

# The Spring-Heeled Menace



VICTORIANA

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# THE SPRING-HEELED MENACE

*The Spring-Heeled Menace* is an introductory penny dreadful into the seedier side of the Smoke; the adventurers take the case of a hermeticist waylaid in Whitechapel in order to recover his lost cane. Unbeknownst to the adventurers that cane contains a secret plan that could turn the tide in the Crimean War! This penny dreadful is designed for almost any association, but is particularly suitable for associations with an investigative bent.

Depending on the choices your players make, they may chance to meet Dr Victor Johanssen and Inspector Anson. These characters play prominent roles in *Streets of Shadow*.

## Background

For months the Russians have had the upper hand in the Crimean War; the British government is scrambling to send reinforcements for their decimated troops and the French and Ottomans aren't doing much better. Conscriptio is being debated in Parliament and causing general unrest amongst the lower class. If something isn't done quickly to turn the tide, then at best Britain and its allies can lose the war and at worst may face a popular revolution at home.

Fortunately, prominent members of the London Guild have come up with a plan. They've devised a magical matrix that could make British aerostats invisible and enable them to get behind enemy lines for bombing runs while also plucking Russian wyvern riders from the sky. They've even considered the most efficient places to launch their attacks. All of this was detailed in the Thundercloud Proposal.

Sir Reginald Albertson, a hermeticist and physician, works in a Wapping clinic and sympathized with more radical members of the lower class. He decided that if he gave the plans to Russia, it would force an end to the war and any talk of conscription. He copied the plan and intended to hand it over to Russian agents who are waiting in a submersible beneath the Thames.

Unfortunately for him, Sir Reginald was waylaid by the Spring-Heeled Jacks, a notorious gang that uses technological

marvels to commit robberies. During the robbery the Jacks took Sir Reginald's ornate walking cane, which had the plan hidden in the hollowed tube inside.

As the Thundercloud Proposal has already been sent to the War Ministry, Sir Reginald doesn't have the time or opportunity to make another copy. Unless he can manage to retrieve his copy and get it into the Russians' hands now, Britain will be able to unleash its plan on the Russians and strengthen the calls for conscription. Desperate, he decides to seek discreet assistance (the adventurers) in retrieving his walking cane. Of course, he leaves out certain details...

## Getting the Adventurers Involved

This penny dreadful is designed for investigative associations, although with a little work almost any Association can fit provided that Sir Richard believes that at least one adventurer within an association is useful to him.

Here are ways to adapt each of the Associations in the *Victoriana Core Rulebook*:

- **The Cobblestone Club:** Sir Richard has many friends within various socialist circles. He wouldn't hesitate to reach out to associated adventurers.
- **The Havering Household:** Presuming that at least one member is an investigator of some stripe, Sir Richard reaches out to her and her associates.
- **Metropolitan Police, Aetheric Branch:** While it's natural to go to the police, Sir Richard may be wary of any Aetheric Branch detectives. Still, time is of the essence and so long as his bluff holds Sir Richard may find them useful.
- **Royal Geographical Society:** Sometimes one must think outside the box. Sir Reginald is a member of the society, so perhaps he feels that the unique skills globe-trotting adventurers possess will be of use in this matter.



- **Royal Steam Lancers:** The Spring-Heeled Jacks are obviously using marvels to commit their crimes and who better to defeat them than steam lancers? This is really thinking outside the box, but perhaps one adventurer is an old school mate of Sir Richard.
- **The Selenium:** Sir Richard needs hunters to find intelligent prey; who better than the Selenium?
- **The Society for Spiritual Repose:** While they generally assist the deceased, Society adventurers do spend much of their time investigating the living. Sir Richard has likely met with one or more of them before and now needs their assistance.
- **The Star Chamber:** If there is one association that Sir Richard would rather not have involved, it's this one. On the other hand, making agents of the Star Chamber unwittingly act as double agents would amuse him.
- **Willowpin and Associates:** Sir Richard needs detectives. Who better to call than the professionals?

### Cautious First Impression

While we've provided hooks for every association, some are better fits than others. The Cobblestone Club, the Havering Household, and Willowpin and Associates tend to have adventures just like this one, while it's a bit more of a stretch for the Royal Geographical Society, the Society for Spiritual Repose, and most certainly the Royal Steam Lancers. While this is not to say that adventurers of such associations won't enjoy this adventure, it certainly isn't representative of their normal adventures.

If you are using this adventure for one of the latter groups, be sure to stress that this is an introductory adventure to the world of Victoriana and not necessarily representative of the types of adventures they'll be having on a daily basis. You may even wish to run this adventure with the pregenerated adventurers provided and let your players begin the campaign proper with their own adventurers after concluding this adventure.

## ~SCENE 1: A MAGICIAN'S REQUEST~

Sir Richard seeks out the adventurers early in the morning. The pea-souper is especially horrid today and its yellow-green smoke seeps in through open windows and large door cracks. Where he meets them depends on their association; he might show up on the Havering Household's doorstep, Willowpin's office, or the Selenium clubhouse. If the adventurers are normally scattered about then he invites them to meet him at a local pub.

Sir Richard is a Gnome; his shock grey hair and craggly face suggests a man in his 80s, although Sir Richard is only just shy of his 60th birthday. He wears a green frock coat around his small, thin frame and has a pipe clenched between his teeth. He wears a matching top hat which helps cast a shadow over a blackened eye and bruised cheek; he also favours his right leg when he walks. In addition to his physical injuries (thankfully minor), Sir Richard is also a bit out of sorts for being up so early – Gnomes are night owls and generally sleep in.

In spite of his appearance Sir Richard tries to maintain a jovial expression, although it is painful for him to smile. He greets the adventurers warmly and begs them to entertain his proposition. Once he is suitably comfortable, Sir Richard explains his situation.

*'My name is Sir Richard Albertson, baronet, hermeticist, and physician. Last night I found myself traveling through Whitechapel – I volunteer my services at a clinic in Wapping, when I was accosted by ruffians that jumped through the air and demanded my valuables. I attempted to defend myself but one of the blasted gang knocked me senseless before I had much of a chance. When I recovered my senses, I realised that my cane was missing.'*

*'The grip of that cane has special properties. The emerald helps me to exorcise demons; a very useful trait when dealing with those too poor to receive proper treatment from an alienist. Unfortunately, in the wrong hands, it can be a powerful tool to bargain with demons, especially for those with little knowledge. I need to have that cane returned to me before it causes any trouble.'*

*'I'd like you to find it for me. I can offer you each £1 if you can find it for me within 48 hours; otherwise I can offer you as a group £1 a day. It's imperative that the staff be recovered as soon as possible. Can I count on your services?'*

Sir Richard is sincere in his request, but not in his reasons. He is holding back the true nature of the cane, but he's covering it with a bogus story about a demonic jewel. A suspicious adventurer may try to use Presence + Empathy against Sir Richard's MC +2, or 14 (for being a Gnome), making it unlikely that she will discover his ruse. If discovered Sir Richard admits that there is something personal within the cane, which is true enough.

If asked why Sir Richard simply doesn't go to the police then he acknowledges that he was in Whitechapel to 'sample the local flavour' (a lie) and he can't afford a scandal. He's also heard rumours that the Metropolitan Police is giving a low priority to the Spring-Heeled Jacks. A relatively non-violent gang that takes a few baubles from wealthy victims visiting prostitutes and opium dens isn't worth the manpower it would take to track them down.

### Sir Richard Albertson Gnome Hermeticist Physician

Physical: 3      Initiative: 8  
Mental: 10      Health: 8  
Social: 7      Quintessence: 36

Armour Value: 7 (lined coat. Nah sigil)  
Special Traits: Demonology (*quiet*), Sigil Magic (Enochian: *Pe, Ged, Nah*), Thaumaturgy (*aetheric bolt, cure, darkness, ectoplasmic hand, hair of the dog, heal*)  
Complications: Zealot (Bolshevist)  
Damage: Aetheric bolt (8)



Sir Richard describes the cane as oak, with entwined silver and brass dragons holding a large green quartz gem in the grip. Should the adventurers find the cane, then Sir Richard asks them to bring it to the clinic he works at in Wapping. Playing the role of 'respectable' physician during the day, Sir Richard works at the clinic late into the evening.

## ~SCENE 2: TO FIND THE JACKS~

Presuming that the adventurers take the case, then there are a number of avenues they may follow (don't be afraid to improvise). First, they may case the local pawn shops, although smart robbers never dump the stolen goods in the neighbourhoods they stalk.

Secondly, they may use their contacts in the street to find out what they can about the Spring-Heeled Jacks. Finally, and perhaps ultimately, they bait a confrontation with the gang, whether through 'playing victim' or tracking one of them.

The quickest way to find out information on the Spring-Heeled Jacks is to pound the cobblestones with a Difficult (3 black dice) Presence + Streetwise roll (Criminology may be used as a complementary skill) or use an appropriate Contact in lieu of the skill.

Using a Streetwise roll takes the better part of the day as adventurers visit different neighbourhoods, pubs, pawn shops, and opium dens canvassing contacts and gathering information. Since it's likely that the entire group will be involved in this process, the Streetwise roll can be resolved as a Group roll.

Adventurers getting a partial success learn that the Spring-Heeled Jacks tend to strike in the East End, while a few of their valuables have been discovered in pawn shops in the West End north of Hyde Park. The Jacks also tend to use non-lethal force such as smoke bombs laced with some sort of hallucinogen unless provoked. On a success, the



adventurers learn that the Spring-Heeled Jacks tend to target professionals, victims of a class that would rather lose a few valuables than admit to why they are in neighbourhoods like Limestone, Wapping, and Whitechapel.

On a good success (3 successes), the adventurers learn that the Jacks have been seen dumping goods into a coach a block or so away from their victims. No one has gotten close enough to identify the coach, but the driver seems to be a Beastman or Orc. On an impressive success (6 successes), the adventurers discover that someone has recently offered the cane to several pawn brokers. At least one street contact has identified the seller as an Orc servant of Mr Parsons, a Technologist that lives in Marylebone.

### ~ SCENE 3: BAITING THE TRAP ~

Whether the adventurers learn about the coach or not, they'll probably want to lay a trap for the Spring-Heeled Jacks. This is easy enough to accomplish, presuming that at least one of them doesn't mind playing the role of a comfortable upper middle class or lower upper class gentleman or lady with coin to spend in a potentially scandalous manner. Unfortunately, this could trigger a Complication for some adventurers, but that is part of the risk and those with such Complications tend to play their roles well!

Should one or more adventurers decide to be the bait, then they'll need to play the role. Again, appropriate Complications work here, but an adventurer might use Acting, Bluff, Charm, Conversation or other skills to play up her role. The Spring-Heeled Jacks have a number of spotters that comb the neighbourhood for victims; these spotters aren't members of the gang, but informers that blend into the area being cased.

An adventurer 'playing bait' merely needs to make a Difficult (3 black dice) roll to attract the attention of a spotter (Hettie Trask, if appropriate). Note that it's possible to identify a spotter with a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Perception roll, using Empathy as a complementary skill (this does not identify the spotter with the Jacks, only that the spotter has taken an interest in the baiting adventurer). As the spotters are unaffiliated, it's a simple matter to Bribe the spotter into working for the adventurers by pointing the baiting adventurer out as a potential victim (although if the Gamesmaster is feeling particularly sinister the spotter could inform on the adventurers instead).

### Hettie Trask Dwarf Dollymop and Spotter

Physical: 4      Initiative: 3  
Mental: 6      Health: 8  
Social: 8      Quintessence: 18

Armour Value: 2 (lined corset)  
Special Traits: Beautiful  
Complications: None  
Damage: Kick (3), concealed knife (5)

Hettie is an example of a spotter that might be found in a brothel, pub, or opium den.

Once a potential victim has been identified, the spotter runs out and informs a nearby Huldu that is lurking in an alley on roller skates. Perceptive adventurers making a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Perception roll may spot a Huldu taking a particular interest in 'the bait' before running off into the shadows. It's up to the adventurers whether they wish to follow, overpower, or ignore the Huldu (as he's only doing what they want him to do).

Should they attempt to follow or overpower the Huldu then use the Chase rules. The Huldu starts at 'Close By.' They'd better be quick, for if the Huldu is using roller skates and, additionally, if he spots them he drops a smoke bomb in an alley to cover his escape. He also only has about 150 yards to go before he can inform a Spring-Heeled Jack on a nearby roof that he's being followed. The Jacks protect their own, so adventurers chasing down the Huldu may find themselves in an ambush (there's one Jack for each adventurer).

Should the adventurers manage to capture the Huldu runner then he first pleads innocence; failing that he admits he's a pickpocket and claims it's the only way for him to make money; Huldu labourers aren't exactly in high demand. A character making a Presence + Empathy roll against the Huldu runner's SC can determine that he's lying. If they press with an appropriate social skill (Intimidate and Interrogation are especially useful), then the Huldu breaks and tells them that he can take them to the Jacks - he's hoping that they'll overpower the adventurers. On an impressive success, the adventurers learn from the Huldu that Jacqueline Parsons is the leader of the gang.

## Peelers!

The East End maintains a police presence and this can complicate matters if the adventurers spend too much time chasing down Huldufolk or subjecting them to rather aggressive interrogations. Normally, any obvious actions bring two whistling peelers in 3d6 rounds, with a further 2 or more in 3d6 rounds after that. The Gamesmaster should modify the reaction time accordingly, especially if she wants to dissuade the adventurers from being too aggressive. At this point, the peelers are more concerned with breaking up fights rather than arresting people; the adventurers are only in danger of arrest if they brandish weapons on the peelers. This likely leads to an early interview with Inspector Anson (see SCENE 5).

### Police Constable - Human Peeler

Physical: 6    Initiative: 3  
Mental: 3    Health: 8  
Social: 5    Quintessence: 6

Armour Value: 2 (soldier's coat)  
Special Traits: None  
Complications: Responsibilities  
Damage: Punch (3), club (6)

Assuming that the adventurers go ahead and bait the entire gang, the Spring-Heeled Jacks lay in wait on the rooftops until the adventurer and any companions are relatively isolated. Spotting Jacks on the roof-top requires a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Perception roll (normally this would be a Very Difficult roll, but the adventurers are presumably keeping an eye out for them).

There is one Spring-Heeled Jack for each adventurer. In the surprise round, the Jacks use their dart guns on exposed and dangerous-looking adventurers (including any carriage drivers) while one of them tosses a pocket bomb filled with hallucinogenic gas into the coach (or crowd of adventurers, if they are walking). After this initial round the Jacks spring into action, leaping down and using their life preservers on anyone still resisting. They then grab easy valuables and leap away. Presuming they get away the Jacks head for a coach that is parked one street over. The driver is Thaddeus Turnball and Jacqueline Parsons sits inside. Mrs Parsons is wearing a lace mask and she has her electric pistol ready. If the Spring-heeled Jacks meet too much resistance then Mrs Parsons orders Turnball to return home before they are exposed.

There are several ways that this could end. If the Spring-Heeled Jacks get away with the loot then this initial contact is a failure (unless the adventurers had the foresight to sneak stone sight into the valuables or keep at least one adventurer out of the trap to see where the Jacks take the loot. If this is the case then a new trap will need to be set; this time the Jacks know a few faces.

If the adventurers manage to catch one of the Jacks, he can be made to talk with an appropriate opposed roll. In return for his freedom he fingers Mrs Parson, figuring that the ruse is up anyway. If the adventurers assault the carriage then Turnball flees with the carriage leading to a chase through the rookeries. He and Mrs Parsons use pocket bombs and firepower to dissuade the adventurers from following and Turnball is smart enough not to head for home until he's sure that he's shaken the adventurers.

Should Turnball and Mrs Parsons be restrained, she'll have little choice but to confess her role in the gang as well as where the cane is hidden. The Gamesmaster can simply go to the appropriate section in **Scene 4** for more details.

## The Spring-Heeled Jacks

The Spring-Heeled Jacks are a criminal gang led by Jacqueline Parsons, a brilliant woman who would have made an excellent technologist if her family thought it an appropriate profession for a woman and prevented any chance of her being accepted into college. Jacqueline accepted and defied her family by marrying a technologist who was more interested in his workshop than her. Learning from him, Jacqueline created her own technological devices and began an inappropriate and potentially scandalous relationship with their Northern coachman, Thaddeus Turnball.

Together they've gathered a criminal band that uses Jacqueline's devices to rob those that they believe can afford it. They try not to use lethal force and use their pocket bombs to subdue victims, although they don't hesitate to put down magicians and armed victims with prejudice. Parsons and Turnball usually wait a couple streets away in order to collect the valuables from the other gang members once they've left the scene.



## Jacqueline Parsons - Human Amateur Technologist and Gang leader

Physical: 4      Initiative: 7  
 Mental: 12      Health: 8  
 Social: 8      Quintessence: 24

Armour Value: 4 (lined cloak)

Special Traits: Technologist (electric pistol, gas mask, hallucinogenic gas, pocket bomb (smoke), spring-heeled boots)

Complications: None

Damage: Parasol Cane (6), Electric Pistol (10)



## Thaddeus Turnball - Orc Coachman

Physical: 9      Initiative: 6  
 Mental: 6      Health: 14  
 Social: 6      Quintessence: 12

Armour Value: 4 (lined coat)

Special Traits: gas mask, pocket bomb (fire, hallucinogenic gas, smoke), spring-heeled boots

Complications: None

Damage: Brass knuckles (7), Colt Merlin (8), 12 bore shotgun (12)



## Spring-Heeled Jack - Beastman robber

Physical: 8      Initiative: 4  
 Mental: 4      Health: 10  
 Social: 3      Quintessence: 6

Armour Value: 2 (lined waistcoat)

Special Traits: dart gun, gas mask, pocket bomb (hallucinogenic gas, smoke), spring-heeled boots

Complications: None

Damage: large club (7), dart gun (1)



## Spring-Heeled Jack - Huldu Runner

Physical: 6      Initiative: 8  
 Mental: 6      Health: 8  
 Social: 6      Quintessence: 12

Armour Value: 2 (lined waistcoat)

Special Traits: aetheric (pea souper) goggles, pocket bomb (smoke), roller skates

Complications: None

Damage: small knife (4), 4-shot derringer (4)





## Pocket Bomb - Hallucinogenic Gas

Mrs Parsons has created a hallucinogenic gas that can be inserted into a pocket bomb. It only has a radius of 2 yards, but the gas only lingers for one round (or 3 rounds if in an enclosed space such as a coach). The gas has a potency of 4. Failure means that the inhaler adds 6 black dice to all rolls for 10 rounds as she sees things that aren't there and overall has a warped sense of reality. Success means that the inhaler only receives a 2 black dice penalty from a splitting headache for 3 rounds. A gas mask or other protective device worn at the time of exposure negates these effects.

Mrs Parsons resides at a fashionable address in Marylebone. It is a very comfortable home with a large workshop in the rear. Mrs Parson's husband, Benjamin Parsons, normally spends most of his time there working on various projects but he is currently abroad at a Technologist's convention in the Empire of Brazil. It is perhaps telling why he left his wife behind to tend house while he enjoyed his true passion, but that suits Mrs Parsons just fine.

While he is only the driver, Thaddeus Turnball roams the house like he has the run of the place. Mrs Parson reins him in when necessary; it is obvious who is in charge. The rest of the house staff, including the beleaguered Beastman (Basset hound) butler, Mr Olivier, tolerates this temporary state of affairs, although the French butler prays that it will end soon.

Should the adventurers arrive undercover, Mrs Parsons acts the proper hostess, meeting them in the drawing room over tea and cucumber sandwiches. She's used to entertaining eccentric guests, as Mr Parson's associates are wont to be, and little startles her. She also shrewdly assesses any callers, as she is well aware that her nocturnal hobby may have prompted their appearance. Turnball remains close by in the hallway in case he is needed, keeping his pepperbox close at hand.

Once she realises that the adventurers are there to implicate her, Mrs Parson's demeanour changes. Her eyes narrow

## ~ SCENE 4: THE JACK'S LAIR ~

An adventurer making a Presence + High Society roll notes that Mrs Parsons is well-regarded amongst her social circles. While rarely seen in public with her Dwarf husband, Mrs Parsons dedicates herself to many charities, especially those involving underprivileged girls and women. This tends to mitigate her husband's 'common' breeding, as Benjamin Parsons is a self-made man.

## Other Ways of Getting the Cane

Obviously, the direct approach is not the only way to get the cane. Sneaky adventurers may try burgling the house, which can be quite formidable as the house is large and a slim walking cane can be easily hidden. The Parsons home also has a large staff and it's unlikely that a burglar could ransack the entire house without someone noticing her. Still, if the players are committed to this plan, you can place the cane anywhere you'd like, set an appropriate difficulty, and have the burglar make a Wits + Perception roll, possibly with Criminology as a complementary skill.

What is more likely is for the burgling adventurer to overpower a servant and force him to lead her to the cane. While the servants don't know exactly what is going on, they do know where Mrs Parsons and Turnball are hiding stuff. Still, it's unlikely that the adventurer will escape before the servant raises an alarm or another servant crosses the adventurer's path.

It's possible that less discreet adventurers may come in with guns blazing. Turnball is only too happy to oblige, but the more diplomatic Mrs Parsons decides to spare her home any more damage and uses the cane as a bargaining chip.

Finally, the adventurers may not need to come to the home. If they've managed to capture Mrs Parsons during the events of SCENE 3 then she'll make them the same offer to maintain her freedom. Even if the adventurers decide instead to take her to the police, she still uses the obviously valuable cane to barter her freedom. In this case Inspector Anson discovers the hidden tube and asks the adventurers to participate in a sting to catch Sir Richard and the Russians.

and her smile fades. She warns the adventurers that she has many friends in high places and, at most, having her arrested would be a few hours' inconvenience. Still, she wishes to avoid any unnecessary scandal, so Mrs Parsons asks the adventurers what it would take for them to leave her be.

Should they ask for the cane, Mrs Parsons smiles and says 'of course.' She asks Turnball to retrieve it and the Orc driver soon returns with the ornate walking cane. It is obviously Sir Richard Albertson's by his description. 'I've had a few appraisals,' she notes, 'but I'm unsure of a fair value for it. I'd hate for the Southwark Orphanage to lose out because I was too hasty to sell. Nevertheless, if this is your price, then it's yours.'

As far as Mrs Parsons is concerned the matter is settled, but adventurers making an opposed Wits + Empathy roll against Turnball's SC notes that the Orc isn't comfortable with this agreement at all; he may even have designs on doing something about it.

Once the adventurers have the cane, anyone holding it may make a Difficult Wits + Lore (or Magical Skill) roll to recognise that this is a Florentine Cane - the proper word animates the dragons to open the grip. Unfortunately, only the owner typically knows the code word to open the cane. The cane may be opened with brute, damaging force, but this would obviously alert Sir Richard that the cane has been tampered with. If the adventurers decide to try this approach, then they may cut through the cane; it has 4 structure pips. Inside is a rolled up plan for the 'Thundercloud Proposal,' a Guild-designed plan to turn the tide of the Crimean War. Obviously, Sir Richard is a traitor.

## ~SCENE 5: GOING TO THE POLICE~

At some point, likely between confronting the Spring-Heeled Jacks and returning the cane to Sir Richard, the adventurers may wish to visit Scotland Yard. This is either because they've decided to enlist the Yard's help in gaining Mrs Parson's cooperation or they're curious about the contents of the cane. They've either cracked it open or they are hoping that Scotland Yard can do it for them.

In any event, the adventurers are directed to Detective Inspector Henry Anson, a well-dressed human of medium height and build, sporting a well-groomed moustache and

puffing away on a cherry-wood pipe. His eyes are serious and penetrating, usually in contrast to his friendly and disengaging voice and mannerisms. He's very busy, so how he reacts to the adventurers depends on the nature of their business.

Bringing in Mrs Parsons and accusing her of being the ringleader of a gang is going to pique Anson's interest; he knows of her reputation and realizes how difficult it is going to be to keep her. That said he knows the game and hinting at scandal should be enough to convince her that coughing up the cane is worth avoiding any more trouble.

### Detective Inspector Henry Anson Human Investigator

Physical: 8      Initiative: 6  
Mental: 9      Health: 12  
Social: 8      Quintessence: 18

Armour Value: 2 (lined waistcoat)  
Special Traits: Order 1, Deduction (2 dice)  
Complications: None  
Damage: Police Truncheon (5), Allen & Thurber Pepperbox (8)





## Detective Sergeant Harrison Grace Huldufolk Investigator

Physical: 9 Initiative: 9  
Mental: 7 Health: 8  
Social: 6 Quintessence: 12

Armour Value: 4 (lined coat)  
Special Traits: *Cloak of Shadows* (purchased)  
Complications: None  
Damage: Police Truncheon (4), Adams 1954 (10)



If the adventurers bring in the cane unmolested (or it arrives courtesy of Mrs Parson's servants), then Anson is intrigued but unimpressed. Lots of magicians, especially hermeticists, have magically locked personal effects. That doesn't mean that there's something damning inside. Even if there was, it's against the law to destroy property without good cause. What he can do is put a shadow, his Huldu partner Harrison Grace, on the adventurers and see if they can get Sir Richard to open up the walking cane. If there is something damning inside then Grace can make an arrest or call for reinforcements.

If the adventurers show Anson the Thundercloud Proposal then he gets excited. Obviously, Sir Richard is planning on

doing something with this plan, probably handing it over to the enemy. Still, since the adventurers destroyed the cane they've tipped their hand. The only thing left to do is arrest Sir Richard and hope he confesses the identity of his confederates. Anson asks the adventurers if they can confront Sir Richard with the plan and get him to reveal what he'd planned to do with it.

## ~ SCENE 6: RETURNING THE CANE ~

Sir Richard works at Dr Victor Johanssen's clinic on Pennington Street in Wapping. A converted warehouse, this cramped clinic is actually quite spacious, although it lacks a lot of resources; Dr Johanssen is currently gathering funds to build a better one. The adventurers are likely to meet Dr Johanssen first; he is a balding man in excellent shape and just on the other side of 30. Dr Johanssen is a kindred spirit to Sir Richard in that he is a communist, although he isn't in on Sir Richard's plan and wouldn't endorse it (at least at this point; by *Streets of Shadow* he's tilting towards Bolshevism). Currently, Dr Johanssen is complaining that he needs a new nurse as he fumbles through drawers looking for medical equipment.

After greeting the adventurers Dr Johanssen informs them that Sir Richard is in the back finishing with a patient. They find Sir Richard warning a child's mother to keep a better eye her son and not let him go into the sewers as he resets a leg bone and uses a *heal* spell to fix it. The attractive Nurse Catherine smiles approvingly. Unfortunately for the adventurers, 'Nurse Catherine' is actually Katerina, one of the Russian agents. She's masquerading as a well-to-do lady that is volunteering to help the less fortunate.

If the adventurers simply return the cane, then Sir Richard is ecstatic. He eagerly pays them what they are owed and thanks them profusely. Adventurers making an Average Presence + Empathy roll note that Sir Richard and Nurse Catherine exchange relieved glances. Sir Richard sends the adventurers on their way as he tells Nurse Catherine that it's time to tidy up; he plans to take the cane to the submersible as soon as possible.



If the adventurers confront Sir Richard about the Thundercloud Proposal, he becomes visibly agitated. He's smart enough to realise that they are either here to blackmail him or they are part of a sting. In this case both Sir Richard and Nurse Catherine pounce, intending to grab the plan if possible and then escape out the back to the Thames where the submersible is waiting. Even without the plan, there's enough knowledge locked inside Sir Richard's head to make him of some value to the Tsarina.

Nurse Catherine has a few sigils (Russian runes) in her pocket that make her a formidable fighter. She immediately defends Sir Richard with her life if necessary, knowing that the mission is more important than her life. Still, she only fights as necessary, fleeing with Sir Richard once he makes a break for the Thames.

### Dr Victor Johanssen Human Surgeon

Physical: 5    Initiative: 7  
Mental: 12    Health: 8  
Social: 9    Quintessence: 24

Armour Value: 4 (lined coat)  
Special Traits: Order 2  
Complications: None  
Damage: Sword cane (5), Volcanic Pistol (7)



### Nurse Catherine (Katerina) Russian Human Spy

Physical: 9    Initiative: 9  
Mental: 6    Health: 12  
Social: 7    Quintessence: 12

Armour Value: 5 (lined corset, *Eihwaz*)  
Special Traits: Beautiful +1, Sigils (*Eihwaz* (+3 AV), *Haglaz* (+3 Dexterity), *Uruz* (+3 Strength))\*  
Complications: None  
Damage: Kick (8), Small Knife (10), 4-shot Mariette pepperbox (8)

\*The Sigils are already taken to account for Initiative, Health, Armour Value, and Damage.



If the adventurers allow Sir Richard to escape, Inspector Anson does not spring the trap. He's curious as to where the hermeticist is going and orders his peelers to follow at a discreet distance.



## ~ SCENE 7: FROM RUSSIA WITH SUB ~

This final scene takes place on the Wapping dock. Sir Richard and Nurse Catherine go together; if they'd sent the adventurers away then they are in no hurry; although they are walking briskly through the mist of the pea-souper. If they are being followed then this is a running battle - the dock is about 150 yards from the clinic; use the Chase rules as the two sides snipe at each other. Nurse Catherine only uses her pistol sparingly, preferring to let Sir Richard cover their escape with aetheric bolts.

A grizzled, salty old Beastman sailor, Leonid Michavich, sits at the edge of the dock, playing a harmonica with his good hand; as the adventurers approach they can clearly see that he has a clockwork arm. As the sailor sees the hermeticist and the nurse approach he blows a special tune that alerts the submersible to rise. Just as Sir Richard and Nurse Catherine reach the dock a small Russian submersible breaks through the surface and the hatch opens. A beastman (pig) with a Tula rifle steps out to cover their entrance.

If Inspector Anson is leading a sting then he has six peelers with him, two Beastfolk, two Humans, and two Ogres. Once the submersible surfaces he sends his men in to capture them, unfortunately making them the first targets of Chekhov's gun. Chekhov lays down cover fire until Sir Richard is aboard. He has two rifles and relies on Lara to reload while he fires the second one. Once Sir Richard and Nurse Catherine are aboard, Lara pilots the submersible out of the dock.

If things are badly for the Russians, Lara (their leader) decides to cut bait and leave. She orders Chekhov to clamp the door as she pilots the submersible into the water and submerges, hoping to follow the Thames out to the North Sea.

In either case, the Russians flee in their submersible unless the adventurers can stop them. It is difficult to follow them, even if they do commandeer a boat. Fortunately, if the police are here, then Inspector Anson has a solution. He looks to the sky as a wyvern circles overhead and dives down to perch itself on the dock. Saddled atop it is a wyvern rider with Her Majesty's Phoenix Squadron.

### Leonid Michavich

Russian Beastman (Siberian tiger) sailor  
Physical: 8 Initiative: 6  
Mental: 8 Health: 12  
Social: 6 Quintessence: 6

Armour Value: 1 (greatcoat)  
Special Traits: Clockwork Arm (+2 damage, sword arm)  
Complications: None  
Damage: Claws (7), sword arm (12), 6-shot Mariette .36 (8)

### Sergei Chekhov

Russian Dwarf Marksman  
Physical: 9 Initiative: 5  
Mental: 7 Health: 12  
Social: 6 Quintessence: 18

Armour Value: 4 (lined coat)  
Special Traits: Deadly Shot, *aetheric* (pea-souper) goggles  
Complications: None  
Damage: Light Military Sword (11), 2 Tula Rifles (13)

### Lara Grigorova

Russian Huldu Pilot  
Physical: 9 Initiative: 10  
Mental: 9 Health: 10  
Social: 8 Quintessence: 18

Armour Value: 4 (lined coat)  
Special Traits: None  
Complications: None  
Damage: Naval Dirk (6), 4-shot Mariette 0.36 (8)

### Police Constable

Human Peeler  
Physical: 6 Initiative: 3  
Mental: 3 Health: 8  
Social: 5 Quintessence: 6

Armour Value: 2 (soldier's coat)  
Special Traits: None  
Complications: Responsibilities  
Damage: Punch (3)\*, truncheon (6)\*, Adams 1854 (10)  
\*add +1 to melee damage if a Beastman

### Police Constable

Ogre Peeler  
Physical: 9 Initiative: 0  
Mental: 2 Health: 18  
Social: 5 Quintessence: 0

Armour Value: 2 (soldier's coat)  
Special Traits: None  
Complications: Responsibilities  
Damage: Punch (8), large club (13)

### Lt Hayden Rutherford

Wyvern Rider  
Physical: 9 Initiative: 6  
Mental: 6 Health: 12  
Social: 8 Quintessence: 12

Armour Value: 5 (lined soldier's coat)  
Special Traits: Beautiful 2  
Complications: Foreigner  
Damage: Heavy military sword (11), Adams 1854 (10)



### Russian Compact Submersible

Handling: 0                      Movement: 10 mph  
 Scale: Medium                  Health: 18  
 Armour: 6                        Crew: 1  
 Passengers: 4  
 Range: 2 hours (needs to resurface to replenish air supply)  
 Traits: Bat Outa Hell (+3 to first dice pool in Chase),  
 Stealthy (+1 to die pool to lose an opponent)  
 Armament: 0

## ~ CONCLUSION ~

There are a number of ways to conclude this adventure depending on the adventurers' actions. Hopefully, they've managed to stop the Thundercloud Proposal from getting into the Russians' hands; this is worth 1 point of Propriety (Reputation). They shall also have the gratitude of Her Majesty's Government; a medal or other token may be headed their way. Unfortunately, Sir Richard's fears come true; the success of the Thundercloud operation rekindles optimism for the war and conscription continues to be debated in Parliament. The adventurers are each awarded 3 XP.

Inspector Anson quickly introduces Lt Hayden Rutherford. Adventurers making an Average Wits + Perception roll notice that the rather striking 'Hayden' isn't male, although she is dressed in a male uniform and has her hair tied back (see *Faces in the Smoke Volume Two - Shadows and Steel* for more details). Lt Rutherford can easily take an adventurer with her into the air; the other adventurers are going to have to follow the river by cab. The adventurer joining Rutherford doesn't need to make a roll; her gender is obvious this close. She does speak with a Slavic accent (Polish) which may be disconcerting at first, but Rutherford makes no secret that she is loyal to Britain and practically foaming at the chance to strike a blow against Russia.

How the adventurers want to confront the submersible is up to them. This should be considered a Chase, with the caveat that any land craft may not be able to follow a parallel course (the Gamesmaster should use her best judgment). As the submersible has to surface for air every two hours, the adventurers could simply wait. Of course, the sight of a wyvern bearing down on them is likely to push Lara to surface and let Chekhov take a few shots with his rifle from partial cover. If the submersible is destroyed, then the Russians, and Sir Richard if applicable, swim for shore. They try to stage a last stand, but if the odds sway too heavily against them then they begrudgingly surrender, hoping for a bargain for freedom in the future.

If the adventurers ferret out the Russian connection but fail to stop them from taking the plan back to Russia, then there's disappointment but no Notoriety; there's enough blame to share the burden. Fortunately, word was sent to the front in time; while England and France haven't gained any ground, the fact that Russia felt the need to steal plans is a cause for optimism. Again, there is renewed optimism for the war and conscription continues to be debated in Parliament. The adventurers are each awarded 2 XP.

It's also possible that the adventurers simply retrieved Sir Richard's property and handed it back to him. In this case the Thundercloud Operation is a disastrous failure. The government puts on a brave face and still debates conscription, but it is now only a matter of duty and honour - no one reasonably believes that the allies are going to win anymore. The adventurers are each awarded 1 XP.

It's possible that the adventurers lost their financial gain, but Her Majesty's Government can reward them each with £10.

This concludes this penny dreadful, but the adventurers are now well-positioned to begin *Streets of Shadow* if the Gamesmaster desires. If they do move on to this larger penny dreadful, be sure to modify the initial reactions of Dr Johansen and Inspector Anson accordingly; they now share a bit of history with the adventurers!

