



The Exasperating Cadaver

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A Cugel-level Dying Earth scenario, set in the city of Kaiin

(If a less humorous atmosphere is evoked, this adventure might alternatively be used early in a low-power Turjan-Level campaign. It relies on the characters lacking much useful magic. Solutions include granting counter-magic to significant encounters, and/or adding early opportunities to use up the PCs' spells.)

Playtest: Stef Mathers, Ruth Gani, Jennifer Hay, Harry Grawe, Jeff Cheah & Peter Ferko.

What You WILL Need to Use this Scenario

1) **The Rules:** A copy of the *DERPG Rulebook* (Pelgrane Press, 2001) OR the Quickstart Rules available as a download from the Dying Earth RPG website. NB: *Turjan's Tome* (Pelgrane Press, 2003) is of course essential to use if running a Turjan-level version of this adventure.

2) **A Map of Kaiin:** The *Players Guide to Kaiin* (Pelgrane Press, 2003) contains amply sufficient cartography. Additionally an official full-colour map is available, and this is ideal as a visual aid whilst running this scenario. The *Scaum Valley Gazetteer* (Pelgrane Press, 2002) also has a fine map of the city (p112). As a final option, a low-resolution map of the city may be seen at: www.dyingearth.com/images/KaiinMap.jpg and this could be used as the basis for a detailed sketch created by the GM.

Useful Kaiin City References

1) You will ideally own a copy of the *Players' Guide to Kaiin* (P. Press, 2003). [All page references given in this scenario are to that particular publication unless otherwise stated.] In which case, many more characters and location details will be at your fingertips. Without this book, an experienced GM will still be able to flesh out the following details sufficiently to allow them to run this scenario to good advantage (though this elaboration will require some effort).

2) GMs who do not own the Kaiin book but possess a copy of the *Scaum Valley Gazetteer* have in their hands (as well as the map) a fine overview of the city (pp 111-113).

Note for Players: This material is for the GM's eyes only. If you intend to play a character in this scenario rather than run it, then read no further.

Introduction

This scenario can be used as a prelude to a Kaiin campaign. It is also the third in a series by the author - following 'Caravan to Aktabras' (*Excellent Prismatic Spray* Iss. 4/5 - P. Press, 2003) and 'The Skallerk' (scheduled for *Excellent Prismatic Spray* Iss. 7 - P. Press 2004). If the 'Cooks of Cuirnif' (sample adventure from the *DERPG Rulebook* - P. Press, 2001) is used as the introductory scenario, this series becomes - in the order noted above - a geographically-logical introductory Cugel-Level mini-campaign. (None of the adventures rely on magic for their successful completion.)

As GM you will need to read this scenario carefully before running it, and create any statistics for GMCs that you think will be required, as well as flesh out the outline ideas that you deem likely to come into play. Even if the players press the action forward at speed this scenario will take a couple of standard sessions to run, and if the characters are prone to pontificate points of order at every opportunity then it will take three sessions or even four. The GM may wish to call a break before running each district, in order to scan the options for the next section.

GM's Overview and Guidelines

The characters arrive penniless in Kaiin, seeking employment or other ways to gain funds for food and accommodation. We present a storyline that takes various options into consideration, but if



your players are of the tricky type you may need to make adjustments to what follows - in order to retain the basic integrity of the plot. For instance, encounters may be expanded or placed in a differing order to that suggested.

The characters will find themselves in charge of a body (initially known to them only as a 'package') that must be delivered to a certain Penderbast. Their employer assures them that this is a relatively simple task, requiring only that they avoid detection as they transport the 'package' as speedily as possible from one district of Kaiin to an adjacent one during the hours of darkness. Things do not progress as easily as the characters might hope, and what follows is an incident-strewn expedition from one location to another, seeking the elusive Penderbast so as to claim their reward. One might even consider this scenario as a catalogue of impediments, and aggravations¹.

Since it is a city exploration scenario, it is preferable if none of the characters are from Kaiin. It is not such a problem if one or more of the characters have visited Kaiin previously - provided this was not recently, and they didn't make any significant contacts, nor learn their way around the city particularly well. (For instance, many travellers who visit Kaiin stay only at the Marketplace - at the inns on the edge of the Scholasticarium district, with perhaps a day trip out to the Tracks or the Bay - taking in a view of the Palace on the way.) GMCs have no stats, as these can be created by the GM as required.

In this scenario, we will not state each and every possibility for the characters to test their abilities. Take it for granted that good Perception rolls give warning or clarify sensory information, good Athletics rolls avoid physical hazards, and successful Concealment may offer an advantage.

Consider each situation carefully, and allow sufficient time for players to suggest and attempt various character actions where realistic

¹ The GM may find it a fine challenge to oversee what players may remember - long into the future - as the most harrowing night the PCs ever spend in Kaiin.

(rather than simply narrating what occurs too quickly for them to respond or to have a chance to gain the information via ability testing instead). In order to save space, and allow the individual GM to tailor this adventure to their specific needs, in many cases where characters may act we merely insert recommendations in the following fashion: (Ψ PERSUASION , IMPOSTURE), (Ψ SEDUCTION, GAMBLING), (Ψ ATHLETICS), Etc. NB: Less appropriate uses attract a penalty (-1).

Take particular note where such bracketed suggestions feature a Resistance. This indicates a section of the plot where characters should be derailed from their mission - to become engaged in typically Cugelesque activities.

City Scale

According to the official scale, this scenario takes the characters wandering some tens of miles across the city. This is clearly inconceivable in one night. In the House campaign, Kaiin is not that vast, and the 10 mile indicator on the map instead shows only 3 miles. (As per the scale suggested in the *Scaum Valley Gazetteer* - p176.) This reduces the distance the characters will travel to a remotely feasible 27 or so miles. (An average of 3 miles an hour over 9 hours.) GMs must resolve this according to their conception of Kaiin. For those who wish to maintain the city's massiveness, included in the text around the halfway point is a suggestion on including a dawn-to-dusk hiatus.

Ability Pool Refreshment

Since this scenario may occur in a single Dying Earth night, and yet encompasses numerous challenges, characters will soon drain some ability pools. The abilities most likely to be used repeatedly are: Concealment, Perception & Stealth, which - according to the original rules - take a night, a night, and a day, respectively, to refresh.) Other abilities likely to be often used are: Athletics, Gambling, Imposture, & Persuasion, which in the main refresh after a similar amount of time. Twice within this adventure we therefore provide unusual opportunities to refresh pools. (If run over two DE nights, this is less problematic.)



Dealing with Characters' Troublesome Actions

It is of course poor practice to forbid players from having their characters perform any specific actions. Far better to devise a game reality wherein any standard actions that would derail the plot are either simply not possible, or that whenever they are used they work to the disadvantage of the characters. (And are thus soon abandoned.)

In this particular adventure, the story relies on the characters transporting a body around the city on foot. Cugel-Level characters can be expected to seek any means available to make this task easier. We provide details here as to how to cunningly (yet casually) impede the worst examples of such audacity:

Buying Help – As horrible as it is to consider, some characters might pool together to use their advance to try and buy a handbarrow (base cost around 10-15 terces dependent on quality). This is all they will be able to afford, as draft animals are hideously expensive. GMs should reward such un-Cugel-like behaviour by having them purchase a barrow of uncompromising frailty (see below).

Driving - Some characters may try and steal a cart, wagon, or even a hand-barrow in order to assist their progress. The hand-barrow option is not such a plot-buster, and could be allowed to function reasonably well for a short while, before it develops a loud squeak or the wheel simply falls off. Carts are of little use, because anyone using a cart after dark is automatically suspected to be a smuggler, and can expect to be stopped by curious vigils at every major street corner. (This can be mentioned to the players in a casual aside.) (Ψ SCUTTLEBUTT)

Carriages, like carts, also require a draft animal, and would simplify this scenario way too much. (Allowing characters the chance to pose as law-abiding citizens.) Theft of such animals can be prevented in various ways: watchmen are posted nearby; the owner has set up warding spells or discommodating cantraps; guard dogs are present; the animal is drunk, loudly argumentative, old, blind, or all of these.

Remember that this is Kaiin, where thieves are rife. Nobody leaves valuable property like a wagon unguarded (or at least it may seem like this is the case to our adventurers) - even if the only option is for the owner and their muscular brother to sleep inside it, using cudgels as pillows. Occasionally at night, certain nobles may travel about in their sedans pulled by cer or cassec (p70). Pedantic players may insist that in a city such as Kaiin, such things must surely happen, and they would be correct.

At the Tracks especially, many wealthy visitors will have arrived by cassec-drawn coach, though these are all parked together in a yard, where Gaming House staff guard them zealously (having been well-paid for doing so). Also, one or two competent servants often remain with a vehicle (and others nearby will come running to their aid, hoping to profit from the owner's purse for their altruism).

At night in Kaiin, wealthy travellers who venture forth without the company of social equals are often accompanied by at least two burly footmen, as well as the driver. Many owners, and some of their retainers also have access to defensive spells or magical items. This is another fact worth passing on to the characters. (Ψ SCUTTLEBUTT)

One can still envisage a situation where characters might through sheer stubbornness (or - the audacity - highly skilled role-playing) find a way to abscond with a vehicle. For instance they might bribe or intimidate a recalcitrant retainer left guarding the cheap carriage of a lesser merchant who has not paid to be in the carriage enclosure. Or they might take a carriage from directly outside the Silver Tray through skilful use of Imposture or Intimidation. In such cases perhaps the wilful beasts are of a species no character is familiar with. (This places a penalty of 1 on all Driving rolls, and on any Dismal Failure the steed runs wild and the carriage runs off the road and crashes.) Or the beast might be of rudimentary intelligence and - whenever it fails to receive the correct instructions - is trained to only to return to its master's manse (which happens to be back in the Scholasticarium District).



Riding - Somewhat less glamorous than a carriage, a beast might be found to sling the body over the back of. Various ways exist to dissuade characters from such a course of action:

- The beast is constantly hungry, claiming it was stolen prior to its night-time meal. It loudly requests food, and acts with extreme lack of co-operation.
- The beast has been led to believe that all humans other than those in its master's household are disguised deodands, intent on devouring it. The poor creature continually cries out in fear and cannot be silenced.
- The beast is insane and will not stop talking nonsense.
- The beast is street smart and refuses to take part in criminal activities, claiming it will be executed by Prince Kandive.
- The beast is unused to any riders or handlers other than its master, and is so skittish as to apply a penalty of 1 to any rolls attempting to command or control it.

GM: When foiling such attempts, it is important as much as possible to allow the players to believe that such things are merely due to the fates. Unseemly gloating is quite unnecessary, and indeed an air of quiet sympathy is far more appropriate. If certain characters persist with dogged determination, the GM may wish to address the players with a simple sigh and disclaimer that: "It seems you are not fated this evening to succeed in such plans". If you deliver this remark with a meaningful tone, and accompany it with a significant glance, even the densest of poltroons should comprehend the thrust of your intent. (And no further explanations are required, nor should any be given.)

Players' Introduction

Read the following italicised text out immediately before commencing play. Advise players that role-playing does not begin until the scene is set in this fashion. Some players may argue that their characters took certain actions on the approach to the city. Simple activities may be allowed, and others denied - on the grounds that the adventurers were too fatigued to behave in the way that perhaps they might have done under other circumstances. (If the characters travelled along the swift River Derna, then they were forced to disembark some distance outside Kaiin, due to heavy rains having filled the river with debris - making travel unnecessarily hazardous.)

"This morning brigands set upon you as you prepared breakfast. Still half-asleep, and not expecting such an assault in these relatively civilised lands you were unable to put up much of a fight. Fortunately these were good folk as far as brigands go, and their leader even complained to you how unhappy he was that this was the way he was forced to make a living. Apparently he² was the illegitimate son of a Kaiinese noble,

disinherited through ill fortune. They even left you your clothes and weapons, though nothing else.

It was late afternoon when you finally arrived at the outlying settlements that indicated your approach to the city of Kaiin. As the road crossed the high ground you could glimpse the magnificent Sanreal Bay; its waters glinting in myriad blues beneath the tired rays of the sun. None of the small hamlets you passed seemed to have opportunities or facilities worth mentioning, so you pressed onward. 'Surely', you thought, 'this place will afford us somewhere to revive from the rigors of the road, explore convivial company, and earn an honest (or dishonest) terce or two'. It was early evening when your weary band finally reached the top of the Porphirion Escarpment. From there all of Kaiin was stretched before you, and the River Derna rushed along on your right hand side. However, the full majesty of the situation eluded you, due to exhaustion and hunger; and you descended the winding trail.

At the base of the trail, several lounging watchmen pay scant attention to you - they are presumably used to seeing all manner of vagabonds pass in and out of the city, and only interfere with those obviously intent on trouble. Various grubby beggars implore you for alms, standing beneath the sturdy buildings of the Scholasticarium District upon your left side. However, up ahead is the famous Kaiin Market, and being without funds or excess valuables of any kind, you are instinctively drawn in its direction. From

² If you have the Kaiin book, this bandit leader was Angar Glams (p45). He is in league with Vyejuar (see later) to set the characters up as ripe for employment.



the little you know about the city, vigorous community watchmen patrol its other districts, which are inhabited by residents that actively resent criminal activities of any sort. By all accounts the vast and teeming Market is the place for folk with your entrepreneurial spirit to focus their attentions. Summoning your last reserves of energy and brushing the dust from your trail-worn attire, you survey the hubbub before you and pause to plan how best you might secure food, funds and lodgings (though not necessarily in that order).

This is Kaiin, and you are folk of merit, to whom the richest facilities of the city should rightfully be at your disposal. It is an affront to your very existence that this is not currently the case - you resolve to amass significant funds as swiftly as possible."

GM: The last paragraph needs emphasis (perhaps by repetition), as it sets the tone for a desperate scramble to gain terces through any manner of employment - and leads them into Vyejuar's clutches.

A Departure: The vibrant Lessorix was introduced in the aforementioned Aktabras scenario, and in the author's House Campaign has been an amusing GM foil - remaining in the group by default. However, as part of an unashamed plot device he now departs - claiming that he can fare better in this vital city on his own, rather *than* "burdened by the company of others", "even such fine fellows as yourselves". If Lessorix featured in your campaign, add his departure to the above commentary; play begins moments after he is lost in the crowds. Lessorix will reappear later during the scenario, but the GM should neither confirm nor deny this possibility should the players suspect it. As with many suggestions in this scenario, some things may happen in alternate ways. In the playtest the characters split to engage in various money-making ploys around the market, and Lessorix was last seen fleeing the vigils with a bag of terces clutched in his grasp. (NB: If you have not run the previous scenarios then simply ignore this boxed information.)

Scene 1: The Market Place

Overview

See District Map on p102.

This is the commercial heart of Kaiin: a wide area of cobblestones covered with meandering rows of stalls. Gulls fly overhead, occasionally lunging for a titbit, and the entire area smells faintly of seaweed and ocean-spray. As the evening draws in, the crowds have thinned somewhat, but the place is still bustling. The largest part of the market consists of colourfully-canopied stalls, though in the southeast corner these are replaced by wheeled-carts, whose owners sell fruits, vegetables and small crafts that are presumably from outside the city. Most vendors sell unprepared foodstuffs (including slabs of meat, seafood and wine), but of the 150 or so stalls, a significant minority specialize in more variant goods such as household items

As well as the vendors themselves, who vary in appearance from the wealthy to the desperate, you discern several other types of folk. The majority are ordinary residents, dressed in simple clothes and seeming in reasonable health and humour - though certainly a little unrefined of manner. A small number are clearly persons of breeding - some perfumed dandies holding themselves haughtily above the rabble, others mingling comfortably with a worldly air. Other notable types are: the servants shopping for their masters, beggars wandering the edges of the market or sitting against walls, children running hither and thither (sometimes with a biscuit or other stolen bounty clutched in their hands), and the occasional entertainer attempting to hold court with a display of juggling, jokes or acrobatics.

Your well-honed eyes also notice a few uniformed men wandering the rows, occasionally in pairs but usually alone. These are the Vigils of Kaiin - the City Watch; to your relief none of them seem particularly observant or athletic. Nonetheless, you aim to give none of them the opportunity for cheap heroics.



Incidental Encounters from the Kaiin Book

Describe all for maximum urban atmosphere.

- Any of the notable stalls (pp59-65)
- Twegg (p58) who (unusually³) has two or three sample beasts on display.
- Various Criers (p53)
- A Vigil (p54) questions a character that is acting suspiciously.
- Dombetha and her retinue (p55)
- The Slave Pens (p63) NB: Vyejuar (their soon-to-be secret employer) will not be so obvious as to let the characters see her observing them with interest (unless for some reason a character is paying particular attention to her and makes an Illustrious Success).
- Various Buskers (p53)
- A Fortune Teller (p60) tries to gain their business by making odd metaphoric comments. (The GM may throw in uncannily accurate snippets and even a hint about what is to come, but this should be carefully devised rather than invented off the cuff. Understandably, the Fortune Teller will never reveal more except for hard terces.

Bringing the Characters into the Plot

Despite the clear attractions and opportunities presented by this district, some players may feel the need to immediately send their characters off on 'wild titvit' chases throughout the rest of the city. If your players can take a hint, simply explain that such actions are not realistic. The marketplace is far and away the most advantageous place for persons of limited means, and is likely to be bustling only for the next hour or two; the evening is drawing in. (Some cart-owners are already packing up, presumably having to walk back to outlying farms.)

If you prefer, enforce the plot with game mechanics, apply the 'Resistance' rules (particularly against Avarice and Gourmandism) by repeatedly asserting that the scents of various freshly-cooking foods, and the general bustle of

³ Perhaps these beasts are in chronic oversupply?

the marketplace, are literally irresistible to the hungry and impoverished characters. Should characters absolutely avoid such hints and persuasions and somehow make their way deeper into the city, then simply bring forward the arrest sequence as detailed later - as an inevitable consequence of whatever ill-advised shenanigans they decide to involve themselves with. The characters will still be taken to their mysterious employer, through the actions of a vigil officer who is in her pay.

Potential Starting Points

The Marketplace presents numerous opportunities for mayhem and advancement. However, take the time to describe this place in detail, and have several minor interactions - it is after all the first experience of Kaiin. If possible postpone their contact with their employer until some significant exploration and experiences have occurred here.

1) The Friendly Approach

Characters may approach a beggar, busker, older child, or even an unsuccessful stall-holder (successful ones have no time or interest in diversions from the penniless). Since the characters have no funds, none of these will be immediately disposed to good regard. However, flattery and other techniques can sometimes work wonders. (Persuasion rolls may be at a levy or penalty of 1 as the characters clearly have nothing to offer, unless Imposture is used as well.) Inventive characters may even find ways to earn a pocketful of groats or a few terces helping clean up or promoting sales.

The characters may learn some general details about Kaiin. If they ask where the 'temporarily insolvent' may find shelter and sustenance for the night they will learn that Kaiin is notoriously harsh to such folk. A helpful contact may explain that poor quality fruit and vegetables can be had for a pittance (or in exchange for assisting with packing-up stalls) as the market closes, and that certain of the middling-successful restaurants throw out excess food at the end of the evening. (*"Not that I've ever had cause to avail myself*



of such things, you understand"). They will also indicate the direction of the nearby Fringe (the sparsely populated edge of Kaiin's ruined Old Town that is reached via a bridge across the raging Derna).

Many of the buildings there are sufficiently intact to provide shelter for the disadvantaged, and at least a couple of hundred such folk already live there. Characters that ask questions about employment will eventually be told of an anonymous yet reliable⁴ underworld figure who apparently occasionally employs resourceful fellows down on their luck. Apparently, she was asking after such folk earlier this afternoon. This person will not be identified, but a meeting can be arranged.

2) The Criminal Approach

Run any such activities fully. Allow the characters the chance to pick pockets, swindle stallholders, intimidate fops, or whatever they want (Ψ CONCEALMENT, IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION, QUICKFINGERS, STEALTH). Restrict great hauls: luck will not favour them in terms of contraband, although being penniless even a dozen terces will seem like a windfall. Any such attempts may well end in apprehension: the characters will flee down a back-alley that ends in a dead end; a brave stall holder supporting his fellows will stun the criminal with a metal vase; a small detachment of vigils are abruptly encountered marching to replace those at the city gates; a beggar will turn them in (in return for a reward); cart-owners assistants and other local bravoos will charge in outraged mass pursuit. Choose whatever suits and seems to be a stroke of bad luck - rather than the inevitable consequence of marketplace crimes⁵.

In short, the characters, or at least two or three of them (in any pursuit you might get the

⁴ In the sense she is known to pay her employees if they do well - rather than having them casually murdered.

⁵ We don't want to discourage further criminal activities in future adventures; so the GM may even roll hidden dice and comment on the poor fortune that results, as if startled by an unlikely result.

characters to roll Athletics against each other and have the slowest pair captured), could find themselves apprehended by some burly individuals - and several vigils will converge on the spot, including Infido the Under Sheriff (p56). Infido, fortunately, dislikes trouble. Vyejuar will secretly observe our rogues from the crowd and decide that they will serve her purposes. One of her assistants will then have a discreet word with Infido, who is glad to listen to such suggestions⁶.

Otherwise he must expend his energy hauling them away - and facing a mass of paperwork and possibly being forced to spend time in the city's tortuous legal machinations. The characters will not know what is occurring, though one might notice someone talking surreptitiously to Infido (Ψ PERCEPTION). Nonetheless, soon the characters will be marched to a quiet corner of the market and the disguised Vyejuar (see below) will arrive for a quiet word.

GM: If the characters are particularly cunning, they may devise sound tactics, supporting actions and back-up plans, which make arbitrary arrest seem unrealistic - or at least an unfair consequence of superior role-playing. For instance, they may arrange a meeting spot somewhere in the near part of the Fringe. In which case, the GM may wish to allow them to escape after failed attempts at thievery, and disappear into these ruins (see below). If this happens, they will instead be followed by one of Vyejuar's agents who will note their hiding place and bring her to them.

3) The Inventive Approach

Grand plans involving actions such as Imposture and Extortion are not without possibility. Allow such things to proceed as if they have a chance of succeeding. One of Vyejuar's informers will note their activities and report to his mistress. Vyejuar herself will then observe their efforts and choose the right moment to offer them a night's work.

⁶ Vyejuar infers that the criminals will be facing some sort of bonded labour, and a donation of 50 terces to the Vigil Benevolent Fund convinces Infido to leave the matter in her capable hands.



4) Pawning Weapons

The only easy way to gain money is to pawn or sell weapons at Thydic's Shields and Rapiers stall (p65). (Although characters are unlikely to sell their own, they may steal replacements and then sell these, or they may have spares.) Thydic will offer less than standard (DERPG p119) for a sale, if the weapons are in poor condition. However, on seeing the characters' desperate plight, and divining their resourceful natures, he will tell them that he knows 'someone' (Vyejuar) seeking some likely fellows for a night's work. Since selling weapons is such an easy option, if possible make sure they don't find this stall until as late as possible during the market episode. If they think to ask after just such a stall, then of course the adventure moves forwards more quickly.

5) Abject Despair

Some characters may give up, take whatever scraps of food they can beg or steal, and head for the Fringe (pp41-44). If this seems to be the way the game is going, allow it to happen. Vyejuar will hear of them through one of her spies amongst the Fringe's beggars and (accompanied by several burly lackeys) seek them out, as she is desperate to have her plan carried out as soon as possible. If the Fringe does come into play, make sure the characters observe Dututtu's Hut (p46) - this being one of the few landmarks there. Also make sure to describe this district's ruined architecture and desolate energy in suitably grandiose style.

Scene 2: An Offer of Employment

Vyejuar

"I think you are just the fellows I've been looking for." Full details on this slightly sinister leather-clad female slave dealer are available in the Kaiin Book (p63). Since she is worried about the potential for Pioni (see below) to enact a curse, Vyejuar will meet the characters incognito. (What they do not know they cannot reveal.) She wears a long cloak with a deep hood, and a scarf obscures her lower face. Nonetheless, she is clearly female, with a powerful manner and an alluringly husky voice.

GM: Portray this mysterious figure so that the characters (and players) feel confident that she is a streetwise local smuggler, or some other such nefarious individual. It is possible that persistent characters might discover who she is, and this is not such an issue for the plot. It merely enhances plot realism if she believes the characters do not know her identity. She will sometimes be referred to in the following text simply as 'their employer'.

As you have probably gathered, via a little bit of *Deus et Machina*, whatever the characters do will lead to a single outcome: coming into the influence of Vyejuar. None of the contacts that may lead to her will elaborate on the nature of the job except to describe it as something requiring 'thoughtful and circumspect' behaviour, as well as reasonable physical strength. If anyone is so tactless as to ask outright whether or not it is legal, anyone other than Vyejuar herself will refer them to their potential employer for full information. If Vyejuar is asked this question bluntly, she will laugh it off. "You surely understand that the most profit rarely comes from efforts that contain no element of risk?"

She is proud and will automatically rebuff seduction attempts from lesser individuals. She will not even dally with an imposing character who is role-played well, as they are unproven in her eyes (Rebuff and resistance rolls at +1). However, she may allude to a future dalliance, once the job has been done (pretending interest in order to seal the deal).

"By your activities/manner, I suspect that you are in need of lucrative employment. I am in a position to offer such employment, and if you perform adequately I have other tasks also requiring attention over the coming days. In brief I require a substantial package to be delivered tonight to a certain individual. I will pay 30 terces each for this⁷."

GM: If the characters connect with her quite quickly (before fully experiencing the Market), then she has

⁷ Bargaining is possible, and she will go as high as 40 terces per person if they stress their skills well enough.



business to attend to and asks them to meet her in an hour and a half at the Magicians Inn (p118) "Where I can give you an advance payment". In the meantime she requests that they stay in the Marketplace "so as to be near if I need to contact you earlier"⁸. Note that the stallholders begin to close up well before dusk, so that they can have their remaining goods back in storage before night falls fully. Most of those with trolleys leave at least half an hour earlier than the stallholders, needing to transport their wares back to their storage barns outside the city.

If the characters have already experienced the Market, she will take them to the Magicians Inn straight away.

Scene 3: The Scholasticarium

Overview

See District Map on p102, & location guide p119. From the limited information you have heard on your travels (Ψ PEDANTRY), Kaiin's Scholasticarium is possibly the most hidebound and prestigious seat of learning to have existed in this aeon. Either that, or it is a shameful excuse for a number of self-important and argumentative pedants and petty magicians to garner significant funds from the wealthy - in exchange for taking their second sons (and occasionally their wilful daughters) off their hands for a number of years. Probably the truth fluctuates somewhere around these two options. Certainly you have heard (Ψ SCUTTLEBUTT) that this district employs its own law-enforcers - burly gentlemen known as 'Maugifiers' (or some such term), who are protected from vindictive students of magic by enchantments that cause spells to reflect from them back upon their casters.

Also you may know (Ψ PEDANTRY) that the district itself is relatively well off, containing the homes of most of Kaiin's small middle class artisans and merchants, as well as the student tenements. Some of the lecturers live here, though

⁸ This merely grants sufficient time for gaming in the marketplace, and funds-seeking should be encouraged.

most apparently favour locations less accessible to the students, and several large public buildings (including the famous Kaiin Library and the Scholasticarium itself) are also here.

The Magicians' Inn

Described on p118 of the Kaiin book, this inn is located sufficiently close to the market place to serve our needs.

Vyejuar's opening remarks: *"Because we are newly acquainted, and to establish my own integrity, I will pay 12 terces in advance - on the proviso that you do not become drunk or otherwise intoxicated before the job is carried out. Should this happen, should you ever mention this work to anyone, or should you otherwise renege on the deal - I would strongly advise you to leave Kaiin and the Scaum Valley immediately and never to return. So then, are you interested?"*

Bold adventurers, who are experienced in daring deeds (or can convincingly pretend that they are), might attempt to bargain a higher advance (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION). Vyejuar will agree only to a raise to 15 terces.

GM: It may add to the rivalry between group members if the situation arises where Vyejuar agrees to potential bonuses, but says that such will be granted based on performance assessment. If she elaborates this concept to the characters, then the observer that follows them throughout this adventure will occasionally be spotted - just after significant activities - making notes onto paper attached to a small clipboard. On the rare occasions (indicated within the text of the scenario) where they actually speak to him, he may comment on their respective merits in certain situations, or - more amusingly - ask one character to provide their 'unbiased' assessment of another. Possibly one of the characters will more successfully befriend the observer, and be the one who is regularly spoken to.

Characters may also have questions, and she is willing to impart some information. Do not provide this information unless it is asked for, as a second chance to ask questions occurs when the job is described later, just before they set off.

Q: Merely for my own sense of congruity, can you



advise me on how, when and where we shall receive our second payment?

A: Meet me back here after dawn, and I will give you the balance. I will return to this spot on the hour throughout the morning. Then we can also discuss further possible tasks of mutual profit.

Q: What if we are temporarily detained?

A: Should you be unable to make this rendezvous I will also be here at dawn every second day for the next week.

Q: What if ordinary citizens question us?

A: Few ordinary folk travel by night. If any stop you, have a plausible story, or just don't stop to talk to them. Such solutions are the very least I am paying you for, and I'm sure are well within your capabilities.

Q: If we encounter the vigils what shall we say?

A: Avoid the vigils; pass them a few terces if necessary. Most vigils sensibly avoid mysterious groups that pass through the city at night, for fear of a violent interaction.

Q: What if a magician or other powerful person questions us?

A: Be polite; invent some plausible story. Such a thing is unlikely; no proud independent upholders of justice live in Kaiin other than a few agents of the Green Legion, and they take an interest only in things demonological.

Q: How long should the job take?

A: Three hours more or less should do it, though clearly jobs of this nature to not adhere to rigid schedules.

Q: May I ask most respectfully why a person of your obvious resources is unable to utilise current employees to attempt this task?

A: I will say only this - certain of my trusted associates are under observation or suspicion, others lack the requisite skills. You yourselves have no connection to me and therefore no trifling magics will locate you on behalf of my enemies.

Q: Again most respectfully, am I being

overcautious to imagine that this is simply because the chances of apprehension are in fact tangible and that you merely wish to protect your identity by not using any of your known associates in this role?

A: This of course is a potential benefit, but no, this is not the principle reason - I have every confidence and desire that you will succeed. The package is important to me and I wish it delivered safely⁹.

Q: Only for my own edification, I am forced to ponder the fact that you assume no other persons in Kaiin are capable of carrying out this task? This hardly seems credible.

A: Some few might qualify, but allegiances and counter-loyalties are profoundly indeterminate amongst this city's indigents. For crucial reasons I choose not to take that risk.

Q: The payment seems high for a simple delivery. Am I to assume we will face difficulties of some kind, and if so what should we watch out for?

A: The difficulties should be easily surmountable by persons of your calibre; payment is largely to have a task performed clandestinely and quickly, with no questions asked. Precise details will be explained later. I will of course profit extremely well from the successful completion of this task, so the payment to some extent reflects this.

Q: (Any questions on precise details)

A: All will be explained later.

Once the characters have agreed in principle, their employer will ask them to expect her back at the Inn in something over an hour. She then hands over their advance payment, reminds them again not to become inebriated, and suggests that they partake of food and drink to fortify them for the night ahead.

GM: The characters by now have some money, so it is worth emphasising that one of the driving factors of this

⁹ An added advantage is that the identity of the 'package' means nothing to them, otherwise many other city vagabonds might serve to do the job.



scenario are their attempts to accumulate terces. (Against the GM's backdrop of numerous chances to lose them.) The GM should keep track of their financial balances, and from time to time mention these as casual asides. (In order to cunningly maintain this motivational device in player consciousness.) Certainly it should be mentioned during play how the Threeksiders live in relative squalor whilst the wealthier citizens enjoy lives of opulence. A substantial stake is surely necessary to set oneself up in this teeming settlement - unless one is content to labour ignobly amongst the struggling masses.

Tavern Opportunities

Dining:

The characters have been on the road for a long time, and the Magicians' Inn is the first place with real food that they have been at with money in their pockets. On first entering, unless a character has eaten well in the marketplace, each player must roll a dice for their character. If the result is 1-4, then the character is so hungry that they are tempted (Ψ RESIST GOURMANDISM) to buy the most expensive thing available. This is brazed erbshank served in forest-onion sauce, and accompanied by a side-dish of fungus balls, and a glass of violet mendolence. To follow are home-made scones spread with thrush pate, and then a bowl of spiced fruit. All this comes to a grand total of 7 terces, which any character that fails their resistance will spend if they have it. If the character resists, then they will settle for the second best meal of the house (5 terces), which is the same as the first but with a mug of Tatterblass instead of the wine, and no scones or fruit. A far less appetising option (available to those who are not required to resist) is the bowl of forest onion soup with crusty bread and a small cup of Tatterblass - for only 3 terces. However, if any character is able to afford a better meal, no other character that has failed their roll will accept this lesser option, and will turn their hand to somehow being able to avail themselves of a finer repast. Anyone who fails their resistance roll but has no money, will turn their hand to acquiring money as quickly as possible. If any character with a meal

flaunts this state of affairs before a character who does not have food, then the foodless character (whether they failed their original roll or not) may feel the need (Ψ RESIST ARROGANCE) to dine as luxuriously as their comrade.

Joining a Card or Dice Game:

(NB: Any character with a Gambling rating of 5 or more who has less than 10 terces - after any dining that takes place - will be impelled (Ψ RESIST AVARICE) to try their hand at some form of gambling here.)

Two card games and one dice game are already in action when the characters arrive. (Ψ GAMBLING, PERCEPTION, QUICKFINGERS)

Starting a Card or Dice Game:

If any characters have special advantages gained through starting their own games, one of those already in progress will end after 20 minutes or so, or new players may be drawn from the other patrons. (Ψ GAMBLING, PERSUASION, QUICKFINGERS)

Seduction Attempts:

Comely barmaids, strapping local youths, whatever takes your fancy. (Ψ SEDUCTION)

Picking Pockets:

If any characters begin acts of petty theft, one of Vyejuar's hidden associates will almost certainly spot them (exact chances up to GM) and furtively suggest that they immediately halt such activities likely to draw attention to themselves. (Ψ QUICKFINGERS, STEALTH)

Less Obvious Contingencies

(None of these should be broadcast. We cover them only in case a player thinks of them.)

Arranging Assistance for the Mission Ahead:

The author can think of several things that extremely smart characters might do to assist themselves, without even knowing what awaits them. These mainly revolve around obtaining disguises or special knowledge about the city. The GM will need to deal with these as (and 'if') they occur. Extremely cunning ideas should be rewarded, though in most cases a monetary cost will be required.



Banking One's Earnings:

Characters used to sudden loss of income might wish to somehow 'bank' their advance payment. The only easy way to do this is to leave the money with the landlord, either by booking ahead for food and accommodation or paying him to mind their terces. Play Quellime the landlord as not necessarily trustworthy, so as to discourage such things, but do not make this possibility totally infeasible. Charitable GMs might even allow such a ploy to succeed.

When their mysterious employer returns, dusk is falling outside the inn. She draws up an extra stool at their table. Although it appears that she is alone, several of her lackeys are amongst the clientele and surreptitiously keep an eye out for her welfare.

The Job: GM's Background

Vyejuar has had plans for some time to kidnap the mysterious beggar Pioni (p47) in order to study her and ascertain if she truly is an immortal with regenerative capacities. (And if so to extract this secret from her physiology.) Pioni will shortly be sedated with a powerful herb, which makes her appear dead to all intents and purposes. This plan been quite a while in the devising (p48), and Pioni will have no idea who has subjected her to this - since she will fall into a stupor before her suspicions are even aroused.

Vyejuar has merely been waiting for some likely individuals to arrive in Kaiin before putting the plan into action, and had her spies tailing Pioni these last few days - so as to be able to pounce at any time. The unfortunate beggar is at this very moment being stalked prior to being quietly subdued. Vyejuar wants newcomers to transport the beggar on a series of fool's errands around town for a few hours in case any curse descends upon them. If such does not happen she will allow them at last to deliver Pioni to Copcoft the alchemist. (Penderbast is a figment of her imagination.)

One might observe that this is rather a complex plan, and that other plans might serve the

same purpose for far less trouble. Vyejuar wants to subject Pioni to as much indignity as possible, and has decided this is the best way. Her long-term plan is to keep the unfortunate beggar sedated, gagged and restrained, so being carried around unconscious in a carpet seems like a good replication of such treatment.

The Job: What Vyejuar Explains

"All is arranged. I have a weighty package that needs to be transported across town. I am requesting you to deliver it to a gentleman named Sehal Penderbast. Shortly one of my assistants will come up and put an empty mug on your table. When he does, follow him outside and wait there..." (she gestures out of the door and across the street) *"...in the shadows of that alley at the corner of the road. The package will soon thereafter be delivered to you along with the code 'the owl hoots twice'. You must reply 'but not tonight'.*

Then, go across town by whatever route you think best. Here is a sketch map of the city. Penderbast's domicile is here... (she makes a mark on the map) ...at Jank Street in the East Threek; the house immediately to the left of the Scarp View Tavern is the one you are looking for. To summarise, the details are simple - transport the package to the man I have named, do not loiter anywhere unnecessarily, do not interact with anyone unless you have no choice; keep the package from outside observation to the very best of your abilities; do not enter into any tavern or inn unless unavoidable; protect the package from damage and disturbance by any means, including at your own hands. Is this all clear?"

GM: Again, with these questions do not volunteer any information unless it is asked for. The Scarp View Tavern is situated at the center of the main lower bulge of the East Threek. (Kaiin Map K6)

Q: How will we know Penderbast?

A: He is a tall bald man with a pointed grey beard and sideburns that are flamboyant to say the least. You cannot fail to recognise him. Also, you will say to him the codewords: 'I hope we have not come at an inopportune moment', and he will reply 'your arrival is anticipated and sought after'.



Q: What do we do if Penderbast is not at home?¹⁰
 A: Penderbast knows better than to risk my wrath!

Q: Excuse me for my impertinence, but what exactly is in the package?

A: That is none of your business.

Q: In the unlikely event that we are apprehended by vigils, what punishment can we expect?

A: Don't get apprehended by the vigils.

Q: Do you have any advice on how we can protect ourselves against just such a contingency, rare as it might be?

A: Brazenness, force of arms; use your normal methods for dealing with such unwanted encounters; it is not for me to say. It is not illegal to transport a package by night; perhaps you can convince them you have a legitimate task – but best to just avoid them.

Q: (Any awkward questions.)

A: (Deal with them as you see fit. Vyejuar sees no reason to pander to casual questions, and the nature of her business is not for the ears of casual employees.)

Once they have finished with their questions, she has a few more words, which she whispers grimly. She also lets her hand linger around the hilt of a long curved dagger, which is suddenly visible through a gap in her cloak:

"In order to seal our agreement, I have some words of warning to impart. Some persons of unsound morals might seek to double cross me. I do not imagine you would ever think to do such a thing¹¹. However, bear in mind that - merely as a precaution - you will be watched until the package is delivered. In order to

¹⁰ This question fortunately never arose in the playtest, as it is the most awkward to deal with. Underplay the possibility in Vyejuar's manner & content of response.

¹¹ If they later attempt to implicate Vyejuar - after discovering her identity - she will claim they are framing her on behalf of an enemy, and she has witnesses already primed to say that they saw this enemy conversing with them.

motivate obedience I now offer an award of an additional 20 terces to the person observed to act with greatest verve in carrying out this mission.

I expect all of you to use the very best of your resources to overcome any obstacles that arise, and to deliver the package - as you receive it - at your best speed. Abandonment of the package is not an option. As further motivation, I invoke Kraan's Curse of Molten Blood against any who betray me or my terms of employment during tonight's enterprise!"

GM: *This curse may or may not be genuine, at your whim. In the playtest, fear of the curse was on several occasions the only thing that stopped the characters from abandoning the corpse in extreme vexation. If your players/characters are prone to doubt such things, have some minor magical effect enhance the curse's apparent efficaciousness, such as electrical effects standing their employer's hair on end and crackling momentarily about her person. (This may either be the 'real thing' or a cunning cantrap.)*

Dusk is already falling, and after only a few minutes, a weasel-faced individual in a long dark cloak, places a metal mug on their table as he walks past and heads outside. He glances at them once they follow him out, inclines his head towards the place that Vyejuar indicated, then walks slowly away down the street, where he fades into the shadows.

The Vigil Patrols: Throughout the scenario the GM may like to keep the players on their toes by making sporadic secret rolls and implying that these are to ascertain whether vigils are in the vicinity. In fact, all vigil encounters are firmly located within the plot.

Finding the Way

Armed only with a sketch map¹², travelling by night... It is entirely possible that the characters may get lost. Not all alleys are marked; some streets might be drawn at incorrect angles... Many street signs are missing or illegible. As some pedant or other once said: 'the map is not the

¹² Represented by the best map of Kaiin available.



territory'. If players point out that their characters stuck faithfully to its indications, then just assume that it is wrong. Some GMs may wish to make the task of keeping going in roughly the right direction an intrinsic part of the scenario.

GM: At least twice in the smaller districts, and three or four times in larger districts¹³, the lead character (or whomever is directing them, IE holding the map) must choose the direction. (Ψ PERCEPTION) However, the GM makes this roll for them, unseen, and the player must state how many points from their pool they are willing to spend. On any Success Result the attempt stops even if proffered Pool points remain.

Illustrious/Prosaic Success: You proceed correctly.
Hair's-Breadth S. or Exasperating Failure: You are marginally off course (HBS - L, EF - R).

Quotidian Failure: You are off course by 90' (random roll L or R).

Dismal Failure: You have somehow gone round in a circle.

At the Corner

The characters will wait for several minutes before anything happens, possibly becoming concerned. The silhouette of their recent contact may (Ψ PERCEPTION) be occasionally glimpsed watching them from the shadows further down the street. (Throughout the scenario he sometimes be spotted, but will avoid questioning if at all possible. However, he may nod or wave reassuringly if the scenario requires this.)

During this wait it is entirely possible that two suspicious Mavgifiers (p107) will suddenly appear on the street from a nearby alley (heralded perhaps by a low whistle from their contact before that man temporarily vanishes) - prompting the characters to flee, hide, or invent plausible reasons for lurking here in the darkness.

A few minutes after this incident the characters will hear (Ψ PERCEPTION) the faint squeak of wheels as a cart approaches from the stallholders' storage sheds at the far side of the

¹³ The Tracks and Odkin Prospect are so simple in street plan that they can be exceptions.

market. Its wheels seem to be muffled somehow, as the noise it makes on the cobbles is slight. As it draws near, the characters begin to make out one tall, thin man, and a smaller muscular man, pushing a handcart on which is a bulky bundle of some kind. Even closer to them, the bundle can be seen to be a rolled carpet, wrapped around some kind of long and fat object. The taller man whispers: 'The owl hoots twice.'

Hopefully the characters will respond appropriately. When they do, the men nod and turn away, walking quickly back into the darkness¹⁴, leaving the cart and its burden standing alone. The characters can now see that ropes secure the ends and middle of the object. The cart is muffled through the simple expedient of having thick rags tied about the wheels.

GM: We allow the characters use of a cart at this first part of the scenario - since it is still early in the evening, and townsfolk are still abroad. An object on a cart logically has less suspicion placed upon it, and to have the characters carrying the body between them would stretch scenario credulity too far. However, the body is still quite obvious, and characters will need to disguise it somehow. (At least with jerkins or packs.)

The Body in the Carpet

The characters will realize that a body is inside the carpet as soon as they approach. It is entirely possible that the characters will now (or later) wish to examine the body and see who it is. Pioni is a snaggle-toothed crone, and (apparently) stone dead. A close examination shows no signs of violence, and if someone sufficiently medically skilled (Ψ PHYSICIAN 12+) tries to determine any details, an Illustrious Success will confirm a suspicion that the possibility exists that she is not dead at all, but only heavily drugged. (Note 'confirm'. This result will not grant this

¹⁴ If questioned the men look at each other nervously. They are clearly eager to be on their way, and in any case know nothing of substance about the package. They are unsuccessful carters who owe Vyejuar significant sums, and have been guarding the 'package' until she (minutes ago) instructed them to deliver it.



information if it is not already suspected.)

If any characters have means to detect for magic, both body (minor enchantment around the drug that has made Pioni comatose) and the carpet (enchanted to prolong the effect of the drug) are slightly magical.

Note that two persons are required to perform the unnecessarily taxing job of pushing the cart – in order to have any hope of stealthy manoeuvring. The main difference in having the cart is that the two persons involved will not become so exhausted and may not need to change very often. (Though the characters may decide otherwise – since this is rather like ignoble labour.)

Other Potential Location Encounters

If you have access to the Kaiin book, you might locate one or more of the following as places the characters observe en route. (Either merely to add character to this district, or as places of note that they may wish to visit later in the campaign. The Burning Pestle (p120); the Diadem of Unseen Merit (p120), the Library (p122). *Again see district location guide on p119 for those on the route the characters take.*

Drunkards

"I say chaps: look at those bumpkins. What on earth is piled upon that flimsy cart?"

A mixed party of older students and the sons of the middle class merchants of this district suddenly spill from a door that opens nearby. This establishment could be one of several (see guide on p119 for best located) if the characters are sufficiently close to its general map location. One or two of them spot the characters instantly, and soon the whole group gathers round, insistent on finding out what is in the rolled-up carpet. (Ψ ETIQUETTE, IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION, SEDUCTION)

GM: It seems fitting to start out the action part of the scenario with an instant and unavoidable cock-up that needs to be solved. (Since the characters will no doubt have done their best to plan their movement and watch duties to avoid any and all observation and interaction.)

Maugifier Patrol (p107)

The characters must hide from these officers of the law, or explain away the contents of their cart. (Ψ CONCEALMENT, IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION, STEALTH) If these attempts fail, and the body is revealed, the characters will need to fight to resist arrest. Play the Maugifiers as suddenly nervous when it is clear that a body is here, and they will flee as soon as one takes a wound. They will of course shout for assistance, and the characters should flee at best speed. This early in the scenario some people are still on the streets, and will back nervously away from this scene, rather than getting involved. Some will gaze from a safe distance, and turn away if the characters glare at them or make any threatening moves.

The Scholasticarium

This is an incidental encounter, whether they view it further down a street, or find themselves passing it for the third time after taking a wrong turn. (GM may simply state that suddenly they are upon it - and realize that their path is going slightly awry.) Use the information in the Kaiin Book (p121) to paint a vivid picture of this Dying Earth landmark. A drunken magician sits outside performing strange magical feats. It might be Perrin (p112) or Grashpotel (p111) - or even the pair of them, having excessively indulged in the delights of this year's *Tankilvat Nouveau*. This will not be the first such landmarks described in this scenario merely as ways to enhance the in-game feeling that the city is a place of wonder. However, in this case, rather than being merely a passing landmark, another opportunity presents itself...

The Entity

It wouldn't be a visit to the Scholasticarium District without an encounter with some kind of entity, escaped from the vats of an ambitious student or an inept lecturer. Since it is still late dusk, the GM might even have one of the characters (probably the rearguard) spot this being (Ψ PERCEPTION) oozing through the shadows down the wall of the Scholasticarium after the



group has moved on some distance down the street. (The magicians will of course have staggered – or magicked themselves – away.) It should be described in suitably horrible and menacing style, rather than as cheap amusement, so that the characters will sensibly fear its attentions. It is capable of forming large and loathsome temporary organs such as large ears, and eye on a stalk, and multiple stumpy legs.

This slobbering, groaning mass will latch onto their trail and pursue them about the district, forcing them to keep up a cracking pace (Ψ ATHLETICS) in order to leave it sufficiently far behind that it won't draw direct attention to them. Some characters may even freeze in fear (Ψ WHEREWITHAL) when it is first seen sliming its way towards them down a wall. Perhaps it can be defeated by force of arms, or by magic, or perhaps it is resistant to either or both. During the flight they will encounter one or two small groups of other people returning home, with whatever amusing incidental events the GM creates.

GM: Eventually they will lose it, but if sufficiently amusing it may appear later. One fine time for this would be when they have just been placed under close arrest for possession of a corpse and about to be marched to the Palace (or even approaching the Palace Gates under close guard). During the confusion our 'heroes' can recover the body and flee the scene. (Also see later details on this possibility.) In the playtest a character fled from it after failing her Wherewithal, and led it toward the Maugifiers at the gate. They fled, and she avoided it in the East Threek. Thus the other characters passed through the Pannone Gate unmolested. Later it returned to pursue characters hither and yon, as they considered splitting the party in the woods on the edge of Odkin Prospect.

A Mugging!

The characters pass the end of an alley and may (Ψ PERCEPTION) hear noises from within.

Illustrious/Prosaic Success: They may hear someone grunting out: "Now then grandfather, stop your struggling or it'll go even harder for you" - followed by the sound of someone being beaten.

Hair's-Breadth S. or Exasperating Failure: Someone muttering in a threatening fashion, and the sound of something soft being struck.

Any Failure: Odd noises.

GM: Cugel-Level characters are not noted for their philanthropy, so we present here the opportunity to help someone out, and an unexpected reward if they do so¹⁵. The person being mugged is none other than Dafis the magician (p110) a lecturer at the Scholasticarium. Being an absent-minded fellow he has fallen foul of some (exact number up to GM) footpads, who have an enchanted device that allows them to detect whether a person has spells encompassed or not.

At this very moment Dafis is slumped against a wall, bruised and confused after a brief pummelling, and being relieved of his valuables. If someone were to creep down the alley and succeed at Perception they might make out some of these details. If Dafis is rescued, he will be inordinately grateful, and will agree to forget that he ever saw them - and will offer to cast a spell on their behalf from his tome (inside his satchel).

An extremely useful possibility is that he could be convinced (against his initial better judgement at aiding something so clearly illegal and almost certainly also immoral) to cast Phandaal's Mantle of Stealth (DERPG p109) upon the corpse/carpet combination. This will supposedly last for hours, but the Maugifiers at the Pannone Wall (see below) have cast a warding (Turjan's Tome p79) linked to the 'Liberation of Warp' (DERPG p107) upon the gateway.

If it enlivens the story (and if you own the Kaiin book) Dafis recognizes Pioni (p47) and reveals this information to the characters. This may bring up the suspicion that she is not actually dead. (Dafis does not know about any supposed curse.) The grateful magician might also have a minor magical item that he bestows upon his rescuers. The GM decides what this might be, as its main presence in the scenario is to provoke quarrelling as to who should be allowed to carry it. (Ψ RESIST ARROGANCE). An 'Amulet of Luck' might be appropriate.

¹⁵ During playtest a character crept up, discovered that an old man was being beaten, and snuck away again. Shameful! Yet not unexpected. This was the first negative Sympathy point awarded in the adventure.



Farewell to the Cart

Around this point in the scenario the cart will 'expire'. It is sufficiently dark now for them to be able to carry it without making the scenario unrealistic. The cart may come to grief as they are fleeing the creature at speed, or a wheel will simply fall off this poorly-constructed device as they come in sight of the Pannone Gate. (The GM should keep an eye out for a suitable stress that she may quote as the reason for its failure.)

Two persons of reasonable strength (or one person of prodigious strength - as in the playtest) may carry the body by clutching the ropes and slinging it between them. This is sufficiently tiring for normal persons that a change of bearer is required every few hundred yards or so.

GM: If frequent changes of bearer are the norm, it might be useful to work out with the players some sort of rotation, so that whenever an encounter occurs, the GM can randomly roll to see who is where. The front and rear guard would find it hard to do their jobs properly if they were constantly changing. Therefore, if sufficient individuals are in the group the guard positions might be static for each district, and then a new roster derived as each new district is entered.

Choosing who has to carry the body will almost certainly be decided by a lively group Persuasion contest - see DERPG pp35/36. Few (Ψ RESIST INDOLLENCE) are likely to be able to restrain themselves from this argument, since guard duty seems noble and worthwhile (and above all allows the chance to flee or hide with advance warning, whilst those transporting the body are most likely to be caught red-handed).

As the scenario progresses, those carrying the body might be reminded to complain bitterly about this imposition. (Especially if their players are reminded about the possible bonus payments - which are unlikely to accrue via simple footslogging.)

Maugifiers at the Pannone Wall

"Hsst! I heard a footfall. Brigands are upon us!" Some guards (p115/116) (2-5, GM decides) stand watch at this side of the archway in the wall. (Unless the characters have magic or rope and tackle to get over the wall, they must pass this way to reach the East Threek.) The guards must of

course be distracted¹⁶ or convinced that the characters have a legitimate purpose. (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION) Technically they could be fought, but it is not really good form to spend one's first night in a new city committing murder and grievous bodily-harm upon its appointed constabulary.

GM: If the body they transport is magically hidden then it will be revealed by the Liberation of Warp (which is programmed precisely to reveal the magically hidden). However, this need not be such a bad thing, as because even invisible it is so awkward to carry, that characters not hefting this weight will have to distract the guards whilst their fellows wander past nearby. (Trying to act as if they are not supporting a significant burden.) All this matters less if the body is supported by a single super-strong character, but them's the breaks. When the burden is revealed, the Maugifiers will call an alarm, but by reason of extreme fear will not pursue anyone outside of the Scholasticarium District - unless their own lives or possessions are at stake. In such a situation the characters will no doubt flee into the next encounter, and their assessment of the East Threek district will have to wait until that is over. The Liberation of Warp here was something that Vyejuar did not account for. If they pass through (as it most likely) it will have some visual effect (sparks or quivering lines of force) on the body, and be the cause of Pioni's later arousal. (If they find some other way to pass the wall, then her later awakening will be simply because the magic wore off unusually early.)

Scene 4: East Threek

Overview

See District Map on p134.

You did not know that the Threek was divided into an east and a west section. Quite probably this is because nobody ever thought to mention the Threek to you, other than to confirm its very existence. Apparently (Ψ PEDANTRY) The Threek (both east and west) houses the majority of Kaiin's residents: the lesser merchants, the labourers, the

¹⁶ In the playtest, the Maugifiers fled at the sight of the creature, leaving the gate unguarded.



shopkeepers and general artisans. Looking at it now, under the glimmer of distant stars it seems significantly more crowded and less well constructed than the Scholasticarium District through which you have just passed. The streets are narrower, and many buildings overhang the roadways. Even so, these dwellings and small shops are not hovels, and the folk here obviously maintain some degree of pride in their district.

Corrupt Vigils

"Now then, now then, no need for alarm. What have you got there then? Anybody we know? If it is you could be in big trouble, but if it isn't perhaps we can come to some kind of arrangement."

Whether attracted by the alarm calls of the Maugifiers, or merely doing their rounds, a patrol of Threekside vigils (p131) come upon our rogues, possibly lunging from a superior concealment (Ψ PERCEPTION -1). These vigils will act in a pacifying fashion.

GM: Persuasion contests might reduce the fee these vigils demand for turning a blind eye, but either way it will reduce the characters' remaining funds significantly. If they already have no terces left, then they may have to part with a few fine hats and possibly even a rapier or two etc. If you are planning a Kaiin campaign, the vigil sergeant may become an ongoing contact (though a costly one).

The Laundry Pool

This large mysterious pond (p139) is at its most enigmatic during the hours of darkness. It would be a fine encounter to have the creature of the pool make an appearance as they pass nearby - even if they just catch a glimpse (Ψ PERCEPTION) as it oozes back into the water upon sensing their approach.

The Dig

Even at night this odd location (p138) attracts eager searchers. The characters may simply observe this, or may stop to question some of these desperate treasure-seekers. Note that it is not likely the characters will pass this location, except on their way back to the Market after the

adventure is over. At that point they may see early-morning treasure-hunters at work.

The Green Legionaires

"Halt in the name of Valdaran the Just!"

Oh No! The worst possible encounter: noble officers of the Green Legion, on the trail of a Kaiin Witch. These two men and one woman are expert sword-wielders and carry several worthwhile spells - and they consider nocturnal transportation or corpses worthy of suspicion. If the body passed through the Liberation of Warp, then it is no longer magical, and a cover story will be acceptable. If it didn't (or if you simply like the later details of this suggested encounter) then the characters are in big trouble, and face a trip to the Palace - until the witch and her ghoulish sidekick/s spring from the shadows and combat ensues. (Ψ ATHLETICS, ATTACK, CONCEALMENT, PERCEPTION, WHEREWITHAL) The GM adds details as necessary, whilst our characters either flee or help out. If they assist, then the Legion members will be grateful and let them go.

GM: You will need to choose spells and their targets carefully, so that none of the characters is likely to be slain or permanently incapacitated. If necessary, their shadow might have Liberation of Warp, which he will use to solve such a situation (before disappearing once more into the gloom.) However, a surviving Legion member is more likely to be the one to do this, plus any applications of Edan's Thaumaturgic Poultice. (Unless as a GM you fancy the situation where the witch and/or possibly one sidekick remain standing at the end of combat whilst all the Legion members are slain. This presents the necessity for minor heroics, or alternately craven flight.)

An Uncanny Reflection

GM: Allow time to pass wandering the streets between this encounter and the previous one.

Three people hurry around a corner. You are taken by surprise (Ψ PERCEPTION-2), there is nothing you can do - you are discovered. One of the people is short and lithe, with a certain fox-like cunning plainly evident - his hand moves to the hilt of his



rapier, though he does not draw it. The second person is female, and is slightly taller. She tosses back her thick black hair and moves on agile feet to the far side of the street. The third man is six feet tall and half that wide. Over his shoulder he carries a long and bulky suspicious canvas-wrapped package from which you think to observe a pair of protruding feet encased in leather boots. Eyeing you suspiciously, this group hug the far side of the street and continue quickly on their way.

GM: You may wish to redesign the folk of this encounter to more closely reflect the characters in your version of this escapade. This meeting has no ramifications about some major body-stealing operation, and is for amusement only¹⁷. (Although, see next encounter...)

Vigil Patrol

"Hold, miscreants! Surrender to the constables of Prince Kandive!"

These vigils are on the trail of the previous encounter, and unless they are successfully evaded (Ψ CONCEALMENT, PERCEPTION -1, STEALTH) will assume that our familiar rogues are the people they are after. A farcical case of mistaken identity (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION) will play out. This might be preceded by a demand to know who is in charge of this criminal activity. (It is doubtful any of the characters will volunteer, though they may indicate someone else - who may in turn deny this - and the vigils may become annoyed.) At the end the vigils will react with much disappointment that the body in the carpet is not the person they are looking for. They will then accept any reasonable explanation to cover their embarrassment, and return to the hunt with many apologies.

GM: These vigils will utterly overlook the fact that they

¹⁷ It provided the biggest laugh in the first evening of playtesting, and should be described in a deadpan manner - as these folk step one by one out of the gloom. The body-carrier was the only one to speak, acknowledging the 'Good Evening' of his PC reflection.

have discovered other persons transporting a body, and if this strange oversight can be stressed for amusement, then please do so.

Penderbast! (Or not!)

At last they reach the small house that their employer directed them to. However, she has arranged for two persons to pose as his frightened relatives - an elderly woman and a young and tearful girl. These two are genuinely afraid of Vyejuar, but have also been promised remittance of a large debt if they pull off a good subterfuge (and confidence tricks are their specialty). Penderbast (so the woman informs the characters) has gone with his friends to the 'Silver Tray' Gaming House at the Tracks.

These two will not accept a corpse in a carpet under any circumstances, and look rightfully askance at such a suggestion. They say that it is only because they know that their son/father (respectively) sometimes has dealings with dubious contacts that they don't scream for the vigils immediately. They will not be convinced by any Persuasions - due to Vyejuar's already having primed them, but the GM may make secret rolls to pretend they may possibly be taken in.

GM: If necessary, their shadow (the hidden observer) will put in an appearance. He is a stealthy and skilful associate of Vyejuar. He will pretend to be as irritated and concerned as the characters, and act as if their revealing of themselves is only due to this unforeseen dilemma.

In the end he will explain that their employer does not issue empty instructions, and that the body must go to Penderbast, whether he is here or at the Tracks. No doubt Penderbast's friends will assist him with the body after its delivery, as Penderbast will be in great trouble with their employer if he does not do his part of the job as agreed. It is not - so says their shadow - acceptable to wait for Penderbast, as given sufficient time he may become drunk and fail to return. The body must be delivered as quickly as possible.

Various suggestions were mooted in the playtest, such as leaving the body on a roof (most are too steep, and thieves use them as thoroughfares), or



leaving some of the adventurers to guard the body whilst Penderbast was sought. In response to this last suggestion, their shadow made the observation that it might be far easier to get Penderbast out of the Silver Tray on some excuse, and then just dump the body at his feet and then flee. (Since he has been so inconsiderate as to neglect his arranged rendezvous.) "This discharges us of our duty, and then we can all go home and get some rest." Timely GM advice that 'splitting the party in a strange new environment is never a good idea' might also be apposite.

Irritating Urchins

"What ya got there mister?" "Lookithat, Pullip, they gotta body in a carpet!" "Who's in the carpet, mister? Go on, tell us, tell us!"

These children are up way too late for their own good. Unless the urchins are bribed, beaten, or chased away (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION), they may compromise the following encounter¹⁸.

Vigil Patrol

The characters will need to hide (Ψ CONCEALMENT, STEALTH). If the children give them away the cover plan will need to be utilised (Ψ IMPOSTURE). If it fails then bribery or promises of future services are required (Ψ PERSUASION).

Local Toughs at the Bridge

"'Ere, Billos, I think the Threek Grandmothers' Excurshun is headin' our way. Hurr, hurr."

At first it appears that guards man the Scaum Bridge. The characters will no doubt think up various plans to fool them. (Ψ IMPOSTURE) However, they are in fact a party of muggers out looking for trouble and financial advancement. They will be of sufficient numbers to think that they can waylay the characters, but will lack the necessary combat effectiveness. Or perhaps their leader will be Intimidated (Ψ PERSUASION) into a

¹⁸ The urchins provided the second biggest laugh in the first part of the playtest, as the character on point took umbrage to their cheekiness and attempted to cuff the ring-leader. Suffice to say that excrement was thrown and a penalty of 1 applied to all communication skills until adequate cleaning facilities were located.

withdrawal. If combat ensues (Ψ ATTACK), vigils may appear, and the characters may need to obscure the body and pose as innocent victims of crime (Ψ CONCEALMENT, IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION), but most probably flight is wisest.

GM: In the playtest the toughs were still there on the return trip, and the characters were fleeing burly security officers from the Silver Tray. (It's a long story.) Rapiers were drawn, as some characters grew impatient and others tried sneaking past. The issue was solved when the vigils (Sergeants of Integrity - p147) caught up, and in the pandemonium the characters escaped. These vigils see the bridge as the end of their jurisdiction.

Facing Arrest

It is possible that our characters may fail in all of their rolls at some point during this scenario, and face close arrest. In this case they will have their weapons taken, be searched, and the marched under guard to the Palace (except in Odkin Prospect - see later). One way to solve this situation is (as stated earlier to have the entity from the Scholasticarium attack without warning. All possessions not paid for in Possession points will be lost as most vigils flee. Those paid for with Possession points are dropped and may be collected as the characters also retreat - or if they quickly return to scoop them up in the creature's wake. A second option is that Vyejuar has bribed one of tonight's Officers of the Watch at the Palace, who lets the characters loose. Since this is such a handy plot device, best to temper it by having them incarcerated for an hour or so before this man manages to sneak down and let them out by a back gate. Even the body is there waiting for them, and although nervous and cautious this man is inordinately happy because he has been promised a huge cash bonus if this service was required. He compliments them on their ineptitude as he is now many terces the richer. As a final comedic moment, he explains naively that he does require to be coshed on the head so as to establish his innocence. (It is certain that one of the annoyed characters will eagerly volunteer.)



Scene 5: The Tracks

Overview

See District Map on p154.

At least one amongst you has heard considerable tales about Kaiin's famous Tracks (Ψ PEDANTRY, SCUTTLEBUTT). Around a decade ago Prince Kandive persuaded the gambling magnates to move out here beyond the city's edge, and to erect a large racing track for the feline wherriots. This solved two problems, ridding Kaiin proper of the violence, theft, noise, and other unpleasantness associated with racing and organized gambling, and popularising the prince's favourite sport. Two, or perhaps you heard it was three, persons of great influence operate a few gambling houses here besides the sunken racetrack. As you can tell by the evidence of your ears, this district is one part of Kaiin that does not sleep. In the distance you can make out drunken carousing, the snarls of some kind of animals, and the cries of touts advertising the merits of the competing establishments. Several large buildings are visible a mile or so away, and numerous ruins of varying states of decay (tending towards the ancient and denuded) protrude from the ground. You may pick your way easily along a wide stone road, or stumble blindly through the ruins.

The Swordfight

Some way ahead you think to make out grunts and the occasional clash of metal upon metal. Soon you can see two figures lunging and parrying in a deadly game of blade against blade.

GM: Who are these people? Will the characters see fit to intervene? Will they gain an ally or an enemy if they do? If they do not act, after a few minutes one of the men will be mortally injured and the other will depart swiftly back towards the Gaming Houses (after first rifling the pockets of his fallen rival). This would be one chance to gain some extra funds, although perhaps the winner is a master swordsman? Avoiding danger can be sensible, so only those characters who make matters worse will take negative sympathy points. (Anyone who tries to sort things out may receive a positive point.)

The Punishment Poles

GM: This scene should be described in suitably unpleasant terms, rather than for laughs. These people are effectively set up to potentially be battered to death. Two people are tied to the poles (p142), and three burly guards stand duty nearby (well, 'lounge' or 'doze' more than stand). One of the debtors is an elderly man, shivering in the chill and begging them to pay his debt of 15 terces. His body is quite heavily bruised and his manner is pathetic and his voice croaky. You wonder if he can last the night.

The other is a younger man in fine clothes, apparently as yet undamaged (he has only been here for an hour after being thrown out of one of the establishments after amassing a debt he couldn't pay). He too will entreat the characters to pay his debt of 21 terces, claiming that he has a box buried nearby containing 300 terces that he will happily give them one third of if they help him. His manner is brassy and demanding. "These louts refuse to believe me!"

The guards will encourage passers-by to help these men pay their debts the traditional way.

GM: The old man, Harravak, is a confidence trickster, and if released will swear a debt to them and offer to accompany them. However, he will then do his best to steal whatever he can from the characters or to turn them in for reward.

Appraisal 9, Concealment 13, Gambling 10, Perception 12, Quick-Fingers 17, Stealth 14.

The other man, Wentaph, is a young noble who is truthful in tale and intent, and might even be Persuaded to part with a full half of his buried wealth rather than only a third. Moving on will not accrue negative Sympathy points, but taunting and throwing objects will. Granting either of the prisoners assistance in the hopes of monetary reward does not accrue positive Sympathy points.

A Ghost!

"I yearn for the security of the flesh. Ah, to hear the clank of coin again, to feel their glittering solidity as I chance my hand at the tables."

This place sees a lot of ghosts at certain times of the year (p158). However, they may also appear in



one's or two's at other times. This ghost appears first of all as a distant blue light. It comes closer and can soon be discerned (Ψ PERCEPTION) as a glowing echo of a human form. Characters of low resilience (Ψ WHEREWITHAL) will be rooted to the spot with fear. (Describe the initial encounter as suitably scary, rather than as an amusement. Though humour may follow in the interactions.)

The ghost is a former gambler who wants the opportunity to possess one of the characters¹⁹ temporarily in order to spend a single hour in one of the Gaming Houses. In return it offers to give that character a spell (GM decides which Straightforward spell²⁰). (Ψ RESIST AVARICE if you are a dabbler and have a negative sympathy rating. If you fail, you must enter a Persuasion contest with the ghost if you wish to decline.)

GM: If the character agrees, the ghost will possess them and then demand money to go gambling. (Player continues to run their character, but the GM plays the ghost as both parties discuss what actions the body will perform) It may do well, or it may lose all quickly.

After an hour it must be convinced (Ψ PERSUASION) to leave the Gambling House, but will then teach the spell as agreed (a process it can do only whilst remaining in possession). However, then it says that this feeling of being alive is too good to let go, and it refuses to leave its host. A battle of wits then ensues (Ψ PERSUASION), with the character trying to cast out the wheedling intruder, and the intruder trying to convince them (GM decides ability ratings) Of the value of a time-share arrangement (though it has no remaining spells

¹⁹ The ghost chooses the PC with lowest negative sympathy rating. If nobody has a negative rating he chooses the character has the highest Gambling rating.

²⁰ This could be 'Enchantment of Another's Face' (DERPG p106), or 'Archemand's Unlikely Self Restraint' (TT p84). The spell is not taught, but is transferred in an unusual fashion. After it is used once, it vanishes and is no longer known. It must be transferred directly into the sensorium, thus if a character's encompassment is already at maximum they cannot receive it. However, if a character has no Magic rating, they can still receive this spell. (Benevolent GMs might reward them after the event with a Magic rating of 1.)

to offer, having given up its last).

The characters might seek help (plenty of magicians utilise the better gaming houses), or the possessed person might (Ψ PERSUASION, WHEREWITHAL - Illustrious Success required) cast it out. However, once they leave the Tracks and pass over the Scaum, the ghost is in any case expelled - as it cannot travel beyond that point. (Not that the characters or anyone else will know that: the ghost suspects it, but is in denial and will not consider it.) They will leave the ghost on the bridge, begging them to come back.

NB: If the ghost is rebuffed and a lone character is later left outside with the cadaver, the ghost may approach again. If the character fails their 'Resist Arrogance' he/she will be tempted by the ghost's description of the useful spell, and the ghost will attempt to convince them (Ψ PERSUASION) of the value of accepting the bargain. Alternatively, the ghost may threaten to alert the authorities to the location of the cadaver if it's bargain is not accepted.

The Shrine to Fortune

Most people are unaware that this crudely sculpted mass (p158) once represented Yelisea, the Goddess of Fate. In the dark of the night the silver head atop the great heap is unlikely to be spotted. Though if it is then someone in the group might be foolish enough to evoke the curse by taking it.

GM: As you will see by the map (p154), the characters have now arrived at the main area of inns, taverns and gambling houses. Though they may wish to gaze down into the Tracks themselves, bear in mind that they now walk the main (wide) thoroughfare of this district. Though few people wander abroad, it is clear that almost all of the buildings have some kind of business still operating. (Judging by occasional drunken cries of joy and disappointment emanating from within.)

A few elated or forlorn gamblers can be seen. In fact the characters may observe a rapid transition of one sort to the other as a middle-aged fellow is coshed about the head some distance away and left bereft of his winnings. (Possibly a Pure-Hearted person will wish to intervene on the gambler's behalf, or a more practical character may wish to pursue the thief for their own personal benefit - and gain a negative sympathy point.)



Certain ladies of the night will also be willing to separate the characters from whatever funds they might have, and those characters with spare cash who have an established interest in 'couching' will need to evidence great willpower (Ψ RESIST RAKISHNESS) not to take advantage of at least one offer. (If more than one character qualifies, the worst failure – and any other Dismal Failures, if several – indicates a character that succumbs.)

The Race Tracks

Even though no races are occurring, the GM should describe this sunken stadium (p142), so as again to add depth to the experience of Kaiin.

Other Locations

Apart from the taverns (p157) and other Gambling Houses (pp153-155), the Kaiin book informs us that Indium's Goods Exchange (p156) is also 'open all hours'. Indium himself does not stand the nightshift. Instead, his shifty half-cousin Plenk the Bald assesses any goods brought here under cover of darkness. He has a cantrap that tells him how many days ago an object was stolen. A voice will call out the number. The cantrap fails if the object was stolen more than 21 days previously, and simply does not work if the object was gained through purchase or fair exchange. (The carpet was stolen 23 days ago.) Plenk does not refuse to purchase stolen goods (unless he thinks they would be difficult to sell, and thus remain on the premises an uncomfortably long time), but will only pay half the price he would if the item was not hot property. Because he can only use his cantrap as long as he has points in his pool (in game terms until his Magical vitality holds out) he only uses it on goods that look peculiar or highly valuable, or when sellers behave suspiciously. *GM: Do not bring this place to the characters' notice unless they explore the district or at least look carefully up and down the street to see if other places are open.*

The Silver Tray

The first problem might be for someone to gain access to this place (p155), as a dress code is in force. Unlike the staff at the nearby Mansion, the

doorkeepers here do not demand that you prove your status amongst the wealthy before you can gain access. Nonetheless, these perceptive folk astutely assess your social standing, and adamantly refuse entry to those who fail to measure up.

GM: Since this place provides such a potentially rich arena for Cugel-Level role-playing, all characters with even a single terce need to Resist Avarice not to want to go inside. These must then argue amongst themselves (Ψ PERSUADE) to see (DERPG Group Contests p36) who gets to go in. Maybe they will decide to go in en masse? (And the worst roller then must stay with the body somewhere out of sight.)

Unless a character has some Tweak or cantrap which allows them to appear smartly turned out and of reasonable means, they will all be refused entry. Neither will the two burly doormen agree to take a message to anyone inside. (Such things sometimes lead to unpleasantness.) So, the characters will need to find other means. Persistence - probably including significant bribery - in attempting (Ψ PERSUADE: -1 unless bribery used) to get a message to Penderbast may result in one of the doormen allowing them to have him paged. (A page boy wanders around calling the person's name.) However, Penderbast does not respond to being paged - 'Perhaps he is otherwise engaged, hurr, hurr'. (The doormen will not give in to multiple attempts at paging.)

A would-be entrant who looks reasonably tidy might convince this pair (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUADE, SEDUCTION) that their dishevelled appearance has some explicable cause. The doormen should be played for maximum foppery, superciliousness, and general obstinacy. Thus, the character faces a levy of 1, and the player will need to come up with a very good story, or the GM applies a penalty of 1 instead. (Using a scam, such as carrying a purse of pebbles and handing terces to the doorkeepers reduces the disadvantage.)

Another possibility is to claim that one has some bona fide errand (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUADE, SEDUCTION), though again the player will need to



think up something convincing or else face a levy. (Since they are not trying to claim to be above their station then this is unlikely to be a penalty, and again some prop will help this deception.) Success on this angle will only gain access to the tradesman's entrance, and there they will have to negotiate with a pompous flunky, However, he is far less adamant than the doorkeepers and may more easily be (Ψ CONCEALMENT, IMPOSTURE, PERSUADE, SEDUCTION, STEALTH) by-passed.

GM: In playtest, the hulking PC with the body also gained access this way, by bashing down the door. He failed on the first attempt, but succeeded on the second - flattening the flunky against the doorframe (since he was listening at the door to see what the initial noise had been). This character hid the body at the back of a shelf inside this storage room and headed up the stairs into the gaming halls. Of course, when they came to leave the same way the body had just been discovered, and a ride scuffle took place. In the House Campaign such things are occasionally permitted, since one of the characters is a burly vat-created bodyguard type. Nonetheless, in this case, he faced a similar opponent to himself, but rolled an Illustrious Success with a stunning blow, so ended that part of the conflict before it began. Initially the Manager of the establishment was present, but departed to fetch the Silver Tray's sergeants (ape-like security staff) before the rough stuff.

Otherwise, this establishment has a fine terrace protruding from the upper floor, and supported above the ground with stone pillars. At this time of night, few patrons will be enjoying its benefits, and agile characters (Ψ ATHLETICS-1) might conceivably scramble up, evade notice (Ψ CONCEALMENT, STEALTH) of the few patrons standing in the gloom and the steward on door duty, and pass inside. Once inside, they face two problems of equal weight.

GM: If at any point a character that has gained entry taunts another who has not, the taunted character may well be tempted (Ψ RESIST ARROGANCE/AVARICE) to exert their fullest efforts to get inside.

The first problem is locating Penderbast; or more specifically (though they don't know it), locating the plant that Vyejuar has put there to

pretend to be Penderbast's associate. Since Penderbast doesn't exist, no genuine patrons will know of him, so the characters will need to search the premises for a man of his distinctive description. Three of the two dozen or so floor staff have been paid to pretend to recognise Penderbast's description, so the trail isn't totally cold, though of course none will have seen him 'for a while'. Also, less than an hour ago Vyejuar had Penderbast paged²¹. So, various amongst the staff and patrons will have heard this. However, they have no idea of the result of the page. (He was paged to receive a note, so perhaps he left or perhaps he is still here somewhere?)

GM: Some of the characters may not have eaten properly for a while (either having opted for the simpler meal at the Magicians' Inn, or not having eaten there at all). If so, then the GM may tempt them (Ψ RESIST GOURMANDISM) with a variety of decadent foodstuffs here

Should the characters make the assumption that Penderbast has already left, have their shadow inform them that the man they seek is a keen gambler and womaniser and could easily be in one of the private areas. Should they attempt to have him paged, only one page is on duty tonight - and he is clearly tired, overworked, and of an extremely 'recalcitrant' nature. (He is also rather old for a page, and clearly resents his low station.) Even if tipped well he will only make half-hearted attempts, before continuing his attempts to seduce some of the female employees. If threatened he will escape as soon as he can and is not seen again.

Since the few senior staff on the premises have neither the interest nor the time to help common folk with their petty problems, trying to find Penderbast involves checking out all of the games that are going on (21 in total). It also requires making one's way past each burly doorperson (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUADE, SEDUCTION) into each of the seven private rooms where games

²¹ Observers were near Penderbast's supposed domicile in the East Threek, and as soon as the characters approached they ran to the Tracks in relay.



are in progress. All of these games have high stakes, and therefore feature persons not likely to meekly accept intrusions; thus characters that step quickly in and out with some plausible excuse stand the least likelihood of being ejected from the premises after a sound beating. Two games will feature Kaiin personalities. (1: Upolver and his bodyguards - p153 - who suspect an assassination attempt and act accordingly. 2: Frolaga - p149 - who will become intrigued by the character and try to ascertain what is going on. If possible, she will spy on them and be amused at their antics. But if she spies the body she will confront them for an explanation. If convinced of their good nature she will still warn them to leave immediately before she informs the security staff.)

Creative characters will possibly also want to enter the several other private rooms that are currently locked since no game is going on (in case Penderbast has been deposited there). Finally, the dedicated may even make their way (Ψ CONCEALMENT, IMPOSTURE, PERSUADE-1, SEDUCTION-1, STEALTH) onto the courtesan's floor, past the formidable matron of the house. (Unless accompanied by one of the pleasure staff, non-staff are not permitted to wander here.) Eleven rooms are occupied, and the GM should invent various compromising situations. Bear in mind that this is the Silver Tray, not the High Hell, so don't get too imaginative.

One well-off man will be paranoid that he is about to be publicly denounced as a philanderer, since he is not supposed to be here. The most problematic encounter here will be with Fladgna - p31 - who cavorts with two persons (one of either gender) whilst two leather-clad bodyguards (again one of either gender) wait either side of the door. They are convinced that this is an attempt to discredit her, and will detain the character for questioning, after shooing away the courtesans. The character will be protected by ignorance, and presently released with a warning.

The second (and simultaneous) problem is that each character is again tempted (Ψ RESIST AVARICE), to join in some gambling game, and

though they may also make enquiries, these will be severely limited whilst the person has coins remaining on their person (or can purloin them). Phrases such as 'it seems so easy to replenish your funds here, and would surely only take a few minutes', 'you have never seen so much money changing hands so readily', and 'the night is young - what harm can their be in a short rest in convivial surroundings?' will not be out of place.

If any characters resist, then the one with the greatest negative sympathy rating that does so is targeted by a lightly inebriated (but nonetheless comely) 'courtesan of the tables'. This woman (or it could be a man if the character is female) is hired especially to flatter and encourage (Ψ RESIST ARROGANCE/RAKISHNESS) reluctant gamers to invest their time at the tables or upon a secluded couch. (Ideally those who appear to have money; but sometimes the ladies lack discernment and in fact are so keen to gamble that they latch onto anyone who they think can be convinced to play). If none of those that resisted have a negative Sympathy rating, this person approaches the most attractive (highest Seduction rating).

GM: At least one player will have a character that is outside with the body. They might be feeling a little left out when the other characters are inside enjoying themselves. The GM should skilfully encourage any attempts to hide the body, by providing suitably attractive (and apparently secure) places of concealment. (Refuse bins, woodpiles etc.) Should the player be struggling with nobility, hit the character below the belt with a (Ψ RESIST ARROGANCE) - after all, everyone else is enjoying themselves! It is "totally unfair that a person of my standing should be left minding a corpse, whilst my companions enjoy the privileges of cultural diversion". As a final note on the temptations of this establishment, we have one more tool in the GM's arsenal. Since this will happen anyway (see later), the GM may wish to point out (in a surreptitious aside) that anyone who gives themselves up to the pleasures of this establishment gains refreshment of several pools upon leaving.

GM Aside: Breaking the Journey



GM: Those who wish to retain the massiveness of Kaiin (as many might) may note that this situation is close to half-way through the journey. Thus it is the ideal place for the characters to find themselves as dawn breaks. The scenario logic of all this will be that Vyejuar wants the body to remain in the possession of her dupes for two nights and a day - so as she can be sure if a curse will activate on them or not.

The characters will search the place high and low for Penderbast and not find him. Rather than locating the phoney contact, their shadow will be the hinge to this break in proceedings. He will play that he is becoming extremely anxious that Penderbast is not here, and dreadfully fears the wrath of their employer. Eventually it is totally clear that Penderbast is not here. (They will meet a phoney associate of their quarry, who explains that Penderbast was paged and departed.)

NB: Some of the following options available at the Tray will certainly occur before this realisation is confirmed.

Their shadow will then encourage them to find somewhere to more safely hide the body - maybe hiring a room here or at one of the nearby (hideously expensive) taverns. He will then depart to seek clarification. Characters may wish to go with him, but he will be hiring a horse so must go alone to make best speed. If necessary to allay character suspicions, he might donate some terces towards costs, and promise that since the mistake is not theirs, then their employer will certainly double their payment, as well as pay costs.

The GM should then stress that the characters are exhausted. They will sleep throughout the day. (Otherwise untold mischief might occur.) If necessary, mention to players that penalties and levies will be applied later to characters that are not thoroughly rested. (This does not mean that some worrying things may not still happen - suspicious tavern staff, thieves, con-men, whatever, but the day should pass in relative safety. Nonetheless, instil a sense of paranoia, so that the characters spend their time and energy guarding the body.) As further incentive to rest, the GM might mention that the best races start in late afternoon, and that well-rested characters may

have a chance at betting on dhjetar (pp162-164).

Their shadow will return as dusk begins, with a further small advance payment (10 terces each, plus more if they realise he is holding some back from them), and some expenses to pay their bill. (If the bill is inordinate then they may simply have to abscond without paying it.) The shadow will explain that a spy has notified them that Penderbast is hiding out at the Odkin Prospect Hotel, and they must go there at once.

GM: The characters may inquire why they can't simply load the body into a buggy and take it that way. The shadow will explain that night-time transports are often searched by vigils, and that those seeking the 'package' may also search these transportations using magic. If characters then ask why the body can't be transported in this fashion during the day, the shadow will find this as puzzling as they, but say that he presumes that their employer has good reasons.

Gambling Opportunities

Many games take significant periods of time to reach a conclusion; however, here are a selection that proceed more briskly. (The GM decides on the rating that must be overcome in order to succeed. Typically this will be a few points higher than the average amongst the characters.) More may be invented as required. Those who have failed to resist Avarice might be convinced (Ψ PERSUADE) to leave their activities by one who has, but this must be played out in-game. Though this place is far from bustling, it has several large rooms, and a number of smaller closed chambers; and comrades may disappear. It is still late at night, and characters may even use the excuse that they are 'looking for Penderbast' as they circulate.

Rampolio: A card game of the house, involving the avoidance of the jack through passing it to one's left-hand competitor, whilst retaining at least one queen and preferably more.

Zaft! Another card game, this time involving trumping your opponents in order to claim their picture cards. The player with the highest total of points from their picture cards wins.

GM: You may of course apply bonuses or boons



according to strategy and any magical help etc. Also, characters with a Gambling rating of 8-11 might have a boon of 1, and those with a rating of 12 or more could be granted a bonus of 1. This also applies to the other gamblers - whose rating could each be calculated by rolling one die and adding this to the average Gambling rating amongst the characters.

The Blue Hat: Miniature simiodes in a small sunken arena struggle for possession of a magically-propelled blue hat amidst various physical obstacles, balancing poles, and randomly extended passageway obstructions. (They are specially trained and motivated by choice tidbits.) Gamblers choose their champion based on colour and an assessment of previous performance, and may also discourage other creatures during the contest by pulling levers to activate the obstructions and applying long poles topped with small padded cushions.

GM: In Blue Hat one's Gambling rating does not apply (except to grant a boon of 1 for careful assessment if the rating is 12 or higher). Rather, one's success at this contest is calculated through use of Quickfingers. (If one's Athletics rating is 12 or more a boon of 1 is applied.) (NB: If both Athletics and Gambling are 12 or more then the two boons instead become a bonus of 1.)

Success and Failure

Illustrious Success: You triple your stake.

Prosaic Success: You double your stake.

Hair's-Breadth Success: No gain or loss.

Exasperating Failure: You lose your stake.

Quotidian Failure: You lose double your stake.

Dismal Failure: You lose so badly that you are beaten, stripped of all valuables, and flung from the establishment into a heap of strategically-placed ordure.

Increasing the Allure

Some characters may be more drawn to gambling opportunities if something even more tangible than hard terces is at stake. The GM may include in their arsenal various adventurer²² types. One of these runs out of funds and instead of an initial

stake places on the table a small magical item. This might be such a thing as a jar of Chromatic Analysis Spray or some Spectacles of Wisdom and Respectability (see Cugel's Compendium pp4-14). *GM: Those who are caught stealing are soundly thrashed and then taken to the Punishment poles - perhaps to join those very fellows whom they ignored so callously earlier.*

Other Temptations

Drinks and sweetmeats are served here (Ψ RESIST GOURMANDISM), and ladies of easy virtue (and gentlemen of similar inclination) make themselves obviously (though still tastefully) available.

GM: The Silver Tray is a place for the GM to encourage, expand, and flavour the avaricious and lascivious leanings of all the characters. Ideally the characters will all engage themselves in such things, and should be encouraged heartily. Some may win, some may lose, some may delight in carnal pleasures with a bevy of beauties. At least one, and preferably more, should (ideally after a suitable period of play) be caught cheating, stealing, or simply bereft of funds, and escorted (in most cases this will be a euphemism for dragged) to the door. If necessary for the plot, any companions of this person will also be identified and thrown out. (One or two characters may escape this purge and leave of their own volition.)

As discussed earlier, this break in routine allows various pools to refresh themselves: Persuade, Athletics, Concealment, Etiquette, Imposture, Perception, Quick Fingers, and Stealth. NB: Gambling and Seduction might also refresh, but only if they were not used during the activities inside the Silver Tray.

The Contact

Eventually, they will uncover information of substance. Grarpovo (an assumed name) is posing as a friend of Penderbast. He was supposed to wait here and contact the characters some time soon after their arrival (leaving a discrete interval so as not to arouse suspicions). But he became distracted, and accompanied a friend to another Gaming House (failed to Resist Arrogance when challenged to a particular game), and returns at a moment decided by the GM. Or perhaps he has

²² Basically, thieves, braggarts and popinjays.



been upstairs with one of the courtesans. (After failing to Resist Rakishness.) If the timing is good he may even be discovered couching in one of the private salons, and remember what he is supposed to be doing. (If at this point they don't ask him about Penderbast he will shortly emerge anyhow, and 'overhear' that they are looking for 'his friend'.) In the playtest the characters spent so long gambling and arguing amongst themselves that they didn't investigate the balcony until much later. Thus, I had the contact 'be there all along'.

Garpovo claims that Penderbast and several others departed for a party at the manse of Nerijs (p81) in Odkin Prospect some time ago, after being paged by his brother who is going there. If it is 'as good a party as the one last month' then no doubt Penderbast will be there until dawn, or until he regains consciousness some time later in the day. Garpovo will describe the way to the manse, or even mark it upon the map (it is in the central section of the Prospect), and also describe it. He will not allude to the fact that bandits are there, but describe it more prudently as a 'hotel' for successful adventurers.

GM: If the characters question their shadow about this new setback they will eventually spot him (Ψ PERCEPTION), and if approached he will reluctantly exchange a few words. His take is that both he and the characters are paid to make sure the body is delivered. Although he curses the name 'Penderbast, they have no choice but to press on. The shadow will also make it clear that he is supposed to be following them unobserved, and will answer their questions fairly curtly, retiring from observation as quickly as possible. (Play this for comedic effect if possible.)

The Sergeants of Integrity

"Stop! What have you got there then, my likely lads?" These local vigils (p146) notice the characters as they try to leave the area around the Gaming Houses, and are interested in what (or more properly 'who') is in the carpet. These folk are used to Intimidation, and will demand bribery to let the characters go. If the characters have no (or insufficient) funds or valuables remaining, the sergeants will take the body into custody until

such time as a payment can be made.

GM: Some GMs may wish to reserve this encounter to be the pivot that forces characters to start gambling in order to earn enough terces to 'buy back' the body.

Back Through the East Threek

The East Threek is deeper than it is wide. The distance from the Scaum Bridge to Odkin Prospect is a relatively short walk across the end of this district. You may incorporate further Threek encounters, or merely have the characters pass uneventfully down this street and across a patch of parkland into the Prospect. One possibility here is that a persistent beggar sees them leave the Tracks and presumes they have money. Also, since they are carrying a body he rightfully assumes that they prefer to move in a clandestine fashion. "Hmm", wonders the beggar, "How much incessant wheedling will it take for them to pay me to go away?" The beggar will follow them, whining and cajoling until they find some way to solve the problem. (Ψ ATTACK, PERSUASION).

Scene 6: Odkin Prospect

Overview

See District Map on p75.

Odkin Prospect is the home of Kaiin's wealthy, and wealthy folk tend to take extreme measures against persons of lesser financial stature. Especially those that engage in suspicious acts under the cover of darkness. To this end you believe you have heard (Ψ PEDANTRY) that the vigils of this district receive private payments, and even (how quaint) a degree of professional training in urban security methods.

You will soon note the wide leafy streets, the high walls obscuring the large dwellings ensconced within their own grounds. Is it your imagination, or are you really reacting to a genetically-embedded fear brought about by the age-old sound of the distant footsteps? Footsteps of two members of the local constabulary engaged upon their rounds?

The Parkland Around the Prospect



The playtest characters took refuge here after their flight from the sergeants at the Tracks. Then began discussing the possibility of leaving a group here and going to kidnap Penderbast from the hotel and bring him back. They also realised that they had failed to ascertain an address for the Hotel. Locals were heard walking the Prospect, and the characters chose to hide rather than ask directions. Then two characters went back into the Threek to find someone who knew where the hotel was.

Eventually they found the Loutish Scions (who were returning to the Prospect) and garnered imprecise directions before these persons fled. Next they encountered the Entity and ran before it back to the parkland. In the meantime, the remaining characters were threatened by a skulking deodand²³ (barring one that rolled two Illustrious Successes and hid herself and the corpse inside a hollow tree). This downed one of the characters before being slain by another. (Possibly the only heroism we shall see in this particular episode.) Then the Entity arrived and much fun was had before it eventually settled down to snack upon the deodand. (The scene was improvised to encourage the party to move on and not to split up - not to slay characters.) Two characters even fled into the Prospect and encountered suspicious vigils, but managed to convince (Ψ PERSUADE) them that the Entity was real and that they were on a genuine errand. (Like all good vigils, they then proceeded directly away from the Entity's last recorded location.)

Golden Walk

The characters are unlikely to examine the resplendent emporiums along Golden Walk (p94), but may pass the end of it if they get lost - or have to make a circuitous route to avoid patrols. (Most likely they may pass it on their way back to the Market at the end of this scenario.) Whether night or day, at least three vigils will be wandering its

²³ This creature had escaped from Kandive's Deodand Pits, and had the Royal Brand upon it. Needless to say, slaying one of the Prince's deodands is a capital offence.

length, and if passing with the carpet at night the characters may need to hide until these men reverse their patrol, before scurrying across.

Loutish Scions

"I say, Lyunawl, I believe I smell the reek of commoner. Shall we make sport?"

These bravoos (pp76/77) believe they are the bee's-knees, and that they have stumbled upon some base criminals up to no good. However, they are partially drunk and totally bereft of wit, and may be fooled or fought with relative ease. (Ψ ATTACK, IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION).

GM: If any are ridiculed, soundly thrashed, robbed of terces or possessions, or (most severe of all) killed, this may have a reverberation in any future Kaiin scenarios.

The Odkin Prospect Hotel

Nerijs' Manse (p81) is relatively easy to find, because of the sounds of carousing that can be heard coming from the grounds as one draws near. Describe also its general appearance as the characters approach. The sounds are not in fact a party, rather just the normal noises of some of the residents enjoying themselves.

Visiting the Hotel during the day is not unusual. The bandits don't pry into each other's business, and often have visitors on strange errands. As long as the visitors aren't vigils, or other officials, and don't attempt to stay more than a day or so, nobody really minds (not even those sober enough to worry about it if they did).

GM: In the house campaign, the term 'bandit' covers any unconventional folk whose means of income is uncertain. Thus, this place may become the base of operations for the characters in forthcoming scenarios. (Some of the inhabitants still fit the common conception of a 'bandit' quite well, mind you.)

However, since that nocturnal vigil attack, the occupants are suspicious. The characters will be greeted at the locked (and magically protected) gate by Sorgscove the felon (p83) who is only



partially sober, and is the rostered lookout²⁴ for this part of the night. It may be possible to convince him (Ψ IMPOSTURE-1, PERSUASION-1) that they are here for a party, although he hasn't heard of any particular party tonight. If not, they will have to find some other way. (If they pose as legitimate visitors, see section on 'Visitors' below.)

Sorgscove is a drunken bully of prodigious strength and protects magically enhanced gates. But, climbing over the wall might be far too easy. In the playtest, since one of the characters had a Leaping cantrap (and because the players never for a moment suspected such a thing), the walls were protected with magic. (A bolt of blue energy blasted the character out of the sky, to crash into the undergrowth - leaving the other characters at a total loss.) Korwhis found and revived the stunned character. (As the creator of this protective field, he wanted to know how well it worked). After convincing Korwhis of his genuine wish to find a guest here, the magician helped the character inside, where he immediately succumbed to Rakishness (against Verefet), and disappeared from play for a while. (This attractive thief later vanished along with his purse, since the character failed his Perception against her Quick Fingers, having a -1 penalty due to distraction.)

GM: Characters might consider leaving the body outside, perhaps hidden in the bushes alongside another manse. But the GM should mention that the chance of apprehension is high in this part of town. To be blunt, the GM should actively encourage a dispute amongst the characters - as to who gets to stay out and risk arrest for being in possession of a suspicious corpse, and who gets to go to a party. (Ψ RESIST ARROGANCE/INDOLENCE) Or they may simply carry the body inside with them, since such things are not unheard of in this house, and most people will pretend not to notice. (Or mock the characters for their poor methods of corpse handling.)

²⁴ The only duty which residents take with absolute seriousness; the vigil attack looms large in their minds.

In the playtest, the characters eventually convinced Sorgscove to summon others from the house. (They learned that a small gong was hung nearby, to be rung only in case of emergency, and threw stones at it, some of which struck Sorgscove.) One of those who came to see what was going on was Zank Rendeg (one of those Vyejuar has paid to have 'seen' Penderbast). Thus someone vouched for them, and in they went.

Once inside, the characters will find various potential activities open to them as they search for Penderbast around the house and grounds. We describe the manse in detail, and the various folk who live here. GMs may apply Temptations liberally, as apart from at the Silver Tray in the Tracks, this is the only place of respite from the adventure's general trend.

What It's Like Inside

"This place is a mess, though not the absolute chaos that one would imagine. The halls are lined (but not knee-deep) with the debris of multiple occupants. Scraps of leather, old shoes, empty and torn coin purses, lengths of broken stick, worn pieces of clothing, broken boxes, and pieces of shattered furniture."

"The open doorways reveal rooms that were clearly once places of splendence; however, their fine furnishings are now decrepit with age and ill use. Portraits have been defaced, wooden chests and tables covered with graffiti, and more litter is strewn on most surfaces."

"The closed doors almost without exception bear locks and chains of significant proportion. Many bear runes that indicate protective enchantments."

The Main Rooms

Four large common rooms are available. These used to be (and are still condescendingly referred to as): the Drawing Room, the Library, the Master's Study, and the Dining Room. In any of these places, and in the wider halls, one can find various folk lounging, playing cards, and occasionally reading or engaged in conversation. Most such folk look up at you for a moment before looking away and continuing their activity.



The Library is the only room that maintains an air of luxury, since it is still maintained by various enchantments. These magics keep it clean, repair vandalism, punish vandals with painful cantraps, and prevent books and other objects from being stolen. Whatever magical entity resides here is also quite discerning; it prevents the illiterate from entering (a wall of force blocks the doorway).

GM: Most characters can be assumed to be able to read, except unusual types like burly vat-grown constructs.

The Kitchen and Larders are all reasonably clean, as (after several unfortunate fatal altercations here) the original occupants swore an oath to wash what they used and clean up obvious mess. All newcomers must also swear this oath. Anyone may eat here initially, as residents are unable to be sure that they may not offend friends of one of the other powerful resident factions. However, people will ask around, and anyone eating here a second time will be challenged and asked to either pay, desist, or leave the house never to return. In the playtest, Nerijs himself arrived to complain bitterly at them, but since everyone had just failed to resist Gourmandism they didn't care. Also in the kitchen is a small sign: "Please clean anything you use." Anyone who ignores this will draw a minor curse. (Evoked by Korwhis some time ago.)

The Kitchen Curse

GMs will need to note character behaviour in the kitchen. Anyone failing to clean up will be met by a sprite that appears in mid-air as soon as they step outside the house. It addresses them by name (in a list if the characters are in a group), and lists their transgressions (detailed for amusement if the GM can be bothered). Then it pronounces its penalties:

Small Mess (option 1): "I subtract 15 terces from your personal funds - let that be a lesson to you!"

Small Mess (option 2): "I decree that your skin shall be blue for a full day. Count yourself lucky I do not do worse!"

Medium Mess (option 1): "I subtract 40 terces from your personal funds. Those responsible for your upbringing should be ashamed of themselves!"

Medium Mess (option 2): "You may wear only rags and filth for a full three days. I hope this has a salutary effect on your manners." (Anything the character wears becomes totally dirty and ragged, though will change back at the end of the punishment period.)

Grand Mess: "I despair of such behaviour, and decree that for the next month half of what you try to consume will be spilled onto yourself and those around you."

Annulling the Curse

Characters may learn curse details from Korwhis, but he cannot reverse the effects. He may suggest - or characters may think of it themselves - cleaning up and pleading for mitigation. Anyone who cleans the kitchen may be mitigated one level of punishment. Anyone who also cleans another room or does some significant gardening etc may even be mitigated two levels. However, Persuasion contests with the sprite may also be required.

The Cellar

Superior wines and ales are stored down here (unlike the standard fare in the kitchen larder). This area is totally protected by enchantments, so that none of the beverages can be taken without Nerijs' consent. Of course, bandits merely 'encourage' him to come down here when they get thirsty and to select something for them from the racks.

The Gardens

Protected by high walls from the adjacent properties, the gardens of this manse are almost a jungle. The only easily accessible sections are the patio outside the drawing room, where folk often drink and gamble in warmer weather, and the small lawn before the latrine block. (This is fortunately connected to the Prospects sewer system, since no current residents wish to pay for civic waste removal services.)

The Residents

Nerijs the Merchant - This elderly merchant is described in detail in the Kaiin book. (p81).

Dothand's Boys- These brigands maintain a suite of rooms on the first floor. Dothand is a rough fellow, but with his own sense of honour. This gang is still active in and around Kaiin, and its members fluctuate as they are arrested and executed.



Dothand and his two lieutenants are too skilled to be easily apprehended (or to ever leave a trace of evidence that can point conclusively to them).

Fulia's Gang - This group, led by a woman, live in the attic apartments. They are friendly enough, except they have rivalry with the members of Dothand's Gang, and are skilled city thieves. Fulia is the one who every week or two rounds up all the visitors and some of the inhabitants to clean up as much of the rubbish as they can. The hour or so she can be bothered to motivate them - and keep intervening in the petty squabbles that result - is the only thing that keeps this place habitable. She is on good terms with Neridjs and feels sorry for him. She is also the one who organises irregular collections from the inhabitants to help pay for their food.

Levet Hut - This odd man is peculiar in both manner and appearance, though friendly enough. He is actually an archveult in hiding (see Turjan's Tome p132), and does his best to remain innocuous, though this is hard because he is an extremely sociable fellow. He often vanishes for days and then returns tired and nervous.

Joepel Korwhis - Korwhis is the resident magician. He is ageing now, but has a million stories about the exploits of his youth. Occasionally he becomes maudlin, especially when he has had too much to drink, but is otherwise a fine fellow. He chanced upon this house when walking the Prospect and has decided to retire here. (When younger he always dreamed of owning a manse in the Prospect.) He will cast protective enchantments for a small fee, and occasionally can be tempted into assisting some of the friendlier crooks with his magic. He is Nerijs' closest friend.

Zank Rendeg - a former pirate, with one leg, who acts perpetually drunk but is actually stone sober - due to an enchantment - and a canny fellow. He lives in his own room and is on at least reasonable terms with all of the other residents. He is also a good friend of Nerijs.

Looma Swens - A petty thief who made a big haul some months ago in Azenomei. She is lying low here under an assumed name (and having died

and cut her hair) to avoid ex-colleagues and those who she stole from. So she rarely goes out (except occasionally to replenish her funds from wherever it is stashed). She even pays others to buy food for her. Her Imposture is that of the illegitimate daughter of an undisclosed Kaiin notable, and so far everyone believes it (though Vyejuar knows her secret). She also has her own small room.

Sento Thertennek - Once a renowned captain of a band of treasure seekers, he now dwells here, existing on his ill-gotten gains. Three of his old associates live with him, and occasionally they travel around in order to replenish their funds. Sento has no interest in outsiders and he and his followers rarely associate with the other inhabitants (except on matters of joint security.)

Visitors

Associates of the residents often visit, and stay here for a while, dossing down in a corner of one of the common rooms, or in one of the wide window bay compartments. Such folk are tolerated for a few days and then asked to leave - usually by those least friendly with the folk this person is ostensibly 'visiting'. (Visiting is usually a euphemism for hiding out from the authorities.) Mind you, some people who are generally well-liked manage to stay for longer - such as the smiling Verefet of Azenomei. (This small female street singer and pick-pocket has been here now for almost three weeks, and nobody is really sure who was supposed to be her original 'friend'.)

NB: Visitors are not usually admitted unless the person they are visiting is present to vouch for them. (This is doubly true at night.)

Sample Domestic Situations

GM: These occur around the search, or as the characters are leaving, so familiarise yourself with them all, and run them as best suited. (Rather than attempting to run them in some kind of order before the next part of this particular locational experience.) Apply Temptations as you see fit, to encourage (nay, 'ensure') that some characters get themselves fully involved in some of these minor escapades.



1) A couple of the really tough residents pick a fight with one or more of the characters, whom they accuse of stealing meat from the kitchens. (These men are drunk.) (Ψ RESIST PETTIFOGGERY not to become embroiled in an argument. If you fail the argument, fisticuffs ensues.)

2) In a small junk room upstairs a couple are becoming intimately acquainted. The character who stumbles upon them is loudly berated until they depart.

3) On a balcony several young fellows are partaking of certain aromatic substances, and invite one of the characters to partake. (Ψ RESIST INDOLLENCE not to join them.)

4) In the drawing room several residents are playing dice for money and are clearly drunk. Any character coming across this who has more than 1 point left in their Gambling pool will be sorely tempted to join in. (Ψ RESIST AVARICE). (They roll for their Gambling at a Penalty of 1; however, if the character rolls a Dismal Failure, the other players become aware that they are being taken advantage off, and complain violently.)

GM: If possible the character with the body will be separated from it, or need to protect it from would-be body-snatchers. Two friendly fellows offer the character some of their ale (Ψ RESIST INDOLLENCE OR GOURMANDISM), in an attempt to get them drunk. Fresh bodies can be sold to students of anatomy, and the characters may end up having to fight their way into the room of some petty thieves in order to get back their property. At the very least the person guarding the corpse should have to chase it through a few rooms and up some stairs as two miscreants (probably visitors) attempt to abscond with it.

5) Korwhis is somewhat drunk and in one of his 'I know many things' moods. A character eager for information who engages him in conversation may (Ψ RESIST PETTIFOGGERY) become embroiled in his tortuous ramblings.

6) Korwhis is short on ready cash, and has a 'Peregrinating Gem' for sale. (Cugel's

Compendium p11.) He has used this a number of times and suspicions have been roused. Therefore he must relinquish it as quickly as possible. He will not accept less than 30 terces, but will start off the process asking for 100 terces. Any character that has at least 40 terces, may (Ψ RESIST AVARICE) be impelled to bargain for its ownership. (He cannot sell it to anyone in the hotel, as he has already done so, and now claims not to know the whereabouts of the 'missing gem'. When he passes it on, Korwhis also teaches the ownership cantrap, which must be recited once each day whilst the gem is in your hand.

GM: If the character who buys this displays it around the manse, the previous person who believed the purchased it may spot it and presume they have identified the thief. If he is confronted at this stage, Korwhis will cover his tracks by saying that he bought it in good faith from the market.

7) Verefet takes a fancy to one of the characters. (Lowest Sympathy point rating.) Though her attraction is genuine, she cannot resist stealing their valuables. (Ψ RESIST RAKISHNESS in order to resist her SEDUCTION attempt.) Alternatively, the GM can introduce her in a fashion as to encourage acts of reckless Rakishness amongst the characters, and the victor amongst them can discover her nefarious traits at their leisure. (Perhaps she poses as someone impressed by 'adventurers'.)

8) Two of the brigands are dangling Nerijs from a first floor window. Apparently they resent his tardiness in stocking the kitchens. Nerijs will appreciate these bandits being taught better manners, and perhaps the characters will find permanent lodging in this house during their stay in Kaiin. (Especially if they later have these brigands set up and arrested, or otherwise removed from the picture.)

GM: Their shadow will also have entered the house and heard what has happened, but he tries to remain hidden amongst the crowds (perhaps spotted ducking through a door and trying to remain out of their sight). If questioned he will again be most annoyed to be interacting with them, and his responses will be brief



(and always demand that they press on). If it adds to the realism, the shadow is briefed to mutter that Penderbast will be in big trouble for not being where he was supposed to be.

Alterations for the Two-Night Option

The following phoney informers will imply that Penderbast was hiding out here - rather than engaged in a party. However, his brother arrived and escorted him away. The informers will play that they are reluctant to give information on the location to which Penderbast has gone. With bribery, threats, or persuasions, one will eventually 'admit' that they believe Penderbast's brother has a friend with a tavern in Canal Town, and that they overheard that the two were heading there, in order to "lay low for a few days".

Penderbast?

Three people who have been paid to claim to know Penderbast if asked: Looma Swens, Zank Rendeg and Nerijs himself (who is perpetually desperate for funds). They have been persuaded (Nerijs bribed, Zank and Looma repaying a debt) to 'remember' Penderbast. Thus, if the characters are getting suspicious, whichever one they ask first about Penderbast may call over a second person for confirmation. "Yes. Penderbast. You missed him by a little while. He has gone to his brother's house." To add to the realism of this situation, Vyejuar has arranged for the last of the three to be asked to pose as the one who 'knows the way' to Penderbast's brother's house. This person will not be immediately at hand (having been told to wander off when the PCs start talking to the other two) and will need to be sought elsewhere in the manse²⁵.

The last contact poses as another partygoer - one who accompanied Penderbast here from the Tracks. They will provide decent directions - though be too drunk to accompany the characters. In order to allay any burgeoning suspicions, they will 'explain' that the brother owns and lives above the 'Loud Oyster' Tavern in Canal Town.

²⁵ Vyejuar has set this evening's trickery up well.

The story given is that Penderbast's brother (Yago) owes Penderbast money, and the two had an argument. Penderbast's brother promised that he had the money to repay him, but that it was stored at his tavern. Not wanting to miss the opportunity, Penderbast, his brother, and two friends (Jelk and Klimp - also fictitious) departed smartly.

GM: The last person poses as too drunk to give precise directions, but knows roughly where the 'Loud Oyster' is, and marks it on the map. (It is close to the Derna, about a third of the way in from the mud flats.) If questioned, this person says they have visited the 'Loud Oyster' a couple of times, and so are confident that the general location correct. (IE Do not play this person as a totally stupid drunk who is sending them off to the wrong place.) As a final flourish, an observant character might notice (Ψ PERCEPTION) Zank or Looma watching them from a window as they depart - only to duck away swiftly on being noticed.

Pool Refreshment?

In the single-night option, if the characters are supremely low in their pools for important abilities, then treat this break in routine as an opportunity for automatic refreshment - as they leave. (As at the Tracks.) However, if they can wait until they have crossed the West Threek another situation for refreshment exists there. (See the 'Friendly Footpads' encounter.)

Flolad's Men

"I sense malefactors! Be on your guard!"

These unusually tough, uncompromising, and strong-willed vigils (p78) work for Flolad (p78). They will discover the characters, track them and either chase or ambush them. In short, the characters will be apprehended - although during the first part of this encounter the characters might think they have successfully evaded them. In any case, none of the vigils know Pioni, and she is clearly not a person whose welfare is important to them. However, the characters are clearly bringing foul business into the Prospect. The vigils' usual response is to administer a sound kicking and eject villains and their unlawful burdens at best speed.



If the characters are sufficiently convincing (Ψ PERSUASION -1), or look sufficiently tough to put up a good fight, the vigils will instead threaten to blow their whistles for back-up. This is an attempt to extort a bribe, and the characters will need to either convince the vigils that their business is legitimate (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION -1) or bribe them sufficiently well to be allowed to pass on. They will certainly be told to leave the Prospect at best speed.

GM: If the characters are unconvincing, they will be taken to Flolad's manse (the largest house in the district). Mind you, if your players have been raised on games of less refinement, this incident may instead result in the only real 'Opportunity for Bloodshed' in this scenario, since Flolad's men clearly mean business.

If the characters go to the manse, this place should be described in some detail (locations, rich furnishings, menacing power of extreme wealth, foppish mannerisms, long wait in a lesser drawing room, suspicious bloodstains on the carpet, chance for petty theft, opportunity to fabricate more convincing cover story...). Flolad will question them, in the presence of a couple of his bullies, and his tame magician, who has a cantrap for detecting deceit (as well as many useful encompassed spells). Flolad will want to know their names and origins, and who they are working for.

At first it seems that they are in trouble, but then Flolad has the carpet unrolled, and recognises Pioni. Flolad does know of the curse, and has them ejected at best speed - with firm instructions to leave Odkin Prospect at similar velocity. During their brief encounter he may allude in a worried mutter to some of Pioni's reputed powers. However, he wants to have nothing to do with whatever is going on, and gives no further information.

Processional Way

The wide tree-lined road between Odkin Prospect and the West Threek proceeds from the Palace to the harbour. It angles in a wide curve, so the Palace is not in clear view. Care (or at the least - high speed) must be evidenced whilst crossing this broad avenue.

Scene 7: West Threek

Overview

See District Map on p25.

You have heard it said (Ψ PEDANTRY) that the residents of each of the two separate parts of the Threek believe the residents of the other part to be living in comparative luxury. Being used as you are to the finer things of life - as you enter what seems to you to be an identical district to the East Threek, you are reminded of two flies arguing over the quality of two distinct heaps of manure. This is perhaps a cruel comparison, and yet it remains at least vaguely relevant, especially as you almost fall (Ψ ATHLETICS) as your foot squelches into the recent outpouring from a local chamber pot.

GM: In the playtest this section ran much quicker than indicated and various encounters were abbreviated or missed. This entirely depends on how things are running for you time-wise.

Murder!

Just to enforce the realization that Kaiin isn't just about having a fun time whilst exploring the streets - and that it is actually a dangerous place - someone is murdered nearby. The characters hear sounds of a scuffle, then pathetic cries abruptly ended, then running feet. Shortly they come upon a crumpled body at the side of the road. (Or they might observe this cruel event whilst passing the end of an alley, and the murderer casually ransacking the pockets of their victim.)

The GM may decide to have the murderer run fleet of foot almost into their midst. (If suitable, use Liane - DERPG p158.) In this case, this cocky and unpleasant fellow will slow to a swagger and say: "Well, well, common folk up to no good. Best for you if you have seen nothing tonight, or Liane the Wayfarer will silence your tongues as easily as he squashes insects." GMs who wish to find action at this point, especially if the players are resolute that their characters must avoid all risks, might like to offer the chance of combat (Ψ RESIST ARROGANCE, ATTACK).



Alternatively, if he encounters the group's scout first, he may also rob them at rapier point. This happened in the playtest, and he also ran away then snuck back to rob a second character by sneaking up from behind. (Having seen their reluctance to engage in combat.)

Liane should be better at combat than any individual amongst the characters, and he is smart enough to retreat (shouting abuse) if they gang up on him. (An enemy may be made here, if this is the beginning of a campaign; but if the characters kill him he was only an impostor - using Liane's name to avert suspicion.)

GM: Near the body (or in the pockets of the murderer) is a small magical item and a valuable piece of jewellery. This provides a chance to have the characters bicker amongst themselves for possession of these. It also provides humour when the item soon proves also to have an amusing, embarrassing or otherwise debilitating side-effect. (GM invents.)

Nervous Vigils

"My stipend is insufficient to compensate for the risks of this occupation!"

Rounding a corner come a party of vigils. If they spot the characters, they flee with remarkable vitality. Otherwise they walk by, looking nervous, and muttering about the dangers of their work.

GM: It is possible that at this encounter, or at some other far earlier in the scenario, the characters will decide to take their uniforms and impersonate officers of the law. Such acts will derail the scenario and should be discouraged. Facts that the characters will know are: vigils use codewords on each watch; vigils of each district wear different uniforms; impersonating a vigil has but one penalty - to be cast into Prince Kandive's deodand pits.

The Publisher's House

The magical printing press is active (p135). Characters may wish to investigate the odd sounds and strange voices, or may simply hurry by. Either way, if you have the Kaiin book, describe in vivid detail - to add to the oddness of this city.

Friendly Footpads

"Greetings, fellows. It seems you have a burden. Perhaps we can ease your task by lightening your pockets?"

A gang of self-employed extortionists (with their lower faces of all covered in scarves) threatens our characters. However, one of their number is either Lesorix (if you have run the previous adventures in this series) or else an old acquaintance of one of the characters. After initial hostilities, friendly relations can be established. (Lesorix' burly cousin Artanix is a senior member of the band.)

Lesorix (or the PC's old acquaintance) has just seen The Vlark, and despite his normal tendency to leave people to their own fates is feeling unusually altruistic. He has a quiet word with Sangup, and convinces the gang leader that these newcomers are good folk. 'All right', says Sangup, 'I wasn't going to say anything, because we live by the rule of survival of the fittest. But this fellow here says you are worth a little warning. The Vlark is around tonight, we just saw him down the street, and we're heading for a tavern we know, to give him chance to wander off to some other part of town. Mostly he only wanders Canal Town, so if you are headed into that part of the city, you'd best come with us. Nobody asks questions where we're going. Drinks are cheap and the food is the best in the district.'

Resistances can be applied if necessary, and even (as the characters inevitably ask about 'The Vlark?') Wherewithal rolls. (Vlark details - pp32-34.) All who fail will want to get off the street for at least the better part of an hour.

GM: The point of this encounter is for the PCs to learn about the Vlark from a reliable source.

This little tavern is as cheap and criminal-friendly (dark booths, no questions asked, knowing nods from other rogue types) as it is described to be. If it adds to the atmosphere, various card and dice games might be in progress, plus if you have the Scaum Valley Gazetteer (P. Press, 2002), use a variant of Skeddlepike (SVG p11). Since this game uses Quick Fingers instead of Gambling, if pools



are low it might be more appealing. (NB: However friendly these local rogues may be, none will accompany the characters into Canal Town.)

GM: It takes only the tiniest of shifts in perspective to imagine that Scrint's Tavern (p137) is the place they are referring to. (Or simply invent some other place.) During the day, all Threeksiders use Scrint's, but after dark a different type of clientele begin to arrive, and regular folk sensibly go home or relocate.

Chance to Refresh Pools

If the GM deems it necessary, once the characters leave this tavern, the pools of all standard abilities (as at the Tracks) refresh.

At their parting, the chief footpad is interested to see who is in the carpet. If they show him, he can identify Pioni. This man does not know of the rumoured curse, but will volunteer that "I, for one, would not undertake to transport her body around town: some noted her to be a magical being!" Also around this point, someone (possibly Sangup himself) will notice that Pioni is not dead, but in a deep slumber. (The magic is wearing off, so the characters will also be able to see this.) As the two groups go their separate ways, Artanix will casually call out: "Watch out for The Vlark!" If they request further information, a few hints are given. Or perhaps one of the characters has heard (Ψ PEDANTRY) of him.

Scene 8: Canal Town

Overview

See District Map on p35.

According to the map, you are entering the Canal Town district. To your eyes there is little or no difference between it and either section of the Threek. However, your nose detects a slightly ranker ambience hovering between the streets.

Recalling travellers' tales (Ψ PEDANTRY), you believe that you heard that Canal Town has been built over or next to a series of canals that were supposed to be the site for numerous city vegetable gardens. In the manner of many ambitions, it fell far short - and the lagoons,

mudflats, and brick-lined tunnels now only provide illegal and inedible shellfish (which nonetheless apparently often find their way into lesser-class eating establishments.

The residents here are apparently (Ψ PEDANTRY, SCUTTLEBUTT) of peculiar character. They include the religious bowelers (the city's sewer workers), the violent and obstinate builders' guild members, and the combers of the mudflats (who are the last chance of recovery for the artefacts washed down the Derna towards the sea).

GM: Remember to describe the canals, bridges, and piers during their travels through this section. It ceases to resemble the Threek very quickly. The houses are the same, except slightly newer, but the streets meander more, and the waterways and tunnels are numerous and obvious. Taverns are also much more numerous, though at this time of night most are closed, and those still with patrons inside will refuse to open the doors to people they don't know.

As you can see from the map, Canal Town is a maze. This is the place where the characters will get most lost. As well as the descriptive material, use this situation as a backdrop to the following encounters as they attempt to find their way around. And always remember the fiercely independent (not to say downright aggressive) nature (p26) of the residents of this district. These people will be of little help in giving directions, unless paid, and even then will probably misdirect the characters out of sheer malice.

Oyster Smugglers

A group of these shameful individuals (pp28/9 & 33) appear with a small barrow with muffled wheels. This is loaded with six whicker baskets that reek of salt water and river lichens. They will be eager to avoid all suspicion and may concoct some ridiculous (and clearly fabricated) story about what they are doing. If this encounter goes for any length of time, then it may be terminated by the arrival of The Vlark (see next). The smugglers will depart swiftly. "Evening, Mr Vlark, Sir, fine night for... err, err... Well, goodbye all. Nice to have eaten you, er met you... Sorry. Err, 'night



then." It is possible that the characters may seek to obtain (Ψ ATTACK, IMPOSTURE, PERSUADE) this cart. This can be allowed, as such a thing has no impact at this late stage in the scenario.

GM: In the playtest the following all happened rather more quickly. The oyster smugglers were easily intimidated, and vanished before The Vlark arrived – scurrying away with their illegal cart-full of crustaceans. The Bowelers were fled from after a short argument in which they tried to extort money for a 'corpse handling permit'. The hefty vat-grown character with the carpet rolled an Illustrious Success with said carpet, knocking down all the Bowelers, and the characters ran into a blind alley. That is all bar one, who hid and then came along to mount a rearguard rescue. However, this seemed the ideal time to introduce The Vlark, and the rearguard rolled an Illustrious Success on their Pedantry, thus knowing all about this being. Then (as things sometimes happen), the same player immediately rolled a Dismal Failure on Wherewithal, and the character fled shrieking into the night, yelling: "It's the Vlark; it's the Vlark!" Although nobody else succeeded at their Pedantry, since the Builders also ran screaming, they got the message. Thus the chase began with The Vlark's first appearance. This all goes to show that 'flexibility' is the watchword.

The Vlark (1)

"Good morning, gentlemen. Allow me to introduce myself; The Vlark at your service."

This dapper and yet hideous half-man (p32/33 plus show picture on back of Kaiin book) will observe them, and then step from the shadows. He will be polite and charming (perhaps speaking first before they see him). This encounter is designed to set him up as sinister and threatening, but he will not attack them. (Although see playtest note above.) The GM should emphasize his bulging muscles, and even (if the characters were not alerted by the footpads) supply a rumour as to the nature²⁶ of

²⁶ Most importantly the characters should know from one source or another that The Vlark is apparently invulnerable. Various swordsmen, and even armed gangs have tried to kill him - all have failed, and most died in the attempt

The Vlark (Ψ PEDANTRY - best success). If possible, have The Vlark become noticeably offended by the manner in which a character looks at him (Ψ WHEREWITHAL - worst failure), or take offence to a remark. This will add to their next encounter with him. The Vlark himself might be the one to explain his licensed status and horrible culinary habits (Ψ WHEREWITHAL - as above).

GM: If The Vlark is attacked here, he will knock down his assailant with surprising ease and then retreat, howling his outrage at their lack of friendliness. Vyejuar has made an arrangement with The Vlark, having given him two slaves already, and promised him as many as he can catch from within the adventurer group. (Since none of these are known locals, he does not need to add them to his tally. Also, since they are newcomers, there is a high chance that they will attack The Vlark, and thus become fair game anyhow.) For this price he is to terrorise the characters carrying the body, but not to devour them until after the body is deposited. Alternatively (off the cuff playtest descision) after this chase Vyejuar has no further use for them and has included them in the Vlark's price.

The Palace

Unless previously arrested and taken there, our rogues will probably at some point be closest to the Palace (p86/87) during this section of the adventure, and catch a view of its wall and the central palace dome. (Sufficient for the GM to describe this important Kaiin location in some atmospheric detail.) However, since it is dark and they wander narrow streets, this will only occur once or twice at most.

Bowler Fanatics

"What dyu think yer doin? Corpse disposal is our job! Hand it over, or there'll be trubble!"

These people (p28) consider themselves the premiere disposers of refuse in this city, and will be most aggrieved to find someone else disposing of a corpse (as they see it) on their turf. They are convinced that the characters are headed to the mudflats to dispose of an enemy. They will not be interested in viewing the corpse, so certain are



they of their assessment of the situation. They will demand compensation for this outrage, and in return will offer a permit that allows the characters to transport this item through Boweler territory. (Possibly a useful item if other such encounters occur. GM adjusts price compared to how much the characters have.)

Play these outrageous characters to the highest degree of amusement, audacity, and stench. If the characters have no funds remaining they may have to convince these characters of their need to pass by (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION). If the characters draw weapons, the Bowelers will run away, vowing to find reinforcements and return to take vengeance.

Temple of Dijekom

Yet another passing encounter from the Kaiin book (p35+37) worthy of mention. Depending on the needs of the scenario, it might be described in an amusing fashion, or (wildly inaccurately) as a mysterious place of obvious religious solemnity. In either case spend some time describing this odd location, rather than just a brief mention. Possibly an odd procession is spotted heading towards the temple. Or perhaps hooded worshippers lounge outside; maybe a brash junior priest will encourage the characters to move on.

GM: If the characters are by now tired, irritated and volatile, allow the opportunity for this officious junior priest to bear the brunt of their tension.

Builder Bullies

"You shall rue the day you ever considered performing criminal deeds in our part of town!"

These toughs (p??) consider themselves to be the vigils of this part of town. If they spot the characters, they will attempt to apprehend them. (Ψ ATTACK, PERSUASION -1). Any combat will soon be disrupted by the appearance of The Vlark, whereupon the Builders will flee.

Shin House

Another passing encounter worth describing from the Kaiin book (p37) to enhance city weirdness.

The Vlark (2)

"My hunger grows and it is time to feed. You seem tender and lively, and inspire my digestive juices!"

Maybe it was something they said? The rear guard character will spot (Ψ PERCEPTION) The Vlark pursuing them casually through the shadows.

GM: If sufficient time has passed, then mention the first light of pre-dawn slowly drifting into the city from across the bay.

When spotted. The Vlark will continue to follow them without bothering to hide itself - swinging its cane jauntily and whistling through its multiple teeth. This sinister pursuit will evolve into a speedy chase as the characters move faster to avoid is gradual approach (Ψ ATHLETICS), and The Vlark picks up speed to counter this. (He will call out the quote above as the chase begins.)

GM: In playtest the characters decided to hold their ground against The Vlark, whilst the burliest of them failed to break down the barricaded door of the tavern. In order to get them to run, I described his huge salivial excressences as he picked up speed, and his amused cry of "ah rapiers, how quaint!". This was more fun than applying Wherewithal rolls as earlier.

The 'Loud Oyster' Tavern

At last, the place where Penderbast is supposed to be waiting is visible in the early morning light some distance down the street, and a few patrons sit outside at a long wooden table. In fact, there is (Ψ PERCEPTION) a man answering Penderbast's description standing outside (Vyejuar used Copcoft's description), accompanied by a man who looks (Ψ PERCEPTION) suspiciously the leader of the bandits who robbed them outside Kaiin; and by a woman who (Ψ PERCEPTION) is about the same height and build as their employer. However, someone (Copcoft) spots The Vlark and a great cry of alarm goes up. This man charges inside and attempts to slam the door.

At the last moment the woman and the other man reluctantly leave the street and push inside. The door is then bolted, and the lower windows are also barred and unable to be entered.



It is likely that the characters will 'deposit' the body at this point, and continue their flight. (As they run on, Pioni will awake and begin wriggling and shouting in alarm, but The Vlark will ignore her - except perhaps to stumble over the carpet if they drop it when he is close behind.)

GM: Play Pioni's awakening for maximum humour. Since in the playtest she had started to come round during the time the Bowlers were demanding payment for a corpse-handling permit, they were only too keen to drop the carpet and shout in to 'Penderbast' that his delivery had arrived. One of the characters was caught here (the slowest) and was engaged in a (losing) battle of wits. So I had Pioni wake up and distract the Vlark as she struggled from the carpet still semi-drugged (it seems they knew each other). The character then temporarily disabled The Vlark with a rapier thrust (Illustrious Success) and escaped. The Vlark presumably regenerates, but was sufficiently discommoded that the character escaped.

The Rotted Wharves

Their precipitous flight takes them alongside the wharves (p36), with the hungry Vlark in hot pursuit. "Why do you run so fast; I only wish to invite you to dine?" The characters might assume that with his bulk, he cannot safely traverse the loose planking, whereas they can. If they charge out onto one of the wharves, The Vlark slows his pursuit, but then begins to pick his way after.

The characters have some chance to hide along the wharf - between huge piles of rotting nets, falling-down storage shacks, and heaps of empty crates. The wharves are notoriously unstable, and only by moving cautiously might one manage to pass safely along. After the initial charge out onto the wharves, stress this unstable nature. After this, each time a character makes a move that is other than slow and cautious they must roll a die. On a result of 1 the planks below collapse (Ψ ATHLETICS - bonus/penalty as above). Illustrious/Prosaic Success - You jump aside safely. Hair's-Breadth S. or Exasperating Failure - You are trapped for 1 round, but then pull free. Quotidian Failure - You are trapped for 3 rounds, or may push yourself through.

Dismal Failure - You are stuck fast.

GM: These options are designed to create panic, rather than allow the slow-moving Vlark (who is used to crossing the fragile planking in a careful manner) to catch them easily. Some of the characters may end up waist deep in viscous mud, but unless all of them are down there they are the safest, as The Vlark doesn't like to dirty his clothes. (Once The Vlark has passed by, such persons may attempt the difficult climb back up the wharves, in the hopes that they can return to Canal Town and find shelter. However, if The Vlark notices them he will pursue doggedly.) Note also that he will fixate on the person with the lowest negative sympathy.

The Chase

The wharfs are only one option, and although presented early in the chase. The characters may not choose to run out along one of them. If they instead run along the streets, or if they choose the wharf and then evade The Vlark and regain the streets, a horrid game of cat and mouse is a desirable finale. It should be played for maximum effect and dark humour. The Vlark will continue the chase relentlessly, chuckling or guffawing even when succumbing to a painful blow or fall. He seems to be having a wonderful time.

If the characters split up then the slowest one of them (or the one with the greatest negative Sympathy point rating) will possibly be devoured. (Ψ PERSUASION) Nevertheless, give them a chance to get away, using standard rules for pursuit. The Vlark may be slower but knows his way around, and occasionally (1 on a D6 every time they make a turn) will vanish as he takes a short cut and waits in hiding for them to pass by. (Match their Perception against his Concealment, with character Perceptions at a penalty of 1 if they alertness is not specifically stressed.)

Evading The Vlark

1) **Persuasion:** If caught, convince The Vlark that you are of more use alive than dead, and that if he dines elsewhere you can perform a service for him. This only works if the characters feel they can trust The Vlark, and so in suspicious campaigns



may not be of use. They also have to beat him in a Persuasion contest using an appealing proposal. (This option is only useful if this scenario serves as the start of a Kaiin campaign²⁷.)

2) **Brute Force:** Knock The Vlark off the wharf or into a canal somehow, and then flee before he can climb out. (If they are out on a wharf, this only works if any characters that have fallen in can be pulled out. One option is to lower such persons some sections of the aforementioned rotting fishing nets - which have a reasonable chance of supporting the weight of one human.) It might also be that the Vlark dislikes flame, though he would deal with the possibility of burns if absolutely necessary. *"There is no call to threaten me with fire. Its cruel heat offends my sensibilities!"*

3) **In the Mud:** If everyone ends up in the mud alongside and under the wharfs - by falling, or by leaping in a last second attempt to avoid The Vlark, The Vlark will cautiously descend one of the bulwarks, and enter the mud. Despite his amphibious appearance, he does not swim stealthily, but wades menacingly. Being so strong, he makes good speed, and the characters are best advised to climb back up. (The Vlark is not infallible and might not notice if one character remains on the docks. In this case, that character might potentially inconvenience The Vlark by dropping nets or heavy objects upon him, so that others can climb up before they escape en masse.)

4) **By Sea:** A group of optimistic smugglers might be attempting to offload some contraband from their barge - moored in one of the channels in the flats that leads up to the wharves, or somewhere else along the dock. The characters might conceivably steal the barge, or merely hitch a ride. It is up to the GM whether this is easy or hard to do. Perhaps the smugglers are too tough to fight and must be bribed? If the characters were friendly or neutral towards Zank Rendeg at the Odkin Prospect Hotel, maybe he is the one leading this gang. Or, if the characters were rude or

unfriendly to some of the other rogues, maybe they are the gang here. (In either case they would have departed the Hotel shortly after the characters, boarded a boat on the Scaum and met with their colleagues a short distance out to sea.)

5) **Back into Canal Town:** Characters may flee back into Canal Town. That situation is perfectly suitable to the plot. Simply follow the guidelines above, and have The Vlark chase them around the streets. Eventually he might see a less difficult meal, and pounce horribly upon that person. Failing to warn someone of the approaching Vlark definitely garners a negative Sympathy point.

GM: Whatever happens, this is the finale of the action sequence, so give great emphasis to the slow but unrelenting pursuit of the horrendous Vlark. In the playtest, the characters simply outran him in the end, and left the district. However, this was not an anti-climax, since they were fearing for their lives the whole time.

The Vlark (3)

After a merry chase, The Vlark finds himself wearied. He calls out the following: *"Ah, you've led me a fine chase, and I'm too weary to consider dining now. I congratulate you on such amusement. I must admit that I believe I've been the final link in a chain of deceptions played upon you in our nocturnal city. I hope there are no hard feelings. Good night to you all."* If questioned in a civil fashion, he admits that he was paid (he won't say how) to chase them around and to get them to drop the 'corpse' near the inn. He won't identify Vyejuar (he swore as part of their agreement that he would not), but might allude to the fact that ("this unpleasant and overly ambitious woman") works in the Marketplace and has access to "the human commodity". If asked why he agreed to the job, he will apologise, saying that "sometimes my appetites get the better of me".

GM: In playtest, no friendly conversation with The Vlark occurred, though he wore his joviality well as he invited them to dine with him.

²⁷ Or perhaps someone is caught and just wishes to live!



Scene 9: Winding Up the Scenario

The Loud Oyster

Back at the tavern, Angar Glams, Vyejuar and Copcoft have long since departed, as has Pioni. Only the ragged carpet lies at the edge of the street. If you own *Cugel's Compendium* (P Press, 2002), this could be a larger example of Quadriion's Stature-Enhancing Carpet (CC p10). Otherwise invent some other minor magical item to reward any character that thinks to collect this item. (Its properties in this regard were unknown to Vyejuar's accomplices when they borrowed it from her supplies for the purpose of wrapping Pioni.) Even if the characters don't like its properties it could be exchanged or sold later. (Remember also that the innkeeper knows the identity of Copcoft, but will not volunteer this information - unless in the heat of the moment, say when they demand to know where 'Penderbast' is (and then describe him).

GM: I dropped subtle hints that the carpet might be worth something. Since they had never properly looked at it unrolled before, this was easy to slip logically into the game. (Ψ PERCEPTION, APPRAISAL) The characters (being unversed in such things) could not estimate its worth, only recognise that it was worth something. It did after all have glowing sigils along the sides - although these had been covered in dust.

Penderbast's House

This place was rented from a poor family, who are now back in residence, and know nothing about how hired the place or why. (It was all done through a weasel-faced man they have never seen before.) Possibly they might recognise him if they saw him again, but they are not likely to.

GM: On their way back to the market the playtest PCs passed a group of vigils and students dragging the multi-legged Scholasticarium entity in a huge net.

The Marketplace

In the immediate aftermath of the scenario, the characters may return to the Market in search of Vyejuar to try and collect the remainder of their payment. Crossing back through Kaiin without the

burden of a clandestine corpse, the city seems far less sinister. (In the playtest they hired a cab in order to be able to get back before dawn was too long gone.) Some workers are already heading for their places of employment. Tired vigils will even greet them with a weary 'Good Morning'. If appropriate, GMs may insert an amusing repeat encounter with vigils or other GMCs that saw them earlier in the night. If **Golden Walk** (p94) did not feature in the scenario previously, describe its grandeur as they pass by. (Also **the Dig** - p138.)

As the characters wait at the Market in morning's early light, a handful of the more desperate stall-holders are already setting up. Eventually, Pioni will walk across the Market from the direction of the Fringe, looking grim. The characters will probably wish to avoid her notice, perhaps by assisting some of the stallholders, or simply by running away. If the GM considers this sufficiently amusing, she may pretend not to see them, and sneak round behind them. Then a confrontation may occur where she threatens to inflict upon them her evil curse.

The characters will have to (Ψ PERSUASION) convince her that they meant no harm, are new to town and were simply doing a delivery job. If they have any money left, probably she will demand it from them, and they will be left dejected. Or perhaps she will demand they perform some obscure task (a new scenario) to make reparation. *GM: Back at the Market the characters waited for their payment, and investigated the stalls - trying to find someone willing to pay money for their new possession. They were approached by Pioni, and convinced her (Ψ PERCEPTION) that they had bought the carpet from some other hulking brute similar to the PC in question. (I ran Pioni as filled with smouldering menace and lurking magical potency. The players were aware she was a major personality, and did not want to risk their characters by messing with her.) One character even convinced her that they could assist her with knowledge about her enemies, and would meet her later when they had followed leads. During all this, one of the characters (whose player was away) who had vanished earlier (as noted in the Odkin Prospect Hotel section) was spotted*



for sale in the slave pens. A deception was mounted so that he acted ill and fatigued, and thus the price was beaten down and he was purchased. (During this action, Vyejuar was spotted (Ψ PERCEPTION) sneaking a peak at the characters, the connection was not made.

Selling the Carpet

The characters may make a tidy profit on this whole sorry incident. If they need prompting, then one of the buffoons who wrapped Pioni in it, will spot the PCs and make enquiries - trying to pretend it is merely a curio and "not something of any importance to our formidable employer." He doesn't know who his employer was, having been handed the carpet by two masked men near to any one of several warehouses that it may have come from. But he has been threatened to get it back!

The characters may even need to return to Canal Town and liberate it from its new home in the tap room of the Loud Oyster. The amateur curio dealers of the Marketplace (p59) won't be able to offer much of a price (halve that indicated below), but professionals of the Scholasticarium District (pp120/121, map p119) can. (That is except for the Margrabe (TT p125), the proprietor of the Sleepless Scroll, for the rug was stolen from his store - along with various other valuables - only last month. Presenting the rug will lead to criminal accusations that must (Ψ PERSUASION) be refuted.

The Establishment they Find (or are directed to) First:

- 1 - The Diadem of Unseen Merit (p120)
- 2 - The Burning Pestle (p120)
- 3 - The Owl and Snake (p120)
- 4 - The Pentrararium (p120)
- 5 - The Waiting Ghost (p121)
- 6 - The Sleepless Scroll (p121 & TTp125)

Persuasion	Vs Margrabe (Pure-Hearted 13)
Illustrious S.	Finders fee of 40 terces
Prosaic S.	Finders fee of 30 terces
Hair's-Breadth	Finders fee of 20 terces
Exasperating F	Finders fee of 10 terces
Quotidian F.	Vigils are mentioned; you depart.
Dismal Failure	Vigils are summoned; you depart

GM: In the playtest, the proprietor of the Diadem of Unseen Merit tried to con them into selling it cheaply,

Persuasion	Any Other Proprietor
Illustrious S.	700 terces
Prosaic S.	600 terces
Hair's-Breadth	500 terces
Exasperating F	400 terces
Quotidian F.	300 terces
Dismal Failure	200 terces

but one character (Ψ PERCEPTION) noticed her duplicitous attitude. They marched out of the shop and approached another down the street - in order to call her bluff. The proprietor of this new store heard the commotion as a shouted conversation was held. He came out and quickly evaluated the carpet. A bidding war began and a high price was reached without any bargaining being necessary. This proved a fitting climax to the scenario - illustrating as it did that the PCs are not the only avaricious individuals in the city - and the two characters entrusted with selling the carpet were well pleased. (They took a third of the money each and declared the final third as being the total payment. This smaller amount was shared out amongst the entire group, and still beat the best offer of a market vendor.)

Buying Goods

Standard prices are in the main rulebook (DERPG p119). Special prices are in the Kaiin book (p73). If the characters get a good price for the carpet, remember that other potent magic items cost a similar amount, in fact often even more. If they wish to buy a few things, then amulets and rings that allow you to cast a single cantrap are the only notable magic items likely to be within their price range. Lesser goods (such as some Arcane Adjuncts, and most of the Fashions & Fripperies, in Cugel's Compendium) are also obtainable.

The Last Act?

In some RPGs, episodes end in a grand finale. However, this is the Dying Earth. If the characters do not recover and sell the carpet, they gain no significant reward. Instead, as they stand forlorn, waiting for their remaining payment (which will never arrive) - or in relief that Pioni did not inflict multiple curses upon them - it starts to rain. Twegg sees them standing there and offers them 3 terces each. He needs someone to spend the



morning and early afternoon shovelling dung out of a warehouse he recently rented to display his animals to some of Kaiin's nobility. He also mentions that he may soon have some better-paid delivery work for a bunch of willing fellows. (A new scenario.) Life goes on.

GM: The characters might sell the carpet and spend the cash and find themselves in this situation in a few days anyhow. In the playtest they decided that leaving town for the time being was a smart move, and cast around for riding animals or a beast of burden they could harness to a cart. So even though they had ample funds, this brought them to Twegg, and they were only too glad to receive payment even further payment for leaving town - and took the job immediately. NB: With Twegg being a reliable businessman, he might very well agree to mind some of their savings whilst they are away. Such an opportunity is not to be missed, although of course if they somehow lose the beast its cost will be taken from their funds before their return.

Following Things Up in a Campaign:

Vyejuar: If they uncover her identity (see 'Copcoft' below) they will find that Vyejuar has left town. Apparently someone placed a terrible curse on her, and she has gone to see a magician about having it removed. (Despite much pain and inconvenience, she will of course survive and return, though relations between her and Pioni will be forever damaged.) If they do not uncover her identity, then some weeks later one of the characters might recognise her voice as they pass the slave stalls in the Market (p63).

Penderbast/Copcoft: Tenacious characters might track down and identify Copcoft (p48) as the ersatz Penderbast (via the barman at the 'Loud Oyster'). He will deny all knowledge, saying only that someone paid for his services in some undisclosed and illegal magical experiment that was to be explained later. (With sufficient pressure he may reveal her identity.) He was asked to wait for her and her contacts at the 'Loud Oyster' tavern from midnight onwards. She had arrived only a few minutes before, and explained that all

would soon be revealed. If they agree to leave him alone, he agrees not to mention their involvement.

Pioni: This strange woman is now back to her usual activities (p47), having made her revenge through a horrible curse on the woman who engineered her maltreatment. However, apparently she is still asking around to try and identify the brigands who manhandled her across town. However, nobody knows who they were, since they were not familiar faces and it was dark. Since the instigator of her degradation has been punished, given time she may give up her quest for retribution. Or (in a Kaiin campaign) recompense may be required.

Angar Glams: This successful bandit leader has nothing to fear from the characters. He is only loosely associated with Vyejuar in this enterprise; hoping to reap the rewards of involvement, but secretly expecting it all to go wrong. The PCs might form some kind of relationship with him if they impress him with tenaciousness or spirit.

The Vlark: Best the characters do not return to Canal Town for a while. However, The Vlark is not one to bear grudges for minor infringements. Still, if anyone upset him greatly (in the playtest he was injured) this character is most well off never to venture back without a good disguise.

The Silver Tray: The playtest characters caused quite a ruckus here. Staff were assaulted, and miscreants chased across the district. All characters not adept at Imposture will need to steer clear of this area for at least a few weeks, or risk recognition by staff or patrons. (Certainly if they go to the Silver Tray, recognition will be assured within a short time.) However, unless you are of an unusual appearance, after a few weeks the District may be entered with relative safety. (Presuming minimal efforts are made to disguise one's appearance: a new hat, different clothes and hair-style.) Sensible folk will not only alter their appearance, but also wait at least 2 months before returning to the Silver Tray.



Tag-Lines for the Adventure of the Exasperating Cadaver

(We took three 4-hour sessions in the playtest. If your players explore all the options it might take four sessions, and you may need to reconsider the distribution of these offerings. Ideally, cut out each character's selection prior to play and pass them over. Should you have less than six characters then the remainder are spares to distribute as you see fit - or use in another scenario.)

SESSION ONE

Character 1

"Perhaps we might resolve this unusual situation to our joint advantage."

"Whilst you may wish to spend the Earth's last days in idle speculation, I have more pressing activities in mind."

"I entered this employment against my better judgement, and disclaim all responsibility."

Character 2

"Cease this pointless ballyrook, we have a task to accomplish!"

"The stories that all the folk of Kaiin dwell in magnificent mansions are clearly an exaggeration."

"I was merely conversing with these furtive fellows as I passed by. Surely you can see by the poor quality of their attire that I am not their associate?"

Character 3

"I am not convinced that we should interfere in matters that do not concern us."

"Your manner is not one to inspire me to immediate confidence in such proposals."

"By day these streets may bustle and hum with life, but by night an air of imminent peril hangs in the musty air."

Character 4

"I am accustomed to far greater compensation for my labours, and my zeal cannot be guaranteed."

"I wonder if such things are commonplace in this town of decadent fancies?"

"Be not alarmed; I for one will never disclose that I witnessed such bumbling incompetence."

Character 5

"Place of education! Pah! 'Tis no more than a hotbed of debauchery and drunkenness!"

"Think nothing of it, your mistake is understandable. In fact, it is already no more than a memory."

"Lend me your ears; I have a plan of uncompromising deviousness."

Character 6

"They are possessed of peculiar habits, these city folk."

"I have undertaken stranger tasks in my day, but the list is short."

"You anticipated the very course of action I had fully formulated quite some time ago."



SESSION TWO

Character 1

"I am accustomed to the finer things in life, and thus feel unqualified to venture an opinion."

"Pass me the gaming pieces at once; my palms itch with an insatiable fervour."

"It is not right that a creature should possess such a proliferation of appendages!"

Character 2

"My fingers twitch in anticipation of significant mutual profit."

"I must declare that such decadence appeals to my finer nature."

"Though we travel thither and yon about the world, I observe that some circumstances remain annoyingly constant."

Character 3

"If my associate has caused offence, I recommend that you step outside and resolve the matter like gentlemen."

"One day I shall dwell in such an imposing edifice; the fates have decreed it."

"I can take no more; let us bide a while and partake of bread and ale."

Character 4

"I require inebriating beverages; no alternative is conceivable."

"I fear that we are pursued by an entity both massive and ravenous."

"I am a person of unusual integrity; to take me into custody would be a grave injustice."

Character 5

"Despite this predicament, I feel in my bones that Mandingo the three-eyed goddess of luck smiles upon us."

"You cannot intimidate me merely with a bluff tone and shiny buttons!"

"What harm can it afford us to venture a small wager or two?"

Character 6

"Please disregard my companion's remarks; raised in poor circumstance he occasionally articulates prior to engaging his faculties."

"One day this will make a fine tale. With luck I will remain alive to enjoy it."

"To my mind the fates clearly treat us with gross contempt this night."



SESSION THREE

Character 1

"The only clear option is to stride boldly on. I for one prefer my blood unboiled."

"Normally I would engage a withering rejoinder; however, I find your comments unworthy of such efforts."

"Who would have thought such a thing? I am baffled, bemused, and more than a tad perplexed."

Character 2

"In the name of Kraan, what is that foul being?"

"I had hitherto suspected such dishonour, but failed to observe it due to your expertise at obfuscation."

"On reflection I heartily wish that I had chosen less taxing employment."

Character 3

"I am convinced that persons of our capabilities can easily overcome such trifling setbacks."

"Words fail me. Perhaps we might resolve the issue through swift and violent action?"

"My senses are compromised by strange odours."

Character 4

"Our wisest course of action is surely to depart at speed."

"I stand upon the verge of unmitigated vexation."

"I am formulating a new method of greeting for our quarry. It is not strictly affable."

Character 5

"Your ill-conceived actions necessitate specific compensation!"

"I am beginning to suspect that we are merely pawns in some peculiar stratagem."

"My skin crawls with revulsion at the merest suggestion of such an encounter."

Character 6

"This surely is a most peculiar set of circumstances to find ourselves in."

"My impression of our quarry so far is not one to inspire the deepest of confidence."

"Do my eyes deceive me, or does that gentleman bear a striking resemblance to the greater carnivorous keak?"