most of the social fallout by throwing her husband to the wolves. She has changed little since *Lost Luggage*, and is still as dangerous and devious as before.

### *Lady Eleanor Dashingham – Rank 12 Mistress of Demonology (Focussed)*

Physical Competence: +6

Mental Competence: +9

Initiative: 11

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)

Signature Skills: Act +3, Athletics +2, Charm +4, Dance +2, Demonology +4, Etiquette +3, Fashion +2, Firearms +2, High Society +3, Intimidate +2, Lore +2, Perception +4, Politics +3, Streetwise +1

Traits: Graceful +2, Devious +4

Special Abilities: Demonology spells: Ether Ribbons, Ethereal Cloak, Protected Domain, Whispering Colours, Fleeting Messenger, Summon First Circle Demon

Combat Abilities: She uses her spells if cornered, but prefers to put other people between her and harm's way.

soul energy. Each time one of the players in the game loses all their chips, their undead body dissolves into dust as they utter a silent gasp. The dust is swept up into a whirlwind around Lady Dashingham, who stands in the centre of the maelstrom gathering power for her summoning of the demon lord, Dantallon. The dust makes it harder and harder to see as it swirls around the whole room, which may give player-characters in the ballroom (except the poker player) a chance to slip away and join the others in the basement.

If the player understands that greed is the key, they may attempt to lose the game. However, this causes them to give their soul energy over sooner. If a player-character tries to follow this plan, the Gamemaster should inform them they are feeling weaker and weaker as they lose more chips, and their skin is going a terrible grey colour. They should get

the hint. Unfortunately, if they win the game they prove their own greed and effectively offer their own soul to Dantallon themselves. It is apparently an impossible choice, which is the reason for Lady Dashingham's confidence in the cleverness of her revenge.


The best way for the poker player to win back his soul is for him to remember the first game of the adventure. When the game is down to two players he can offer to split the pot and call it a day. If Nathaniel does so, (especially if he has fewer chips than his opponent) the game ends. The remaining player (probably Gerald) nods slowly to the poker player's request, his last act of humanity, and with a smile of relief crumbles into dust, his soul bound for final release. With the pot of soul energy split, rather than gathered by one person the ritual begins to fail. Lady Dashingham quickly realises the supply of energy she needs is no longer flowing as it should. In desperation she continues the ritual, turning the torches green in the catacombs as a signal for the sacrifice to be made. However, it does not make any difference, the ritual has been ruined.

As the ritual progresses, the arrival of Dantallon becomes more and more evident, not as a nasty monster, but as a lengthening of shadows and a tangible atmosphere of terrible greed and evil. If the poker player wins the game, his soul is forfeit and Lady Dashingham calls for the sacrifice as she drains the poker player's soul energy into the vortex and calls Dantallon into the world. While this means a terrible fate for all humanity, the player-characters never live to see it as Dantallon appears in all his might and feasts on them all.

Should the poker player split the pot or the other player-characters stop the sacrifice, the complicated ritual will fail. The vortex of energy implodes around Lady Dashingham and in recompense Dantallon drags her (and the other poker player guests) into the Pale as punishment. Her terrifying screams as she looks into the Pale and an eternity of horror stays with those who hear them for some time. However, the player-characters have little time to focus on such terror as the force of the ritual tears the house down. Low-ranking cultists may try to stop them as they run from the house lest they be trapped in the rubble. This may be made more difficult by trying to see to the safety of Constance and Lottie.

Once they are out of the house, the characters can watch it collapse into itself in clouds of green and





black flame. They have saved the world from being drawn into the Pale, although sadly, few people ever know. All that is left to do now is go home for a good cup of tea.

## EXPERIENCE AWARDS

This adventure should reward player characters as normal with 1-3 Experience Points for each session of the adventure as detailed in the Core Rulebook p.228. Again, the Gamemaster should take into account not just their success but how entertainingly and believably that have played their characters. We also suggest a few additional awards of an Experience Point if they achieve the following:

- Trading entertaining barbs over poker without turning the event into a brawl.
- Dealing with Vincent Staples without resorting to violence.
- Finding a way to really help Fiona Casington with her debts.
- Investigating the Farndale-Digby estate during the party without raising the alarm or Lord Farndale-Digby's suspicions or by committing any violence.
- Impressing the attendees of the ball in some way (such as a superb dance).
- Sneaking into Bethaven without engaging with any cultists.
- Remembering to 'split the pot' at the climax.
- Saving Lady Constance from the Bethaven estate.

It is not impossible that one or more of the player-characters might become romantically involved with Fiona Casington or Constance Farndale-Digby. Given both women are only likely to be single because they are recently widowed, the Gamemaster shouldn't reward the seductive activities of a love shark. However, additional experience may be warranted if a player-character initiates a considered romantic sub-plot.

All the player-characters should also gain a Rank Point at the end of the adventure as well.

## WHAT SPELL IS THAT?

You may have noticed that we haven't given anyone the spell 'Summon Dantallon', this is intentional. Summoning such a powerful demonic being is beyond the scope of mere sorcery. The Demon Lords are always interested in manifesting in our world, but they need to make sure their minions are skilled and dedicated enough to do the job. Too many failed attempts by amateurs wastes the Demon Lord's time and energy, and attracts the attention of the Host. So the 'spell' to call up such a being is not so much a spell as a set of detailed instructions given to only the most trusted servants. These instructions are different each time, as the Demon Lord itself must make certain preparations on their side of the portal as well. The servant is really only opening the door, the Demon Lord is doing the work of unlocking and even making the door. The preparations and requirements for the ritual differ wildly depending on the demon and the movements of the planes, making a single learnable spell simply impossible. So instead of a spell, the servants learn a specific ritual from their lord and must carry it out over several months or even years. While anyone can learn the preparations, a skilled Demonologist is required to perform it, as summoning up demonic power and dark mana is always one of the requirements.



# CONTINUING THE HAVERING ADVENTURES

As the Victoriana line continues there will be more adventures for the Havering family and other characters. However, there are a few adventure hooks that remain from these three adventures. So we present a few adventure seeds the Gamemaster might like to use to continue the story:

## ***Repercussions***

The cult of Dantallon has suffered a significant loss at the end of *Dead Man's Hand*, and it may come looking for revenge. While this might initially mean a few attacks from low-grade cultists, sooner or later the higher levels of the cult will be forced to get involved. Instead of trying to hurt the player-characters, maybe they attempt to induct them into the cult. After all, they have proved themselves to be dangerous opponents. If the cult chooses to bring them into the fold, the question is what can they tempt each player-character with? A cult of greed can offer many incentives to new members, and what will the player-characters do when faced with their heart's desire?

## ***Rising in Society***

If the player-characters rescued Constance and her daughter, they have earned the favour of someone well placed in society. This is especially true if they also rescued the guests on the *Valiant Rose*. The player-characters might choose to use their new contacts to rise a little higher in their social circles. However, such circles are a minefield of politics and deviousness. Plenty of nobles do their best to exclude interlopers. The player-characters suddenly find themselves surrounded with smiling enemies and unsure of whom they can trust as the social web tightens.

## ***Sky Agents***

If they successfully defended the *Valiant Rose*, the Hampson Line may well have other jobs for the

player-characters. Trade routes to India are at risk from piracy on the sea and in the air. As agents of the Hampson Line, the player-characters might be sent all over the world to foil smugglers and spies, as well as provide assistance to Hampson agents making secret deals or taking important passengers on missions of national importance. They might make a friend or enemy of the Pan-Asiatic Spice Company (see *Faces in the Smoke* Volume II) as well.

## ***A Lady in Need***

As mentioned before, Gerald Casington's widow is suffering under the weight of his gambling debts. This has meant some visits from some particularly nasty characters. If they don't think to assist her, Fiona Casington almost certainly calls on the player-characters for help. Such adventures take the player-characters onto the darker streets of London and a world far removed from the elegant soirees they have started to get used to. They also discover that the fall of Abraham Tallow (unless the player-characters are helping him as part of a deal) has left a small power vacuum that several gangs are trying to muscle into. The gangs of London may be preparing for a turf war, and if they are not careful, the player-characters might find themselves in the middle of it.

## ***A Silent Recruitment***

As they have done well against the forces of darkness, the Silencius (see *Faces in the Smoke* Volume I) might consider the player-characters as agents. They are unlikely to want to induct them fully into the order. Instead, one of the Silencius comes to them as a private patron and enlists their help in dealing with a suspected Demonologist or rogue Thaumaturgist. If they do well they find more lucrative job offers coming from their mysterious patron. After a while they might decide to investigate exactly who the patron is and for whom he works. That's when the trouble really starts...



# APPENDIX – PLAYING POKER IN VICTORIANA

As Nathaniel spends much of the adventure playing poker, we thought you'd find some rules for running such games in Victoriana rather useful. While we present the following for poker specifically, the systems may also work for other gambling games your player-characters might get involved with.

While poker is thought to have been originally developed in the 15th century, it was not until the 1850s (with the adoption of a full 52-card deck) that the game developed finally into the form it is found in today. It was especially popular among the Mississippi riverboat gamblers where it gained a certain glamour and notoriety among card games as a symbol of high stakes and decadent living. Poker is essentially quite a simple game. Each player is dealt a certain amount of cards (usually five) and the one who collects the rarest combination of cards (or of the highest value) wins the round. So a pair of aces beats a pair of queens, but three jacks beats two aces. However, the trick to playing the game is not learning how to play the game itself but how to gamble and bluff your opponent.

There are many different forms of poker, and although they all follow the same basic format, the oddities and quirks to each different variant makes them very different games to play. The most common modern variant used for poker is called Texas Hold'em. However, it didn't appear until the early 1900s, so most Victoriana characters will be playing a version of Straight or Stud poker. In all games of poker, each player has to make the best hand they can with five cards. Usually, the variant determines how many cards they are dealt, and how they might receive them. Some variants deal out seven cards with each player picking his best five. Other variants reveal communal cards that all the players share, as well as a small hand they can keep secret. Sometimes hands are dealt gradually over a few turns with betting happening between each turn until everyone finally has a complete hand.

## WINNING HANDS

While the rules may change depending on the variant played, here is a list of the winning hierarchy of potential poker hands. Remember that each assumes a maximum hand of five cards. If two players have the same (such as both having a pair), the highest value cards win (so a pair of jacks beats a pair of fives).

**Royal Flush** – The highest value (10 to Ace) cards of the same suit in sequence.

**Straight Flush** – Any sequential five cards of the same suit.

**Four of a Kind** – All four of a particular card.

**Full House** – Three of a Kind and One Pair in the same hand.

**Flush** – All five cards from the same suit.

**Straight** – All five cards in sequential order, but not the same suit.

**Three of a Kind** – Three of the same card in any suit.

**Two Pair** – Two sets of One Pair in the same hand.

**One Pair** – Two cards with the same value, but of any suit.

**High Card** – Single card of a higher value than any other single card hand.

However the cards are dealt, the heart of poker is not playing the game but how you gamble on your hand. Without revealing any cards to the other players, at each turn all players must bet chips into a 'pot'. The player with the best hand when they are revealed after betting keeps the pot. To remain in the game, you must be prepared to throw the



same amount of chips into the pot as everyone else ('Calling'). However, at any point in the betting turns, you can increase the current bet ('Raising') forcing the other players to add more chips or back out. At any point in the betting rounds, a player can 'fold' and declare themselves out of the round. They discard their cards, but anything they have already bet remains in the pot. So backing out in the later stages of betting can be very costly indeed, but better to lose some chips than keep playing a bad hand and lose even more. If a player doesn't have enough chips to cover a bet but doesn't want to fold they can go 'all in'. No matter what they have, they add all their chips to the pot and are considered to have covered any following bets. This is a last resort as losing puts you out of the game, but it allows a poor player with a good hand that one last try. The other players must match the value of the 'all in' but the all-in player need not bet any more regardless of the continuing gambling. This means small players cannot be forced out of the game simply by high betting, although it's not something you should try every round.

The chips each player is willing to risk each round are the only guide that other players have to the strength of their cards. However, the clever poker player with a good hand doesn't bet too high for fear of scaring the other players off. So the best plan is to keep adding to the bet gradually to build up the pot. It is also acceptable to 'bluff'; making such confident bets that the rest of the group think your hand is so good they ought to fold rather than risk any more. If there is only one player left who hasn't folded he gets to keep the pot and need not reveal his cards. So a player with a very bad hand might bluff the others (even the ones with far better hands) into folding after making a substantial bet, leaving the bluffing player the winner by default. There is an adage among poker players that if you want to see someone's cards you have to pay for the privilege. After all, if the player was bluffing, he may have given away signs (or 'tells') that he was doing just that. Bluffing is a very cunning tactic, but always runs the risk that someone will not be taken in and 'call your bluff' by being willing to bet until the bitter end when the cards are revealed.

In any variant, poker is a game that requires a lot of calm detachment and nerves of steel. In a real sense you are not playing your hand, but playing a psychological game with the other players at the table. It is this psychological duel that is the real excitement of the game.

### ***Game Rules for Playing Poker***

There are many ways you might want to run your characters in Victoriana playing poker. You might have one character playing the game, with the Gamemaster controlling the other players, or it might be that all the characters are playing poker. The same system won't work very well for all the ways you might simulate the game in Victoriana, so we present a few different rules you can use depending on your situation. It won't matter what variant of poker your characters are playing in-game as the rules don't take that into account. However, players should all have an idea of how the game is being played so they can throw the right terminology at each other as the game goes on to get into character.

### ***Gambling Tokens***

For each game, each player should begin with ten gambling tokens (or 'chips'). The actual worth of each chip depends on the stakes for the game. As with a normal poker game, each player 'buys in' the same amount, so no one begins with an unfair advantage (as being able to afford to lose more allows a player to over-bet to force poorer players to fold). So each player begins with the same amount of chips, the value of which might be whatever the Gamemaster decides depending on the game. In a back street poker den for lower class gamblers, each chip might be anything from a penny to a shilling. If the players are all wealthy socialites, each chip might represent several pounds. Simply take the initial stake and divide it by ten for a value. However, in the game the actual worth isn't as important as who has the most.

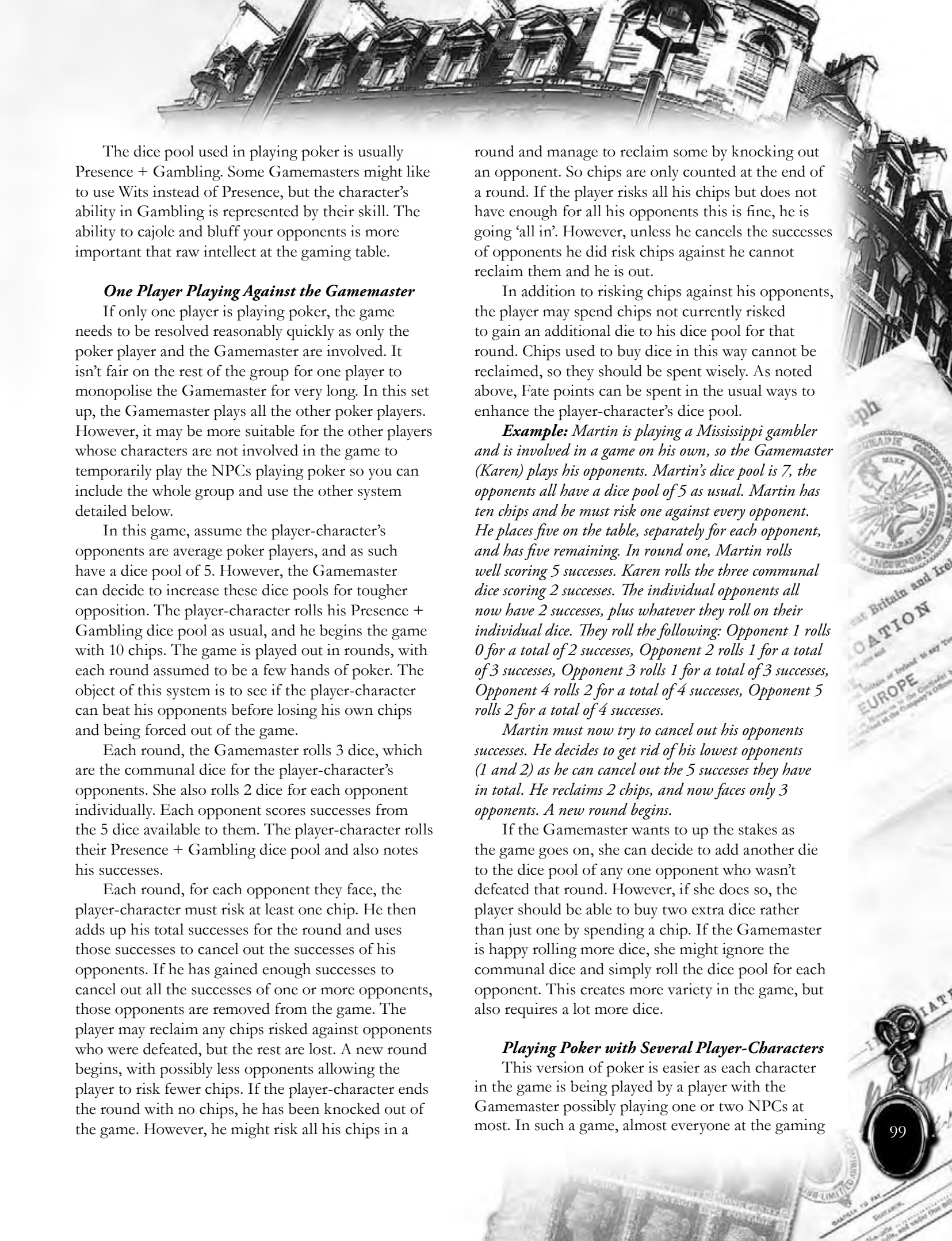
### ***Fate Dice, Dice Pools and the Watch***

As playing poker uses a dice pool, players may spend Fate points to improve their rolls, as with any other dice pool. If a character has the 'Gambler' Talent, he can use the Fate points he gets from that Talent in the same way.

## **THE DEMONIC WATCH**

The watch (from Dead Man's Hand) is very powerful, adding 3 successes to the result of the player who has it. The Gamemaster should add and apply this bonus as she likes, without telling the player, who discovers they are winning more than they should.





The dice pool used in playing poker is usually Presence + Gambling. Some Gamemasters might like to use Wits instead of Presence, but the character's ability in Gambling is represented by their skill. The ability to cajole and bluff your opponents is more important than raw intellect at the gaming table.

### ***One Player Playing Against the Gamemaster***

If only one player is playing poker, the game needs to be resolved reasonably quickly as only the poker player and the Gamemaster are involved. It isn't fair on the rest of the group for one player to monopolise the Gamemaster for very long. In this set up, the Gamemaster plays all the other poker players. However, it may be more suitable for the other players whose characters are not involved in the game to temporarily play the NPCs playing poker so you can include the whole group and use the other system detailed below.

In this game, assume the player-character's opponents are average poker players, and as such have a dice pool of 5. However, the Gamemaster can decide to increase these dice pools for tougher opposition. The player-character rolls his Presence + Gambling dice pool as usual, and he begins the game with 10 chips. The game is played out in rounds, with each round assumed to be a few hands of poker. The object of this system is to see if the player-character can beat his opponents before losing his own chips and being forced out of the game.

Each round, the Gamemaster rolls 3 dice, which are the communal dice for the player-character's opponents. She also rolls 2 dice for each opponent individually. Each opponent scores successes from the 5 dice available to them. The player-character rolls their Presence + Gambling dice pool and also notes his successes.

Each round, for each opponent they face, the player-character must risk at least one chip. He then adds up his total successes for the round and uses those successes to cancel out the successes of his opponents. If he has gained enough successes to cancel out all the successes of one or more opponents, those opponents are removed from the game. The player may reclaim any chips risked against opponents who were defeated, but the rest are lost. A new round begins, with possibly less opponents allowing the player to risk fewer chips. If the player-character ends the round with no chips, he has been knocked out of the game. However, he might risk all his chips in a

round and manage to reclaim some by knocking out an opponent. So chips are only counted at the end of a round. If the player risks all his chips but does not have enough for all his opponents this is fine, he is going 'all in'. However, unless he cancels the successes of opponents he did risk chips against he cannot reclaim them and he is out.

In addition to risking chips against his opponents, the player may spend chips not currently risked to gain an additional die to his dice pool for that round. Chips used to buy dice in this way cannot be reclaimed, so they should be spent wisely. As noted above, Fate points can be spent in the usual ways to enhance the player-character's dice pool.

**Example:** *Martin is playing a Mississippi gambler and is involved in a game on his own, so the Gamemaster (Karen) plays his opponents. Martin's dice pool is 7, the opponents all have a dice pool of 5 as usual. Martin has ten chips and he must risk one against every opponent. He places five on the table, separately for each opponent, and has five remaining. In round one, Martin rolls well scoring 5 successes. Karen rolls the three communal dice scoring 2 successes. The individual opponents all now have 2 successes, plus whatever they roll on their individual dice. They roll the following: Opponent 1 rolls 0 for a total of 2 successes, Opponent 2 rolls 1 for a total of 3 successes, Opponent 3 rolls 1 for a total of 3 successes, Opponent 4 rolls 2 for a total of 4 successes, Opponent 5 rolls 2 for a total of 4 successes.*

*Martin must now try to cancel out his opponents successes. He decides to get rid of his lowest opponents (1 and 2) as he can cancel out the 5 successes they have in total. He reclaims 2 chips, and now faces only 3 opponents. A new round begins.*

If the Gamemaster wants to up the stakes as the game goes on, she can decide to add another die to the dice pool of any one opponent who wasn't defeated that round. However, if she does so, the player should be able to buy two extra dice rather than just one by spending a chip. If the Gamemaster is happy rolling more dice, she might ignore the communal dice and simply roll the dice pool for each opponent. This creates more variety in the game, but also requires a lot more dice.

### ***Playing Poker with Several Player-Characters***

This version of poker is easier as each character in the game is being played by a player with the Gamemaster possibly playing one or two NPCs at most. In such a game, almost everyone at the gaming



table is involved in the poker match, so no one is getting left out.

As before, the dice pool used is Presence + Gambling. Before beginning the game, the players should agree on how many dice they are going to reveal to each other. This depends on the variant of poker their characters might be playing. However, you need only pick a mutually agreeable number. In the case of arguments, the Gamemaster should have the casting vote. As everyone might roll different amounts of dice and must have at least one secret die, the maximum amount of dice that can be revealed is equal to one less than the smallest dice pool available to the players.

Each round, all the players roll an amount of dice equal to their Presence + Gambling dice pool. Some are rolled in front of everyone and remain on show, the rest are rolled secretly with only that player knowing the result. This means each player knows how many successes they have made, and each player can also see some of the dice results of their opponents.

Proceeding around the table, each player can then make a bet using their chips. The first player must bet one token and then the next player may either bid a token to match it or fold (bidding no more but removing themselves from this round). This carries on around the table, when play returns to the 'first player' he can bid another token or fold. Play cycles around the table until everyone has either matched the bet or folded. If a player does not have enough chips to cover a bet they can declare 'all in' as long as they have one chip. In which case they bet everything and need not bet any more, but if they lose they are out of the game.

When all of the betting has been settled, the remaining players reveal their secretly rolled dice, and the highest result wins the round. In the case of a tie, the highest dice pool is the winner. If there is still a tie the highest Gambling Skill wins, and if there is still a tie, divide the pot between the winners equally. Any odd chips remain in the pot for next round. The title of 'first player' rotates around the table to the left.

If a player runs out of chips they are out of the game. Play usually continues until one winner has claimed all the chips. However, by mutual agreement, the players may call the game to an end at any point and leave the table with whatever they have in front of them.

**Example:** Bob is playing poker with Charlotte and David. Each player works out their dice pool from Presence + Gambling, which for Bob is 6, for Charlotte

is 5 and for David is 4. The players agree they will be revealing two of their dice (as David has the lowest dice pool they can agree to reveal no more than three). Each player rolls their dice, Bob gets only 2 successes, but those are on his revealed dice. Charlotte gets 3 successes, only one of which is on her revealed dice. David gets 2 successes, but neither are on his revealed dice. So all the players see that Bob has at least 2 successes, Charlotte has 1 and David has none. However, the actual result is that Bob has 2 successes, Charlotte has 3 and David has 2.

The players now bid, going around the table. Bob decides to bluff, continually increasing the bet as he is the first player. Charlotte has the winning hand, but decides to fold convinced Bob has more successes in his unrevealed dice. David decides to keep up with Bob, knowing he can at least match Bob's revealed result. After betting is complete the players reveal their remaining dice, but it is a draw. Bob and David both have the same result. However, as Bob has the higher dice pool he is declared the winner and takes the pot.

If all the players agree, you might try a slight variant on the way dice are revealed. Instead of rolling some dice openly and some dice secretly, each player rolls all their dice secretly. They then choose which dice they are going to reveal. This allows each player a certain amount of strategy in what they want to display of their hand. However, this might give players a little too much control, as there is still a very random element to poker.

### Playing for Real

Finally, perhaps the best way to simulate playing poker is to run a real game. The only problem with this is that each player does not have the same skill as their character. However, that is easily solved. Each player should play the game as usual, betting funds appropriate to their characters. At the end of the round, just before the winning player grabs the pot, each player should make a Presence + Gambling roll (with no Black Dice) and notes how many successes they get. Each player can then take one chip back from the pot for each success they got, representing how their character didn't actually lose quite so much. Instead of using their successes to reclaim their chips, any player may also use their successes to cancel out the successes of any player. This allows the winner to stop players taking too many of their chips back, or allow other players (no matter how much they put in the pot) to play against other players.



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