

TM

# JADETECH

red jade



Jacob Possin

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# JADETECH™

**red jade**

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*Jadetech: Red Jade*

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## Flashpoint

"How many rounds do we have left?" Shen flicked his wrist, dropping six hot brass casings out of his revolver and into the dust at his feet.

The sailor held up three bullets. "This is it."

"And how many thugs are there?"

Alistair chanced a glance over the rim of rock which shielded him from the thugs below. He had an empty rifle between his knees. Shen assumed that like most Aeorishmen, the boy was comforted by the mere presence of the gun. "Twelve I think? Thirteen maybe? One of them might not be as wounded as he thinks he is."

Shen smiled bleakly. "No one said bandits were the braver sort. Give the bullets here"

The sailor shook his head. "Three bullets isn't going to kill twelve bandits. Don't care what kind of trick-shot traveling show you're in. Unless you've got more of that green jade brew hidden somewhere, I don't think I'm gonna be able to handle the other nine even if you take out three of them."

"I'll handle it." Shen put out a hand and the sailor dutifully dropped the last three cartridges into it. In the four weeks since their escape from Daiyu Mountain Labor Camp, Alistair and the sailor were all that were left of their merry band. By twos and threes the escapees had set off home in various directions through lush, trackless valleys and over jagged Túyangan peaks. It made sense. When it came to being hunted there was weakness in numbers. After a stretch in Daiyu, Shen, Alistair, and the sailor were the only three crazy enough to risk going back to Kausao City.

So far they had avoided the monstrous beasts that had made the Túyangan interior so famous. Apparently high ground and fires at night were enough to keep them at bay. What Shen hadn't counted on were the roaming bands of brigands. A running three day fight with the latest group now left them cornered.

Shen pulled his tool roll out of his pack and slipped off the leather bindings. It was one of the few extra items he had allowed himself to carry when they set out from the prison. With a pair of pliers in each hand, and a small patch of polishing silk beneath, Shen twisted the lead slug out of each casing, tipping the red jade powder into the silk. "It's a good thing the prison didn't get any new shipments of ammunition in the past decade. They don't even make bullets with powder anymore."

The sailor watched in puzzlement. "So now we have no cartridges?"

Shen smiled again. "We have something better. I need the grease can from last night."



The sailor pulled the battered tin can out of his jangling cookpack and Shen fingered out a handful, pressing it into the silk on top of the red jade powder. He gathered up the four corners of the silk and twisted. In a moment, the cooking grease and red jade was a hard little mass within the soft piece of cloth. Shen unfolded the silk and took a stick, pushing it through one side and out the other, leaving a hollow through the center. "Your flask?"

"You need my gin?"

"Yes."

The sailor frowned. "How much?"

Shen put out his hand. "You want to die out here?"

The sailor sighed and handed over his hip flask. "Leave me enough for a last drink, okay?"

"When this is over, I expect the bandits will have a few extra bottles they won't need."

Shen set the jade ball to one side, and filled two of the empty casings with alcohol. Taking another finger of grease, he sealed the tops and shoved the casings back to back into the center of the mass of jade and filled in the hole. Finally, he took a twig, snapped it in half and shoved both sides into the stoppered holes. Shen held it up for inspection. "Who wants to throw it?"

Alistair spoke up. "That'd be me. They didn't call me the Stickbat Terror of Refinery Row for nothing."

Shen handed it over. "Don't touch the twigs."

Together, the three men crept to the edge of the rock. Below, the bandits were sitting comfortably around a small fire, a bottle passing from hand to hand. They seemed content to wait until their quarry came to them. Without warning, Alistair stood to his full height, pulled back and flung the greasy mass of jade in a high arc. It landed next to the fire with a splat.

A bandit stood up to investigate. Suddenly the fire snapped out of existence as if smothered. A second later the circle of stunned men seemed to freeze in place, shudder, then go limp. Shen ducked back behind the ledge just as a deafening explosion rocked the bandit camp. There was a wet thud and he glanced up to see a severed hand, blue and icy in the dust next to his face. There was a moment of tense silence. Finally the sailor cleared his throat. "What, by Great Ehal and all his prophets, was that?"

Shen stood, dusting himself. "Red jade is a catalyst. Your evaporating gin pulled heat out of the air and the red jade followed suit. It can only hold so much energy though. With nowhere to go, it exploded."

Alistair looked like was going to be sick. "Let's not do that ever again."

Shen patted the boy on the shoulder. "No one said the jade made us more civilized."







## Welcome to the Jadetech Series

Jadetech defines the world of *Jadepunk*. It shapes everyday life and allows for a level of technology and understanding far beyond what would otherwise be possible. At its core, jade defies the laws that are considered the normal laws of nature. Any attempt to codify these exceptions to the natural order in any but the loosest of ways has failed. Many philosophers hold that jade—and by extension, Jadetech—is proof that the universe is unknowable in any way beyond the superficial. Others maintain the hope that some underlying principle or series of principles will emerge and explain the jade phenomena with some sort of grand, unified law.

### What is Red Jade?

Next to green jade, red is the second most common form of jade in the world. It is volatile and unstable, even in its natural form. Red jade is consuming and explosive, energetic and dynamic. The lands where it is found are often unwelcoming and unstable, from barren deserts to volcanoes and sulfur pits. Red jade is at once simple to use yet difficult to control. It is easily powdered and purified, but making alloys and other complex forms of red jade is dangerous and requires great skill. When taken internally, red jade enhances courage and physical might, and it fills one's heart with passions and emotions far stronger and more volatile than normal. Red jade is most notably used in engines and generators of varying design—it has proved to be a valuable energy source. It is red jade that powers the technology used in the great red steam engines and the massive refineries of Kausao City.

### History of Red Jade

Red jade was the first jade to reveal its secrets to man. Even after hundreds of years of improving the methods, though, refining red jade is a dangerous and difficult task. The story of the discovery of red jade's properties is an old one, as old as Jadetech itself. In the hills and wadis of the north-eastern region of what is currently controlled by Naramel, a small city, Truva, existed on the edge of several larger civilizations. In those days jade was viewed as merely a pretty stone sometimes shaped into ingots and used as currency. A humble blacksmith, called Temujin, was counting his ingots when he dropped a red jade ingot in the bloomery's charcoal. He tried to retrieve it, but was unable to find the small piece of red jade. The next time Temujin lit and stoked the fire it rapidly became far hotter than the simple brick structure could handle, culminating in a massive explosion that nearly killed the smith. Temujin realized there was a connection to his lost ingot and began to experiment with the jade. When used properly it allowed for fires to reach tremendous temperatures, unheard of with the old methods. This allowed for better metal work and stronger finished products. For a long while this secret stayed with Temujin and within the city of Truva. However secrets like that cannot last, and the secret of the jade began to spread, all along the northern trade routes. Naramel and the Aerum Empire were the most affected by these new ideas, quickly utilizing red jade as well as the other jades available. This new form of



trade was the first inevitable step to the four great nations dominating the world, economically and militarily.

Though that might just be a story, it is known that red jade's properties were discovered by the Tuyang, the Naramel, and the Aerish at roughly the same time, and they were all connected via that trade route.

### Truva

Truva is an ancient city— it has been conquered and rebuilt at least five times in the last thousand years. It sits in the southern edge of the only pass through the Xibu Bati mountain range, connecting Naramel and Túyang. The town was once a major power in the region, and many classic stories mention its wealth and military might; however, it has long since fallen in power and prestige in the world. It was used as an Aerish fortress city, a Gahul trade port, a Kushmet principality, and now finally a Kshatra (a semi independent province) of the Naramel. The current Val, or Administrator, is Carcihme III, a thorough supporter of his master's back in Sursut. He is aware of his tenuous position in the city and the world at large. Truva is the center of the Naramel's attempts to stir up the Nahdisan against the threat of the Kushmet.

Early uses for red jade were fairly limited. Since refining it to a powder is relatively safe and simple, it was used in that manner for over a hundred years with little advancement. Red jade fueled fires and powered explosives. It was thought to be the most limited of all the jades. Then around the time Kausao was founded a Kaiyumi alchemist by the name of Tadamori began work on something new. He discovered a way to alloy and refine the solid form of red jade. This breakthrough changed the very landscape of industry and travel. Rather than using up the precious jade resources, this made long term use, and made the creation of things such as engines and generators possible. Since that day, red Jadetech has been a growing field, though it is still mainly used for its explosive and heating properties.



## Refinement

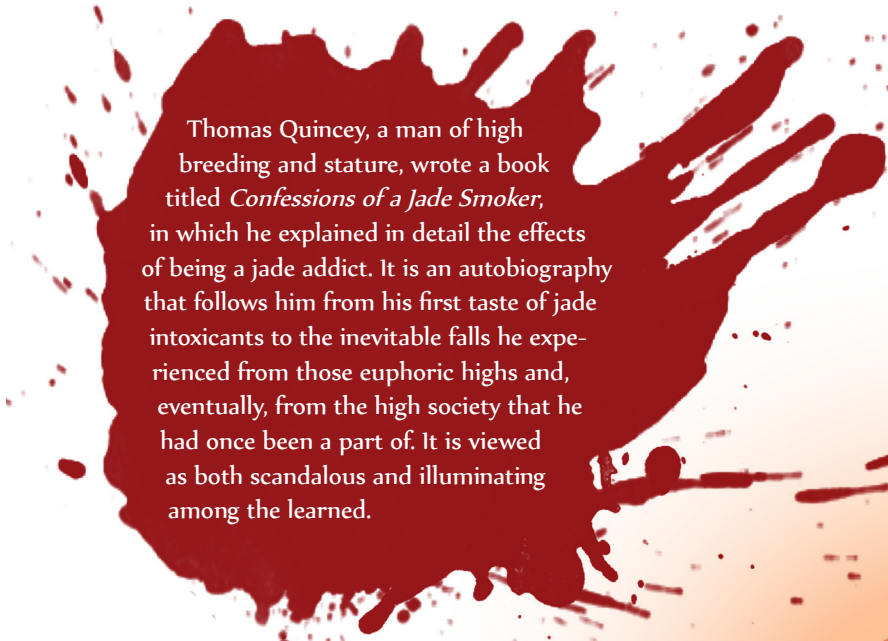
Red jade is only found in some of the most difficult terrain in the world. Deserts and volcanoes are the most common areas one can find surface red jade. It easily fractures and shatters, leaving razor sharp jade fragments behind.

While other jades must be heated intensely to refine them, red jade requires a delicate balance of both heat and cold with very stable conditions. Its temperature must be lowered to freezing and then raised to boiling repeatedly over the course of a week, all while keeping it still and silent. If the raw jade is subject to a loud noise or experiences too much of a shock during temperature changes, the resulting refined jade will be dangerously flawed. Not surprisingly, the burnout rate for alchemists who work with red jade is four times higher than alchemists that refine

- any other form of jade.

## Quality of Life Uses

Red jade has an indirect effect on the lives of most folk. Miners utilize it to precisely blast in the mines, ships can transport goods and people further and faster, and factories and refineries are powered by great dynamos and generators fueled by red jade. In Kausao City the streets of the powerful are often lit by red jade lamps, casting a scarlet hue through the shifting smoke and fog. Aside from those major uses, red jade is most often seen in the hands of gangsters and the guard; their clockwork weapons use red jade ammunition. Red jade infused drugs are common and relatively cheap, and red jade dependance is on the rise in the poorer sections of the city.



Thomas Quincey, a man of high breeding and stature, wrote a book titled *Confessions of a Jade Smoker*, in which he explained in detail the effects of being a jade addict. It is an autobiography that follows him from his first taste of jade intoxicants to the inevitable falls he experienced from those euphoric highs and, eventually, from the high society that he had once been a part of. It is viewed as both scandalous and illuminating among the learned.

Red jade is most commonly seen in the engines of great ships, both in the sky and at sea. The heat and steam that flow from these ships is often viewed in equal parts disgust at its ugliness and delight at the symbol of progress. Red jade engines propel the craft at far higher speeds than either blue or white engines, though their is greater risk and less control over pure red jade impellers. Often ships will use red jade to augment the mechanical impeller of an engine made from a different kind of jade. Even with their red jade screws, paddles, or turbines, these ships are still slower than those that use red jade engines , but they have much more control and assurance of safety.

Other common uses for red jade are in explosives and ranged weaponry. When its properties were first encountered, red jade was ground into a powder and used to launch primitive lead or stone balls great distances. This was grossly inefficient as it used up the red jade far too swiftly. The invention of the red jade casing changed the face of ammunition forever. The red jade still had explosive capacities, but in alloying it with brass the gunsmiths were able to create a reusable propellant. This led to the invention of the revolving chambers now commonly in use in all clockwork weapons. The ability to rapidly reload and to reuse the casings opened the door for the widespread adoption of these weapons throughout the world.

### **The Cliff Guns of Kausao City**

The massive cliff forts that defend Kausao Bay are outfitted with the most advanced and powerful cannons in the world. They can hit targets far into the horizon with accuracy and force. These defensive gun emplacements are designed to deal with threats from both sea and sky. These weapons require teams of soldiers to maintain and fire properly. To get past the guns, one's ship must have the proper markings and flags, as well as the correct passphrases over the heliograph. Without those, the ship must attempt to bluff their way through. The difficulty for faking the flags is between Good (+3) and Fantastic (+6), depending on the nation that you are trying to represent. To falsify the heliograph codes it requires a difficulty Great (+4) to Legendary (+8) roll depending on circumstances. You can possibly get around this, however, depending on the weather and the type of ship you are piloting.

Red jade is connected with consumption, passion, and energy. While it is not often used in artistic expression directly, many great artists have used it to keep themselves awake and active long after they should have collapsed in utter exhaustion. It enhances passion and grants energy, allowing some artist to achieve greatness far beyond what they believe themselves capable of.





Among the faithful of the Church of Ehal, red jade is viewed as the most dangerous and volatile of Ehal's gifts to mankind. The many factions within the religion each have their own views as to the uses and taboos of uses of red jade. The followers of the Way of Suffering often speak out against the subversive use of jade. Red in particular is viewed as dangerous and evil. In inciting passion it stands against the true Path. Pathists see it as the positive qi in purely physical form. Too much can be a bad thing, but in moderation it is a boon to the harmonious soul. Among the followers of the Old Gods red jade has an interesting use. When one has achieved a great feat in life and brought favor to his or her household, it is viewed as only right and proper that the honored individual's body be preserved for all time. Red jade powders are used upon the body to fully desiccate the corpse and preserve it from moisture and corruption forever. These mummified remains are then placed in the family's ancestral home, to watch over them for all time.

Among the Scraen, red jade is viewed as the symbol of Methion Bhet, the holy protector of the people. Every winter during the equinox they hold the great fire festival where they celebrate red jade and its protective nature. The traditions tend to vary between differing bands, but all of the celebrations end with the consumption of Tafia, fermented plum wine, mixed with powdered red jade. This drink is also used to celebrate births and marriages among the Scraen. It is viewed as a sacrament and a sign of prosperity to come.

## Complications

Red jade that is not properly refined has a tendency to lead to catastrophic failure. When they break, red jade devices do not break simply. Many are the soldiers with improperly refined red jade casings who are taken out by their own weapons. Red jade also has a tendency to glow far more than other types of jade, making it tricky to use undetected. When a red jade device has been continually in use for a great deal of time, it can become extremely hot. This is less of an issue with steam engines as the water can help alleviate this condition, but in some cases devices have been known to become white hot, scorching the air, melting metal, and turning the dirt to glass.

When used internally, red jade causes an increase in passions and appetites. It also shortens one's temper and increases irritability. Red jade dependency can occur after much use, or overuse, of temporary red jade boosts. Early on the user feels awake and aware, far beyond the norm. As the use continues, the user begins to require red jade to function, often going for days without rest. In the late stages of dependency the user requires jade just to remain at all active. Should they simply quit using red jade, without gradually stepping back on their intake, the user will fall into a deep and lasting sleep. Dependant users often fail to ever wake from this sleep.

## Red Jadetech Assets

### Offensive Red Jadetech

#### Red Jade Knucklers

Crafted for those who wish to do massive damage with their bare hands, knucklers are metal grips with a red jade plate over the front of the fist. The user strikes with explosive force that is impossible to block and difficult to dodge.

*Function Aspect: Red Jade Knucklers*  
*Features: Focus 1 (Fighter +1), Harmful 1*  
*Flaws: Situational (must be wearing the knucklers and striking with your fists)*  
*Cost: 1 refresh*



#### Explosives

There are several types of explosive in use throughout the world. Usually they are split into two categories; military explosives and civilian explosives. Military explosives are able to break through man-made defenses and large groups of men equally well. They are designed for the purpose of doing large amounts of damage to the largest amount of people. Civilian explosives are usually used for construction and mining, and so are aimed at being more controlled and directed. You treat both as a created asset, since generally speaking one does not use the same explosive device twice. Here are some sample red jade explosives:





### Grenade

A weapon designed to inflict shrapnel damage about thirty feet out from where it is thrown.

*Function Aspect: Handheld Red Jade Explosive*  
*Features: Exceptional (attack everything in the zone)*  
*Flaws: At least two, based on the creation roll*

### Heat Bomb:

A red jade shard that absorbs heat from the environment around it, freezing everything and then exploding. The act of freezing the objects and people before exploding greatly enhances the damage of the device.

*Function Aspect: Red Jade Heat Bomb*  
*Features: Exceptional (attack everything in a zone), Harmful 2*  
*Flaws: At least two, based on the creation roll*

### Glass Cannon

A favorite of desert nomads, bandits, and explorers. This weapon requires very little. Simply load it with sand, and it converts that sand into glass shards that it fires at a great velocity. Its main flaw is that armored opponents often take very little damage from this weapon. However, there are many stories of adventurers exploring the hidden desert regions that mentions this weapon's value as a survival tool.

*Function Aspect: Red Jade Glass Cannon*  
*Features: Aspect (There is Ammo Everywhere), Harmful 1*  
*Flaws: Situational (requires sand)*  
*Cost: 1 refresh*

### Red Jade Holdout Pistol

A small clockwork pistol that holds only one round at a time. It can be easily concealed on one's body and thus is a favorite for those who wish to go armed to even the most civil and genteel of events.

*Function Aspect: Concealed Red Jade Firearm*  
*Features: Aspect (Easily Hidden), Harmful 1*  
*Flaws: Demanding (it takes one action to reload after every shot)*  
*Cost: 1 refresh*



### Carcal Officer's Pistol

The gun that defined how all modern guns are viewed. It is known for its reliability and its accuracy—the best gunslingers swear by this pistol. It is usually known by its nickname, “The Equalizer.” The design comes in several different calibers, and in addition, Carcal makes a repeating rifle that utilizes the same rounds. It has become well known on the frontier as a solid weapon for hunting and defense.

*Function Aspect: Red jade Clockwork Pistol*  
*Features: Harmful 3, Aspect (Reliable and Easy to Maintain)*  
*Flaws: Demanding (requires a turn to reload after firing several shots)*  
*Cost: 2 refresh*



### Red Jade Casings

The invention of the reusable red jade casing allowed for a great many interesting new developments in ammunition. Bullets of varying type were designed to utilize the red jade casings. If your character is a gunsmith or alchemist you can design these bullets as a temporary asset. Just remember that harmful and other features cannot be stacked.

*Explosive ammunition: These bullets explode when they strike their target.*  
*Function Aspect: Red Jade Explosive Bullets*  
*Features: Exceptional (attack everything in the zone you are firing into)*  
*Flaws: at least two, based on creation roll*

## Utility Jadetech Devices

### Black Smoker

Originally it was an attempt to create a miniaturized smokeless steam engine, but it failed, and this is the result. It is a small red jade device that fits in the palm of the hand. When it is wound up it produces an oily, black smoke that clings to the ground and obscures all vision, taste, and smell. The prototype was stolen and has been used several times in the last year in robberies and assaults.

*Function Aspect: Red Jade Smoke Machine*

*Features: Exceptional (fills surroundings with thick smoke; when invoking aspects related to concealing smelly smoke you gain a +3 rather than a +2), Focus 2 (Scoundrel +2)*

*Flaws: Situational (Scoundrel bonus can only be used when evading detection), Consuming (spend a fate point to create a cloud of smoke with the device)*

*Cost: 1 refresh*

### Handheld Heating Element

A small device that warms the whole body when held in the hand. It is very useful for winter survival; it is often used by explorers and travellers as they brave treacherous mountain passes and deep, frosted valleys.

*Function Aspect: Red Jade Portable Heater*

*Features: Exceptional (ignore any obstacles related to being cold; automatically succeed to overcome cold)*

*Flaws: Demanding 2 (requires a +2 Engineer roll to activate and takes a turn to do so)*

*Cost: 1*

### Snake's Eye Tattoo

In the deep Naramel Desert, a group of bandits, the Sand Vipers, have plied

their trade for over two hundred years. Now more a rogue clan than a bandit gang, the Vipers have developed their own traditions and techniques for surviving in the harsh desert. Recently they have developed a new jade tattoo. Using red jade, they tattoo the glyph of the viper over their eye. This grants to them a form of heat vision. They can roam even in the moonless night, as they see the heat of every living thing. The desert has become far more dangerous since the invention of this tattoo—the Vipers now

strike in the dark without sound or warning, fading away swiftly into the sands that protect them.

*Function Aspect: Red Jade Ocular Tattoo*

*Features: Exceptional (can see the heat, rather than the visible spectrum)*

*Flaws: Troubling (Serpent's Avarice), Situational (can only see heat at night)*

*Cost: 1 refresh*



## Gaspar's Bow

Named after the great and eccentric violin maker, Lemuel Gaspar. Prior to his death twenty years ago, Gaspar delved deeply into music and Jadetech. He made many advances in the use of Jadetech, and even more claims of greater discoveries. His violins are the finest ever crafted, though he only ever combined jade with violin craft in one known case. The violin itself was lost to time, but the bow yet remains. Throughout its short history it has left a string of madness, despair, and genius. When used to play a violin, this bow seems to enhance the moods of those listening. There have been riots, mass suicides, and even one political coup, all within earshot of a violinist using this bow. Crafted from imported Bucco wood, which was used for its strength and flexibility, the bow is strung with strands of red jade. Even to this day, no one knows how Gaspar crafted string from red jade that was capable of replacing the traditional bow hair.

*Function Aspect: Red Jade Violin Bow*

*Features: Focus 4 (Aristocrat +4)*

*Flaws: Situational (only to incite passion while playing the violin)*

*Cost: 2 refresh*

### The Chaos Portfolio

During his life, Lemuel Gaspar was obsessed with jade and music. Over the years, rumors began to spread of his mystical and theoretical works. Of these the Chaos Portfolio was considered the most powerful and dangerous. It is said to contain the designs for jade instruments, enough for a full orchestra, as well as a grand symphony that they are to play. Rumors abound among those with a mystical or musical bent on what would happen should those instruments play that symphony. Most agree it would be powerful and near cataclysmic in nature. Some even speculate that to play it would be to end the world, and a far more rational and mathematically sound one would be built in its place. Needless to say, should the portfolio ever appear, many power-hungry men and women would do nearly anything to obtain it.

# JADEPUNK™ TALES

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