

Based on the Dying Earth book series by JACK VANCE

The Kaiin Player's Guide™

A supplement for the DYING EARTH RPG

Written by Robin D. Laws

*“Kaiin! Kaiin! O my dashed hopes!”
— anonymous, refrain from popular song*



TURIAN hesitated, then opened his eyes. It was night in white-walled Kaiin, and festival time. Orange lanterns floated in the air, moving as the breeze took them. From the balconies dangled flower chains and cages of blue fire-flies. The streets surged with the wine-flushed populace, costumed in a multitude of bizarre modes. Here was a Melantine bargeman, here a warrior of Valdaran's Green Legion, here another of ancient times wearing one of the old helmets. In a little cleared space a garlanded courtesan of the Kauchique littoral danced the Dance of the Fourteen Silken Movements to the music of flutes. In the shadow of a balcony a girl barbarian of East Almery embraced a man blackened and in leather harness as a Deodand of the forest. They were gay, these people of waning Earth, feverishly merry, for infinite night was close at hand, when the red sun should finally flicker and go black...

Jack Vance, *The Dying Earth*



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With thanks to Jack Vance



*“By taking this from you now, I protect you from
those who would seize it by force.”*

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Chapter 1

How To Use This Book



THE DECADENT, WHITE-WALLED CITY OF KAIIN, the largest in fabled Ascolais, makes a superb home base for any group of Dying Earth characters, whether they be Cugel-level ne'er-do-wells, Turjan-level adventurers, or Rhialto-level Arch-Magicians. *The Kaiin Player's Guide* tells you, the player, what your character knows as a long-time resident of, or frequent visitor to, this city of marvels.

This introductory section brims with vital advice, and the occasional dire warning, directed to the sagacious reader of *The Kaiin Player's Guide*. Purchasers more impetuous than yourself may heedlessly flip past it, assuming that it consists of the usual aggregation of self-congratulation, statements of the obvious, and standard text clipped from previous books, all decorated with spare illustrations that didn't really match the passages they were intended to illustrate. While this is often a necessary procedure when dealing with books published by our rival roleplaying publishers, in the case at hand, no mistake could be more grave! *The Kaiin Player's Guide* employs a deviously innovative approach to the usual divide between material aimed at players, and that intended for GM use only. Acquaint yourself with it now, or face inevitable bafflement.

WARNING: There Is No Kaiin GM's Guide

*The foolish reader may further assume that *The Kaiin Player's Guide* must be a companion volume to an even thicker and more lavish GM's book, in which various secrets are revealed and game statistics are provided. Let us take some time, when next we gather together at the wine table, to deride this hypothetical person. Although this book, for laudably shrewd commercial reasons, is labelled for player use, it also doubles as the only information source a GM will require to run years of adventures set in Kaiin.*

For Players

Whether you're just beginning a *Dying Earth* series or are already well embarked on one, the amenities of Kaiin should exert a siren lure on your character. Roleplaying characters naturally gravitate towards cities. They crave a home base of some sort – a place where they can rest and heal up between dangerous exploits, where they can store their hard-earned terces, and where rumors of new and profitable activities might be easily gleaned. After spending countless sessions traipsing across reeking fens, foraging in barren and wintry forests, or sailing on the waters of some turbulent sea, they'll yearn for the amenities of a large and various city. They can leave behind the slope-browed sub-humans, proudly ignorant villagers and treacherous hermits of their far-flung travels, in favor of the well-supplied merchants, learned savants and perfumed pleasure slaves of



Kaiin. PCs who behave like scholarly homebodies may see the city as a oasis of calm and tranquility. However, those whose tastes lead them to explore the city's countless nooks and crannies will find opportunities for both profit and danger so abundant that they can have their fill of death-defying excitement without ever venturing outside the city's famous walls.



The Voice Of This Book

You may be expecting us to do the obvious thing, as so many of our competitors might, and present this tome as a real document from the city, albeit one blessed with abundant illustrations and the fruits of state-of-the-art desktop publishing software. This stratagem is a time-honored one, which conveys the flavor of a world, while coincidentally making easy the freelance writer's essential task of inflating his word count¹.

However, the purpose of this book is to give you the sense that your characters know Kaiin as well as you do your own hometown or longtime place of residence. If you've lived for years in Toledo, Ohio², you wouldn't need to read a guidebook to familiarize yourself with the place. Your guidebook would be the years of memories and experiences you've accumulated while living there. To duplicate this effect, the other chapters in this book are written in the second person, with the assumption that "you" is your character. For example:

You've learned to be wary during the regatta, as its crowds act as a magnet for pickpockets, many of whom belong to the notorious Umpvold family, which has lost more members to the prince's deodand pit than any other criminal group in the city.

Obviously, not every single PC in your group had the exact same experiences in Kaiin before the series started. Most of the material is stated generally, so that they reflect basic background knowledge rather than highly specific events in your past history. When you do run across a reference that seems overly specific to

you, treat it as a flourish of creative license, not as an addition we've unilaterally made to your character background.

Similarly, apply a grain of salt to references that seem out of keeping with your particular character. If you've established that your PC is not only averse to crowds but deathly afraid of boats, chances are that he never personally attended the regatta. Presumably, he learned about the pickpocketing Umpvolds through some other means. The GM will never use this book as "proof" about your past history: the use of the second person is merely a device, and isn't meant to be taken absolutely literally.

Perusal During Play

GMs are sometimes trained to prevent their players from referring to rulebooks while a game is in progress. In some cases, this is entirely appropriate: if your character knows nothing about the exotic creatures of the Great Erm, you shouldn't get to whip out the rulebook and flip to the section on erbs and leucomorphs as soon as your character broaches the boundaries of that forbidding land. Such gratuitous



Although both are found in the Great Erm the leucomorph must be dealt with very differently from the gid.

¹ Fortunately, the Dying Earth format permits the copious use of footnotes, so that the author deprived of the chance to write in character nevertheless retains other weapons in his arsenal.

² A gruesome thought, but please bear with us for the sake of the example.



book-consultation jarringly breaks the mood, reminding us of the distinction between player and character when we should be forgetting it.

However, in the instance of the *The Kaiin Player's Guide*, we encourage GMs to allow you to refer to it as often as you like. Here we have the opposite case, where your character knows much more about the city he lives in than you do. So when you look things up in this book, what you're really doing is saving your GM the trouble of doing the same. Instead of asking her where the city's apothecaries are located, you can look it up yourself, in the handy reference starting on p180. Without having to bother her, you can find what you're looking for and tell her your character is on his way there. She may even ask you to read out the relevant passage, or perhaps just hand her the book so she can peruse it herself.

In addition to shops, you should also feel perfectly free to look for rumors to investigate, personages to interact with, and places of interest to explore.

Rumors

Were it possible to summon up a sense of ideological fervor in these last dying days of the sun, we might take this opportunity to proclaim that the *The Kaiin Player's Guide* is more than just a sourcebook: it is a manifesto for player liberation! No longer must you meekly submit to your GM's choice of plot hooks at the beginning of each new adventure. Instead, you can scan the chapters of this book at your idle leisure, looking for the section on rumors in each neighborhood description. Make a note of the rumors that seem interesting to you. When your character next finds himself at loose ends in Kaiin, send him off to investigate one of these rumors³. Don't worry that this forces your GM to improvise: the game system, with its simple game statistics and off-the-cuff GMC creation, is designed to make it especially easy for GMs to make it up as she goes along. In fact, if she's like most GMs, she'll be happy to avoid the effort of dreaming up a plot hook that matters to your character. Adventures motivated by the PCs' specific desires are almost always more memorable than ones that treat the characters as interchangeable figures with generic goals. So treat the rumor sections as catalogues of possible adventures, using them to take the reins of the series into your own hands.



Players of Rhialto-level characters should note that most of the rumors will be beneath their interest. They can solve most of the petty mysteries of the everyday city with a mere wave of their hands — or rather, a peremptory command to their favored sandestins. For them, the investigation of rumors is more a matter of entertaining diversion between adversaries truly capable of disturbing their sense of composure, such as archvults or their colleagues in Ildefonse's conclave.

Contacts

With the exception of the occasional embittered shut-in, most people who live in cities for long periods of time develop a range of contacts, people who they know casually and encounter occasionally. They may be clients, merchants, innkeepers, armorers, librarians, academics, bodyguards, assayers, drinking partners, courtesans, or anyone else your character might know by name and have repeat dealings with, without forming any great emotional tie or binding formal relationship.

³ Especially clever players will ensure that the taglines they choose will match up with the sorts of adventures they expect the rumors to lead towards.



Using Your Contacts

In general, your contacts move the plot forward without solving any truly major problems for you. To understand how best to use them, you'll need to look for a moment at the way GMs structure adventures⁴. An adventure is just a series of obstacles for you and the other players to overcome.

For example, you might need to persuade the mermelants to find the beer to give to the madman so he'll tell you why the ghosts haunt the bridge, so you can confront and exorcise them, getting the deed from the city official.

Each step in the above example is a separate obstacle in the adventure⁵. You know you've overcome one because it leads you to the next, until you reach the final obstacle, the adventure climax. Unless the GM has taken pity on you because you're stuck and can't seem to get past the current obstacle, she'll never let you solve a problem just by calling on a contact. However, contacts can reduce the time you spend flailing about between obstacles. They most often provide information.

You know you need to find mermelants, and don't know where to start looking for them. You use the contact rules to show that your character has a teamster contact. Mermelants are talkative, beery beasts of burden, and a cart owner is likely to either own mermelants, or know someone who does. Your contact doesn't help you persuade the mermelants (that's an obstacle) but he can move you to the obstacle by telling you where to find them.

In some cases, contacts may perform other minor services that your character needs in order to get to the next obstacle.

The madman lives at the bottom of a well. When you get to him with the beer, you discover that your next obstacle is a physical one: the hermit lives at the bottom of a ruined well, and you need to climb down to meet him without dropping any

of the bottles. The ruined well is near the Old Town, a disreputable part of town where honest merchants fear to tread. You check the CONTACTS section for that neighborhood, and use the rules below to show that you have a petty criminal as a contact. You find him, and he loans you some rope. He hasn't solved the problem for you — he certainly isn't climbing down any wells! — but he's brought you closer to solving it yourself.



For all but one neighborhood of Kaiin, this book provides a list of possible contacts. These are the people your character might know who live or work in that area. Whenever you find that you need help moving ahead to the next obstacle, flip to the chapter describing the neighborhood you're in⁶. Find its contact list. Keeping in mind the kind of help you need, decide which of the possible contacts on the list might provide it. Be prepared to think creatively; dreaming up elaborate rationalizations is part of the fun.

The list of contacts for The Fringe of Old Town doesn't immediately yield any likely rope-owners. To convince your GM that your criminal friend might have rope, you argue: "Thrubian has been

4 The same principles hold true whether the GM is improvising, running a prepared adventure of her own creation, or is using a published scenario.

5 Only rarely will you know all of the obstacles in advance. In an improvised adventure, your GM may not know all of them ahead of time, either.

6 Or one close to it. In some cases, your GM may allow you to cross the city in search of a relevant contact, but only when she can easily ignore the extra time this would realistically require.



involved in a number of kidnappings, and is always ready to tie someone up at a moment's notice." Your GM accepts your suggestion, mostly because it's amusing.

Note how this process involves you in creating details about the contact; you've become an accomplice to the GM as she fleshes out her series and her version of Kaiin. If you're good at creating suitably Vancian-sounding names, feel free to invent the contact's name, along with any other colorful details⁷.

Then (assuming that your GM has accepted your justification) your character must actually locate the contact. The GM may make this as easily done as said, or could add amusing complications to your adventure by adding a minor obstacle or two to your efforts.

When you mention Thrubian, your GM looks at her watch. Unbeknownst to you, she planned a series of scenes tonight revolving around another character, only to find herself at a loss when his player failed to show up for the session. Needing additional material to fill the length of the session, she decides to complicate your quest for Thrubian: when you find him, he'll be getting roused by vigilantes. You must persuade the vigilantes to let him go, or he won't be able to help.

When you find the contact, roll Persuasion to see if he helps you. You may reroll these Persuasion checks, as per the basic reroll rules.

The nature of the later trouble the contact will cause in the event of a Dismal Failure is left to the GM to determine. She decides both how serious the trouble will be, and when it will occur. It might happen later on in the current session, or many episodes down the line. Likewise, the extra favor granted by Illustrious Successes is also fully under GM control. In either case, you can safely assume that she'll draw inspiration from the situation, the type of contact, and how you play your character as you interact with him.

Some contact types respond especially well, or poorly, to particular Persuasion styles. If a contact type responds positively, the style is listed in brackets after



Contact Response Chart

1. Dismal Failure

Contact not only refuses, but decides to make other trouble for you at a later date.

2. Quotidian Failure

Contact refuses, perhaps impertinently.

3. Exasperating Failure

Contact refuses, apologetically.

4. Hair's-Breadth Success

Contact agrees, reluctantly.

5. Prosaic Success

Contact agrees, cheerfully.

6. Illustrious Success

Contact agrees, and does you a second, unrelated favor.

a plus (+) sign. If the type responds negatively, the style appears after a minus (-) sign. For example:

Petty criminal (+Intimidating, -Eloquent)

When rolling for a contact who treats your Persuasion style positively, treat all Prosaic Successes as Illustrious. When rolling for a contact who reacts negatively, treat all Quotidian Failures as Dismal.

You do not need to roll Persuasion when your GM has added additional obstacles to your search for the contact. Instead, you must do whatever is necessary to overcome the obstacle.

If you persuade the vigilantes threatening Thrubian, you need not subsequently cajole him, too. By overcoming the obstacle, you've won his automatic gratitude.

When you introduce a contact into the storyline, he becomes a full-fledged GMC like any other. Should the GM find herself in need of game statistics for a contact, she jots down whatever numbers she needs.

Recurring Contacts

If the group seems to enjoy the GM's portrayal of the

⁷ You can create details that add flavor, but not ones that advantage you. It's one thing to specify that a contact is married to a much younger man, quite another to say that she owes you a thousand terces.



contact, she'll likely bring him back for encore performances, as a recurring character in her series. Alternately, it might occur to her that she needs a character like your contact to perform some specific upcoming function in one of her plotlines. She might use the contact as a victim in need of rescue, a client hiring your group's services, or even as the troublemaker who turns out to be responsible for a problem they've been called upon to solve.

An obstacle you encounter in the current session may make you want to pay a return visit to a contact introduced in a previous one⁸. You might think that, over the course of successive encounters, you could cultivate a good relationship with a particular contact, building his loyalty and coming eventually to rely on his honesty and his good opinion of you. But then you would be thinking about a different game. Recurring contacts will remain as self-centered and peevish as any other typical resident of the Dying Earth. If anything, familiarity breeds contempt; GMs may choose to hit you with levies if you come to over-rely on a particular contact.

Contacts Recap

1. FIND CONTACT LIST for current neighborhood. (Other lists may be accepted according to GM whim.)
2. FIND A CONTACT TYPE on that list. Where not self-evident, contrive a rationalization to explain why a contact of that type can provide the sort of help you need.
3. ROLL PERSUASION to see if your contact, when found, is willing to help. (Or, if the GM thinks it will make the adventure more interesting, overcome a new obstacle to find the contact or make his help available to you.)
 - a) Depending on your Persuasion, some contacts may react positively (treat Prosaic Successes as Illustrious) or negatively (treat Quotidian Failures as Dismal.)
4. On a SUCCESS, the contact moves you a step closer to overcoming the present obstacle. On a FAILURE, he doesn't. The GM uses the Contact Response Chart to see how he treats you, and whether there are other repercussions, good or bad.

"I Am A Stranger Here"

Your character concept may not fit with our assumption that the PCs are very familiar with the city of Kaiin. You may be playing a barbarian, a vat-grown construct, an isolated villager, or merely someone who has never lived here. In these cases, you can't draw on contacts or make use of the tweaks that appear in this book -- at least not at first. After a year living in the city, you can make use of both⁹.

Certain fanatics might suggest, since you intend to play a stranger unfamiliar with the city, that you shouldn't read this book at all. We insist that they immediately withdraw this baseless canard! One of this guide's purposes is to present to you the sights, sounds, and smells of the city, relieving the GM's descriptive burden. If you come to the table with a vivid image of Kaiin already in mind, her job will be easier. So read the book not as an impression of your character's past experiences in the city, but as an indication of what your character will begin to see, feel, and taste as he begins to explore Kaiin.



⁸ For that matter, you might want to call upon a contact first introduced by another player.

⁹ The year must actually be spent in the city: meeting people, learning things, buying from merchants, and so on. If Kaiin is merely a place to hang your elaborately feathered hat while you traipse around the wilderness, you gain no further access to contacts or Kaiin-based tweaks.



Tweaks

As you know from perusing your well-thumbed copy of *Cugel's Compendium of Indispensable Advantages*, tweaks are special tricks you can use to boost one of your abilities whenever a certain, specific situation rears its head. Normally, a tweak costs 1 Improvement Point to acquire, requires you to have at least 3 points in the ability, and, unless your GM is unusually tolerant, is unavailable during character generation.

The neighborhood descriptions contain tweaks available only to experienced residents of Kaiin. (You can automatically specify that you are such a resident, as long as it doesn't contradict anything previously established about your character.) As you'll soon see, they tend to provide special advantages when dealing with the odd situations peculiar to each neighborhood.

No one is equally familiar with all of Kaiin's neighborhoods. Its people range from the utterly destitute to the hideously wealthy, and it is no easy thing to transcend your social circumstances. Before you acquire your first Kaiin-specific tweak, you must specify the single neighborhood in which you are most at home. Any tweak in this book can be purchased for the normal Improvement Point cost. However, Tweaks from your home neighborhood are available for free whenever you increase your rating in the governing ability. You can never gain more than one free tweak per point of ability increase, even if you're somehow trying to stack up with some other special deal on tweaks that might appear in some hypothetical supplement we haven't written yet.

Your home neighborhood should either be the place where you were raised, or the area where you currently reside¹⁰. Be prepared to dazzle the GM with a suitably entertaining rationalization if you select a neighborhood that seems out of step with your character.

Although you, the player, are adding a tweak to the character in the course of play, he isn't suddenly learning this new capability; he's had it for years. It's just that we haven't seen him use the talent while he's been "on stage", so to speak.



FORMAT

The next chapter provides a general overview of the city. After that, each of Kaiin's neighborhoods is described in its own section. These chapters share the same format, so you can easily find the information you need during play. That format is as follows:

On First Glance

Each chapter starts with a brief description containing the two or three essential facts you need to know about this neighborhood. If your character is a resident of Kaiin, he certainly knows this much about the neighborhood, even if he's never been there.

Didactic Overview

The didactic overview contains historical or background information which your character, realistically speaking, would know only if he has a Pedantry pool of 4 or more, or if he regularly spends time in the company of someone else who does. In other words, if your character has any interest in learning this sort of detail, he knows this.



¹⁰ This assumes that you have lived there for a good while.



Inhabitants

The section on inhabitants starts by describing the general population of the neighborhood. Here you'll learn how the people here support themselves, and what they offer to the city, and to curious, adventurous sorts such as yourself. This section may also contain notes on quirks of local etiquette, which may help you avoid embarrassment or the outrage of the inhabitants.

Contacts

The aforementioned contacts list appears here.

Personages

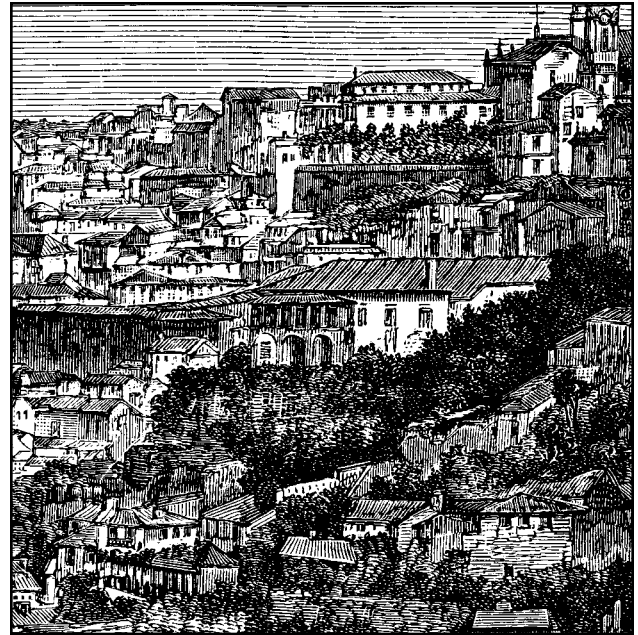
One or more prominent residents of the neighborhood are profiled in this section. As with the Personages in the main *Dying Earth RPG* rulebook, you can spend points during character creation to forge Relationships to any GMC listed in this book.

Some listings are not individualized; they describe a typical member of a group found in that neighborhood, such as a typical patrolman or mermelant breeder. After all, it would defy belief if every Kaiinese player character happened to know the same rug merchant.

You can forge a relationship to a typical character; just pick a name for him¹¹. You can suggest a character trait or two to the GM; these reflect not the typical character's actual personality, but your PC's impression of it. It's up to the GM to decide whether or not your assessment of his character is correct¹².

Note to GMs

The Personages listed in this book come with game statistics, which, obviously, the players can read. We don't need to tell you how to slightly adjust game statistics in accordance with your needs, and to keep the players guessing. If you ever hear a player say, "I can wallop him, he's only got a Rebuff of 8," it's time to begin adjusting in earnest. Otherwise, it may not even matter: in this game system, the raw numbers don't reveal that much.



Whether individual or typical, you don't need a relationship to a character to approach or attempt to interact with him. You should only spend precious creation points on relationships that you expect to use repeatedly, or which define your character. You are never obligated to take relationships, not even to any personages in your home neighborhood. It is certainly possible that you grew up in a given area without developing especially close ties to its leaders and notables.

Places of Interest

This section begins with a general account of the area's physical attributes, from the condition of its building to the smells wafting from its cooking pots.

Grid references refer to a location's placement on the main map. So when we note that the main Undercity entrance is at K11, look for K11 on the map.

Commercial Establishments

A list of the neighborhood's most notable businesses appear here. It presents the highlights of the area and is not exhaustive. The absence of a listing for, say, a tavern should not be taken to mean that there are no taverns nearby. The more commonplace the type

11 If stumped for an appropriately Vancian name, pick one from the list in the appendix, on p184.

12 Our advice to GMs is to accept the players' descriptions, and play these personages more or less as described, until you come up with an interesting plot line or development that requires you to reveal the GMCs' hidden sides. Remember, a typical character to whom a PC purchases a relationship is no more likely than any other GMC to be entirely cooperative and friendly — that is to say, not likely at all.



establishment is, the more likely it is present but not listed. However, don't expect your GM to add duplicates of the strange or exotic establishments which do qualify for their own listings. If you get yourself barred from Kaiin's only hoxaxo removal stall, you won't be able to find another.

Businesses come and go. Over the course of a long series, some places might close¹³, change owners, or move. The nature of these changes is left up to your GM. GMs shouldn't bother making changes for establishments until after they've appeared in their series. Only those places you most involve yourself with should change much, if at all, from the information given here.

At the end of each description, some sample prices are presented. Unless otherwise indicated, these are expressed in terces.

Curiosities and Landmarks

Less transitory than the rug stalls and wine shops of the city are its curiosities and landmarks. These are features like the ruined, stilted stadium of Mad King Min, or the haunted ruins of the Old Town. The neighborhood's most interesting features, if any, are described in this section.

Events

This section describes any special events of interest that take place in the area on a regular or predictable basis. A prime example of an event would be Prince Kandive's annual regatta (p98.)

Rumors

In bullet-list form, the rumors you're most likely to hear while shopping, drinking, feasting and carousing in the area are provided here. We've already discussed how you can use these rumors to allow you to drive the plot.

Taglines

This section provides you additional choices for the tagline you choose at the beginning of each session. If you know the session will center on a given neighborhood, and you select a tagline from its section of the book, your chance of scoring generous improvement point awards increases. However, there's no rule preventing you from choosing a tagline you find appealing from anywhere in this volume, even if you have no reason to believe that the GM's plans will take your PC to that part of Kaiin during the current session. You could try to steer events so you do wind up in a location where your tagline will prove devastatingly apt. Alternately, you could seek permission from your GM to slightly alter a tagline, to make it relate less specifically to its location. For that matter, if you see a tagline you like, feel free to choose it, even if your character is currently adventuring in far-off Cutz, or in the Imperturbable Rift of the 19th Aeon. Only you can assess your own tagline insertion skills, and can judge how challenging it you'll find it to make use of a given choice.

Tweaks

Each section concludes with a list of tweaks available to characters who take the time to acutely familiarize themselves with the area.

FINAL WARNINGS

Immediately upon purchasing this volume from your local merchant, protect it from fire, water damage, and vermin by performing the well-known cantrap Fumator's Vehement Bookplate.



Purchase a second copy of the book and store it in a safe place unknown to your sandestin. Compare the contents of your reading copy periodically with those of your archive version. If they differ, your sandestin has probably changed your main copy, with an eye towards misleading you in some manner intended to effectuate your humiliation and/or injury. Remedy this offense with a thorough chugging. (Arch-Magicians only.)



Do not read in the presence of pine wefkins.

¹³ Often due to your own efforts, or the unforeseen destruction your activities leave in their wake.



Chapter 2

City Overview

*“Kaiin! Kaiin! O my dashed hopes!”
— anonymous, refrain from popular song*

This chapter introduces you to the city, and discusses a few matters of equal application to all neighborhoods, such as the legal system, the institution of slavery, and the local calendar



THE CITY OF KAIIN is largely contained within a series of crumbling limestone walls, built a mere few centuries ago¹. It covers about ten square miles and provides a home to about 175,000 people².

Gloom and Decadence

The everyday lives of most Kaiinese are suffused with pessimism and despair. Occasionally, at festival time for example, the public mood bursts forth in a frenzy of debauchery, as people try to momentarily obliterate their knowledge of the world's imminent end.

A few wealthy individuals carry on in this manner throughout the year, because they can afford to. Riches still flow through Kaiin. Although it's but a shadow of past cities' splendor, it is still the most exciting place in Almetry. A center of fashion, learning, and commerce, it attracts thrill-seekers, scholars, and fortune hunters. As a never-ending stream of visitors flocks through the city walls, swindlers rub their hands together, confident that they will never run out of targets for their schemes.

Climate

Kaiin lays shrouded under overcast skies most of the year. Damp, stinking air blows in from Sanreal Bay. Temperatures remain cool for most of the year. Rare breaks of sunshine and warmth provoke sudden outbursts of forced jollity, followed by a sudden plunge back into melancholy and discontent when the clouds waft back over from the bay.

Walls, Scars, and Rivers

The city sits at the confluence of two great rivers, the meandering Scaum and the faster Derna. Upriver, the Derna has carved a deep canyon in the surrounding rock. Nearer its exit in the Sanreal Bay, its slopes moderate, but are still steep enough to send careless hikers quickly tumbling down into the gorse bushes. As the Derna enters the city, it becomes increasingly polluted, and is finally bottled up in a network of lagoons and

¹ Countless cities have stood on this spot over the aeons; Kaiin is just the latest of these.

² If we wanted to be strictly realistic, we'd make the city much smaller and more densely populated. Kaiin is bigger than demographics demand, mostly to allow for a simple, readable map.





canals, some of which enter a system of gigantic limestone tubes.

The more southerly Scaum River flows serenely towards the bay along wide banks decorated with tall grasses and wildflowers.

Also bounding the city are a trio of enormously wide white walls, which predate not only Kaiin but the ruined Old Town, which stands nearby. The founders of Kaiin refurbished the walls somewhat as their new city expanded. The northwesterly Pannone Wall jags down into the city from the wilderness above it. It divides the Palace District from the Market and Scholasticarium areas. To its east, the Conizio Wall hugs the Derna, providing a buffer between the city proper and the dangers that lie above it, in the haunted Old Town. To the city's south, the Adomi Wall follows the Scaum's path, starting at the bayshore and terminating at the Porphiron Scar.

The Porphiron Scar is a sharp ridge of gleaming black stone. The crest of this ridge is the area's highest point; if you stand up on it, you can see not only the city, but much of Ascolais, specifically those parts of it controlled by the city's prince, Kandive. Be careful when balancing atop its sharp rocks, though; on the city side, this feature acts as an escarpment, and the drop into the city below can be a terrible one. For example, you could fall over a hundred and fifty feet from the top of the Scar into the Scholasticarium District below.

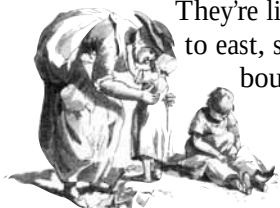


Neighborhoods

Kaiin's white walls encompass a number of distinct neighborhoods. Some of the largest are of only passing interest to adventurous types such as yourself, and accordingly get short shrift in the pages ahead. Conversely, certain very small areas are likely to attract your attention on a recurring basis, and get quite detailed treatment.

The neighborhoods detailed within, are as follows.

They're listed in geographical order, from west to east, starting along the city's northern boundary.



Canal Town

Canal Town is a dank and grubby

area populated by proudly impoverished workers deep into a prolonged work stoppage, along with an assortment of religious fanatics and practitioners of the unusual profession of oyster smuggling.

The Threek

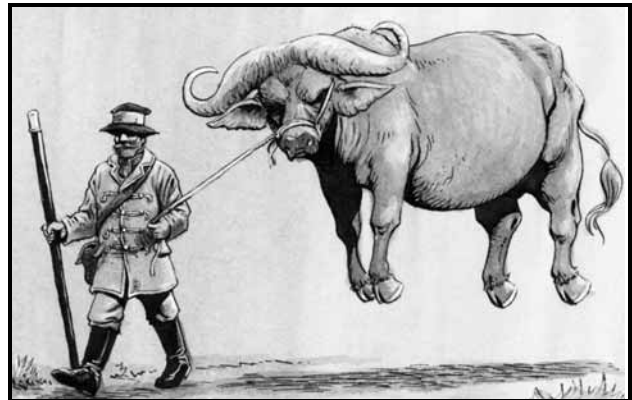
By far the largest and, not coincidentally, the least interesting of Kaiin's neighborhoods, The Threek provides a home for the humble and humdrum. About eighty-five per cent of Kaiin's people live here.

Palace Environs

Home to the prince's magnificent palace, as well as other government buildings, this area is mostly deserted, except during festival time. If you suffer from a taste for palace intrigue, you may find yourself a frequent, if possibly short-lived, visitor to this area.

The Market

Here you'll find a large, open-air shopping district, which is frequented by most Kaiinese on a daily basis. Come here to buy food, stock up on daggers, or float rumors.



Occasionally available at the market, ossip wax allows recalcitrant objects to be handled with ease.

The Fringe

The Fringe is a desolate frontier of garbage and rubble, inhabited by the most desperate of the desperately poor. Bandits may or may not dwell among them, depending on when the prince's men last razed the place.



The Old Town



"...a gray wilderness of tumbled pillars, weathered blocks of sandstone, slumped pediments with crumbled inscriptions, flagged terraces overgrown with rusty moss. Lizards, snakes, insects crawled the ruins; no other life did he see."

Jack Vance, "Liane the Wayfarer"

Though not part of the city proper, the ruins known as the Old Town hang ominously in the minds of Kaiin's populace. The ruins lie to the north of the city. As noted elsewhere, a long succession of cities have grown and died at the confluence of the Scaum and Derna; the Old Town ruins represent what is left of this place's previous occupants. Even the smallest child knows to give the Old Town a wide berth, for it is the stomping grounds of the voracious monster Chun the Unavoidable (*DERPG* p155.) Though no one sees him and survives, it is generally agreed that this hideous creature stands eight to nine feet tall, bounds about on mammoth, frog-like legs, and collects eyeballs for an unknown purpose.

(Readers of the Vance story mentioned above know that he weaves them into a cape, treasuring especially beautiful eyes most of all. Because sensible people know to avoid the Old Town, he must lure fools to him, doing so with the aid of the witch-woman Lith, who lives to the north, in Thamber Meadow. She convinces smitten adventurers to sneak into Chun's lair to recover a golden tapestry she treasures, depicting the magical valley of Ariventa. Chun does possess the tapestry, but pays Lith for each victim she sends his way, a few of its threads at a time.)

Chun's lair within the Old Town is known as the Place of Whispers. It may be possible to quickly venture into other areas of the ruins without arousing his attention, but the benefits of so tremendous risk seem minimal.

Were Chun to be dispatched by some mighty and reckless champion, the Old Town ruins would immediately become a target for scholars and treasure-seekers. One can assume that it would be rapidly denuded of any riches it may still contain, at which point it would likely become an extension of the no-man's-land known as the Fringe (see above.)

Odkin Prospect

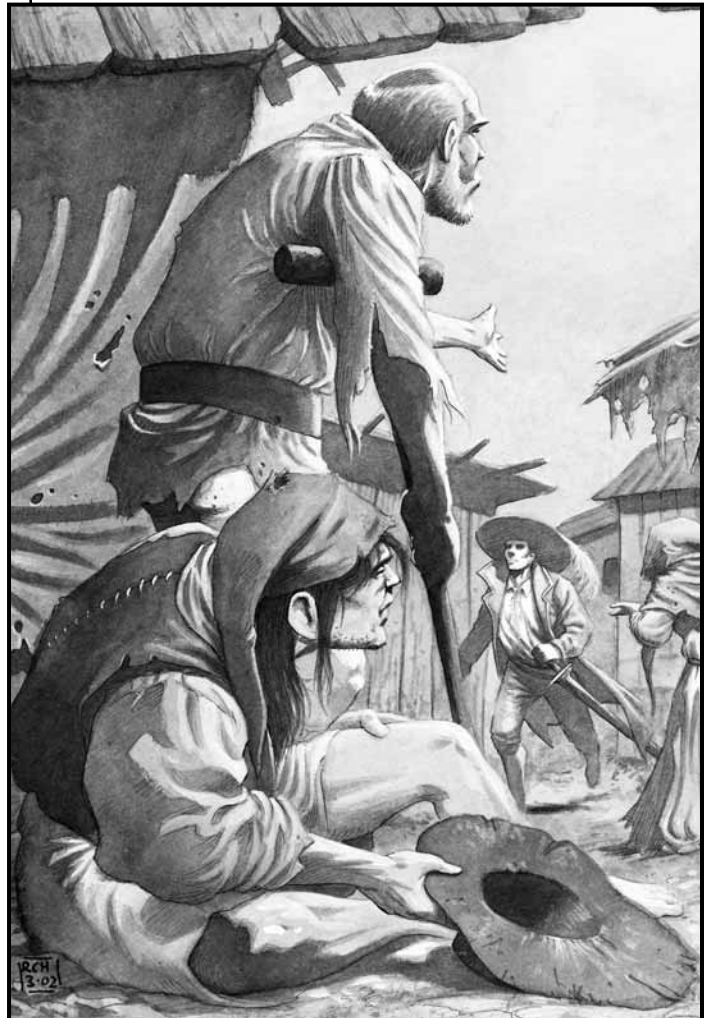
The lords of the city dwell in this well-guarded enclave. High-born aristocrats grudgingly mingle with the recently wealthy.

Scholasticarium District

Rowdy students, resentful lecturers and overweening Arch-Magicians crowd this small area, home to the Scholasticarium, the region's largest institution of pedantry and occult experimentation.

The Tracks

South of the city proper, this area bustles with the excitement of a race track and various gambling dens. It draws gamblers, criminals, and debauchers as a flame does moths, so you'll likely spend a great deal of time there.





The Undercity

Beneath the city is a small subterranean level where Kaiin's most prestigious shops can be found. But enter with care: its residents believe that the world has already been destroyed. If you contradict this belief, you may be accused of being a half-man, and placed under sudden sentence of death.



PRINCE KANDIVE

Kaiin's ruler, Prince Kandive the Golden, is described on p157 of the *Dying Earth Roleplaying Game*. You may already have a Relationship to him. Renowned as both a warrior and a magician, his imperious presence looms over every transaction in Kaiin. His people are grateful to him for maintaining law and order, but ever fearful of falling afoul of his authority. Those who flout it end up being lowered into a well inhabited by voracious deodands (p97.)

LAW AND ORDER

When you're traveling from one isolated backwater to the next, you can confidently leave destruction in your wake, knowing you won't be around to suffer the consequences of your actions. In a city-based series, the presence of effective authority hampers your more lawless urges. If you commit wanton crimes, eventually you'll be called to account for them. Like any effective ruler, Prince Kandive maintains order with a legal system that strikes fear into ordinary and influential citizens alike.

Vigils

Any visitor to Kaiin soon takes note of the prince's vigils. These well-armed law enforcement officials patrol most of the city. You can identify them from their distinctive black tunics and high boots. Local commanders, called Under-Sheriffs, wear pewter buttons and conical silver helmets. They all report to an Over-Sheriff, who headquarters himself in the Hall of Justice, p96. The current occupant of this office is the inappropriately affable Chozzerri, but the prince takes a direct hand in managing his vigil detachments.

Vigils enjoy considerable discretion in most minor matters, and you'll do well to cultivate vigil contacts in



the neighborhoods you frequent. During character creation, you may want to consider forging Relationships to local Under-Sheriffs.

The Legal System

Entanglement with the Kaiinese legal system is to be avoided at all costs. However, the more interesting a life you lead, the more likely it is that you'll eventually face criminal charges or become the object of a lawsuit. It is therefore important to understand the eccentricities of Prince Kandive's justice.

Precedents and Decrees

Kaiin has laws, but no constitution or legislature. Statutes are made by decree of the prince, in whom all power ultimately rests. Included among his rights is the instant revision of any prior decree. He may, at whim, change a previous law, whether enacted by himself or a predecessor. He may even specify that his changes are retroactive to a date of his choosing. In other words, never annoy the prince.

The accumulated collection of royal decrees, as stored and catalogued in the Hall of Justice (p96) are therefore relevant only as guidance to lower officials.



The prince has neither the time or the desire to determine the outcome of every single criminal charge or civil dispute. Functionaries adjudicate most cases, using past decrees as guides to his thinking.

Charges and Complaints

You can only be charged with a crime by a vigil. Experienced vigils quickly learn to lay charges sparingly. If an adjudicator considers a charge frivolous, the vigil may be ordered to compensate the defendant. There's also the risk that the case may make it all the way to the prince. Kandive has on a couple of occasions ordered the arresting vigil thrashed or even executed.

When a vigil catches you committing a crime (or seemingly doing so), your powers of persuasion will determine whether the matter goes any further. Expect nasty levies if your crime was notably violent, victimized an influential person, took place in front of many witnesses, or might otherwise embarrass the prince. Your GM may assign you generous boons if you enjoy a Relationship to the prince or another power in the palace, or if you're wealthier or of a nobler pedigree than your supposed victim.

Although typically you'll be pitting your Persuade against a vigil's Rebuff, you might in some instances find yourself competing with the victim to convince the vigil. In this case, the victim pits his Persuade against your Rebuff. In other circumstances, you might want to induce a vigil to lay charges against someone who has seemingly victimized you. If the offender is not present, contest Persuade against the vigil's Rebuff. If he is there, and argues with you, contest your Persuade against his Rebuff; if you win, the vigil lays the charges.

Anyone, including visitors to the city, can lay a civil complaint against any other person, for any reason. Although some pathologically litigious types lodge complaints at the drop of a hat, sensible people try to settle matters out of court whenever possible. Adjudicators have been known to heavily fine both parties when a case drives them to distraction. The prince might order vexing litigants tortured or killed.

Judgments and Appeals

Whether you're charged with a crime or are party to a civil suit, the system handles matters in roughly the same way. First you appear before a junior functionary

at the Hall of Justice (p96.) You may argue on your own behalf, or hire a professional legalist to speak for you. After preliminary argument from both sides, the adjudicator decides which facts are in question. He questions both you and the vigil (or opposing civil litigant) to find out which witnesses he needs to call in order to find the truth. He then dispatches vigils to subpoena those witnesses. He questions them privately; you may not attend this proceeding. In a criminal case, the arresting vigil may be present to assist in the questioning. In a civil case, neither you nor your opponent attend.

Actuality Resolution

At his leisure, the adjudicator issues a report called an Actuality Resolution, stipulating the facts of the case as the court sees them. You must accept them as the truth, even when they're wrong.

In a civil case, the disputants then get another opportunity to settle privately. Most cases end here, as the Actuality Resolution usually makes it abundantly clear whose side the adjudicator favors. Still, if one of the litigants wants to continue, the case goes to final argument.

Final Argument

In final argument, you or your legalist argue the merits of the case, according to the facts laid out in the Actuality Resolution. In a civil case, the other litigant, or his legalist, argues against you. The plaintiff must at this stage specify the financial compensation he demands from the defendant. This becomes important if both parties manage to exasperate the adjudicator — see sidebar.

In a criminal matter, another government functionary, who may be a close friend or bitter rival of your adjudicator, makes the argument. You pit your Persuade (or your legalist's) against your opponent's Persuade, to see which of you is most convincing to the adjudicator. Boons and levies are as follows:

Actuality Resolution is...

Strongly in your favor
Generally in your favor
Balanced towards both sides
Generally against you
Strongly against you

Boon or Levy

Boon of 2
Boon of 1
None
Levy of 1
Levy of 2



City Overview

Criminal Penalties

If you lose in a criminal case, the adjudicator assigns a punishment. At best, you'll be fined a nominal sum, indicating that you're guilty, but that your offense was of a purely technical nature. Serious fines range from 100 to 100,000 terces. Offenses of violence or sedition warrant floggings or even death sentences.

Civil Penalties

If you lose as the defendant in a civil case, the adjudicator decides how much your misdeeds cost the plaintiff, and orders that you pay compensation equal to one and a half times that amount. If the contest ended on a Dismal Failure for you or an Illustrious Success for your opponent, you pay three times the amount. Conversely, if you're a successful civil plaintiff, you gain compensation, using the above formula.

Appeals

If you don't like the result of either a criminal or civil case, you can apply for an appeal with a senior adjudicator. Since only losers appeal, you always suffer a levy during the appeal. If you suffered a levy during the original argument, it is increased by 1 now. If you suffered no levy during the original argument, you suffer a levy of 1 now.

✿ *Winning An Appeal As A Criminal Defendant*

If you win the appeal in a criminal case which ends on any result other than your Illustrious Success, your punishment is downgraded. Fines are halved, floggings become fines, and death sentences are commuted to mere floggings. If you win on an Illustrious Success, you are completely exonerated.

✿ *Winning an Appeal As a Civil Plaintiff*

If you win the appeal as a civil plaintiff, you gain compensation according to the above formula. If you won compensation in the first round but appealed anyway, your compensation is doubled.

✿ *Losing an Appeal As a Civil Plaintiff*

If you lose as a plaintiff, your compensation is reduced by half, unless the contest concluded on an Illustrious Success for your opponent or a Dismal Failure for you. In that instance, you get nothing.

A Pox On Both Your Houses

In any civil or criminal case, it is possible for the adjudicator to become equally infuriated with both parties. The GM keeps track of the number of Dismal Failure results, even when they are subsequently rerolled. As soon as the total number of Dismal Failures in the contest reaches four (provided that at least one Dismal Failure is scored by each side), the adjudicator throws up his hands in vexed despair and penalizes both sides.

In a criminal case, he punishes both you and the vigil who arrested you. The severity of punishment is left up to the GM to decide. Only the prince will order both parties executed, but floggings are not out of the question in cases before senior adjudicators.

In a civil case, adjudicator fines both parties. The plaintiff usually pays the court the amount he requested in compensation, while the defendant pays twice that amount. This assumes that the plaintiff was probably swindled out of the original amount in the first place. The GM is always free to assess different fines depending on circumstances.



✿ *Winning an Appeal As a Civil Defendant*

If you win an appeal as a civil defendant, the judgement you owe is reduced by one half, unless the contest ended on an Illustrious Success for you, in which case you pay nothing.

✿ *Losing An Appeal As A Civil Defendant*

If you lose the appeal as a civil defendant, the original judgment against you is upheld, unless the contest concluded on a Dismal Failure for you or an Illustrious Success for your opponent, in which case it is doubled.

✿ *Applying For a Royal Audience*

If you don't like the results of the appeals process, you can then apply for an audience with the prince. Cautious people accept the rulings of lower functionaries, even when unhappy with the outcome. Risk-takers pursue their cases all the way to the palace.



You make your plea to a justice official who ranks even higher than your appeals adjudicator. At this point, your argument becomes irrelevant; your presentation and connections are all that matter. So you roll Etiquette against the official's Rebuff. Before the contest begins, add 3 to your pool if you have a Relationship with the prince; 2, if you have a Relationship to a GMC from the Palace chapter of this book, and 1 if you have the Impeccable Pedigree tweak (p85.) If you fail, the existing judgment is considered final. If you succeed, you go before the prince, at which point anything goes.

✦ *Appearing Before the Prince*

When you appear before the prince, you may or may not roll or engage in any kind of contest. The GM decides what happens, according to her portrayal of the capricious Kandive, and her sense of what makes for the most entertaining result. The prince can disregard not only the Actuality Resolution, but his own laws. He might reverse decades of precedent because he likes your manner, or condemn you to death (even in a civil case) if he finds you impertinent or tiresome. When contradicting past law, the prince may issue a decree, changing the statute, or simply make an exemption, in which case the law stands, except as it pertains to you.

Methods of Execution

The standard means by which the condemned meet their demise is the deodand pit, described on p97. Resourceful adventurers may face other forms of execution. The prince never wants to risk the embarrassment of a public escape. Minor magicians may be stripped of all clothing and equipment and quickly beheaded. Kandive personally casts deadly spells to slay magicians of known competence. He is never so foolish as to condemn to death magicians more powerful than himself. They would simply command their sandestins to free them, causing him great humiliation.

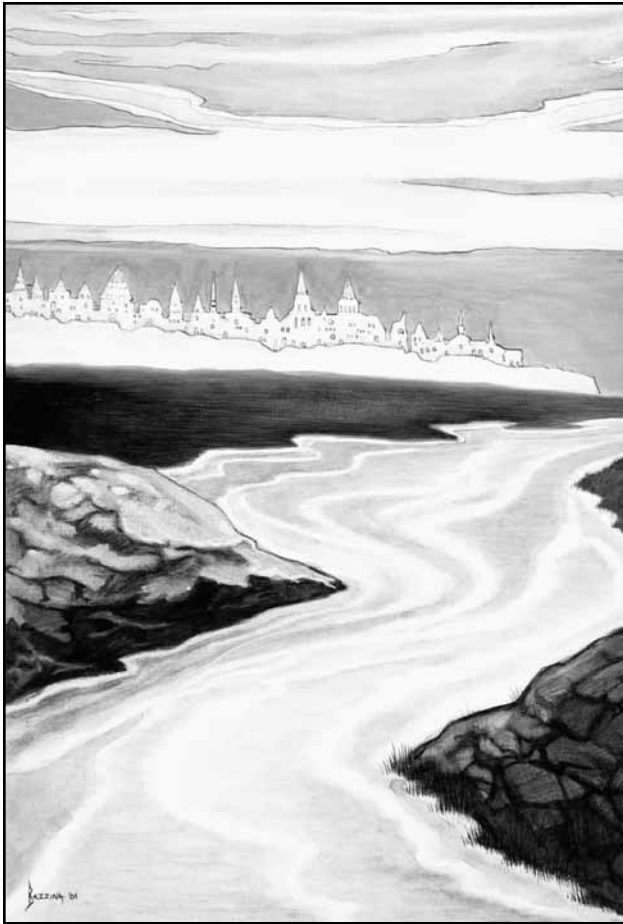
Slavery

The Kaiinese maintain a variety of contradictory attitudes towards the institution of slavery. They see



themselves as civilized, and above such primitive habits. Yet they also find something alluringly decadent about it. Slavery is illegal. However, the exceptions to this law are many. You may own slaves if:

- ✦ You descend from any one of twenty-three old families whose rights of slave-holding fell under a grandfather clause when slavery was abolished. (To qualify, you must acquire the Etiquette tweak, Impeccable Pedigree, which is found on p85.)
- ✦ Your slave is not fully human. The definition of "fully human" is vague and may be subject to litigation. Many slave-keepers argue that any odd detail of physiognomy is enough to classify an individual as less than one hundred per cent human. Under this definition, any of the odd-looking people who inhabit various isolated communities can be taken as slaves. Others claim that the law was meant to apply only to those with half-man blood flowing through their veins.
- ✦ The person you wish to own was reduced to slave status by the prince, as punishment for a crime. The prince sells petty criminals as slaves. Although it is possible to purchase these individuals after sentencing, directly from the prince's agents, it is easier to buy them on the secondary market. Slave dealers procure from the prince's staff and resell to others. You might



also be able to privately purchase a criminal from his or her previous owner³. When the wretch's sentence expires, you are obligated to release him, no matter how brief your period of ownership. It is not uncommon for certain unscrupulous sellers to alter a sentenced slave's documents to make it look as if his remaining term is much longer than it really is. The prince's agents keep copies of all sentencing documents. The slave has the legal right to check these official records in the event of a dispute over the length of his term. So it is possible to buy a slave thinking you will own him for many years, only to see him released a week or two later.

- ✦ You legally purchased the slave in another jurisdiction where slavery is permissible. As in the above example, foreign slaves may be resold. You must be able to provide proof of ownership

tracing the slave's provenance from its original sale to the transaction in which you acquired him.

The children of inhuman slaves become slaves too, and are the property of the mother's owner. If a male inhuman slave impregnates a free female, the owner has no claim on her offspring.

The children of criminal or foreign slaves are born free.

To complicate matters further, individuals may enter into a Contract of Personal Indenture, in which the holder of the contract may effectively treat him as a slave for the duration of the agreement. The contract may be sold and resold.

The degree to which a slave owner may mistreat his chattel is limited by princely decree. You must provide your slaves with food and drink adequate for their survival. You must also supply them with shelter, and clothing sufficient to protect them from the elements. You may slap them with an open hand or thwack them with an object no heavier than a scroll of parchment, but may not otherwise beat them. You may certainly not kill a slave. To do so is to commit murder, though you may not be punished as severely as you would for slaying a victim of high status. If you require your slave to act as a concubine, catamite, or other provider of carnal services, he or she cannot also be compelled to perform labor of any other sort for you.

In general, slaves are no more cooperative than any other sort of servant. If anything, they're more resentful, and therefore more likely to pervert the intent of your instructions. Slaves can never be Diligent servants. Typically, people own slaves for two reasons: they don't require regular pay, and they confer a certain degree of status on their owners. Pleasure slaves in particular provide a significant cost savings over regular visits to independent courtesans. In rules terms, you can specify that any non-Diligent servant is a slave. You gain no particular advantages for this, but it may suit your conception of the character.

The best place to buy slaves is at the Market — see p63.



³ Even in this instance, it is more common for the slave owner to resell to a dealer, rather than going to the trouble of personally finding a new buyer.



Religions and Philosophies

With a few notable exceptions, such as the Bowelers of Canal Town (p28), Kaiin is a largely secular city, its people skeptical, or even hostile, towards religious belief. In this, they follow the lead of their prince, Kandive, who believes in the primacy of human action. Kandive is not an atheist, exactly; he believes that the gods were once potent and active but have now died off or simply faded away. If they hadn't gone away, the world wouldn't be dying. This belief, known as NECROTHERISM, predates Kandive, but has become locally prevalent since his ascendance to the throne. His decadent festivals are beloved by the vast majority of Kaiinese, and Necrotheism is one of the precious few belief systems that does not forbid nine out of ten of the activities festival-goers look forward to engaging in.

Other philosophies popular in Kaiin include:

- ✱ CHRYSALIZATION, which states that what seems to be the imminent death of the world is merely a harbinger of a beautiful transformation beyond the scope of man's current consciousness.
- ✱ SUPERFRAGORIANISM, which holds that only people who engage in extreme forms of behavior will be reincarnated in a world subsequent to this one.
- ✱ PERIPATATIANISM, which states that places do not become real until people travel to them, and that the world is dying because too many folks stay at home these days.

Conveniently, all of these philosophies allow their adherents to guiltlessly participate in all manner of sybaritic activities.

Most of Kaiin's many street corner prophets and religious proselytizers are relatively new to the city. Their hopes have not yet been shattered by the local tendency to regard all priests and believers as swindlers and fraud artists.



Calendar

Calendrical unity is an overrated virtue. Even in

Almery, four different calendars compete for recognition as the most sensible method of measuring the passage of time. Until recently, Kaiin itself used two rival calendars. This state of affairs lasted for hundreds of years, until the last prince instituted a persecution against adherents of the exotic Shlioltese calendar. That left only the rigidly mathematical Pokuno Reckoning System as a means of naming days, months, and dates.

According to the Pokuno System, each month is exactly twenty-eight days long. The year concludes on a special holiday, Fladnflawn, which takes place on the winter solstice and belongs to no month or day. It is consequently a time of much feasting and debauchery.

It is considered horribly unlucky to list Fladnflawn on a calendar. A calendar which includes Fladnflawn is called an Anathematizer, and is traditionally sent to one's new enemies to announce your undying enmity for them.

Each month is made up of four weeks, each of which is seven days long. The days of the week are Perday, Mireday, Banitday, Tradday, Aryday, Scionday, and Cusday.

The thirteen months are Plamel, Raterse, Sorgent, Inlasto, Blinet, Chious, Deger, Hobven, Trumamel, Pestamel, Akosh, Vinstim, and Blotndming⁴.

The first day of the year, Perday the first of Plamel, is the day after the winter solstice. It is also the day after Fladnflawn, and is consequently a time of much debauchery and feasting.

The great virtue of the Pokuno System is that each year's calendar is identical⁵. Further, each month is identical. Even better, every date is always the same: the 11th is always a Tradday. Each month looks like this:

Weekday	Date			
Perday	1	8	15	22
Mireday	2	9	16	23
Banitday	3	10	17	24
Tradday	4	11	18	25
Aryday	5	12	19	26
Scionday	6	13	20	27
Cusday	7	14	21	28

⁴ The 'n' and 'd' are silent. Come to think of it, so is the 't.'

⁵ Pokuno was a manufacturer of calendars who hated to dispose of overstock.



Chapter 3

Canal Town and The Mud Flats

“To conceal my abhorrence of the reeking Waterman would have been an unconscionable slight to my lofty ancestors. Yet, when he casually reminded me that the canals provided a splendid station for the disposal of unwanted corpses, I found it equally difficult to conceal a sense of unease.”

— Kulluar of Octorus, *Seven Unfortunate Situations*

On First Glance

The part of the city called Canal Town surrounds the banks of the Derna from the palace to the shores of Sanreal Bay. Here the river emits its last pathetic gasp before it empties into the bay. Its once-mighty current has been diverted into a labyrinth of winding canals. In many places it has also been covered, so that it is now more a massive culvert than the mouth of a great river. A uniquely hardy and disdainful breed of working man makes his home here, next to these stinking waters.

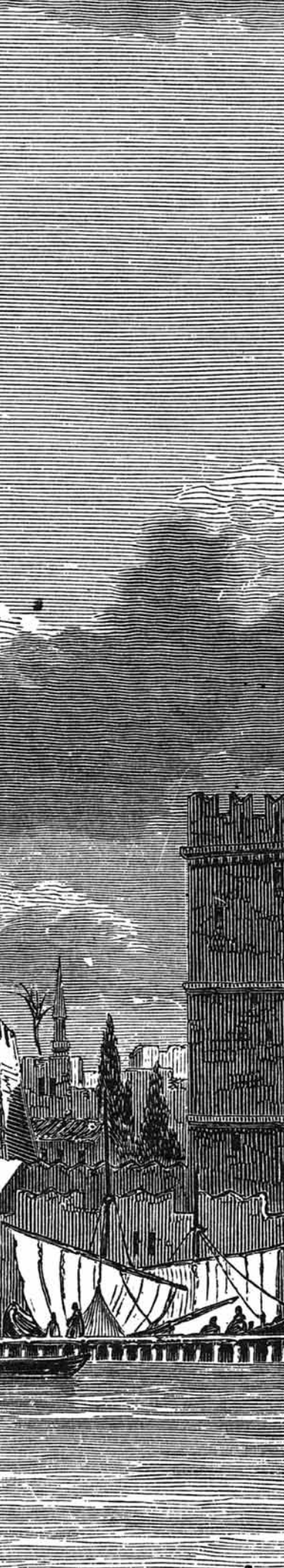
On the shores of the Sanreal, below the Derna's mouth, lie the Mud Flats. Shorecombers, most of whom make their homes in Canal Town, diligently part the viscous sands in search of valuable items, and occasionally even find them. Note: Most residents of Kaiin avoid Canal Town as they would the plague¹. You may decide that your PC has never been here. In that case, feel free to read the material below as background information, as opposed to an account of your character's actual experiences.

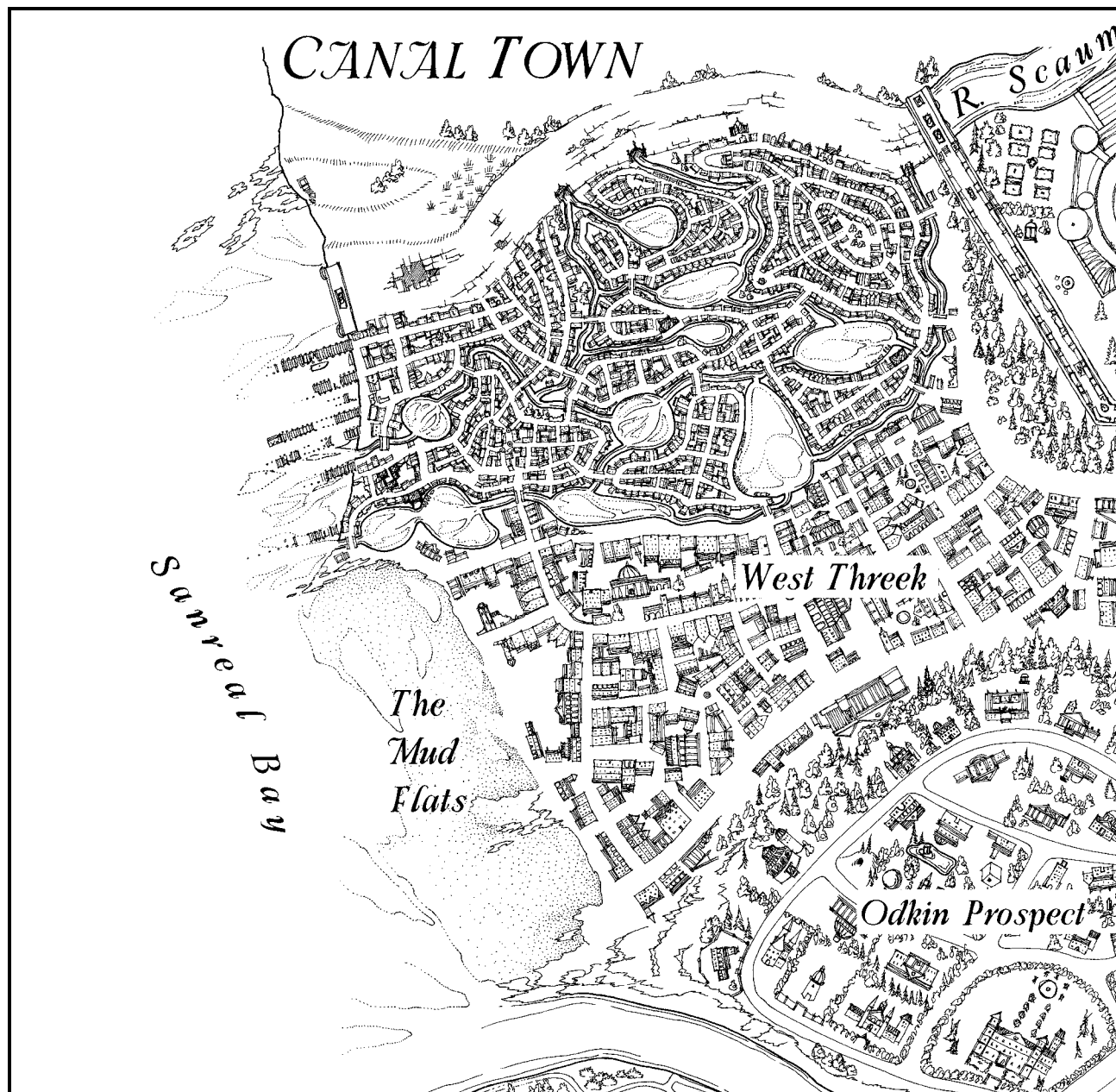
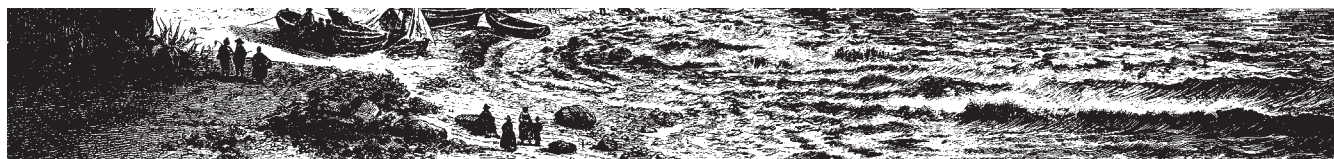
Didactic Overview

Building of the Canals

Now decrepit and decaying, the network of tunnels and canals through which the Derna makes its final, aching push towards Sanreal Bay were constructed about seventy-five years ago. The project was overseen by the ambitious minister Whimake. Proposed during a period of food shortage, the canals were supposed to serve two purposes: first, they would cover over the polluted waters of the Derna, protecting the people from its increasing stench. Second, they would permit a variety of irrigation projects, allowing otherwise idle local residents to usefully produce fresh fruits and vegetables. This measure was meant to combat a blockade placed further up the river by Sorghoy, a local warlord of the Modavna Moor, who, for a period of several years, stopped trade goods originating in northern Ascolais from reaching the city. Historians agree that the canal project gradually revealed itself to be an epic boondoggle; some even accuse Whimake of having hired Sorghoy to trump up this blockade, to justify the great building project. It is certainly known that Whimake dispensed contracts to his cronies and relatives, draining Kaiin's treasury. When the expenditures grew so great that they ate even into the prince's fund for the financing of festivals and orgies, Whimake fell from favor. It is said that his body lies buried beneath the limestone piling that holds up the last of the covered bridges to be erected in Canal Town.

¹ And indeed, the neighborhood offers a wide variety of infectious diseases to the less-than-rugged visitor.





The Inevitable Fall Into Sordid Decline

Neither fruits nor vegetables were ever grown here, at least not in quantities sufficient to line anyone's pockets. The soil was never good enough, and once Sorghoy fell victim to mottled pleurisy, cheap produce again flowed from the north. Canal Town slowly developed its own, new uses. Wastes from throughout the city were taken and dumped into the covered canals, far from the noses of well-heeled citizens. The

gases given off by decomposing excrement proved salubrious to certain barnacles and other shellfish, who gathered in abundance on the limestone banks and columns of the canal works. A few decades ago, some enterprising person decided to hire workers to scrape away these useless animals, replacing them with supposedly edible scallops and oysters. Unfortunately, these otherwise saleable shellfish carried a wide variety of diseases, and their sale within Kaiin was ruled



illegal by the prince. This did not long deter the oystermen. They sneaked what produce they could past the prince's harried and corruptible inspectors, and exported the rest.

Their trade continues today, but most of the activity in Canal Town is devoted to the disposal of the city's substantial volume of bodily wastes. Its lagoons and waterways also provide a useful venue for the dumping of other unpleasant items, from animal carcasses to human corpses it would be awkward to get rid of in the standard manner.



Inhabitants

The cramped stone hovels of Canal Town are much like those of the adjoining neighborhood, The Threek (p129), except for two factors: they are of slightly more recent construction, and they stink like rancid sewage. Nevertheless, the Watermen, as residents of this area call themselves, look on their Threek neighbors with utter contempt. Watermen see themselves as hardened, self-reliant, stoic, and blessed with uncommon good sense. They deride Threekmen as weak, lazy, puling, and less intelligent than the average clam. They are no more respectful of their supposed social superiors. Fine clothing, educated diction, uncalled hands... all of these are, in the eyes of the Waterman, sure signs of moral weakness and mental backwardness. A Waterman would rather go down cursing a nobleman, spitted on his lance, than shrink from him in submissive servility. This self-destructive and defiant attitude is what distinguishes him from the more typically humble and fearful resident of the Threek. It is fortunate for both Watermen and their social betters that they rarely cross paths. Watermen rarely leave the precincts of their neighborhood, convinced that the rest of the world is an out and out cesspit of flaccidity and dishonesty². Needless to say, the wealthy and influential find few reasons to venture into the neighborhood that serves as Kaiin's bowels.

It is not a simple matter to move to Canal Town. Watermen will tell you that their fathers lived here,

their father's fathers lived here, and their father's father's fathers lived here. They will live and die here, and so will their sons, and their son's sons, and so on. Outsiders receive an unwelcoming reception³. Only under extreme coercion will a Waterman sell even the direst of abodes to an outsider. Even if you do manage to buy a place here, you can expect to be harassed and beaten until you either prove yourself the equal of a Waterman in obstinacy, intolerance, and capacity for punishment, or flee the area. Although their policy is brutal, you realize that it is not entirely unwise: most poor neighborhoods are rife with criminals, who prey first of all on the ordinary people around them. Not so in Canal Town. Here, there are a multitude of bridges from which to hang thieves and extortionists, and as many broad-backed laborers willing to perform the deed.

Bowelers

No Waterman would deign to come into contact with the sewage that chokes many of the neighborhood's lagoons and canals. The duties of collecting, skimming, and aerating the city's solid waste redound to the Bowelers, a cult of penitents to whom these activities are a sacred trust. Bowelers believe that the present lamentable state of the world can be directly attributed to the crushing weight of sin accumulated over the aeons by countless generations of arrogant and prideful individuals. If the sun is to be rekindled, and the world's slow slide into utter destruction averted, people must abnegate themselves, adopting with zeal the most humiliating occupations possible. Bowelers contend fiercely with one another to wade through the most fetid skiffs of ordure, proving that their humility exceeds all others. As the death of the world grows ever more imminent, the ranks of the Bowelers swell.

These fanatics, whose humble clothes (not to mention their hair and skin) are permanently embedded with the sickening odors of the muck they sift, are treated as pariahs by the Watermen, and live separately in their own areas of Canal Town. Though their faith revolves around incessant humiliation, the Bowelers' reputation is not entirely peaceful; you've heard a number of stories about their penitents going on rampages. Sometimes they fight back against Waterman bullies. Their priestess, Fladgna (see below)

² An exception occurs when members of the Builder's Guild receive a commission to bully or intimidate someone from another neighborhood. See p28.

³ Even if you prove descent from a Waterman, you'll merely receive an array of hostile, gimlet stares: "Oh, you claim descent from old Menerdmile, who ran off from us the first chance she got. Here, the name Menerdmile has become synonymous with the phrase 'rank betrayer.'"



recently announced a revelation from Dijekom, the Screaming Prophet, to the effect that suffering imposed on them by others need not be endured⁴. Accordingly, she recently began to organize her people to fight back against their tormentors, especially the trouble-seeking members of the builders guild. Street-fights for territory have ensued, though these are conducted in an indolent manner, so that months can pass between flare-ups. Either side is more than capable of unaccountably forgetting to press an advantage or avenge an injury.

Lately you've heard of internal strife within the sect. Supposedly they've taken to setting upon one another with clubs and rocks, although the stories you've heard may have been bloodily embellished by their tellers.

Contacts

Barmen

"Persist in your condescension, and my fist will find itself drawn irresistibly towards your face."

(+Forthright -Glib)

A waterman's greatest dream is to save enough terces to one day afford to open his own tavern, where his fellows might gather, drink, and bloody one another's noses. Among the watermen, a barman fulfills the functions of priest, judge, lawyer, loan officer — and, needless to say, dispenser of stomach-burning, high-proof libations. A barman knows nearly everything that goes on in his corner of Canal Town, but is also ardently protective of his



flock. He'll be quite willing to tell you about threats to his community from outside, and to supply you with rotgut, and to help secure gainful employment for his fellow watermen. Only when you have something to hold over him will he reveal the community's painful secrets, for example the identities of its wrongdoers.

⁴ Only the cruelties the penitent inflicts on himself, or those meted out by his high priestess, aid in the revivification of the world.



Bowler

"My humility is second to none."

(+Obfuscatory -Forthright)

The most important fact to a boweler is his standing among his fellows: he knows who among them is the most self-abnegating, and who still holds onto a scrap of pride. You may not consider this especially useful information. On the other hand, bowelers criss-cross the entire city each night, to scoop from its gutters the contents of emptied chamberpots. They are thus intimately familiar with Kaiin's geography. Treated as invisible by a population that would sooner not meditate on the necessity of their occupation, they have occasion to witness all manner of night time activities. Your boweler contact may even give you permission to travel alongside them, to wend your way unnoticed into otherwise forbidden places. However, you can expect to be treated as one of them, expected to heft a shovel and set aside all outward signs of dignity and self-respect. Your contact may or may not try to convert you to his faith. Although it is considered a holy act to help shrive a person of his self-regard, there are now more willing bowelers than the city needs, and many cultists no longer care to increase their number of competitors through willy-nilly proselytizing.

Builder

"Few understand that a work stoppage is even more exhausting to maintain than actual labor."

(+Forthright -Intimidating)

Among the watermen, the builders are admired for their staunchness. They cling like the most stubborn of barnacles to a thirty-year old work stoppage, first declared against the Prince Kandive's predecessor's predecessor. The original reasons behind the strike are unclear to you, even if you've asked about it repeatedly. The disrepair of Canal Town's sheds, bridges, abutments, and canals is entirely attributable to this stoppage. The builders wait with hammers and cudgels to violently repel any attempts by outside workmen to perform repairs of even the most modest nature. The mere installation of a replacement hinge can occasion bloody violence. The prince periodically orders a feint against them, but never seems to care quite enough to expend dozens of lives to break their power once and for all.

Most builders can tell you very little about

building, let alone actually assist you in constructing something. It would be against their principles, and besides, many of them have been on strike for their entire careers, including their apprenticeships. However, they are adept at pulling down construction work performed by others. They're experienced intimidators and leg-breakers, and are often hired as such by entrepreneurs throughout the city. Accordingly, they can tell you who is currently hiring bullies and who they're being deployed against. You might be able to hire them as guards or professional threateners, though you should not expect them to risk life or limb on your behalf.

Most builders wear shapeless garments of rough, lined sacking, dyed blue or brown and tied off with cords at the wrists and ankles. They wear hard, flat caps reinforced with metal, which function as rudimentary helmets. The bills of these caps are often festooned with metal pins bearing the insignia of their ancestral work crews.

Comber

"This fragment can be none other than a piece of wizard's wand from the 18th Aeon."

(+Eloquent -Obfuscatory)

Combers are watermen who sift the wet sands of the mud flats, which lay between the twin mouths of Kaiin's two rivers, for valuables. You will know them by their traditional cloaks of rotted sacking, dyed (and scented) with urt urine. They stoop all day, armed with the tools of their trade, the mud flange and pattie turner. At night, they complain of joint pain, drink themselves cross-eyed, and dream of the day when they will comb up an artifact so valuable that they might purchase the bar they sit in.

Combers know about the sorts of artifacts that show up on the shore. They can tell you about the doings of antiquities dealers, separating them out by degree of dishonesty. They can report any events they might have witnessed on the bay shore. They may also recall details of water traffic on the Sanreal, including the landings of smugglers in contraband⁵.

Oysterman

"No, they're supposed to be that color."

(+Charming -Forthright)

Oystermen, another subgroup of watermen, illegally grow and harvest shellfish in the area's concrete-lined

⁵ Combers watch their unloadings carefully, hoping for broken crates whose contents might spill unnoticed onto the shore.



lagoons and canals. Anxious to conceal the nature of their business, they dress in like builders, although vanity leads some to decorate the bills of their caps with pearls. Because their wares are sometimes poisonous, they deal only with unscrupulous fishmongers and food exporters, to whom they may be willing to introduce you. As professional criminals, they sometimes hire builders to protect them, or suffer extortion from rivals capable of hiring larger platoons of bullies. Thus they are equipped to inform you about the wider nature of Kaiin's criminal underbelly, including the names of corrupt royal inspectors. They can also draw on their contacts to sumptuously cater your next seafood feast. Sadly, a guarantee that none of the food will poison your guests comes only at a hefty premium.



Personages

Antelo, Recalcitrant Builder

"Until our oppressor comes to heel, our cause shall not rest, nor will we stir ourselves."

You've seen the burly Antelo stride ponderously through the streets, swaddled in red velvet, his vast and hairy legs protruding from unflatteringly tight lime green leggings. Several weed-thin young men, apprentices in the builder's union he runs with iron fist, accompany him with parasols, shading his pale skin from the light of the feeble sun. His hair is dark, his eyes deep-set, and his face jowly. He speaks in an impressive bass voice, and conducts himself with an air of authority so confident that even you, for a moment, felt the urge to obey him.

Although the members of his union take pride in their bare-knuckle squalor, Antelo surrounds himself with luxurious things. You once asked one of his builders if he didn't resent Antelo's airs of superiority. The man took offense, claiming that it is only fitting that his guild boasts of a leader capable of the same opulence displayed by its the wealthy exploiters.

It goes without saying that Antelo's wealth derives from the booking fee he charges whenever his guild members take work as bullies or roughnecks. If you want to hire a gang of builders, you must go through him. He maintains the loyalty of his men by strategically distributing his wealth among them. Antelo's sense of loyalty is not known to extend to his clients: he openly warns them that he'll switch allegiances if their designated target approaches him with a higher counter-offer. Thus, the services of his bully-boys are only attractive to the confidently wealthy, or those interested in hiring only for the short term.

The only individual that gruff Antelo seems to fear is The Vlack (see below), to whom he abases himself shamelessly.

When not threading his way through the damp and twisting streets of Canal Town, Antelo can be found holding court in a tavern called the Well-Hammered Nail (see below.)

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 14, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 14, Attack (Strength) 4, Defense (Parry) 6, Health 6, Magic (Curious) 2, Appraisal 3, Engineering 2,



Gambling 3, Perception 4, Scuttlebutt 6, Stewardship 6, Wealth 15, Wherewithal 6.
Resistances: none.

Bocchimile, Oyster Launderer

"Among the drovers of the northern bayshore, the acrid aftertaste you complain of is considered surpassingly desirable."

Canal Town's most successful dealer in black market shellfish is most likely the fresh-faced Bocchimile, who wears a tall, red felt hat over his unruly blond curls. He wears silver plates over his toenails, which protrude out through open-toed slippers of soft leather. Embroidered clamshells adorn his billowing yellow tunic.

Like any launderer of shellfish, Bocchimile pays importers of clams, oysters, lobsters and shrimp to certify that his catches, grown in the poisonous muck of the canal network, were actually harvested in healthy waters. He bribes inspectors to certify his wares. He sneaks buckets of clams and oysters through the back doors of eating establishments throughout the city.

The careers of successful oyster launderers tend to be impressive but short-lived. The more clams the launderer sells, the sooner the arrival of the inevitable day when an influential grandee, perhaps even the prince himself, eats a contaminated meal, and is stricken ill. Then a grand inquisition is launched, and the launderer must typically flee the city to elude apprehension.

Bocchimile shrugs and takes this danger in stride, even though his uncle, who preceded him into the trade, was sentenced by Prince Kandive to a fatal force-feeding of his own merchandise. Bocchimile claims to have been blessed by a princess of the twk-men, so that the punishment for his offenses will always fall on others.

Persuade (Charming) 15, Rebuff (Penetrating) 15, Attack (Finesse) 6, Defense (Intuition) 6, Health 6, Magic (Daring) 4, Appraisal 4, Athletics 4, Concealment 4, Etiquette 3, Gambling 4, Imposture 2, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 2, Scuttlebutt 4, Seduction 4, Stealth 4, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 2.
Resistances: none.

Dolbuk, Conniving Shorecomber

"My own recollection of the incident is considerably different."

The blandly handsome Dolbuk eschews the typical urine-marked cloak of the lifelong shorecomber, in favor of a variegated poncho, wide-brimmed straw hat, and elevated sandals, which keep his elegantly formed toes at a safe remove from the sharp rocks and tiny pinching crabs of the mud flats. You have often heard other combers curse his name; he and his frequent companion, Saish Shortshanks, have gained a reputation for separating honest scroungers out of the fruits of their back-breaking labors. According to a tale common told in shorecomber taverns, Dolbuk was once called Wallow, and served as a temple guardian, but was driven from his post after being convicted of unspecified heresy and the improper handling of a captive deodand. Whenever an opportunity for sudden wealth surfaces in Canal Town, it is said that Dolbuk is sure to appear, in search of personal advancement. If you've met Dolbuk, you found him quite pleasant and not at all the dark-eyed villain his detractors portray him as. However, the grinning, gravel-voiced Saish Shortshanks, who hovered at Dolbuk's shoulder, did project the demeanor of a rather shady character. Shortshanks wore a floppy wool cap, tight striped shirt, and black leggings festooned with patches of various colors.

Persuade (Glib) 8, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 8, Attack (Cunning) 6, Defense (Misdirection) 6, Health 6, Magic (Devious) 2, Appraisal 6, Athletics 4, Concealment 4, Etiquette 3, Gambling 6, Imposture 3, Living Rough 3, Pedantry 4, Perception 4, Quick Fingers 4, Riding 2, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 4, Stealth 3, Stewardship 3, Wherewithal 2.
Resistances: none

Saish Shortshanks

Persuade (Intimidating) 4, Rebuff (Obtuse) 4, Attack (Strength) 10, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 8, Health 4, Athletics 4, Gambling 4, Living Rough 4, Perception 3, Quick Fingers 3, Riding 3, Scuttlebutt 3, Seamanship 3, Wherewithal 3.
Resistances: none.



Fladgna, Boweler Priestess

"You may begin your obeisance by ridding yourself of coin. Entrust me to dispose of it for you."

The slim, self-possessed Fladgna is high priestess of the Bowelers, and, as such, presents herself to the world with the utmost dignity and humility, clad in shapeless, voluminous robes mottled with various colors of dirt. Her raven hair is woven up around a tall headdress, the centerpiece of which is a crude wooden representation of Dijekom, the Screaming Prophet. Her only concession to vanity is a certain cleanliness of face and hands, and a jasmine scent that contrasts strongly with the aroma of ordure given off by her followers.

You have never seen Fladgna alone; wherever she goes, she is trailed by dozens of penitents, both long-time worshippers, identifiable by the decades worth of filth ground into the folds of their skin, and newer devotees, who have yet to fully discard their appurtenances of ease and comfort. There are now more worshippers wishing to stir sewage than sewage that needs to be stirred, and only through Fladgna's dispensation can the coveted places be assigned. You have heard long-time worshippers grumble that she

favors newcomers, who can better show their commitment to self-abnegation by throwing jewels and purses of coin at her feet. Although the worshippers did not seem to make the connection, the possibility that Fladgna follows the dictates of personal profit did not elude you. However, you have so far lacked the desire, or opportunity, or both, to make this accusation to any of her acolytes. You've seen vicious fights break out between rival factions of bowelers, and may be sensibly hesitant to arouse their anger by questioning the motives of their priestess.

You have heard rumors of Fladgna's secret sexual insatiability, but this sort of thing is said about any powerful woman of Kaiin, so the truth of such whisperings is difficult to gauge. From a distance, she seemed poised and confident, but it was hard for you to tell much about the person behind her mask of clerical dignity.

Persuade (Eloquent) 12, Rebuff (Penetrating) 10, Attack (Ferocity) 3, Defense (Intuition) 5, Health 4, Magic (Forceful) 6, Appraisal 4, Perception 8, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 6.
Resistances: Gourmandism Ω, Pettifoggery 4.



One of Fladgna's unprepossessing but devoted followers.

Hetta the Austere, Purveyor of Abstemious Beverages

"I recoil at the suggestion."

With ramrod posture and upwards-flaring eyebrows, the tall and matronly Hetta prowls the mud flats, accompanied by her bearers Chelderamel and Blotfulatte, who stagger under the weight of large casks of sugar water and various other nearly flavorless beverages. These she sells to thirsty shorecombers, many of whom she's browbeaten into joining her temperance league. You have seen several of the leading lights of this organization head swiftly from the mud flats to the nearest tavern when sundown comes, but this fact has either escaped Hetta's attention or exists on a plane beneath her notice.

Hetta cannot stop combers from bringing their own beer or wine to the shore, but has been known to send out the enormously rotund Chelderamel or the skeletal Blotfulatte to kick over beverage containers left unattended by their owners.

Rumor has it that Hetta was once the mistress of Perrin, an archmage with ties to the Scholasticarium (see p112).



Persuade (Intimidating) 12, Rebuff (Contrary) 10, Attack (Speed) 3, Defense (Vexation) 3, Health 5, Magic (Curious) 2, Appraisal 3, Etiquette 4, Pedantry 3, Perception 4, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 4.
Resistances: Gourmandism Ω, Rakishness 6.

Chelderamel

Persuade (Intimidating) 4, Rebuff (Obtuse) 4, Attack (Strength) 6, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 6, Health 5, Athletics 3, Perception 3, Scuttlebutt 3, Stewardship 2, Wherewithal 4.
Resistances: none.

Blotfulatte

Persuade (Intimidating) 4, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 4, Attack (Cunning) 6, Defense (Intuition) 6, Health 5, Athletics 3, Perception 3, Scuttlebutt 3, Stewardship 2, Wherewithal 4.
Resistances: none.

Miransgi, Half-Lucky Comber

"Some call me ill-starred, but I reject the characterization."

It is not an easy thing for a shorecomber to become renowned, but this is exactly the status of Miransgi, though he would surely prefer anonymity. Miransgi is known far and wide both for his phenomenal luck in finding valuable items in the damp sands of the Sanreal mud flats, and for his equally shocking inability to profit from his discoveries. Tall, ungainly, and balding, Miransgi wears the habitual urine-soaked cloak and formless sacking of the shorecomber's trade. He continually shakes his head as if in bewilderment at the continuing cruelty of fate, but at the same time speaks in a hopeful manner. When you sat across from him in a gloomy Canal Town feasting hall, it seemed to you that Miransgi spoke this way to convince himself that life is still worth living. He reluctantly affirmed to you that he had on separate occasions found the Glittering Scepter of Sfidher, a cauldron full of ossip wax, a purse laden with IOUN stones, the Backwards-Slicing Sword of Endecca, and the original manuscript of Qerpami's Analects, well preserved and in the master's own hand. He went on to confess that these items had been, respectively, swindled from him by seafaring pygmies, melted by a stray bolt of magical energy, spirited away by a sandestin, confiscated by the prince's men, and taken from him at swordpoint by

masked bandits. He also conceded that many other less spectacular, but still valuable, items had similarly parted company with him soon after he unearthed them.

Miransgi now attracts scavenging pursuers as a rotting sturgeon does seagulls. As Miransgi stumbled up to drag himself off to his pitiful hovel, you saw dozens of eyes swivel towards him. Several men left the tavern immediately afterwards, following him just in case he was headed to the mud flats. You later heard that Miransgi now resorts to a variety of disguises before he goes combing. Otherwise he'd be trailed by a small crowd of ill-wishers, each hoping to intercept him and relieve him of his latest find.

Persuade (Forthright) 2, Rebuff (Wary) 6, Attack (Caution) 2, Defense (Dodge) 2, Health 6, Magic (Studious) 2, Appraisal 8, Gambling 2, Imposture 6, Living Rough 4, Pedantry 4, Perception 6, Stealth 4, Wherewithal 2.

Resistances: Arrogance Ω.

The Vlark, Licensed Half-Man

"Withdraw your baseless slander! The terms of my license are incontrovertible!"

If you have heard nothing of Canal Town's other personages, you surely know the name of The Vlark, which occasions a shudder of involuntary dread second only to that provoked by Chun the Unavoidable. For something like four generations, The Vlark has prowled an exactly-demarcated area, comprising most of Canal Town, where he devours at least six people a year. He engages in his predations with the sanction of a royal charter, granted him by one of Khandive's predecessors, and reconfirmed by each prince thereafter. The charter represents a compromise, whereby The Vlark agrees to confine his activities to a district where it is unlikely anyone truly important will get eaten, in exchange for the prince's promise not to try hunting it⁶.

The Vlark stands about seven feet tall, and may be seen openly strolling through Canal Town's winding laneways, jauntily twirling an ivory-tipped malacca cane and whistling through the bony slats of gaping mouth, which resembles the baleen feeding mechanism of a whale. If you have seen The Vlark, you beheld his threadbare, felt top coat, adorned with brassy buttons and trimmed with quills of the

⁶ This seems a small sacrifice on the prince's part, since the expeditions sent against the Vlark were devoured anyway.



southern gwelk. Aside from his monstrous mouth, his inhuman features include tiny, beady eyes, a mottled and scaly hide, and massive, flipper-like feet.

You have never seen The Vlack feed, but you have it on good authority that he grabs his victim, pulling him up to the bony baleen mouth, and sucking in great hunks of flesh. His feeding apparatus is evidently capable of exerting the force of a powerful vacuum. In mere moments, nothing is left of the victim except for bones, clothing, and any solid possessions he might have had on his person at the time⁷.

The Vlack makes himself a fixture of life in Canal Town, openly making his daily rounds, often stopping in at area taverns, or accepting invitations to dine with local families. Everyone in Canal Town, from Antelo to Fladgna, pays homage to The Vlack, flattering him and showering him with gifts, in hopes that, when his

feeding time comes, he will turn his attentions to other quarters. This gives you good reason to be wary if you ever find yourself conducting business in the area. When outsiders arrive in Canal Town, its anxious notables may conspire to direct them toward The Vlack's expectant maw.

Vengeful family members sometimes attack The Vlack, but this activates a clause of his license permitting him to devour those he kills in self-defense, without counting them against his yearly quota. Obviously no one has yet succeeded in exacting retribution from him.

Supposedly The Vlack sees himself as a respectable, even a prominent, member of the community. He takes pleasure in civilized conversation, and discourses pedantically on a variety of learned subjects. You have heard that he is quick to take offense, and may therefore be reluctant to engage him in contests of pettifoggery.

The Vlack takes temporary refuge in any one of a number of houses erected for him by interested citizens. Each is luxuriantly appointed, displaying a level of wealth most in Canal Town can only dream of. Apparently The Vlack is also semi-aquatic, and may, on occasion, be found lurking beneath the sludge of any lagoon or section of canal.

A chalkboard on the wall of the Shucked Oyster (see below) keeps track of The Vlack's quota of kills for the year. When the number reaches six, people breathe an immense sigh of relief, and throw an uninhibited party, to which The Vlack habitually invites himself as guest of honor: see Vlack Festival, below. Since The Vlack seems to be highly alert to the contours of his self-interest, it is not surprising to learn that he postpones his final kill to as close to year's-end as his appetite will allow. He thereby maintains maximum leverage over the community. But even when the Vlack Festival comes early, wise people continue to kowtow to him, not wishing to end up on the top of his menu when the new year rolls around.

Persuade (Intimidating) 15, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 12, Attack (Ferocity) $\Omega+6$, Defense (Sure-Footedness) $\Omega+8$, Health 12, Magic (Forceful) 6, Appraisal 2,

⁷ The Vlack uses no special rules to accomplish this gruesome feat; it is merely a colorful description of the automatic kill any character is allowed against a downed opponent. Until The Vlack downs his victim, combat proceeds as per usual.



Athletics 6, Etiquette 4, Gambling 4, Living Rough 4, Pedantry 8, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 4, Stealth 6, Wherewithal 12.

Resistances: Rakishness Ω.



Places of Interest

Gulls, sea-shrikes and the occasional pelgrane circle over Canal Town, shrieking and looking for food. Its air is damp, and thick with a distinctive and heady smell, mixing the rotting odors of the sea with overwhelming sewage-stink⁸. Confusingly circuitous, hovel-lined roadways bend and twist in parallel to the neighborhood's network of decaying canals. Watermen stride proudly down these meandering streets, drunkenly reeling and on the alert for bowelers or outsiders who they might coarsely curse and mock. Weary combers trudge home, rakes and patties slung listlessly over their shoulders. Shouts and bellows of laughter burst forth from the doors and windows of the neighborhood's countless dingy taverns. Not infrequently, a drinker is forcefully ejected, tossed face-first into a gutter by a barrel-shaped barkeep. Occasionally entire groups issue forth from a bar or dining hall in order to bear witness to a fight between patrons. Canal Town is never silent, not even in the dark of night; many inhabitants drink from dusk to dawn, and drag themselves home to sleep it off only when the sun crawls fitfully up over the horizon.

Commercial Establishments

Aside from general supply stores and taverns catering to local trade, Canal Town is bereft of interesting commercial establishments. It is far from the sort of place one would treat as a shopping destination. As previously mentioned, it is every waterman's most cherished dream to open up a tavern, so these establishments spring up all the time. Most go out of business without attracting significant trade, often because the proprietor personally consumes the bulk of his own stock. Even so, a core of taverns enjoys longstanding longevity...

The Shucked Oyster (C11) is frequented mostly by

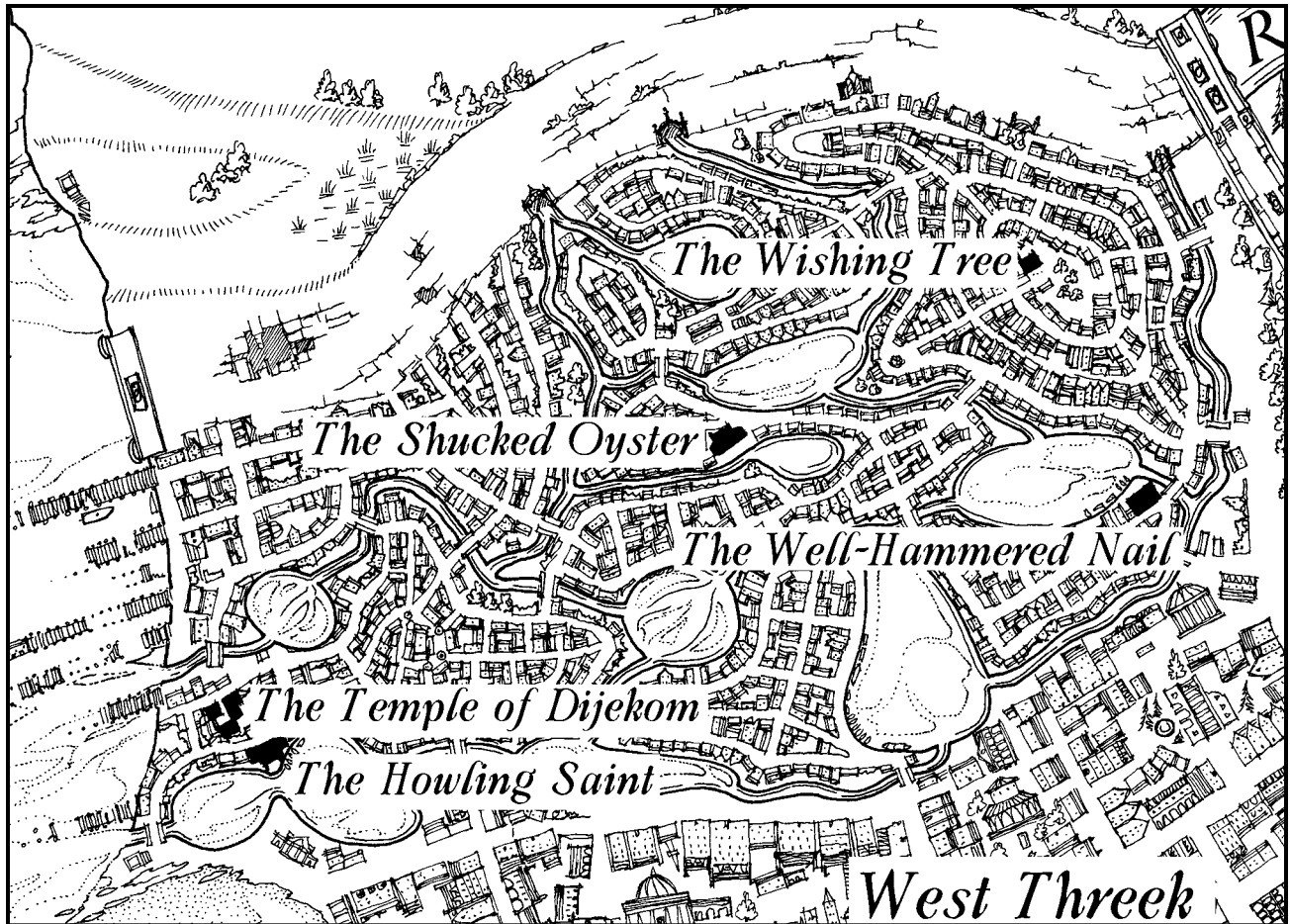
oystermen, and is known for the chalkboard measuring this year's death toll from The Vlark. The Vlark himself periodically stops in to slurp ale through his comb-like feeding structure. Sometimes he arrives to disown a particular new murder marked on the board, insisting that it was committed by another and that his quota remains unchanged. The proprietor of The Shucked Oyster is the handsome, brown-eyed Lacto, the only man who dares tease The Vlark with sly and insinuating jokes. Lacto laughs off those who accuse him of suicidal recklessness.

The Well-Hammered Nail (E11), jointly owned by Antelo (see above) and his sleepy-eyed brother Vye, provides a headquarters for the guildmaster and his cronies. Patrons often provoke fights in order to display their physical prowess to Antelo, in hopes that he will think of them the next time a client comes to him seeking bullies for hire.

The Howling Saint (B10) is unique in its refusal to serve alcoholic beverages. Stoop-shouldered bowelers sip tepidly on its menu of mildly-flavored waters, struggling to outdo each other in recounting recent acts of self-sacrifice. Its proprietress, Tracmatabli, is an intimate of Fladgna; her skin is the color of flour, and her voice rarely rises above a creaking whisper.

Superstitious drinkers avoid **The Wishing Tree** (D12), despite its bargain prices. Its customers divide into two categories, the defiantly skeptical and the acutely desperate. A ring of wooden statues, each carved with remarkable detail and realism, stands watch outside the tavern's door. Each statue depicts a seemingly normal waterman, usually with his expression frozen in an attitude of mild displeasure. Its perspiring owner, Kokursy, seems anxious to sell; if you have ever been here, you were offered the chance to acquire this establishment at an extremely low price. You've heard the rumors about the place: that it is haunted by a vexing sprite or vindictive phantom, who periodically enspells one of the casks of ale so that its contents permanently transform unfortunate imbibers into wooden statues. Kokursy denies the rumors, but if you've ever heard him do so, you've also observed the doubtful and guilty expressions on the faces of his worn-looking clientele.

⁸ Longtime inhabitants pay this no mind, but occasional visitors may be expected to make Wherewithal rolls or suffer the visible signs of nausea and revulsion. Those struck by the effect take a levy of 1 when negotiating with watermen or other hardened Canal Town denizens, who proudly mock the mincing sensibilities of outsiders.



Curiosities and Landmarks

Oyster Beds

Only an astute observer can tell a lagoon in which illegal shellfish are cultivated from one merely choked with the usual sewage. This, naturally, is the state of affairs preferred by oystermen, who have no desire to see their crops confiscated by bribe-seeking inspectors. If you're especially observant, though, you might have noticed that certain lagoons are monitored by loiterers of ostentatious casualness, who must surely serve as look-outs for their oyster-growing employers. Many of these are burly, cudgel-wielding individuals, who straighten their shoulders threateningly when they decide you're looking at them too intently.

The canals provide the city's best venue for the private disposal of corpses. Should you wish to discard inconvenient remains, it is best to do so in the middle of the night, when even the oysterers have gone to

bed. Keep a sharp eye peeled for indigents sleeping on the streets, though. They take a sharp interest in corpse disposal, because oysters and shrimp seem to thrive in lagoons where bodies decompose. Oystermen offer them fees to reveal the location of freshly-dumped carcasses. After being tipped off, the fishermen quickly seed the area with young shellfish. This means, if you find yourself in the opposite position of needing to find a corpse dumped by another, that you should concentrate your efforts on areas frequented by obvious oyster lookouts. The lagoons they watch are the most likely to contain the body you seek.

Mud Flats

The Mud Flats are a large expanse of wet, fine sand centered around the mouth of the Scaum. Depending on the time of year, the flats may be covered in up to a half inch of water from the adjoining bay. The



Artists such as Vrancastler have occasionally attempted to capture the character of Canal Town.

Sanreal has been a busy shipping hub for aeons, so interesting objects are constantly washing up on the shores, only to be buried under its soggy and ever-shifting sands. Also resident in the sands are several varieties of crab, some of whose pincers are capable of delivering a nasty nip. One variety, the fortunately rare blue-rimmed sand crab, is capable of snipping off an unwary comber's toe. During the day, the flats are alive with activity, as gulls probe the sand for crabs and worms, and combers dig through it for valuables.

Governesses and stewards of wealthy families bring their masters' children here to munch on salty dried bayweed, and to gawk happily at the bowed and red-faced shorecombers. Sharp-eyed resellers perambulate the flats, waiting for a comber to jump up and give out an exclamation of excitement. Then they coolly converge on the lucky individual to assess his catch and, if it is of interest, to dicker over it. The shorecombers complain that the resellers all collude with one another to keep prices down; resellers all curse their competitors for driving them up. Successful

bidders proceed to the market, offering their purchases to various dealers in antiques, curiosities, and miscellaneous junk.

Rotted Wharves

By contrast, the mouth of the Derna is a treacherous locale, dominated by wharves that date back to the Old Town era. Though kept up until the builder's strike began, they are now in extremely bad repair, and are likely to collapse under anyone foolish enough to traverse them. Inexperienced smugglers sometimes attempt to use these docks while unloading contraband late at night. They generally lose their cargoes, and on occasion even their lives, as a result. Vagabonds with no better shelter sometimes try sleeping under the wharves, but rarely stay for long. More than a night or two spent snoozing on the damp sands exposes a poor wretch to various skin-eating diseases and fungal infestations. The Fringe (p41) offer better refuge to the indigent. What the area under the wharves does offer is a splendid location for



clandestine meetings. If you happen to be wandering here and see a group of people conferring under a wharf, it is best to look elsewhere and keep moving. Otherwise, you can expect to be accosted by angry toughs wondering why you're spying on them.

Temple of Dijekom (A10)

This humble building, once a mere crumbling tenement, is now the world headquarters of the Boweler's cult. Its main attraction is its courtyard, where Fladgna conducts sunrise services each morning in the fetid open air. The most fervent worship occurs when the weather is drizzly and cold. At other hours, the courtyard acts as the cult's collective bedchamber: adherents toss and turn on musty, straw-filled pallets. Deacons armed with pointed sticks patrol the snoring heap of worshippers, enforcing the invisible line of segregation separating men from women⁹.

The cult's detractors insist that Fladgna's own apartments within the temple are sumptuously appointed, but the bowelers hotly deny this libel.

Events

Day of the Screaming Prophet

The 12th of Raterse is the holiest day in the boweler's calendar. Penitents flood the streets, gathering first outside their humble temple, then proceeding through Canal Town, and then towards the marketplace. They moan and grimace as if caught in the throes of some supernal agony, stripped to the waist and swatting themselves with whips and switches¹⁰. Canal Town onlookers gather to aid in the penitents' suffering by showering them with sharp stones and rotten vegetables. As the bowelers leave Canal Town and hit the processional, the prince's men invariably lie in wait for them, to charge them with horses and break their column. Most times, the vigils are successful, and the religious festival is dispersed amid shrieking chaos. Perhaps one year out of five, the worshippers withstand the vigils' sally and continue on to the marketplace, where they are greeted with jeers and groans of revulsion. When this occurs, the worshippers jig about in ecstatic glee as vendors close their stalls and shoppers flee for other precincts.

Opening of the Shin House

Throughout Kaiin, at least a dozen places claim to be the location of the final, painful, withering death of Mad King Shin. Canal Town's candidate for this distinction is the lonely, teetering structure known as Shin House. The house stretches up several stories into the air and is decorated with gargoyles and falling, scale-shaped shingles. Although no documentary evidence links the dead king to this location, it is redolent with strange magic, which is good enough proof for some. Specifically, its doors open only once a year. At any other time, it is impossible to pry loose the front doors or gain entry in any other manner. At midnight, on the ninth of Blotndming, the big brass doors swing open, admitting any who care to enter. They slam shut about a minute later, only to creak briefly open in the diffuse light of pre-dawn, allowing those who went in to stagger out.

The opening attracts several dozen adventurers and thrill-seekers each year. Allegedly, those who cross the threshold enter a strange realm where they encounter a variety of allegorical figures, who reveal great secrets to them. Accounts differ on whether these secrets are of a metaphysical or personal nature; perhaps each person is granted the revelations he seeks, or best deserves. Muddying the question is the fact that those who shakily emerge from the house suffer inevitable memory loss, and cannot describe of anything they saw or heard during their time inside. Some claim that they maintain an instinctive understanding of how they might thereafter change their lives. It is also interesting to note that everyone staggering out of the house is always missing his footwear, as well as any green or blue threads in his clothing. Those uninformed enough to enter wearing clothing entirely of blue or green exit naked.

Vlark Festival

When the Vlark officially acknowledges that it has claimed its sixth, and final, legal victim for the year, the builder's guild and shorecomber's association join together to hold a raucous street party. Celebrants drink themselves into giddy oblivion, happy that they and their loved ones have eluded The Vlark's feeding structure for yet another year. Mourners of his victims are encouraged to avoid the revelry, lest they be considered spoilsports. The Vlark himself makes an

⁹ Among the bowelers, only married couples are permitted conjugal relations, and then only in cases where both participants attest that the most frequent result is discomfort and frustration.

¹⁰ Elderly and infirm individuals are given dispensation merely to slap themselves with pats of ordure, which they carry in heavy sacks that hang from their necks.



appearance midway through the celebrations. He generally gives a speech, accepts a round of toasts, and generally acts as if the event is intended to honor his accomplishments. The truly uninhibited festivities do not commence until after he yawns, stretches, describes himself as sleepy, and waddles off to one of his many beds.



Rumors ...

- ✱ If the PCs have fallen on hard times, Bocchimile is willing to employ them as dogsbodies, carting illicit shrimps and oysters from Canal Town to various eating establishments. The PCs' predecessors in this endeavor were recently caught by a wealthy matron who blames a severe gout inflammation on contaminated shellfish. However, Bocchimile himself escaped the attention of authorities, so he is sure that no untoward attention will fall upon the PCs.
- ✱ One of your rivals (specified by your GM) has disposed of a body in the Canal Town lagoons. If you can recover it before its complete conversion to oyster food, you might be able to find a clue which could bring about your enemy's disgrace, banishment, or death.
- ✱ A merchant named Comosivamel has earned a fortune selling jewelry in the market. Now she wants her family to come and live with her in her manse near the banks of the Scaum. Alas, they are dyed-in-the-wool watermen, and act as if she dropped dead of the quivers the moment she stepped foot outside the old neighborhood. Comosivamel wants to employ a select group of trustworthy individuals to safely kidnap all fifteen members of her extended family and bear them to her manor, where, she is confident, several months of exposure to extravagant surroundings will induce them to change their minds.
- ✱ The eldest son of Lord Perzo has joined the bowelers. If he inherits the Perzo estate and holdings, he will donate all of them to the temple. Perzo would like his son to quietly vanish from the face of his earth, so that his more responsible second son might inherit and carry on the family name. Those who perform this mission must be discreet, so as not to unduly upset Lady Perzo, who suffers from a nervous disposition and is prone to the whiffles.
- ✱ The Canal Town barman Blotstrunct has been found laid out on the counter of his tavern, a six-inch blade protruding from his breastbone. His will specifies that, should his death come about as the result of foul play, the individual who accurately reveals to a magistrate the identity of the killer will inherit his establishment.
- ✱ The prince has appointed a new special magistrate, Ant Antson, to break the back of the builder's guild once and for all. You might profit by bringing about the downfall of Antson, assisting him in destroying Antelo, or by playing off both sides to ultimate advantage.
- ✱ The unfortunate Miransgi has gone missing. He was last seen in the company of the shady Dolbuk and his ne'er-do-well companion, Saish Shortshanks. They are probably holed up somewhere in the neighborhood, torturing Miransgi until he reveals the hiding place of his latest discovery. If you were to find them, perhaps you could beat them to it. You might even, if so inclined, be able to spare Miransgi some pain, or even a premature demise.
- ✱ The Vlark is indignant that he has been credited with the disappearance of an individual with whom you were passingly acquainted. You could earn his gratitude by investigating and clearing the half-man's name. A favor from The Vlark might come in handy should you ever wish to engineer a disappearance of your own.



Taglines

*Before you continue, I must warn you that
The Vlack is my boon companion.*

*By taking this from you now, I protect you from
those who would seize it by force.*

*Call me parsimonious, but I am reluctant
to become nourishment for anyone.*

Calm yourself, and hand me that muck-pole!

Cease your skulking and reveal your intentions!

*Even from a wharf-rat more dignified than yourself,
I would reject the imputation.*

*How many toes do you find here,
in the course of the average year?*

*If you allow me to examine it for an extended period, I
could perhaps come to an accurate appraisal of its value.*

*Indeed; the distinctions between yourself and a mere
flunky of The Threek are too numerous to list.*

My ignorance of your doctrines is absolute.

My own self-abasements are of an internal nature.

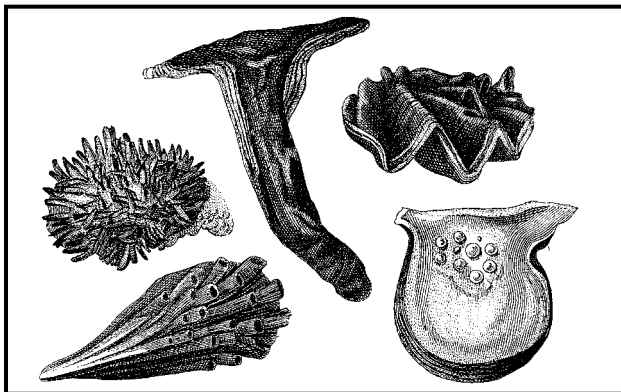
*Perhaps it would be consoling to think of it not as
misfortune, but as involuntary generosity.*

This libation is brutal, yet efficacious.

*Though I need nothing constructed for me at this time, I
can nonetheless propose a profitable use for that hammer.*

*Your customers appear to have rethought
the merit of your service.*

Your dedication is fervent.



An assortment of the shellfish sold as 'oysters' in Kaiin.

Tweaks

Air of Imminent Conversion (Persuasion)

Situation: You find yourself engaged in a negotiation with zealous followers of a religion or philosophy, one which encourages adherents to recruit others.

Description: You are adept at feigning interest in the doctrines of others, no matter how fanatical they may be. You adroitly tantalize would-be missionaries with hints of incipient conversion, without ever actually committing yourself. By doing so, you induce your negotiating partner to grant you additional concessions in hopes of ingratiating himself to you, softening you up for the final embrace of his faith.

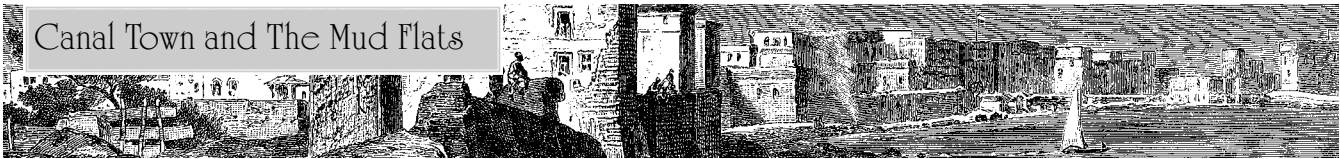
Benefit: You gain a boon of 1 whenever engaged in a Persuasion contest against the true believer's Rebuff. If you win contest without having to reroll any Dismal Failures, the believer never detects your insincerity. When next you meet this person, you can once again pretend to be pulled towards conversion, and gain further benefits from him. However, if you lose a contest, or win while having rerolled a Dismal Failure, or if he discovers by other means that your interest is feigned, you thereafter suffer a levy of 1 on Persuasion attempts against him.

Reek of the Waterman (Imposture)

Situation: You are encountering a particular group of watermen for the first time, in their own territory.

Description: You easily assume the pugnacious attitude and weather-beaten look of the native-born waterman, even if fled the neighborhood years ago or do not even hail from Canal Town.

Benefit: Whenever you find yourself in a situation in which an outsider or former resident would be mocked or harassed, you may roll Imposture to instead inspire a waterman to treat you with back-slapping friendliness. He may oppose this attempt with his Perception. If you win the contest, you gain a boon of 1 on any immediately subsequent Persuasion



contests against him. When you face a group of watermen, your Imposture contest is waged against the ringleader; a win against him counts as a win against all.

"Is It By Design That You Missed This Gleaming Object?" (Perception)

Situation: For the first time, you are about to enter a mud flat frequented by shorecombers. None of them recognize you or know you by reputation.

Description: When it comes to shorecombing, you are blessed with a dose of beginner's luck more experienced hands may find deeply vexatious. Even though a patch of beachfront may have been carefully sifted a dozen times or more, you may stroll up to it, glance casually downwards, and spot something of value poking up out of the mud. You are then obliged to delightedly show off your find to all of the shorecombers around you, or the tweak won't work next time. You may use this tweak only once per day, and only if you are unknown to all of the shorecombers present.

Benefit: This tweak automatically succeeds, but the type of item depends on the number of Perception points you spend. The GM decides the exact nature of the find, using this chart as a baseline.

Points Spent	Nature of Item
1	5–10 terces
2	Minor curio, worth 10–20 terces
3	Old coin or other minor antique, in poor condition, worth 20–30 terces
4	Valuable antique, worth 40–60 terces
5	Stunning antiquity, worth 100–500 terces
6	1-point magical item
8	2-point magical item
10	3-point magical item

If you wish to keep the item, you must pay Possessions points for it, as for any other item. Otherwise, you can sell it, or trade it away in exchange for a favor or service.

Unappetizing Countenance (Health)

Situation: A half-man, or other intelligent being with a taste for human flesh, has sensed your presence and is deciding whether to make you its next meal.

Description: No matter how robust you may actually be, you appear as a pitiful specimen, no doubt bristling with an array of distasteful and contagious diseases. Your skin seems loose and tough, your flesh gristly. You smell sour, like curdled milk or badly cured meat. Oddly enough, you project this unhealthy air only to individuals assessing your relative tastiness and nutritive value. This tweak does not, for example, give pause to prospective employers or frighten off potential romantic partners.

Benefit: This tweak works differently depending on whether you are the flesh-eater's sole possible victim, or are one of a range of culinary choices. If you are the only possible meal in the area, you may contest your Health against his Perception. If you win, he declines to eat you, even if it means he'll go hungry instead. If, on the other hand, you are just one of a number of possible repasts within his range of smell, you need merely spend 1 Health point to have him focus his attention on those others. In the unlikely event that everyone nearby has this tweak, the half-man wanders off, his stomach still rumbling.





Chapter 4

The Fringe

“It is an in-between land, neither part of Kaiin, as ruled by Prince Kandive, or of the ruins, whose master is Chun the Unavoidable. Once I was forced to lodge there, when I had momentarily worn out my welcome in the city itself.”

— Orzorchiat the Bare-Fisted, *Fights I Fought*

On First Glance

The Fringe serves as a buffer between the dangerous ruins of Old Town and the rest of the city, inhabited by the most unfortunate of the city's unfortunates. It perches on the north bank of the Derna, on the eastern side of the Porphiron Scar.

Note: Most citizens of Kaiin have never been to The Fringe. If you are concerned for your social position, you are unlikely to have ever set foot here. If you had business, such as the hiring of menials, to conduct with its indigent denizens, you doubtless sent one of your dogsbodies, and a low-ranking one, at that. However, if you are the typical Cugel-level adventurer, yourself just one step ahead of penury, you may have had the pleasure at least once. In especially unlucky circumstances, you might even have spent the night.

Didactic Overview

Any sensible person of Kaiin carefully avoids the Old Town, the haunted ruins just to the north of the city. But not everyone has that choice. The Fringe is a scattered band of ill-made, ramshackle buildings where outcasts mingle with the desperately poor. Most of the people of the Fringe are beggars, menials, and other pathetic souls who depend on the city for their meager subsistence, but cannot afford to live in even the barest hovels of the Threek, the section of town where the poor generally huddle (see p129.) Instead, they gather together junk wood, scavenged nails, and other refuse, to build flimsy homes in which to shelter themselves from the summer heat and winter's bone-chill. The Fringe provides a home to perhaps a thousand people.

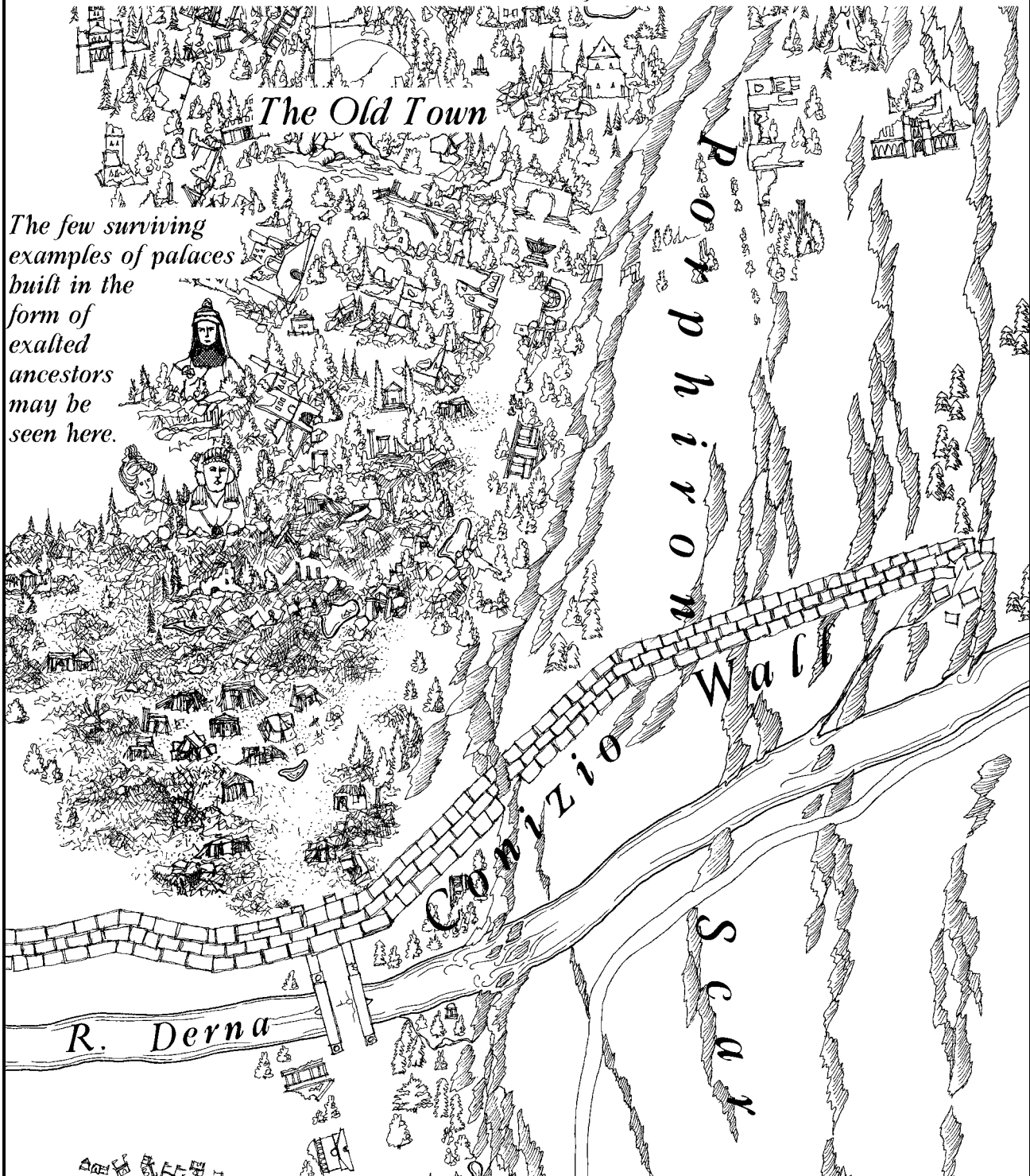
The Fringe only exists according to the whims of Prince Kandive. Sometimes he turns a blind eye to its squalor, as if it does not exist. But periodically bandits and other predatory individuals move in from elsewhere and use it as a base for their criminal activities. As soon as one of these gangs commits a serious outrage in the city, such as an attack on a member of a lord's retinue, or the slaying of a vigil, the prince's men descend





THE FRINGE

Both the Old Town and The Fringe extend some distance to the west, approaching the area inhabited by the Tedders.





on The Fringe in force. Their torches set alight the rotting shacks; the hooves of their horses trample beggars too slow to evade them. Bandits, and those who simply look like bandits, are rounded up and imprisoned while the prince prepares an impromptu festival, at which their mass hangings will serve as the primary entertainment. Patently pathetic sorts, whose executions might tend to arouse sympathy instead of glee, are turned loose, enjoined to leave the area forever¹.

However, desperate people always seem to find their way back here. Sometimes their ranks are swelled by people from the city's better neighborhoods, reduced to penury by the cruel winds of fate. Mostly the people of the Fringe come from other places, having heard that Kaiin is a place of splendor, a good table to beg scraps from. As the impoverished trickle back into the city, many of them find that the only place for them is here, in the Fringe. They slowly begin to build new shacks, and the population of the Fringe grows again. When there are enough of them to provide cover for bandits and criminals, these sorts move back in, terrorizing and displacing the most energetic of the menials and beggars. Soon after that, they go too far, attract the prince's attention, and another raid launches. And again the cycle repeats itself ...

Inhabitants

The sorts of people you find in the Fringe depend on its current point in the cycle. When it is bustling, it provides a home to both impoverished families and criminals. When it has just been resettled, only the bravest and neediest of the poor dwell here. They are more likely to be solitary hermits and scavengers than entire families of indigents. When it has just been destroyed, you can count yourself lucky to find even a single babbling recluse.

Contacts

Bandit

"The time has come for us to extract a donation from that jangling purse of yours."

(+Intimidating, -Eloquent)



The Three Stages of the Fringe



Bustling

The population lies somewhere between five hundred and a thousand, including several criminal gangs. (The default assumption of this chapter is that the Fringe is bustling. It is most dramatic if your GM starts with a well-populated Fringe, brimming with bandits, just on the verge of events that will trigger another raid, but the choice is up to her.)

Recently Destroyed

The prince's vigils raided the Fringe not long ago. No one lives here; it is just an expanse of burned garbage.

Resettled

Anywhere from a couple dozen to five hundred unfortunates live here. They are not yet numerous enough that bandits and criminals feel confident hiding among them. To draw a picture of the neighborhood during this stage, simply ignore any of this chapter's references to criminals or bandits, and assume a lower population.

The bandit respects shows of strength, and distrusts fanciful expressions. He can describe the schemes of his rival bandits. He can tell you which gang leaders of the Fringe consolidate their power, and which are marked men. He can help you locate persons willing to purchase and resell stolen merchandise. He may know about lords or merchants of the city, insofar as they offer enticing targets for thievery. He knows the routines and practices of the prince's vigils, though he can't introduce you to any of them.

Beggar

"Earlier, you strongly implied that you would gift me with a coin or two, so that I might alleviate my terrible hunger."

(+Charming, -Forthright)

The beggar wants you to treat him as an equal, and shrinks from those who seek to order him about, just because his station is lowly. He can tell you about the

1 In the unlikely event that a person of substance were apprehended in one of these raids, it is certain that he would be spared the gallows. However, his reputation might suffer considerably; a wealthy citizen found in the Fringe could only be engaged in unseemly behavior. In sybaritic Kaiin, there is no shame in indulging fleshly pleasures — the embarrassment would derive from direct contact with people whose social station is so low that they barely count as human.



whereabouts and activities of his fellow beggars. He may know all manner of miscellaneous scuttlebutt: his travels take him throughout the city², and he keeps his eyes and ears open, in hopes of gleaning information worth a groat or two. He knows which well-known personages treat unfortunate people with respect, and which of them delight in gratuitous cruelty. He knows the locations of hiding places and shelters throughout the city.

Menial

"I urge you to dismiss all of your current servants, in favor of me and my family, for we will be grateful and work harder than they, who are without doubt a pack of lollygaging scoundrels intent on embezzling your riches."

(+Eloquent, -Intimidating)

Menials survive by energetically volunteering for day labor and odd jobs. They look down on beggars, who they regard as lazy and defeatist. The average menial believes that he has merely suffered a temporary reversal of fortune, and one day soon he will encounter just the right patron, who will hire him and make him a permanent fixture of a lofty household.

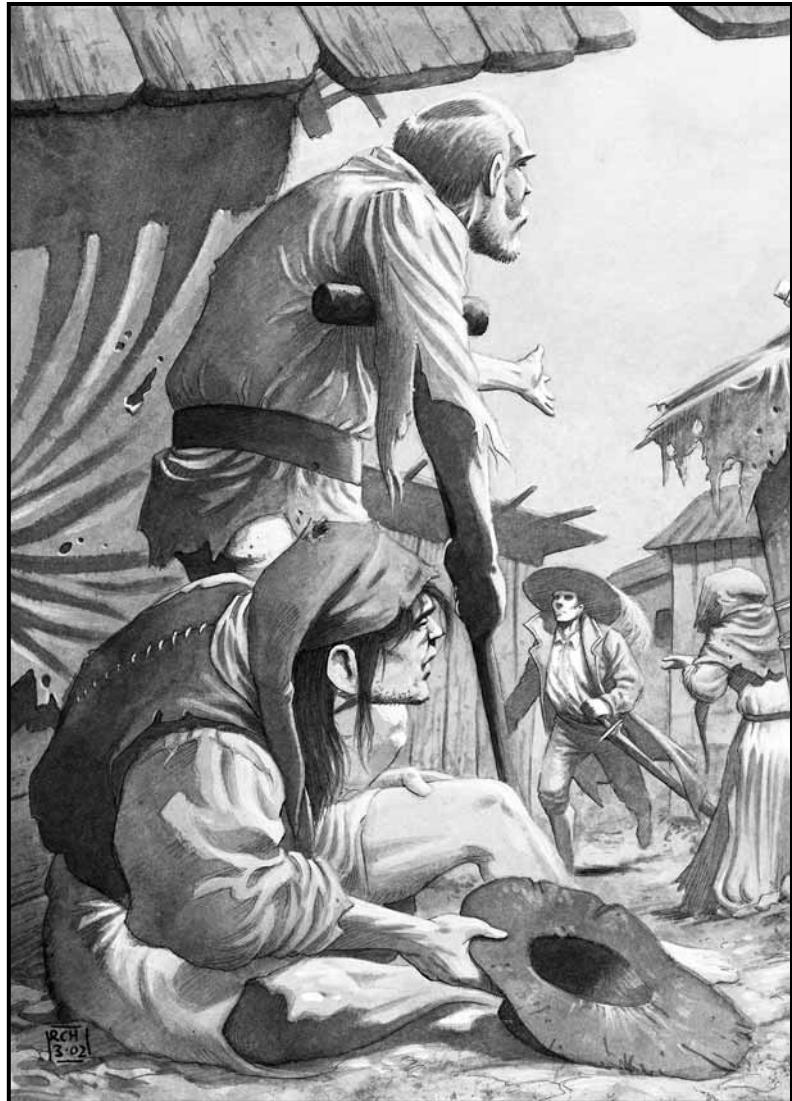
Menials know where work is to be found. They know which lords and merchants are engaged in building projects. They can tell you which foremen are stealing from their employers, and which are honest. They fan out through the city early each morning, and may be witnesses to any odd events taking place at that time of day.

Scavenger

"If there is anything under your foot, I formally proclaim first rights to it, so stand aside."

(+Forthright, -Glib)

Though considered as loathsome as any outcast, scavengers perform an invaluable service to the citizens of Kaiin, carting away their garbage, which they then sort through in search of useful or saleable items. They explore the underside of the city, usually during the night, and can tell all manner of tales



about the sights they've seen. They know where the best garbage sites are. From sifting through the trash of the lofty, they can intimately describe the personal habits of famed personages. They know which vendors of the marketplace are honest, and which overcharge outrageously for their goods. If you need a specific item, a scavenger can find it for you at a very low price, assuming that you don't mind if it is damaged and coated in filth. Sometimes they even come across accidentally discarded antiques or magical items. Even more conveniently, they're unlikely to grasp the true significance or value of such items.

Even though they live in the Fringe, scavengers look down on the sewage-toting Bowelers (p26) of

² Though not to the Undercity.



Canal Town, who they often encounter on their nightly rounds.

Personages

Note: The information in this section is known only to PCs with connections to the lowliest elements of Kaiinese society. If your PC does not fit this description, you can still read the section, but must remember to separate your knowledge from your character's.

Angar Glams, Melancholy Bandit Leader

"Your pitiful cries remind me that my present lot in life is a distasteful one, but this, in itself, is not enough to dissuade me from my course."

Angar Glams, a tall, willowy figure with dark, curly locks and sad, liquid eyes, is, for the moment, the most successful bandit leader in the Fringe. This is to say that his gang is the largest, and occupies the greatest extent of this expanse of garbage and scattered charcoal: his men confidently patrol the southern two-thirds of the Fringe, leaving only the band immediately next to the ruins of Old Town to his main rival, Vyerpasin (see below.) He commands somewhere between two and three dozen bandits, about half of whom have horses. He cleverly makes it his policy to raid parties of foreigners headed towards the city, leaving alone obviously Kaiinese travelers. He also forbids his men to go into the city itself. Thus he keeps his activities from the attention of the prince, so that the Fringe will not be raided by his vigils.

Glams' men say that he is wise, having filled their purses with coin, but aloof, even melancholy. Supposedly he is the illegitimate issue of some noble or other. He apparently feels that he was cheated of the life of leisure and art appreciation he was justly entitled to, and has taken to banditry as a way of

whiling away his time while he waits for his father to come to his senses and provide him with some sort of inheritance. You've heard conflicting stories: some say his family is Kaiinese, others, that he hails from far away. Everyone agrees that he would rather be hunting gjido³ than running a bandit gang. He even confesses as much to the foreign travelers he kidnaps and holds for ransom. However, his stated disinterest in his current profession is not so great that he fails to protect his men or his interests, especially against the ambitions of his closest rival, the crude and belching Vyerpasin. If you ever find yourself at Angar Glams' mercy, it may come as only small consolation that the necessity of running you through bores and irritates him.

Persuade (Forthright) 12, Rebuff (Penetrating) 10, Attack (Finesse) 10, Defense (Intuition) 10, Health 8, Magic (Insightful) 2, Appraisal 4, Athletics 6, Concealment 2, Etiquette 3, Living Rough 6, Perception 4, Riding 6, Stealth 3, Tracking 4, Wherewithal 4.

Resistances: Avarice 4, Gourmandism 2, Pettifoggery 4.

Vyerpasin, Hungry Bandit Leader

"I assure you that my drooling is not triggered by the sight of your fine and meaty mount."

Vyerpasin is a squat, bearish man, who wears a pointed goatee over a vast double chin. If you've met him, you may have had to restrain yourself from sniggering at his waddling gait. You did restrain yourself, though, because you've heard what a violent man he can be. If the rumors are right, he's killed at least a dozen men, some of them with his bare hands. One of his victims was head-butted to death.

Vyerpasin is a crude, belligerent man who hails from somewhere up north, possibly the Saponid Tundra. He commands about a dozen and a half bandits. You understand that they are not as trustworthy as those who follow Angar Glams. For one thing, Vyerpasin's terrible temper leads him to bully and frighten his own men. For another, none of his gang have horses to ride. Vyerpasin's appetite is legendary, and it is well known that horse-flesh is his favorite dish. Whenever one of his men succeeds in stealing a horse, it ends up in Vyerpasin's cook-pot by the end of the week. If you dealt with him, and



³ The gjido, as you well know, is a fast-moving variety of antelope, known for its elaborately curving horns and flippant attitude. Once plentiful in the forests of Almeri, it has become increasingly rare in recent decades, despite its skill in eluding hunters.



approached him on a horse, you were distracted by the hungry looks he directed towards it. If you negotiated with him, he used every means of persuasion at his disposal to convince you to sweeten the deal by throwing in your steed.

Some people say that Vyerpasin will eat human flesh if there are no horses around. This might be mere slander, though, and you imagine that he would stiffen his back in indignant protest were you to ask him to comment on the accusation.

Vyerpasin is not so cautious as Angar Glams, and sometimes sends his men into the city to steal. On several occasions he has tried to raid livery stables. He has been getting increasingly bold of late, and you wonder who will be the first to attack him: the prince's men, or Angar Glams.

Persuade (Intimidating) 8, Rebuff (Obtuse) 10, Attack (Strength) 14, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 14, Health 10, Appraisal 2, Athletics 4, Gambling 6, Living Rough 6, Perception 2, Riding 6, Tracking 2, Wherewithal 8.

Resistances: Pettifoggery 6.

Dututtu, Pop-Eyed Oracle

"Seat yourselves while I turn and froth, and I will reveal to you the secrets of the universe."

The crazed Dututtu is a large person of indeterminate sex, whose vast bulk is concealed beneath a ragged and stinking garment. Dututtu's face is composed mostly of jowl, peppered with the occasional hairy mole. He (or she) spends most days wandering randomly through Kaiin's streets, wearing a sign which reads:

Powers of Prophecy

Metaphysical Truths: 1 groat

Mere Facts: 20 terces

Although any city-dweller may see (and smell) Dututtu at any moment, those who wish to find him (or her) are best advised to come out to the Fringe, where he (or she) sleeps at night. Dututtu's hut is always distinguishable from those around it, because it is painted with arcane symbols⁴.

When hired to perform a prophecy, Dututtu shuffles around in a circle, his eyes rolling back in her head. Then she froths at the mouth, finally dropping to his knees and rolling about in the dirt and charcoal



dust. Dututtu's prophecies are cryptic and vague, but many people swear by their accuracy. It is well-known, for example, that she pointed the prince's vigils towards the location of a notorious fugitive, T'ne the Jumbal, who was found in a granary with a burlap sack over his head, just as he predicted.

If asked for metaphysical truths, Dututtu simply spouts the sort of incoherent philosophical nonsense one might hear from any number of street-corner madmen. Although she charges for the privilege of hearing her, he is extremely difficult to silence once he gets started. He becomes grossly offended if interrupted, so if you want a factual prophecy, it is always best to start with that before moving on to the grand metaphysical questions.

Dututtu remains close-mouthed about his or her past life, but the rumor down at the Magician's Inn (p118) is that she was once a male Arch-Magician named Peresht⁵, who ran afoul of the witch-woman T'iume the Beflowered, and was transformed into the pathetic creature who now madly wanders Kaiin's streets. Others say that Dututtu was once Peresht, but that his downfall came about as the result of imprecise instructions to a truculent sandestin.

⁴ If your Magic pool is 4 or higher, you know that only half of these symbols really mean anything.

⁵ Author of the seminal tome *Salubrious Formulae of Transmutation*.



Persuade (Obfuscatory) 6, Rebuff (Contrary) 14, Attack (Ferocity) 6, Defense (Misdirection) 8, Health 4, Magic (Insightful) 6, Appraisal 3, Concealment 3, Living Rough 6, Pedantry 4, Perception 2, Quick Fingers 4, Scuttlebutt 4, Wherewithal 4.
Resistances: none.

Kogjin, Enterprising Reseller

"You hold a mere imitation, but I will generously relieve you of it for five groats."

The long-legged, golden-haired Kogjin is a fixture of the Fringe, though not a resident. She purchases items from the scavengers of the Fringe and resells them to various vendors of the marketplace. The scavengers seem to bitterly resent her, imagining that every item they sell to her for a pittance is a legendary treasure she'll immediately resell for a vast sum. Still, they are dependent on her, because they cannot go directly to the vendors, for fear of being immediately ejected by private guards. Because Kogjin is presentable, the vendors deal happily with her. While tramping through the Fringe, she wears old and greasy garments, but in the Marketplace, she dresses in fine velour, her wrists and neck dripping with delicate jewels. She is not the only reseller to wend her way through the blackened rubbish of the Fringe each morning, merely the most experienced, persistent, and successful. Kogjin denies that she ever buys stolen merchandise from bandits, but her protestations are difficult to take seriously.

If you ever need an item that you think might have made its way to the Fringe, Kogjin is well-equipped to help. She knows all of the scavengers, and is allowed by both gang leaders to move around the place with impunity. Further, she claims to have a contact within the prince's vigils, and can provide you (though not the bandits) with advance warning of raids, should you need it. Naturally, she is well aware of the value of her services, which do not come cheaply.

Kogjin has her lusty side, and you have heard that she sometimes lowers her prices for especially robust-looking young male clients, provided they seem willing to while away an evening or two on her couch. Although her body is not unshapely, her eyes are rather close together, and her nose somewhat sharp. Further, you have heard at least one of her former lovers complain that she treated him rudely after he had concluded performing his duties for her.

Persuade (Glib) 12, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 10, Attack (Cunning) 3, Defense (Vexation) 3, Health 5, Magic (Studious) 2, Appraisal 6, Concealment 3, Etiquette 4, Gambling 3, Pedantry 4, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 4, Scuttlebutt 4, Seduction 4, Stealth 2, Stewardship 3, Wherewithal 2.
Resistances: none

Pioni, Resilient Beggar

"Cease your vexatious quackings and leave this poor old woman alone."

Although she denies it, the snaggletoothed crone Pioni is reputed by many to be hundreds, if not thousands, of years old. Supposedly she has trawled the streets of Kaiin for spare coin and scraps of food for since before there was a Kaiin. When the Old Town was a new, bustling city, she begged there. Perhaps she even walked the streets of the now-buried cities that can today only be seen as bits of the Undercity (p165).

Pioni flees from anyone who seems to know her name, or who shows too great an interest in her. Her caution is not unreasonable: you once saw her pursued by a small squadron of street urchins, who pitched large rocks at her and tried to poke her with sharpened sticks. She escaped them through the intervention of a pure-hearted foreigner, who intervened on her behalf — and then himself became their target. Miscreants attack her because of a second rumor, which states that any wound or injury she suffers heals with unnatural quickness. This may be true: you saw a big rock hit her on the forehead, bloodying it. But then, moments later, the gash seemed to have gone away, as if of its own accord. Perhaps her miraculous self-healing powers explain her longevity.⁶

She certainly is not interested in discussing such matters with anyone. But if cornered, cajoled, and suitably persuaded, she may provide her tormentors with information on the city's past.⁷ Although she carefully makes no such claim, the facts she provides seem to come from first-hand observation.

Confusingly, she sometimes gets her tenses mixed up, and speaks as if the events of two hundred years ago are happening now. If angered, she may tell you that you will soon become corpse-dust, just like all those who have gone before. You once saw her lay a curse on a scholar who annoyed her with questions, but you have no reason to believe in a connection

⁶ Pioni can suffer a single injury, but never more than that.

⁷ Pioni remembers the entire history of the city, as far back as the GM desires, and can always accurately answer questions on this subject, without the GM's having to roll. Whether she wants to answer the question is another matter.



between that event and the painful bone disease which subsequently afflicted him.

Persuade (Forthright) 4, Rebuff (Wary) 10, Attack (Ferocity) 2, Defense (Dodge) 2, Health 6, Magic (Devious) 2, Appraisal 2, Athletics 2, Concealment 2, Living Rough 10, Pedantry 2, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 3, Scuttlebutt 6, Stealth 6, Wherewithal 14. Resistances: Rakishness 6.

Places of Interest

The Fringe hardly qualify as a place of visual interest. All of its buildings are flimsy, transitory structures. Foliage is limited to the odd, hardy weed poking up between ash and rotting boards.

Rumors ...

- ✿ A wealthy young woman from a city to the east has come to Kaiin looking for her long-vanished half-brother. You think that she may be seeking Angar Glams, or at least might be convinced that Angar Glams matches the description of the relative she seeks. Surely there is a way to profit from this situation, if you just cogitate momentarily.
- ✿ In the 19th Aeon, a breeder named Pervulso, who loved horses and was opposed to their use as meat, developed a breed whose flesh was poisonous to mankind. The eminent noble Koku-Blothor shares these sentiments, and recently purchased two Pervulsan stallions, bringing them here from Kaspara Vitatus. Any number of individuals, not the least of them Angar Glams, might wish to reward you if you were somehow able to spirit one of these stallions out of the stables of Koku-Blothor, and arrange for its superbly marinated haunch to end up on Vyerpasin's dinner plate.
- ✿ (Arch-Magicians only) While perusing one of the still-extant manuscripts of the vanished Arch-Magician Peresht, you note an oblique reference to an item or spell you covet⁸. If you

find the being who transformed Peresht into the shambolic Dututtu, and then persuade or coerce it into providing the means to reverse the magic, you expect that Peresht give you the thing you as a measure of his gratitude. Or, if not, he might be, immediately after awakening from his lamentable condition, too dazed to prevent you from swindling it from him.

- ✿ While visiting the market, you see Kogjin in intense conversation with a vendor of antiquities and magical gew-gaws. Sidling in to accidentally overhear her, you discover that she believes that a wondrous item of your choice (subject to GM approval) is in the hands of an elusive scavenger named Rovanna. If you can find Rovanna first, you can snatch the item from Kogjin's avaricious grasp.
- ✿ An individual loathsome to you (your choice, subject to GM approval) has, rumor contends, kidnapped the unfortunate Pioni. Your enemy has hired the buck-toothed alchemist Copcoft to study her, extracting from her veins or tissue the substance that makes her so resilient. You also understand that this Copcoft is a pitiless individual who might inflict considerable torture on Pioni. Even if you do not care for her fate, you know that it would be bad if your foe gained her powers, and could never be slain or even downed. Perhaps you should rescue Pioni before his alchemist learns her secret.



⁸ The exact nature of this desired item is left to you to propose to the GM, with the understanding that she'll make alternate suggestions if the thing you want is so powerful that a neutral observer would naturally consider it gauche.



Taglines

*Although my companion is indeed an errant patterer
and promulgator of nonsense, your proposed remedy is
surely can only be labeled extreme.*

Do I perhaps hear the approach of Prince Kandive's men?

*Excuse me; the generosity of your offer induced
a momentary paralysis.*

*I cannot help but recall to memory a particularly
succulent horsemeat sausage, which I sampled while
recumbent on the blossomed banks of the Scaum.*

I close my eyes only so I might better savor your charms.

*I well understand your zeal to withdraw
from the company of men.*

*In my younger days, I was a swordsman of legendary
repute, but these days it would take me several entire
minutes to dispatch the lot of you.*

*It is extortion, but, to preserve the amity between us,
I will pretend you did not say it.*

Let us pretend for the moment that the rumors are false.

Let us segue from the metaphysical to the concrete.

*Lie down in this mud for me, as a measure
of your zest for honest labor.*

On the contrary; I find your aroma refreshingly pungent.

*Perhaps if you try again, you will succeed
in engaging my sympathies.*

*The item is utter trash, but I will nonetheless
offer you several groats for it.*

The nobility of your bearing stirs me to atypical candor.

*Your suspicions, though born of sound policy,
are in this instance misplaced.*

Tweaks

City Survival (Living Rough)

Situation: When attempting to survive on the streets
of a city without money or lodgings.

Description: You are an experienced scavenger,
capable of surviving on the streets of a large city as a
hunter or trapper does in the woods. You know how
to find and identify edible garbage. You can assess
potential sleeping places for the degree of shelter they
provide from the elements and the likelihood that you
will be left undisturbed by vigils, angry neighbors,
street toughs, and rival scavengers.

Benefit: This tweak changes the standard definition of
the Living Rough skill, expanding its uses to cities as
well as wilderness environments.

Decipher Lunatic Ramblings (Scuttlebutt)

Situation: You are listening to the fractured ramblings
of a grizzled street-dweller, attempting to sift the valid
information from the crazed mutterings.

Description: You have spent enough time among
scavengers and beggars to understand their singular
methods of communication. You understand that
these people learn to act mad as a means of
frightening off those who would prey on them, and
that the isolation and fear that characterizes their daily
existence gradually transforms them into the lunatics
they pretend to be. You know how to project a kindly
and unthreatening air, so that they'll actually respond
to your questions instead of just babbling whatever
comes to their minds. You have dealt with enough
lunatics to translate their bizarre ramblings into
normal parlance. For example, the addled derelict
might tell you that he fled from a big, black, many-
legged dragon; you can deduce that he refers to a
carriage drawn by a team of black horses.

Benefit: When trying to gather scuttlebutt in
neighborhoods frequented by beggars, scavengers, and
desperate madmen, you gain a bonus of 1 on your



The Fringe

rolls. The GM is obliged to give you the clues they provide in clear and understandable terms.

Felonious Deportment (Imposture)

Situation: When you wish to gain the trust and cooperation of bandits.

Description: You carry yourself like a person who distrusts authority, and is not one to inform the vigils when provided with information regarding illegal activities. You may discourse knowledgeably on such topics as the most efficacious method of waylaying travelers, the criteria one uses to select a hidey-hole, and the precise circumstances in which vigils and other law enforcement officials might be safely disposed of. When you enter a new location, you scan it for signs of ambush, as would any experienced bandit. Your manner is gruff and self-reliant, without being disrespectful towards bandit leaders who may be more experienced or better armed than yourself. Or, at any rate, you are capable of adopting all of these signs of the trustworthy bandit, when called upon to do so.

Benefit: Roll Imposture whenever you first meet a bandit you wish to impress. You may also use Felonious Deportment on a bandit who has already accepted you, if he starts to doubt your loyalty. In either case, you may treat Dismal Failures as merely Quotidian, and Exasperating Failures as Hair's-Breadth Successes. When negotiating with bandits, you may also use Imposture points in place of either Persuasion or Rebuff points. However, you may not use any of these benefits on a bandit who has definitively learned that you are not a fellow criminal, or who has secured proof that you have dealt with him dishonestly.

"Let Us Repair To Less Exposed Surroundings"

(Perception)

Situation: When visiting The Fringe.

Description: You just know when the prince's men are about to raid the Fringe. Whether this comes from a long understanding of the waxing and waning cycles of the neighborhood, or simply a sixth sense, you are unlikely to be caught in a raid.

Benefit: If you are in or near The Fringe, you may at any time ask the GM to roll on your behalf to sense if a raid is imminent. As always, tell her how many points of your Perception pool you're willing to spend to get an accurate result. If you succeed, the GM tells you whether a raid will occur within the next twenty-four hours. If a raid is coming, and you score an Illustrious Success, she tells you within an hour when it will commence. If you successfully use this Tweak and learn that there is no raid on the way, the GM cannot change her mind and send one in anyway, unless you or your fellow PCs actively do something to trigger it.

Let's say that you've used this tweak and gained an assurance that no raids are imminent.

If another PC goes to the palace to warn the vigils that a plot against the prince is being hatched in The Fringe, this player-driven event supersedes your previous prediction. However, if you successfully try again after the PC informs the palace, you now sense that a raid is imminent.

Without a player action of this sort, though, the GM can't just decide that it would now be more interesting for a raid to occur. She's stuck with her previous answer to you, and can't send in the vigils.





Chapter 5

The Marketplace

“Directly below was the marketplace, a medley of stalls selling fruits, molluscs from the slime banks, slabs of pale meat, dull flagons of wine. And the quiet people of Kaiin moved among the stalls, buying their sustenance, carrying it loosely to their stone chambers.”

— Jack Vance, *Liane the Wayfarer*



ccupying the city's northeast corner, the Market is Kaiin's largest commercial district. The majority of its vendors sell unprepared food, but goods of all sorts are available here.

On First Glance

About a hundred and a half stalls, few of them sturdily constructed, huddle together on a flat, cobblestoned plain, where they are arranged into more-or-less neat rows. The Market's southeast corner has no stalls; there, temporary vendors wheel in carts, from which they hawk their wares.

Stall keepers vie to catch your eye by erecting colorful tents around their stalls, or flying bright silk banners, which flap in the wind. Despite their efforts to create an air of excitement, the Market is a gloomy place much of the year. Thick cloud cover rolls in from the bay during the fall and, until spring comes, disperses only rarely. Dampness hangs in the air. Rain always seems imminent, but rarely falls. Although the entire city is usually bathed in this cold gray light, the effect is most noticeable in the Market. It is clear of tall buildings, so the threatening yet indolent sky fills your eye line as you comb through its stalls.

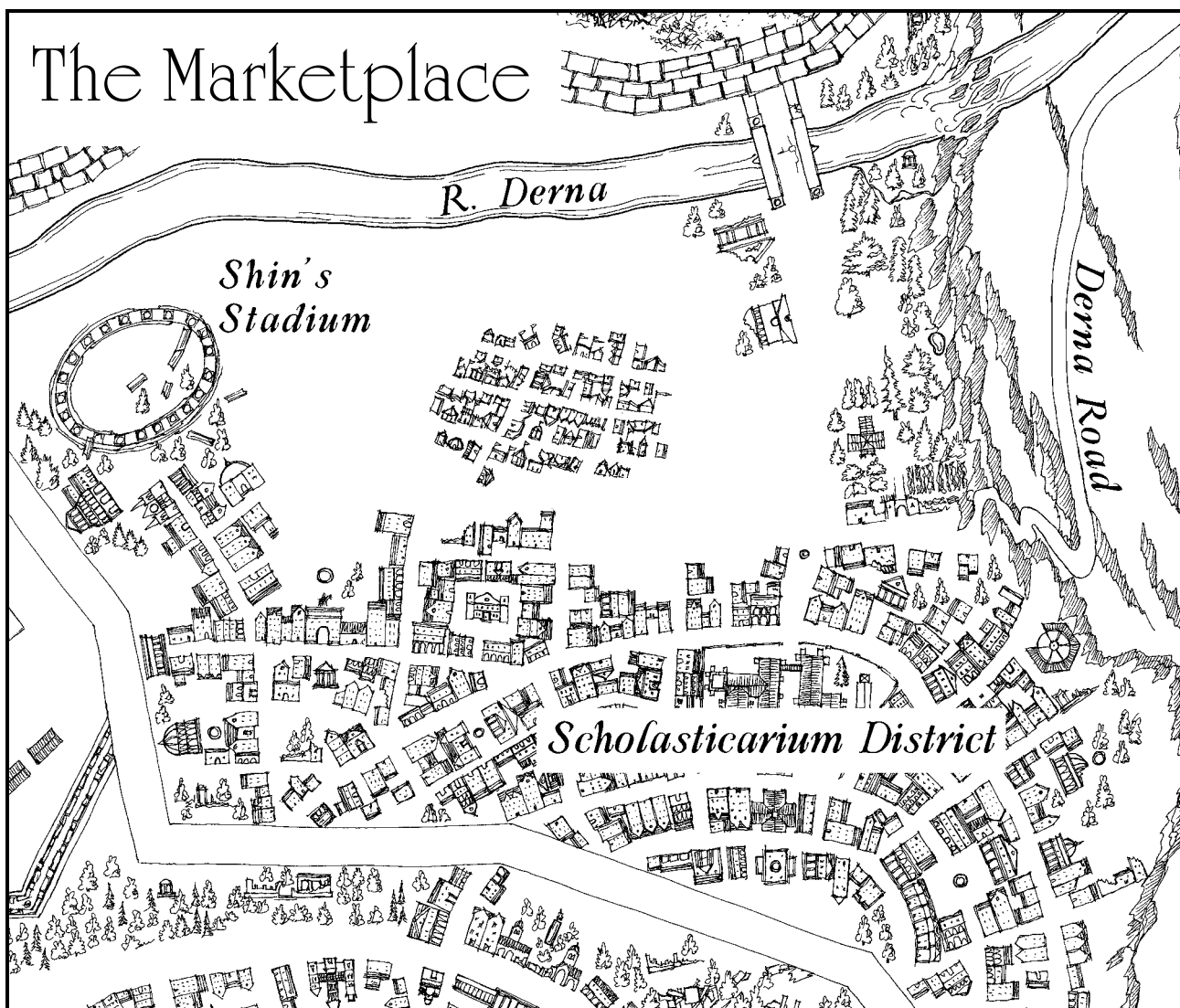
On sunny days, the shouting of the vendors and the joy of the crowds takes wing, and the place sets aside its weary mood. You hear the laughter of children and competing strains of raucous music, ground out by rival teams of buskers and minstrels. When the sky is gloomy, musicians stay away, knowing that the shoppers will be in no mood to dole out groats to songsters. Then the dominant cry is that of the gulls and shrikes who circle eternally overhead, waiting for someone to drop a scallop or bay-slug, at which point they will all swoop down to do shrieking battle over it.

During the cloudy months, the Market smells damp, and reeks slightly of decaying seaweed. In the summer, the smell changes to that of grilled meat, overlaid with the clashing perfumes of wealthy shoppers, who only come out when the sun manages to struggle its way free of the clouds.

Didactic Overview

The Market is not a place for histories and didactic analysis. As vendors come and go, it remains forever changing, yet also timeless. It has always been here. It feeds the city, and





serves as its central distribution point for news, rumors, and entertaining lies. But, because it is so much a part of the city's everyday life, no scholar has ever bothered to write a book on it.

Inhabitants

During the day, the Marketplace is perhaps the most densely populated section of the city. No one lives here, though. When dusk comes, the vendors pack up their merchandise and cart it back to shops and warehouses scattered throughout the city.

Eternal rivalry bristles between the vendors, who operate from semi-permanent stalls, and the teamsters¹, itinerant types who sell out of carts, which they typically bring in from outside the city walls.

Vendors usually live in Kaiin and sell year-round. They see themselves as respectable, trustworthy and sophisticated. Teamsters may just be year-round sellers hoping to one day graduate to full stall ownership. More often, though, they sell seasonal wares, such as produce from the surrounding countryside. Itinerant teamsters see themselves as hard-working, honest, and humble. Naturally, each group regards the other as utterly wicked. Vendors claim that carters are fly-by-night types who won't be around when the customer returns to lodge a complaint. Carters claim that the vendors are stodgy, complacent types who overcharge for goods of questionable quality. Each side accuses the prince's excise officers of favoring the other.

¹ Also known as carters.



The teamster leader is the doleful Edicnapa; vendors follow the overly hearty Schi-Gii. Both are described below, in the Personages section.

Recently, Schi-Gii began a campaign to build two new rows of stalls. Most would be given over to current members of his organization, allowing them to expand their businesses. Their expansion would take place at the expense of the carters, whose area would be reduced in size. Schi-Gii has been gathering donations from the most successful vendors, with the aim of throwing a series of fetes in honor of Prince Kandive. Some vendors grumble at the expense, but others slaver at the prospect of displacing more of the filthy cart-men.

Edicnapa, unsurprisingly, is thoroughly indignant over Schi-Gii's initiative. Her people earn less than his, so she can't outspend him in flattering the prince. To hear the vendors tell it, she's instead retaliating by sabotaging their stalls at night. Edicnapa denies that any such organized campaign is in progress, but it is hard to imagine who else would benefit from the ongoing vandalism. The last time you visited the market, the growing hostility between the two sides was so great it was almost tangible.

Inhabitants

Contacts

Beggar

"The conspicuous clinking of your purse offends a poor man's ear. Assuage your guilt by gifting me with coin." Beggars, who are tightly regulated in the market (see the entry for Dombetha, under "Personages, below), survey with a professional eye the movements of the well-heeled and the generous². They also keep an eye out for pickpockets, hoping to earn a reward for crying "thief!" Desperate for the merest groat, they are eager to share their observations in exchange for coin.

Busker

"Next I shall favor you with a dirge popular among the necrophages of the Falling Wall. Unless, perhaps, you would prefer to request a tune..."

Buskers are not so observant as beggars; their concentration tends to be focused on their own performances. They do often, however, possess an odd

accumulation of knowledge, as found in the lyrics of the old songs they sing. Though untainted by book knowledge, their familiarity with ancient myths and legends may be great. They frequently find themselves in the company of rogues and wanderers, and may know the recent whereabouts of various Cugel-level adventurers. Used to traveling on the cheap, they can point you towards the best inexpensive lodgings and the least offensive cheap meals. They may have recently arrived from elsewhere in Almerly, and are well in touch with rumors from other lands.

Crier

"Kuranes' meat is exceeding fine! Fione's comes from choleric swine! Kuranes' meat is exceeding fine! Fione's comes from choleric swine!"

Vendors hire criers to stroll about the marketplace, touting the virtues of their wares, and casting aspersions on those of their competitors. A crier's eyes follow the movements of the richest-looking customers. If you want an account of the activities of a noble, grandee or magician, one of these leather-lunged shouters may be your best witness. Criers are also well-acquainted with the ups and downs of their clients, the vendors. They can tell you who's feuding with who, which stall-keepers need to quickly unload their wares, and who is doing brisk business.

Servant

"I thank you not to impede my progress, as my master is both punctual and truculent."

On the three out of four days when the Market is shrouded in gloom, the wealthy of Kaiin dispatch their servants to do the daily marketing. They hustle glumly through the stalls, anxious to complete their business as quickly as possible. Many guard their masters' purses as tenaciously as they would their own, if they had purses with anything in them. To make a servant into a reliable contact, you may have to overcome his initial resistance. Anything that wastes a servant's time is likely to earn him a fierce scolding, a prospect that makes him sullenly grit his teeth. Servants display close knowledge of the Market's best bargains, and are adept at sorting the fresh food from the spoiled. They do not typically shop for luxury items or exotic goods, and can tell you little about the vendors who sell these sorts of things.

They know a great deal of gossip about the social

² The two are rarely the same; often the most frequent alms-givers are themselves folk of modest means.



circles in which their masters travel. A mage's factotum will know the juiciest rumors of the Scholasticarium, while the dogsbody of a merchant grandee can tell tales of impending financial transactions.

When given the choice between his own interests and that of his employer, the servant will almost invariably choose the former. However, a servant must trust you, and believe that you can truly help him, before he will betray his master's secrets to you. He may be freer with gossip unfavorable to his boss' rivals.

Vigil

"Explain to me how your behavior is not suspicious."

The Market is the place where people of different social stations most often bump up against one another. If not carefully watched, this crossroads of the moneyed and the needy would also be a breeding place for crime. Fortunately for the city's nobles, it is well-watched indeed, by a complement of the prince's stoutest vigils. When approaching a Marketplace vigil for the first time, expect him to respond gruffly to your greetings, unless you present yourself as an obvious member of the city's ruling class. In that case, he will be polite but formal and distant. To truly befriend a vigil, you'll need to do something that proves you're on his side. Perhaps you can apprehend a criminal for him. A vigil who does not know you well will only provide basic, common information about the doings of the market, like directions to a particular stall. One who trusts you may point out the crooked merchants from the straight, or share information on the suspected

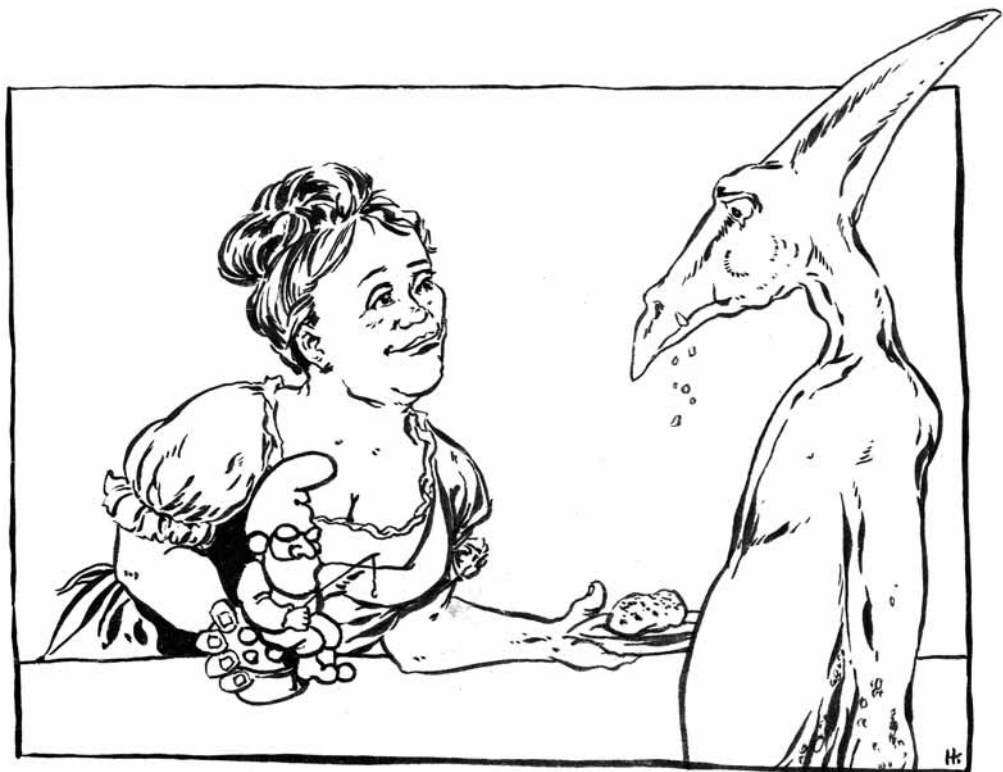
whereabouts of known criminals. He may help you to intimidate shady witnesses into giving up information you desire, or provide introductions to victims of crime.

Vendor

"To accept your offer would be to pluck food from the mouths of my own children."

Vendors realize that they are selling you more than just a handful of onions or a hunting knife. The customer who leaves their stall feeling happy is one who will come back again. Only sellers whose merchandise is unique or obviously superior can afford to be surly and demanding. Those with many competitors make an effort to seem friendly, which may include answering your questions. However, vendors are both canny and over-cautious, and won't provide you with information that might conceivably reduce the quantity of money in their pockets.

Though their ears are always open for gossip, you must sift their words for bias. For example, let's say that you're looking for details on a scandalous story concerning a person who happens to be a top customer of your vendor contact. He may change the





story so that it instead incriminates someone who patronizes a competitor.

Personages

Dombetha, Beggar-In-Chief

“It is a common misperception, that the beggar-in-chief could herself be considered a sort of beggar.”

Dombetha is a hefty, brown-skinned woman whose formless, layered clothing is colored in various shades of purple. She encircles her eyes and lips in matching make-up; even her high-heeled boots are dyed an eye-straining violet. Her hair is purple too, piled wildly up on her head and stiffened with sweet-smelling root paste. At first glance, she looks like a slightly crazed but well-heeled member of the upper class. In fact, she’s the self-appointed duchess of the Market’s beggars, a position whose duties she carries out with stiff-postured grandeur. You’ve often seen her ponderously patrolling the stalls and carts, accompanied by a quartet of ratty-looking henchmen. On several occasions you’ve seen her lift her stubby finger to point out some unfortunate wretch hiding under an empty table or behind a pile of crates. Her bully-boys then rush forward to run the poor fellow off, cursing and shaking their fists at him. If he’s not a fast runner — often these fellows are cripples — they set upon him, kicking him into submission. The vigils not only turn a blind eye to Dombetha’s activities; they treat her as a sort of deputy. Her efforts spare them the indignity of coming into contact with the foul-smelling and unwanted.

As you understand it, Dombetha’s agreement with Schi-Gii, head of the Market Association (see below), allows her to choose which beggars may enter the Marketplace. According to a quota laid down by Schi-Gii, only forty individuals may beg here at any given time. Dombetha doles out begging licenses and sets the hours in which her people are allowed to cadge for coins, even going so far as to assign them specific stations. She collects a large percentage of each beggar’s take. Her enforcers routinely frisk beggars to make sure they’re handing it over. Her favored beggars get the best spots and most favorable hours.

It is rumored that Dombetha has accrued phenomenal wealth during her years as Beggar-In-Chief and lives, under another name, near Odkin Prospect. According to this tale, her absurd appearance

is a sort of disguise, which she discards each evening, assuming a more dignified look in keeping with her true station. On the other hand, you’ve also heard that she lives in a hovel in the Threek.

Persuade (Intimidating) 15, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 15, Attack (Strength) 4, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 5, Health 3, Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Concealment 4, Gambling 4, Living Rough 6, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 3, Scuttlebutt 6, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 8
Resistances: none

Edicnapa, Head Teamster

“It was surely one of the filthy stall-mongers, merely claiming to be an honest teamster.”

Edicnapa is a stout, matronly lady whose thick dousing of face powder never quite obscures the dark rings under her eyes. Her gray hair juts out in an unruly fashion from under her box-shaped felt hat, decorated with quail feathers. She favors a crimson half-length cape, tartan skirts, and white, tasseled knee-socks, worn with black leather sandals.

Edicnapa carries herself with great dignity, looking down at the ground only in emergencies. If you have ever spoken with you, she found the opportunity to tell you that she was born into exceedingly humble circumstances but has worked her way up to a position of respectability through hard work and applied common sense. She becomes most haughtily offended at any suggestion that the leadership of a group of itinerant fruit-hawkers is less than lofty. She can generally be found squatting on a stool in the carter’s section of the market, absent-mindedly peeling an apple or hectoring one of her dozen or so disorderly grandchildren. Whenever she detects a slight against the rights of her merchants, she shifts her bulk up from the stool and marches over to unleash a fiery tongue-lashing. The force of her personality is such that individuals who technically outrank her hate to arouse her ire. The Under-Sheriff, Infido (see below), seems to visibly shrink when she approaches him. Her rival, Schi-Gii, who represents the stall-owners, stands his ground against her protests. Even so, you’ve seen him red-faced and shaking after her departure.

Persuade (Forthright) 18, Rebuff (Contrary) 10, Attack (Ferocity) 3, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 3,



Health 3, Appraisal 4, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 6,
Stewardship 6, Wherewithal 6
Resistances: none

Infido, Under-Sheriff

"It might have happened, or it might be an expression of your deluded senses."

The silver-haired, crease-faced Infido heads the detachment of the prince's vigils permanently assigned to keep the peace of the Marketplace. His official title is Under-Sheriff For the Market and Environs. He wears the standard uniform of the vigils: an indigo tunic and matching leggings, with the wand and lion emblem of the prince emblazoned on the tunic's chest. Infido tops this with a pointy, silver-plated helmet, embossed and filigreed and bearing the dyed-red plume of the desert ostrich. He keeps the helmet on his head with a large red chin-strap; often the helm droops down to obscure his eyes, leaving his thick white moustache as his most prominent facial feature. He carries a large cutlass, with which he often accidentally knocks over items for sale, when he abruptly turns around in the narrow space between stalls. He strikes you as disinclined to use it. When merchants or shoppers come to him to lodge heated complaints, he shrugs his shoulders, shakes his head, and does his best to encourage them to drop their claims. If he fails to appease the complainant, he'll reluctantly drag himself over to the other party, and try to effect a conciliation between the disputants. If this fails, he shrugs some more and, if truly pressed, commands his assistant to make notes on the incident, should the aggrieved party truly want to bring it before the prince. It does not take an expert in politics to realize that Prince Kandive has chiefly charged Infido with keeping petty marketplace squabbles from reaching his attention.

Infido is quick to command his men to action on those rare occasions when something really dangerous occurs, or a serious crime is committed. He does not physically involve himself in a situation until his younger underlings have pacified matters. You have heard that, in his younger days, he was known as quite the swordsman.

Infido makes no secret of his personal regard for Schi-Gii, leading Edicnapa's teamsters to accuse him of bias. However, he has made little headway in investigating the recent rash of vandalism against Schi-



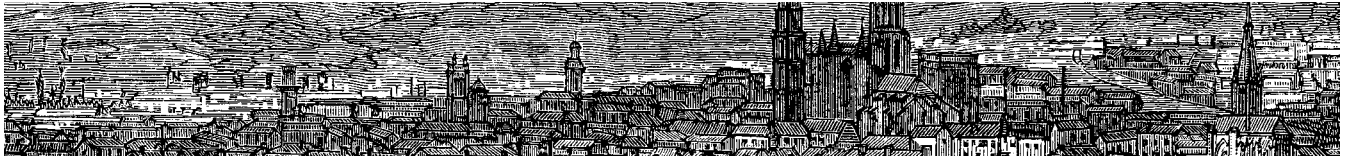
Itinerant peddlers hawk their wares in the Market, although stallholders actively discourage them. Tandrid sells an assortment of birds, including sticks of larks suitable for pies and other delicacies.

Gii's membership. Some say he's intentionally dragging his heels, because he doesn't like trouble. Others dismiss him as a mere idiot, who would help Schi-Gii, if only he were capable.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 12, Rebuff (Obtuse) 15, Attack (Finesse) 10, Defense (Misdirection) 12, Health 5, Magic (Curious) 3, Athletics 6, Etiquette 6, Gambling 4, Living Rough 2, Pedantry 2, Perception 6, Riding 6, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 4, Stewardship 2, Tracking 4, Wherewithal 4
Resistances: Avarice 3

Schi-Gii, Merchants' Association Head

"Avert needless ruction: pay reparations for the damage to his stall."



The florid-faced Schi-Gii serves as Grand Consul of Kaiin Marketplace Association, which represents the stall owners and works vigorously to restrict the privileges of the carters. A middle-aged man of bearish physique, he braids his flowing, peppery hair and beard with beads of carnelian, agate, and turquoise. He favors colorful patterned-print tunics and matching leggings, cut off at the knees. On special occasions he wears simple gold hoops through his earlobes, and occasionally a smaller one that pierces his left nostril.

His manner is grand and ever-smiling. Even when his demands are punitive, his tone of voice remains jovial. If you have ever dealt with him, you found him quick to drape his large and heavy hand over your shoulder. He does his best to appear unruffled by his frequent arguments with his chief adversary, Edicnapa (see above.)

Schi-Gii does his best to convey the impression that he is an official of the city, which he is not. Infido, with whom he is often seen sipping wine, contributes to this image by habitually taking his side in disputes.

Schi-Gii's own business sells leather crafts. When he must leave the stall to conduct Association business, his strapping young son takes over for him.

Persuade (Glib) 12, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 12, Attack (Finesse) 6, Defense (Vexation) 8, Health 6, Appraisal 6, Athletics 4, Craftsmanship (Leather) 8, Driving 4, Etiquette 4, Gambling 4, Pedantry 2, Perception 4, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 3, Stewardship 6, Wherewithal 4
Resistances: none.

Sidhujne, Tax and Excise Collector

"It is the prince's policy you object to. Surely you do not mean to imply that the prince is unjust."

Tall, stick-thin, and equipped with a fine head of snowy hair, the imperious Sidhujne sweeps through the stalls and cartways in search of tax withholders among its merchants. He is always accompanied by four broad-shouldered men of the excise office's enforcement branch. Like everyone, you well take it for granted that tax evasion is a way of life in the Market. Since the excise men can't catch everyone who under-reports his sales, the prince keeps increasing the rate of taxation, to compensate for the losses.

Naturally, rate increases induce more merchants to greater heights of cheating, forcing further rate hikes, and so on.

Sidhujne holds up a silencing hand whenever anyone argues that the prince's tax system arbitrarily singles out a few people and forces them to pay for the sins of all cheats. The equity of the system, he says, is no concern of his. He merely carries out the instructions the prince lays down.

That said, his eyes do seem to land on individuals who annoy him. It is said that he dislikes wrinkled persons, and also men with excessively long sideburns. Clashing colors, pointy-toed boots, and hats with objects bobbling or dangling from their brims also antagonize him. Apparently, the stall-owners have learned to avoid such displays, so now he looks for customers who commit these visual offenses, and then audits the stall-owners they frequent. You may have been rudely treated by a merchant anxious to get rid of you, simply because you unknowingly manifested one of the fashion offenses Sidhujne despises.

Sidhujne's grim visage is well-known by the merchants, and there is something about the manner of his junior officers that always gives them away. He may occasionally recruit freelance agents to make purchases at various stalls, so that he can later check the merchants's books for matching entries. If you've ever looked for temporary employment in the market, you may know someone who did this. You may have even done it yourself. You've heard, though, that this is dangerous; merchants sometimes take rough vengeance on tax informers, and Sidhujne does little to protect them after they've served his purpose.

You've also heard that Sidhujne is easily swayed, especially by those willing to entertain him in luxurious surroundings. It may be possible to strike out against enemies by persuading him to audit them. Unfortunately, his power ends at the boundaries of the Marketplace, so you can only use him against merchants and teamsters.

Persuade (Intimidating) 14, Rebuff (Contrary) 6, Attack (Cunning) 8, Defense (Vexation) 8, Health 6, Magic (Forceful) 3, Appraisal 6, Athletics 4, Concealment 4, Etiquette 3, Gambling 3, Imposture 3, Pedantry 4, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 3, Stealth 6, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 4
Resistances: none



Twegg, Furtive Livestock Dealer

"My message boy will come to you at the appointed hour, and arrange a place for the final sale."

Twegg deals in animals of superior quality, selling both mounts and beasts of burden. However, you can't inspect his merchandise in the market. He keeps a stall, where he allows prospective clients merely to leaf through a handsomely-bound volume containing attractively rendered charcoal illustrations of the various beasts he has on offer. If you linger on a particular page, he will lovingly describe the pictured creature's superior attributes. When you announce your interest in seeing the beast in the flesh, his eyes dart from side to side. He steps back and eyes you suspiciously. The threat of thievery is constant, he says; there are dozens of bandits who devoutly desire to learn the location of his secret stables, where he keeps his inventory. More than once, a supposed client has revealed himself as nothing more than a common waylayer.

If your Persuasion style is Glib or Intimidating, Twegg will outright refuse to deal with you. He may also (GM's discretion) turn you away if you say anything remotely suspicious. If he refuses one customer interested in an animal, he will refuse to even consider selling that particular specimen for a week or more. He assumes that anyone else who inquires after it will surely turn out to be a confederate of the first rejected customer.

Should you manage to convince Twegg of your trustworthiness, he demands an inspection fee equal to ten per cent of the beast's price. If you decide to purchase the animal, he explains, the inspection fee will be deducted from its cost. If you agree to his terms, he asks where you might be found the next morning. He tells you that a messenger will come to meet you, and take you to a place in the countryside outside Kaiin, where you can look the creature in the mouth. He never picks the same rendezvous point twice. Presumably, these spots are nowhere near his hidden stables.

Though you may not be inclined to tolerate his elaborate precautions, everyone will tell you that Twegg's beasts are of exceptional quality. He breeds various strains of creatures first hybridized by a group of whimsically mad magicians from the previous aeon. Twegg is well into his sixtieth decade. His nose, straight and prominent, nose points down towards his



Carters may be identified by their whips and their well-maintained leather boots, stained various colours and artfully folded. Here a carter is shown talking to one of the many servants sent to procure goods from the Market.

well-clipped gray goatee. He favors dark clothing, often pulling a black hood over his head when he becomes nervous or chilly.

Twegg's beasts are listed in the "Special Equipment" section, under the header 'Unusual Mounts and Beasts.'

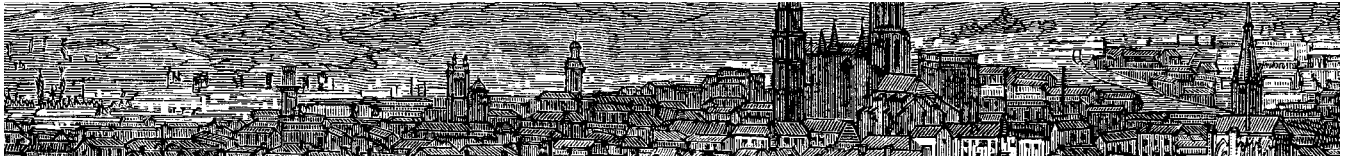
Persuade (Forthright) 16, Rebuff (Wary) 15, Attack (Caution) 6, Defense (Parry) 8, Health 6, Magic (Studious) 7, Appraisal 6, Athletics 2, Concealment 6, Driving 6, Etiquette 2, Pedantry 6, Perception 4, Riding 6, Scuttlebutt 3, Stealth 8, Stewardship 6, Wherewithal 4

Resistances: none

Vetracosto, Seafood Supplier

"There is no stink here, save the honest stink of the sea."

The short and stocky Vetracosto is the leading



supplier of seafood shipped to Kaiin from the waters to the north. His face is round and weatherbeaten; his slicked black hair cleaves closely to his skull, and betrays to the careful observer clear symptoms of dyeing. He favors the simple garb of the seaman, and is best distinguished by the gigantic mermaid tattoos running down his bare arms. Their dark ink obscures a series of round scars, which Vetracosto suffered as a young man when a giant squid grabbed him from the deck of a fishing boat. If plied with sufficient ale, he will regale you with the thrilling tale of his remarkable survival.

He is friendly, in a gruff, business-like sort of way, but ruthless in negotiation. He sells to stall-men and carters alike, staying well clear of the endless power struggle between the two groups. Vetracosto's crusade is against the sellers of shellfish illegally harvested in the poisonous muck of Kaiin's Canal Town. He is always ready to pay for information leading to the apprehension of oyster launderers³. He might well be willing to pay a reward if you're able to smash a laundering organization.

Persuade (Charming) 18, Rebuff (Penetrating) 15, Attack (Strength) 8, Defense (Dodge) 8, Health 6, Appraisal 3, Athletics 5, Etiquette 3, Gambling 3, Living Rough 3, Pedantry 2, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 3, Stewardship 7, Wherewithal 5
Resistances: none

Commercial Establishments

Bagjidha, Rope Merchant

Soft-voiced and friendly, Badjidha does his best to present himself as an honest merchant in a sea of scoundrels. He sells rope, for uses ranging from the household to the nautical. He is an expert on knots. You once saw him identify the nationality of an unknown sailor by a length of knotted rope shown to him by the vigil, Infido.

Curio Dealers, Various

If you seek priceless antiquities or magical artifacts of known provenance, look instead to the curio shops of the Scholasticarium District — see p120. The many curio dealers in the Market offer humbler fare,

ranging from minor antiques to talismans of questionable authenticity. This is not to say that a true find never appears on a Market curio table. For example, you hear that the mage Perrin discovered the original prototype of Sulscrede's Ever-Improving Flask here, a year or so ago. Apparently some mischievous imp had altered its exterior form, so that it appeared to be a clay statue recently produced by artisans of the odious Glanjyre tribe. Local curio dealers do their best to inflate the hope that one of the dusty pieces laid out before them might be such a treasure. And perhaps, if you keep looking long enough, you'll find that to be true.

Many curio dealers are part-timers who show up only after gathering sufficient quantities of rummage. The best-known regulars are as follows.

Onsloc is a genial old fellow who exaggerates his naturally jolly manner, hoping to infect you with his good mood — and a desire to part with your terces. He is somehow sprightly and frail at the same time. If you show interest in one of his pieces, he jigs happily out from behind his table to look at it with you. Though he retains his smile at all times, he bargains fiercely once he thinks an item has caught your imagination. You remember him for his snow-white moustache and the jingling bells affixed to his blue leather tunic.

Finipa is a red-haired woman of middle years who does her best to seem like the mother you wished you had. She offers sweetened raisin rolls, baked fresh this morning, to customers who seem tempted to buy. The rolls are delicious. From the hideous junk you've seen her sell to others, you reckon that some people make purchases merely for the rolls, and for a moment of her maternal affections.

Blunt-spoken and flat-faced, **Chitoroad** carries on as if his goods are so blatantly superior that he needn't cozy up to his customers. He speaks curtly⁴, urging you to make quick decisions and stop wasting his time. If you suffer from a nervous disposition, you may have purchased items from him simply because you succumbed to the false sense of urgency he created.

³ Oyster launderers: see p30 for more on this peculiar form of illicit commerce.

⁴ By the standards of the Dying Earth, that is.

Fortune Tellers

Self-advertised oracles, prophets and soothsayers are plentiful in the Market. Many buskers double as tellers of fortunes, and one-eyed wise women arrive in profusion on carts each morning. Only a few fortune tellers have stalls and can be counted on to be here on fair days and foul. The best-known of them are Paltatea and Venzioi.

Paltatea

Paltatea's detractors⁵ claim that men come to her only to gaze into her dazzling eyes, to behold her creamy skin, and to dream about running their fingers through her curly, dark hair. However, she has as many female patrons as male, and she has many supporters who praise the accuracy of her predictions. She charges 50 terces for a reading, which she conducts with cards, the throwing of miniature rods, and, when doubt persists, careful study of the patron's palm. Many people trust her because she does not hold back the bad news she sees in her cards. As most people of the Dying Earth expect imminent misfortune, her doom-laden omens and dire warnings seem more than credible. However, some patrons bitterly object to a bad reading, treating it as a curse she has placed on them. For that reason, her metal-masked guardian, Xallime, stands perpetually at the ready, a gigantic battle-axe in hand. He is a colossal and well-muscled man. You once heard somebody say that his distorted bronze features are not those of a mask, but that his head is actually a magical device which has taken over the use of a human body. The rumormonger did not care to speculate on the fate of the body's original head.

Venzioi

Venzioi is a round-headed man with deeply furrowed brows and eyebrows that point upwards in a sinister fashion. He wears voluminous silken robes, even in the heat of summer. You've never seen him without his distinctive headgear, a skullcap decorated with paper-thin plaques of embossed silver and gold.

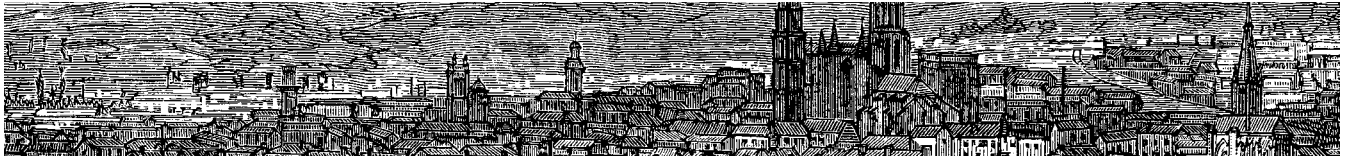
Venzioi is not just a fortune teller, he proclaims, but a magician who has dedicated his life to aiding others. Much of his 60-terce fee, he says, goes to feed the poor and alleviate the suffering of the sick. You have never met any poor or sick people who credit



him with helping him. He reads fates with the aid of a strange device which, judging from the painting on the outside of his tent, looks like a cross between a crystal ball and an astrolabe. Like most professional fortune tellers, he emphasizes good news and glosses over bad omens.

Unlike Paltatea, who he often condemns as an unschooled amateur, he offers a range of other services of interest to the Cugel-level adventurer. He will identify magical items, scry on your enemies, and lift curses. You have heard differing opinions regarding the efficacy of these services. You've also heard people say that secrets they revealed to him in confidence later came back to them, from unexpected quarters. Maybe this means that you should never trust him with your secret information. Or perhaps it means that you might be able to pay him to reveal your rivals' secrets, should they happen to be his clients.

⁵ Foremost among them is her chief rival, Venzioi.



Joftamela's Candles and Lanterns

The stout, sharp-faced Joftamela sells candles, lanterns, lamps, and lamp oil. As a sideline, she also offers supplies for would-be explorers of the Old Town, including pick-axes, climbing gear, heavy boots, and even helpful maps of the ruins. As it is widely known in the city that no one ever returns from the ruins, her customers for this product line are invariably foolish newcomers. You've heard suggestions that Joftamela has an arrangement with Chun the Unavoidable⁶. According to this tale, he strips the corpses of the explorers he kills, burying their equipment in a predetermined spot. Joftamela then goes to dig it up so she can resell it to the next group of fools. Although the tale has a pleasing circularity to it, Joftamela's manner seems too jovial for such murderous chicanery.

Kager's Miraculous Elixirs

The next time you suffer a wound, or come down with an ailment such as Saponid fever, pleurisy, the grippe, or jungle rot, you may want to inspect the wares of the craggily handsome Kager, a former excavator of ruins who now makes his living as a dispenser of medicines and poultices. He charmingly boasts that he has suffered almost every injury and non-fatal infection known to mankind, and that his homemade concoctions have been formulated with



the special insight only direct experience can bring. Ingenious wooden cases, line the back of his narrow stall, folding up into shelves when the market day is done. They're filled with thousands of tiny bottles containing variously colored tinctures, salves, and ointments. Kager insists on a quick inspection of any patient before dispensing his medicines, and may ask to look at your wound or peer down your throat. He is personable, but you may be annoyed by his

habit of one-upping his patients. There is no complaint you can make to him that he won't claim to have suffered in a much worse way at some point during his storied career.

When you are poisoned, or suffer from a disease, you can reduce by 1 any levies attached to related Health rolls by spending at least 50 terces on Kager's medicines. (Kager will attempt to haggle you upwards.)

You can refresh Health by consuming revivifying elixirs purchased from Kager. The elixir costs 50 terces per dose, and can at most be used once per day.

Kohha's Poetry On Demand

Gruff and bearded, the irascible Kohha is not the first person you'd picture when you think of a poet. He wears rough linen overalls, unevenly dyed in shades of indigo. A worn, wide-brimmed straw hat roosts on his head, raked back at a high angle. Kohha is not one to chat: he wants to know what kind of poem you want, right now. He barks out any questions he may have about the custom composition you want him to create, and then sets right to work, the tip of his tongue worming its way out of his mouth as he scribbles away. He harumphs indignantly if you dare to criticize or suggest changes.

Kohha's poems count as special equipment, and are described under two headings in that section: Bewitching Stanzas and Limerick of Excoriation.

Hediclip Fine or Hearty Ales

The broad-shouldered, grizzled Hediclip, who always looks like he's either thirsty or spoiling for a brawl, or both, offers the greatest selection of ales in the Market. He'll sell by the skinful (bring your own wineskin) or by the cask. His ales range from inexpensively priced and rancid to expensive and flavorful. Supposedly Hediclip was cursed by a prophetess he once struck down on the road, and as a result is unable to let even so much as a drop of ale touch his lips or tongue without suffering a fit of violent convulsions. If this story is true, it explains why he gazes forlornly at you whenever you sample his wares.

Lonpria's Fine Arts

When you desire paintings, tapestries, or sculptures, seek out the stall of the wildly-gesticulating, fast-

⁶ See *DERPG*, p155.



moving dealer known as Lonpria. Typically clad in a leather vest, crimson or purple tunic, and mottled leggings, and a high, narrow hat of green felt, he is anxious to beautify your domicile with the finest pieces of salvaged art from aeons past. He also acts as an agent for a small stable of living artists, though he encourages them to work in the familiar and popular styles of the past⁷. Lonpria's sculptures are small in size, suitable for display in the home. The items on display at his stall, though impressive, do not represent the most expensive items in his inventory. He is wary of thieves and must be convinced of your trustworthiness before admitting you to his main warehouse, located on the outskirts of the Market. It is there that he keeps his works of true distinction, priced at 10,000 terces and up. Lonpria's warehouse is well-guarded by burly swordsmen. Allegedly, a demon of the fourth over-layer prowls the warehouse at night, bound to Lonpria's service by means unknown. The same rumor has it that Lonpria also controls a quartet of otherworldly beings known as Sniffing Hounds, who will tirelessly track down successful thieves and subject them to hideous tortures. You have no idea whether these rumors are accurate or not; certainly, if you were an art dealer, you would want people to believe them.



N'je Lenitin, Blacksmith

When you need a metal item made or repaired, N'je Lenitin is the man to seek. Tall, thin, sandy-haired and gravel-voiced, N'je Lenitin is not unfriendly, but seems perennially worried and distracted. You've heard various theories explaining his apprehensive disposition. One says that he once imprisoned a fire spirit to help him at his forge, but that it escaped, and

will some day come back to burn him to the quick. Others claim he's merely laden down with gambling debts, and stays alert for the approach of bully-boys come from The Tracks to collect on them. It may just be, though, that N'je Lenitin is a nervous fellow — or just seems that way to others, even though he's perfectly happy. Not everyone has an interesting story.

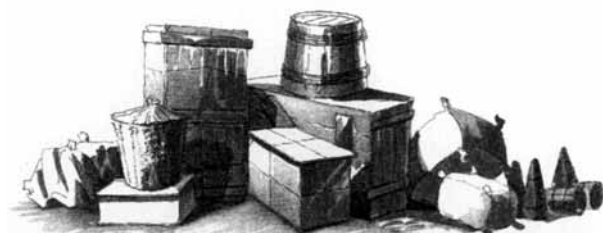
His smithy is a more permanent structure than the flimsy stalls of his neighboring vendors. It is locked at night and guarded by creatures that howl and bark.

Parmont's Rug Stall

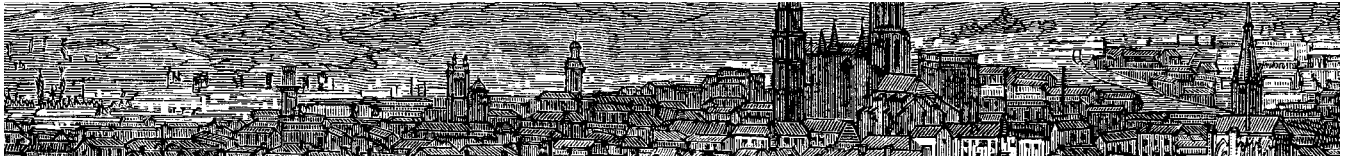
Stacked to bursting with a teetering mound of carpets, Parmont's Rug Stall is your best bet for floor coverings, whether you seek a cheap item to keep your toes warm, or an impressive collectible to astound rival connoisseurs. (See 'Rug of Superior Merit', in the "Special Equipment" section.) Parmont himself is an odd figure, a proudly bald man in a city where a disinterest in hats is taken as a sign of incipient madness. His eyes bulge out enthusiastically as he praises his wares. When describing a particularly choice item, his face flushes, and sickly purple rings appear beneath his eyes. He speaks in a high, squeaky voice many find grating.

Pronom's Boxes, Crates, and Other Diverse Containers

Typically unshaven, often intoxicated, and always hostile, the grizzled Pronom remains your best-priced source of boxes, crates, bags, sacks, jars, chests, trunks, and containers. Though he does not advertise the fact, he is also a skilled locksmith. His skill extends to the creation of ingenious traps to puncture, poison, shock or slice thieves who attempt to ransack your belongings without permission. You also hear that he will, after taking suitable precautions, accompany clients to isolated locations, to help them break into



⁷ Kain's discerning art purchasers, realizing that any style of any merit would have been discovered by now, are wisely reluctant to embrace any new or shocking modes of artistic expression.



trapped or well-locked containers. If you ever asked him about this, he replied that he only helps people who have lost the keys to their own chests and trunks. You got the impression that this was not so much a scruple as a bargaining stance. He wears a muslin hood, which, oddly has no a cape or coat attached to it. His favorite shirts boast designs rendered with gold or silver paint, depicting recumbent leopards and sindics. On close inspection, you might have noticed that these creatures are often lewdly entangled.

Sepmi's Sublime and Useful Furnishings

The largest suite of stalls in the Market belongs to the stern yet beautiful Sepmi, who strides through the Market as if she owns it. She sells furniture of all kinds, both used and new. You can inspect a wide range of couches, chairs, and tables at her stalls. She owns several warehouses full of additional stock, and can arrange for a functionary to escort you to the things you covet, should her display items fail to meet your fancy.

If you want the cheapest possible furnishings for your Threekside hovel, you'll need to consult the beaten-down carters who bring scavenged pieces into the city each day. Sepmi's goods are more suited to a respectable person of modest means.

If you come into the possession of a spectacular antique piece of furniture, she may take it off your hands, even though she doesn't sell such items here. When she purchases a showpiece suitable for a grandee or Arch-Magician, she discreetly offers it to private clients. You should be careful when trying to sell her stolen pieces. Sepmi would become most displeased if she unknowingly tried to sell a pilfered chair back to its original owner. You know that at least one of her suppliers wound up drowned in the Scaum after just such an embarrassment, involving the Arch-Magician Grashpotel.

Slave Dealers

On any given day, you can find four or five carters with a few forlorn captives for sale. Some, as residents of other places, claim the right to sell their countrymen as slaves⁸. Certain carters even seem to be selling their own family members into slavery or concubinage. However, the two most prominent slave dealers are Aevolai and Vyejuar.

Aevolai

Aevolai appears as a young, thin, blonde woman, though word has it that she is actually quite old, and alters her appearance with a spell of glamer. If this is true, her choices are idiosyncratic: with a wide face, lank hair, and big eyes, she is striking without being beautiful. She does not display her merchandise at the Market. Instead, she merely listens to the customer's stated needs, and then arranges for an appointment at her Threekside slave pen complex, where appropriate slaves may be poked, prodded, and inspected for gum disease. Though they are as indolent and unhappy as you might imagine, her slaves do not show significant signs of mistreatment. She keeps the concubines and catamites in special good health, to best show off their physical attributes. Aevolai looks intently at her clients as she deals with them, and speaks in a harsh but somehow mesmerizing tone. She allegedly maintains an intermittent dalliance with the Scholasticarium lecturer and eroticist Volune Stinobric (p116.) She favors long linen dresses embroidered with colorful or metallic threads, and allows her long hair to drape straight down her back, without adornment.

Vyejuar

The emaciated, leather-skinned Vyejuar displays her slaves at her large stall, in a massive iron cage her shirtless lackeys perspiringly erect each morning. The slaves are chained at the wrists and legs and kept packed tightly together. Where Aevolai is best known for her stock of luscious pleasure slaves, Vyejuar's stock tends towards the bestial and burly. Her grim-visaged captives glare balefully out at would-be purchasers. Aevolai's business seems to cater to the sort of person who enjoys the feeling of power and domination that comes with slave ownership. Even though Kaiinese law forbids mistreatment of slaves, she is happy to remind her customers that the prince's rules aren't always well-enforced. The usual rumors of sexual insatiability attend her; supposedly she has a taste for the favors of her most subhuman slaves. She seems to encourage these rumors, because her clientele likes the sense of perversity she projects. Whether they're true or not is an entirely different question. She dresses like a man, allowing her loose brown tunic to gape open at the neck, so that curious patrons might gaze down in for a glimpse of her modest breasts. She wears tight, dark leggings over high, black leather boots. A looped

⁸ See p21 for detailed information on the legalities of slave ownership in Kaiin.



whip hangs from her belt, though you've never seen her use it.

Sulviff's Ladles and Cookpots

As any dedicated gastronome knows, it is impossible to whip up a truly splendid meal without resort to an assortment of clever, highly specialized cooking devices, from the ralula zester to Tracdowline's Ingenious Juice Freezer. While the braying, bow-legged vendor Sulviff is always more than willing to sell you a complete set of copper cookpots, or an entire Verimite clay oven, his true talent lies in supplying novel cooking gadgets. He diligently paws through ancient tomes on food preparation, searching for diagrams of long-forgotten devices, which he commissions local artisans to recreate. If you've ever bought any of these gadgets, you may suspect that his conjectures about them are mistaken, and that they were intended for uses entirely unrelated to those he advertises. Nonetheless, Sulviff's recreations impress other gourmets, especially if you're among the first to add a new gadget to your repertoire.

The greater your skill in Stewardship, the harder you find it to resist the lure of these items. If Sulviff is trying to sell you one, you suffer a Rebuff levy dependent on your Stewardship rating, as per the chart below.

Stewardship	Levy
0 - 4	none
5 - 7	1
8 - 11	2
12+	3

When you fail to Rebuff him, you buy an exotic and possibly useless kitchen device. Depending on whether your final result was Exasperating, Quotidian, or Dismal you spend 10, 15, or 50 terces, respectively.

Shmagul's Fine Jewelry

The bald-headed, quick-talking Shmagul, who dresses in drab browns so as not to distract from his glittering wares, sells quality jewelry. Some of it he makes himself; he also buys from other jewelry makers. His pieces seldom fetch more than a few hundred terces. Although he doesn't sell precious antiquities or showpiece gems, he does know quite a bit about them. If you fail to correctly appraise a gem or jewel, you

might consult him for a second opinion.

You've seen his eyes dart frantically about when the excise collector, Sidhujne, walks by. You have a feeling he might know the sorts of people who might help you covertly dispose of stolen jewelry, if you were the sort of person who might have stolen jewelry to covertly dispose of.

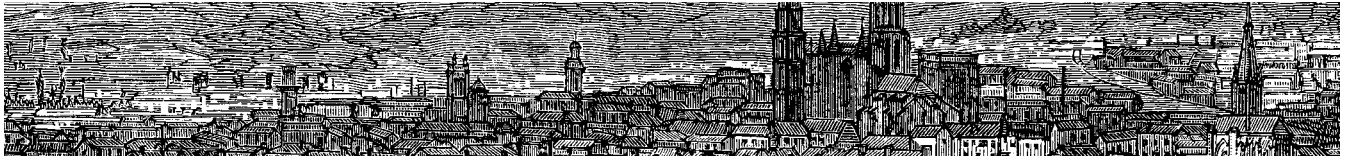
Tailors, Various

Kaiin's finest clothiers are found in the Undercity (p173). For everyday togs, however, all but the wealthiest citizens head to the Market, to patronize its various tailors. The most prominent of these are as follows.

Fiuottecca wears a perpetually hangdog expression and seems gaunt and malnourished. His craftsmanship is typically flawless, but, in keeping with his melancholy temper, he works exclusively in drab and sickly colors. His fashionable customers rely on him for mourning clothes. You may find his penchant for dusky hues useful if you wish to commission an outfit that makes you hard to see while you sneak around in the dark. While he fits his customers, Fiuottecca drones on about his various afflictions and recent bouts of ill-fortune. If you are lucky, he may merely describe, in vivid and exacting detail, the upcoming end of the world.

Blotral favors more amusing colors, but makes mistakes and throws temper tantrums of lunatic intensity when his errors are pointed out to him. His most memorable feature is his pair of dark and piercing eyes, which, with candlelight reflected in them, take on a menacing quality. Every so often, he twitches abruptly, a mannerism which perhaps explains his occasional dropped stitches. He sometimes reminds you of a malign and nervous baby bird.

The seamstress **Lezzina** is less temperamental than either, except when you move during a fitting. If you do so, she will stamp on your foot, or maybe jab you with her needle. She is a matronly woman who usually affects an expression of steely determination. Supposedly she is very rich. This might explain why she is so often seen in the company of cultured-looking young men. She seems to discard her



handsome young companions at regular intervals, and it is said that she does so because she is wary of fortune-hunters.

Thydic's Shields and Rapiers

The stocky, hirsute Thydic, who favors the drab green wool sweater, gray leggings and white tasseled belt of the north country peasant, sells a wide variety of weapons and armor pieces, ranging from collector's items to the cheap and serviceable. He does not make weapons himself, but merely buys and resells existing pieces. You can pawn your weapons to him, receiving one fourth of their value. He leaves them on hold for three months, but then will sell them to the first interested party. You can sell surplus pieces to him outright, for half of their value. Although he can't afford to buy valuable antiques from you, he will offer to act as your agent. He takes the pieces on consignment and then consults his network of wealthy collectors in search of the most interested potential buyer. When he succeeds in finding one, he takes fifty per cent of the sale. If you've ever protested the unfairness of this arrangement, he pointed out to you that no one knows Kaiin's weapons collectors, and the words needed to sell to them, better than he does. With Thydic, you always have your choice of half the sale price, or nothing.

If you've had extensive prior dealings with Thydic, you know him to be a mercurial fellow. He might be friendly and talkative in the morning, but surly and withdrawn later in the day. When he gets angry, he

froths at the mouth a little. Market gossips swear he labors under a curse, or perhaps is a pair of twins posing as one man.

Curiosities and Landmarks

The Market's vendors want no landmarks or picturesque vistas to distract their customers from their spending. During the day, it is the banners and tents that attract the eye. At night, when everyone has packed up, the place seems naked and forlorn.

Events

Likewise, the Market is not a place for special events. Any attempts at processions, traditions, or festivals are quickly stamped out by vigils and stall-keepers.

Rumors ...

✦ A beggar of your passing acquaintance is found dead in the Marketplace. His body is discovered in the morning, and looks like it was dumped there during the night. Word has it that the fellow discovered the location of the hole outside Kaiin where Dombetha squirrels away her vast accumulated wealth. Perhaps it would be profitable to find this hole, since Dombetha's enforcers surely pose less of a threat to you than they would to a malnourished wretch like the dead beggar.

✦ It is not just bandits who dearly want to know where the livestock merchant Twegg keeps his secret stable of hybridized beasts. Pedants and rival breeders alike covet the opportunity to spy on his operation. It is very difficult to get sorcerous hybrids to breed true. Usually the offspring of such creatures is stillborn, or develops additional, undesirable mutations. Twegg must use some special process to ensure his consistent supply of exotic beasts. If you were to learn of its details, you could surely find a number of bidders interested in rewarding you for your knowledge.





- A new carter, the glib and handsome Fra Ginnare, has recently arrived at the market. He has surrounded himself with a group of similarly ambitious young itinerant vendors. Edicnapa apparently looks upon him as a threat. A reliable source tells you he's secretly in league with Schi-Gii, and plans to discredit the carters by inciting a riot. The carters will attack the stalls, knocking them over and, they hope, provoking a wild orgy of looting, as shoppers scramble to claim items as they drop to the cobblestones. After the riot, Fra Ginnare will vanish, leaving Edicnapa to face the prince's wrath. Thus will the teamsters' space in the Market be reduced, to Schi-Gii's benefit. The best-established stall owners will enjoy advance warning of the riot, so they can hide their really valuable goods, leaving only low-priced items to be stolen or broken in the melee. Afterwards, they'll lodge claims for compensation against the carters, claiming much greater losses than they've really suffered. Knowing about the possible riot, several choices appear before you. You can try to prove the rumor, assisting Edicnapa and earning her gratitude, whatever that is worth. You can approach Schi-Gii or Fra Ginnare and demand payment for your continued silence. Or you can use the upcoming chaos as a diversion for some more directly profitable plan of your own devising.
- You hear that Infido has been keeping a closer-than-usual watch on the weapons merchant Thydic of late. His vigils say he's gotten a report that Thydic has arranged to purchase wondrous wands from a ruin-dotted island somewhere in the Sanreal Bay. They spit fire, or reduce a person's flesh to hot glue, or some such thing. The vigils fear that these weapons will pose a threat to public order. Perhaps you can save Infido some trouble, by intercepting the shipment yourself, and learning first-hand what the devices do.
- Sidhujne has been asking detailed financial questions of the merchants and stall owners. A financially aware contact of yours has surmised that the prince intends to overhaul his taxation

system, presumably to the further detriment of the merchants. If you can find out which of the prince's functionaries Sidhujne has been ordered to report to, you could get to him and make some kind of special deal for your friends. Or you could sell this valuable information to the highest bidder.

- (for Arch-Magicians) Osherl, chief sandestin of the vaunted Arch-Magician Ildefonse the Preceptor (*DERPG* p156) has vanished. Apparently, Ildefonse made the classic mistake of issuing an instruction to his sandestin while at the same time munching on a Falguntan flatbread. "Osherl," he said, "I want you to go to the Kaiin market and assume a disguise..." At that moment, before he could explain the rest of his no doubt subtle and clever plan, he began to choke on the dry cracker, and was unable to speak further. Taking advantage of the pause, Osherl acted as if Ildefonse had given him a complete set of instructions, and departed. He has not been seen since, and is presumably resident somewhere in the market, disguised as who knows what. A furious Ildefonse wants Osherl back. His rivals in the Arch-Magician's conclave wish to find Osherl and quiz him on his master's secrets, especially the hiding places of his magical artifacts. Depending on your attitude towards Ildefonse, you might want to help or hinder him. To do either, you must first locate the errant sandestin.
- (for Turjan-level characters) Vetracosto has been selling a new, delicious sub-species of sea-slug to his roster of seafood vendors. The city's most enthusiastic gourmets are crazy for this delicacy, and his vendors have trouble keeping it in stock. But those who eat too much of the stuff begin to act oddly. You've heard that the sea slugs are hybrid creatures grown in a vat, by the sinister magician Mazirian. Surely he doesn't need even the generous proceeds of Vetracosto's slug operation. What dire fate does he intend for the city's gastronomes?





Taglines

Achieve agreement while I sip wine and contemplate the riverbank.

Good etiquette forbids me to point out the fatal error in your reasoning.

I grow bored. Perform more zestily!

I will investigate these claims of yours, and return at my leisure.

Impertinence! My offer is withdrawn!

My palate has been ravaged by your acrid swill.

My sympathies remain unengaged.

Others would demand twice the compensation.

Properly motivated, I might show you how thieves could counter your precautions.

Surely you know he informs for the excise department.

The one with the sharp teeth plans to waylay you tonight.

There are others whose desire for this object can be measured in the hundreds of terces.

This echoes my own thinking.

Today I am in the mood for mollusk.

You overestimate my interest in your wares.

You took cruel advantage of my friend's low intelligence.

Special Equipment

For this most mercantile of chapters, we'll forgo the usual collection of tweaks in favor of various items of special equipment your character can purchase in the Kaiin market. Under the header for each entry is the name of a vendor from whose Market stall you can acquire the item. If the stall is listed in boldface type, it can only be found at that location⁹. A price list appears at the end of this section.

Bewitching Stanzas

Kohha's

The poet Kohha pens rich, luxuriant poems which, when memorized and recited, aid you in the act of seduction. The power of his poems varies. You can

keep one of his standard efforts on hand to deal with a wide range of possible partners, or can hire him to tailor a work specifically to a chosen object of desire. **Standard:** If you recite this poem to your prospective target during a seduction attempt, you may treat all Exasperating Failures on your subsequent Seduction rolls as Hair's-Breadth Successes.

Custom: The efficacy of a specially written poem depends on the quality of information you are able to supply to Kohha. The more accurately you can describe your target's likes and dislikes, the better chance Kohha has of creating a poem to thaw his or her heart. Represent this process by making a Perception roll when you commission the poem. To attempt this, you must have already spent, at minimum, a couple of hours conversing with (or at least observing) your quarry. Your roll determines the number of points you may temporarily add to your Seduction pool while attempting to sway your target, as per the following chart:

Degree of Success	Increase to Seduction Pool
Illustrious	7
Prosaic	3
Hair's-Breadth	2

These points leave your pool at the end of your Seduction attempt, so spend them freely.

Note: You may not make use of Bewitching Stanzas if your Persuasion style is Forthright. If your prey's Rebuff style is Wary, he or she is immune to their effect.

Ingredients of Singular Ostentation

Various stalls and carts

Certain purists may tell you that the true gourmet cook can be distinguished by his ability to create sublime dishes only from simple, easily obtainable ingredients, but their notions are clearly nonsensical. Everyone knows that the true mark of culinary status lies in one's ability to procure legendarily rare and expensive ingredients, and to use them in elaborate dishes your dinner guests will chatter about for weeks afterwards. Although the vast majority of stalls sells simple fare for simple folk, the dedicated hunter of

⁹ Your GM may decide that similar items are available outside of Kaiin. She may also introduce storylines in which new competitors challenge a vendor's current monopoly.



exotic ingredients can usually hunt down something to thrill the most jaded gourmet. Examples of exotic ingredients include yellow hissop nectar, pancreatic residue from the southern hoon, crushed wings of the iridescent flanged butterfly, bear paw, fortu root, and of course the ever-so-rare brilliantine quare¹⁰. A properly-prepared meal incorporating such delicacies will delight your dinner guests and enhance your reputation as a person of means and refinement.

However, exotic ingredients tend to be powerfully flavored, prone to spoilage, or otherwise difficult to prepare. Meals that include them tend to succeed wildly, or fail horribly. When you¹¹ cook the meal, roll Stewardship, increasing all success results by one step, and decreasing all failures by one step. (In other words, Hair's-Breadth Successes become Prosaic; Prosaic Successes become Illustrious, while Exasperating Failures become Quotidian, and Quotidian Failures become Dismal. As always, there is no result higher than an Illustrious Success and none lower than a Dismal Failure.)

Ironically, your attempt to cook using a special ingredient can result in a revolting, disastrous dish that uncultivated guests will nonetheless highly praise.

They do so assuming that the dish is supposed to taste that way, and that it is their untutored palates that are to blame, not the incompetence of the chef. Any taster of a failed dish must make a successful Stewardship roll to identify it as such. If any single guest succeeds, he is likely to openly retch, loudly announcing to everyone else at the table your gastronomic inadequacy. Even so, all is not lost; you can enter into a Stewardship contest against him, as you each try to convince the other guests of your culinary authority. If you win the contest, you convince the other guests that your dish tastes as it is supposed to, and it is your guest who is the epicurean nincompoop.

When you create a successful dish, or leave guests assuming you did, you gain a bonus of 1 in contests of Persuasion, Etiquette, Seduction, Scuttlebutt, Pedantry, or Stewardship against them¹². This benefit lasts for the course of the evening.

Also, if your dish was successful, or if more guests than not treated it as such, luster is added to your general reputation. Among the well-heeled, you may treat all Exasperating Failures on Etiquette rolls as Hair's-Breadth Successes, for a period of 1 month.



Limerick of Excoriation

Kohha

In addition to lyrical poems meant to speed you towards the bedchamber, the poet Kohha also composes satirical verses with which you can jab rivals during sophisticated social occasions. For this purpose, each verse must be carefully targeted to the victim's well-known foibles. In order to commission a useful limerick, you must either succeed at a Scuttlebutt roll, or have already spent two or more hours observing your target's behavior. In the latter case, you must be able to watch him in relatively unguarded circumstances. If you merely observe him stand at attention during a parade, for example, you're unlikely to notice any amusing quirks to inspire Kohha's ridicule.

When you recite the limerick, make an Etiquette roll. If you are successful, the victim suffers a levy of 1 in any subsequent Persuasion, Etiquette, Gambling, Pedantry, Scuttlebutt or Seduction rolls made in the presence of any person (other than yourself) who heard and was amused by it. The duration of this

10 Brilliantine quare: a bottom-dwelling ocean mollusc, somewhat like a cross between a sea slug and a jellyfish. Succulent when properly prepared, it is utterly poisonous in the event of a filleting error.

11 Or, if you prefer, a designated chef. Warning: sandestins are not to be trusted in the kitchen.

12 Guests who successfully rolled Stewardship to identify your cooking as putrid gain a bonus of 1 against you.



effect depends on your degree of success.

Degree of Success	Duration of Victim's Levy
Illustrious	1 month
Prosaic	3 days
Hair s-Breadth	The length of the current social engagement

This effect is not cumulative; you can't make a victim suffer a levy greater than 1 by reciting multiple limericks, or by enlisting others to do so. If your Rebuff style is Pure-Hearted, you may not make use of Limericks of Excoriation. Victims whose Rebuff style is Obtuse are immune to them.

Rug of Superior Merit

A rug of superior merit is an antique floor covering coveted by collectors and connoisseurs. If you display it in your home, you gain a boon of 1 on all Persuasion, Etiquette, and Scuttlebutt rolls made during social occasions you host there.

Further, you gain a boon of 1 on all Attack rolls made against someone who has previously soiled, stained, scorched, or otherwise damaged your rug. This boon depends on your righteous rage at the carelessness of this obvious poltroon, and does not apply if you in any way contrived to make the accident occur.

You may save precious terces by purchasing a replica. The replica provides the boon you gain while hosting parties in your home, but not the Attack boon against those who damage it. Note that, by displaying a fake rug, you risk supreme embarrassment. Every GMC guest with an Appraisal rating rolls that ability when he first lays eyes on it. On a success, he sees through your fakery. Should he announce this to the assembled partygoers, you suffer a levy of 1 on all Persuasion, Etiquette, Pedantry, and Seduction rolls for the next month. This levy applies not only to participants at your event, but to any other Kaiinese GMC who is a) of equivalent social status to your guests and b) has a rating in Scuttlebutt.

You may not use a fake rug if your Rebuff style is Pure-Hearted.



Unusual Mounts and Beasts

Twegg's

See Twegg's entry under "Personages" for a description of the unusual procedures you must endure in order to purchase one of his animals.



Rules for Mounts



The special rules given here for various mounts give you additional perks. Normally, you do not use the mount's game statistics when you are riding it; instead, you just add whatever benefits it grants you to your own rolls. So, for example, when riding a baspagn into combat, you don't roll up separate attacks for it; you use the additional ability pool it grants you for your own Attack rolls. Only when the creature is acting on its own does the GM use its game statistics. For example, if you fall off your baspagn and it tries to eat you, its game statistics then come into play.

Baspagn

The Baspagn is a ferocious riding beast with the body shape of a horse, but the hide and head of a carnivorous lizard. It runs on two pairs of long lithe legs, but also boasts a third set of limbs jutting out from its hindquarters. These stunted quasi-arms come equipped with sharp-clawed fingers. Although these limbs are too weak and spavined to slash at your foes, the baspagn can use them to grab an enemy and yank it into its gaping maw, which is lined with razor-sharp teeth. The baspagn is tailless, unless you count a stumpy mound of bone and flesh atop its hindquarters.

You gain Attack (Ferocity) 5 and Defense (Sure-Footedness) 3 while fighting from the back of a baspagn. During mounted combat, you must make a successful Riding roll prior to each attack. On an Exasperating or Quotidian Failure, your Attack pool drops by 5, and you lose Ferocity as a style, unless your character already has it. This failure represents your loss of control over the baspagn; it stops fighting for you. On a Dismal Failure, you suffer the above



effects, but are also thrown from the Baspagn's back. Unless you then succeed on a second Riding roll, it decides that it is annoyed with you and commences to attack you instead of your foe, using the game statistics given below.

While seated on a baspagn, you gain Persuade (Intimidating) 5. Riding such a rapacious-looking creature in civilized surroundings marks you as hostile, dangerous, and undoubtedly mad. When dealing with anyone who has recently seen you riding a baspagn inside Kaiin's walls, you suffer a -1 penalty on all Persuade, Etiquette, Scuttlebutt and Seduction rolls. A baspagn requires ten pounds of fresh meat a day to maintain its strength. If you feed it less than that, you lose its benefits, but continue to suffer the negative consequences of riding it in town. Each day that it receives less than five pounds of fresh meat, its Health rating temporarily drops by 1. When its Health rating reaches 0, it dies.

The baspagn is capable of eating up to thirty pounds of fresh meat a day, and will continually wheedle and whine in the hopes that you will allow it to gorge itself. However, on any day when it eats more than 10 pounds of fresh meat, it becomes torpid and refuses to do anything except bask in the sun.

Baspagns are sentient and talkative but seldom interested in discussing anything other than meat consumption.

Persuade (Intimidating) 0.75~, Rebuff (Contrary) ~, Attack (Ferocity) 1.5~, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 1.5~, Health 6, Athletics 6, Living Rough 4, Perception 2, Wherewithal 6

Cassecc

The Cassecc is an ox-like beast used both as a pack beast and to draw carts and conveyances. Its hide is thick, gray, nearly hairless, and heavily wrinkled, like that of an elephant or warthog. Its large, rounded head is bare, but a quartet of smallish, yellowed tusks pokes up from its lower lip. Its eyes are small and rheumy. A full-grown cassecc weighs about four tons, and is ten feet long, but only about four feet tall.

The cassecc's foremost advantage is its tireless and dogged nature. Although it eats up to ten pounds of grass, leaves or other vegetation every day, it can go for two weeks without eating. (At the end of its fast, it must gorge itself, catching up on its lost meals.) One

cassecc can pull a cart weighing up to half its own weight; they can be teamed to pull heavier carts. A cassecc can be trained to automatically plod a predetermined route without the need for a driver. To train the cassecc, you must take it along the chosen route twice. Though intelligent, the cassecc shows little initiative, and cannot compensate for anything other than minor changes in condition. For example, it can detour a few feet off a road to avoid a fallen log. But if it reaches a bridge over a river and finds it missing, it will not use another bridge, even if another one has been constructed just a few hundred yards away. Instead it will sit there for a while, waiting for conditions to change. Then it will wander off, abandoning your cart and goods.

Casseccs are resentful creatures incapable of forgetting the merest slight. They nurse grievances until their final days, but will not express their displeasure in a violent manner. Instead, they'll continually remind you, in hurt and plaintive tones, of the day that you revealed your true, cruel nature.

Casseccs fight only when attacked. They retaliate by trampling opponents under their enormous hooves. No cassecc will allow you to ride it; prolonged physical contact with bipeds revolts them. Any attempt on your part to get up on a cassecc's back will be regarded by it as an unwanted sexual overture, to which it will respond with affronted disgust.

Persuade (Forthright) 6, Rebuff (Obtuse) ~, Attack (Strength) 12, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 14, Health 2~, Athletics 2~, Living Rough 4, Perception 2, Wherewithal 4.

Cer

The cer is a bipedal, flightless bird with brightly-colored feathers (usually mottled shades of pink and red) and a large beak suitable for crushing coconuts. Its peaceful nature, small size, and maneuverability make it an ideal riding beast for city use. Its large, splayed feet easily grip the sometimes-slippery cobblestones of rainy Kaiin. Of all Twegg's fabulous creatures, the cer is the most commonly purchased. Some enthusiasts own multiple cers in a variety of colors. The most desirable is the highly rare black-feathered cer, with the blue-feathered variety a close second.

The cer is capable of great speeds, even on



difficult terrain, but its great concern for social niceties makes it reluctant to take any action which might panic or offend passersby. Cers enjoy socializing with one another, and enthusiastically exchange gossip about their masters when tethered together in a stable or in front of a tavern.

A male cer fights only during mating season, and only against other males. Female cers won't fight at all. Instead, they try their best to flee from any physical confrontation.

While mounted on a cer, you may, in any situation in which it might help to be mounted on a very fast, highly dexterous bird, treat all Prosaic Successes in Athletics as Illustrious.

Whenever you can see your cer, it costs only 2 points to reroll your Dismal Failures in Etiquette¹³. Immediately after any gathering where your cer was stabled with two or more others of his kind, you gain a 3-point Scuttlebutt boon.

Although conscientious, cers often fail to correctly fulfill complex instructions when asked to act independently. Their excuses usually arise from their overriding concern for proper behavior. For example, you might ask your cer to keep an eye on a doorway to make sure that the person you've been following doesn't come out. But the cer will avert his gaze, afraid to gain a reputation as a snooper.

Persuade (Charming) 8, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 6, Attack (Caution) 4, Defense (Dodge) 6, Health 4, Athletics 12, Etiquette 12, Gambling 4, Living Rough 4, Perception 2, Scuttlebutt 6, Wherewithal 4.

Dhjetar

The dhjetar is a large, weasel-like beast used for racing. This creature, and the gambling culture that surrounds it, is described in "The Tracks", p161. Twegg is not the only dhjetar breeder. He has bred several champions, however. His beasts fetch premium prices, because they come from winning bloodlines. If you buy a dhjetar from him, the GM secretly rolls on your behalf. Tell her the maximum number of Stewardship points you're willing to budget towards the roll. On an Illustrious Success, your dhjetar is a superior racer. When rolling on its behalf during a race, you gain a +1 bonus.

To find Twegg's rival dhjetar breeders, head to the Tracks.

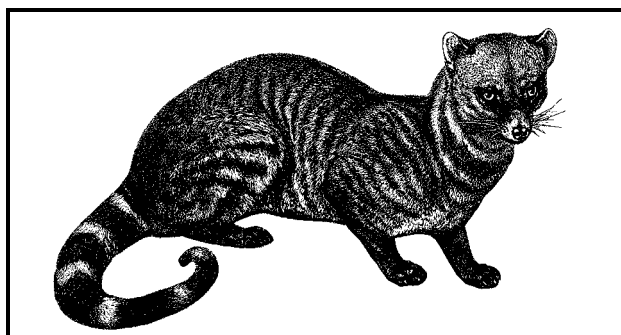
Quelo

The quelo is a half-ton, quadrupedal slug. Though its slipperiness renders it unsuitable for riding, it can pull a cart, with a load up to half its own weight. Quelo can be teamed together, but care must be taken not to mix males and females, because they are prone to sudden bouts of furious mating. Such convulsions can quickly result in your cart's sudden tipping, which may injure riders or damage cargo. Quelo are slower than oxen or horses, but are amphibious and can without complaint ford streams or rivers that would drown more typical beasts of burden. The quelo changes flesh coloration according to mood. Use the handy chart below as a guide to your quelo's emotions.

Color	Mood
Green	Offended
Blue	Content
Red	Hungry
Gray	Bored
Purple	Angry
Chartreuse	Amorous

Although capable of speech, the quelo apparently prefers to keep its thoughts to itself. A vegetarian, the quelo devours fifteen pounds of hay, grass, or fungal matter per day.

Though not aggressive, the quelo will defend itself when attacked. It can, when angry or afraid, secrete a sticky, highly acidic substance from enlarged pores along its back and sides. The smell of human flesh



The colour, coat pattern and tail length of dhjetar vary widely. Although only the last of these is likely to effect racing ability, gamblers may nonetheless wager large sums on unproven beasts whose coats are particularly felicitous.

¹³ In this instance, you change the subject to the beautiful plumage of your bird, distracting others from your gaffe of the moment.



burnt by this acid is notably putrid. If you are ever unfortunate enough to get a whiff of it, you must succeed at a Wherewithal roll or vomit uncontrollably until your stomach has emptied. You suffer a 3-point Health levy, representing your subsequent weakened state. Needless to say, any person foolish enough to attack a *quelo* becomes subject to this effect when his own skin is burned — that is, each time he is hit.

Persuade (Forthright) 2, Rebuff (Obtuse) 5, Attack (Strength) 6, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 8, Health 10, Athletics 2, Living Rough 4, Perception 2, Wherewithal 10.

Ristato

Indistinguishable from a normal horse, save for its glowing green eyes and long, prehensile tail, the primary virtue of the *ristato* is its resistance to magic. The *ristato* itself may never be directly targeted by spells of any kind. Even *sandestins* are incapable of affecting a *ristato*¹⁴. It still remains possible to work magic on something else, which will then have natural consequences on a *ristato*. For example, a magician could collapse a building where the *ristato* is tethered. The planks and timbers of the building could well crush the *ristato* to death, because they are not themselves in any way magical.

The *ristato* is a peevish beast with a low opinion of magicians, and a great desire to share its views with the world. *Ristatos* hate to be owned by practitioners of the occult sciences, and will obey their instructions only under vocal protest.

When you are mounted on a *ristato*, you gain a measure of the protection it enjoys, gaining a +1 bonus on any roll to avoid the direct effects of magic. Again, this would not apply to indirect consequences of magical spells, like the building collapse in the above example.

However, spellcasting from the back of a *ristato* is additionally difficult. The use of any spell or magical item while mounted on, or standing beside, a *ristato* requires a -1 penalty to all relevant rolls. Proximity to a *ristato* does not directly impede your ability to issue commands to *sandestins* or *chugs*. However, the *ristato* may choose to insult the *sandestin*, leading to a prolonged argument that might distract the *sandestin* from the precise details of your request.

A *ristato* eats five pounds of feed a day. Its

preferred food, however, is the magical item. It can eat any device of a magical nature, though softer items, like *ossip wax*, go down its gullet more quickly and smoothly than solid items, like crystal automatons. Any magical item left untended near a *ristato* may be ingested. Even if an item is not completely devoured, a few good chomps may be enough to render it useless. Your GM will adjudicate the exact fate of various items as the need arises.

Persuade (Forthright) 4, Rebuff (Contrary) 9, Attack (Cunning) 6, Defense (Vexation) 6, Health 6, Magic (Forceful) 8, Athletics ~, Gambling 6, Living Rough 3, Pedantry 2, Perception 3, Scuttlebutt 3, Wherewithal 4

Tarmi

The *Tarmi* is a horse-like creature with extremely long legs, high, tufted ears, and a short, curly tail. Most are sleek and black, but you've seen specimens with coats mottled in gray, brown, and orange.

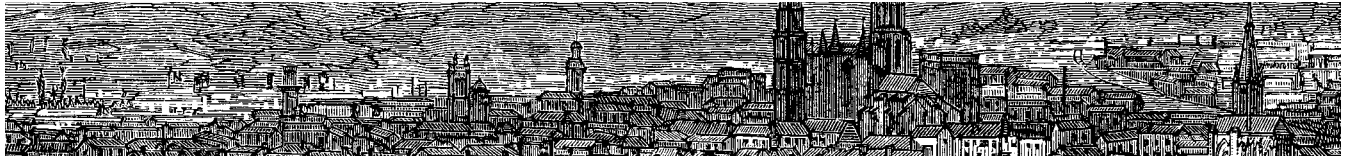
The *Tarmi* is best known for the great leaps it can make with its thin but muscular legs. It keeps its balance well and rarely falls. Whether you wish to leap across a ravine or over a fence, the *tarmi* outperforms any common steed.

If you are mounted on a *tarmi*, you gain +1 to your Riding rolls to complete jumps and similar maneuvers.

The *tarmi's* disposition is a notoriously sneering and sarcastic one. It is always ready to enumerate your faults and detail to you precisely how your latest plan is doomed to failure. Its cutting comments do not necessarily indicate any special dislike of you; the *tarmi* is equally critical of everyone it encounters. The only thing a *tarmi* appears to find more ludicrous and idiotic than a human is another of its own kind. The constant sniping that goes on when *tarmi* meet makes them nearly intolerable in groups. Wise riders respect their solitary natures, and keep them far from others of their species.

Persuade (Forthright) 4, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 1.5~, Attack (Speed) 5, Defense (Dodge) 4, Health 5, Athletics 2~, Gambling 3, Living Rough 4, Pedantry 3, Perception 2, Stewardship 3, Wherewithal 2.

¹⁴ *Sandestins* argue otherwise. They say that they could work magic on *ristato*, but choose not to, in accordance with an ancient treaty. Individuals experienced with *sandestins* greet this claim with pronounced skepticism.



Item	Kaiin	Other City	Town	Village	Remote
Bewitching stanzas (standard)	5	5	NA	NA	NA
Bewitching stanzas (custom)	15	15	NA	NA	NA
Ingredients of Singular Ostentation	200	250	NA	NA	NA
Limerick of Excoriation	15	15	NA	NA	NA
Rug of Superior Merit (real)	500	650	750	NA	NA
Rug of Superior Merit (fake)	50	65	100	NA	NA
Unusual mount, baspagn	1000	NA	NA	NA	NA
Daily food for baspagn	10	10	20	30	NA ¹⁵
Unusual pack beast, cassecc	500	NA	NA	NA	NA
Daily food for cassecc	5	5	3	3	Forage
Unusual mount, cer	750	NA	NA	NA	NA
Daily food for cer	7	10	12	15	Forage
Unusual pack beast, dhjetar	750	1000	NA	NA	NA
(Twegg's prices)					
Daily food for dhjetar	7	10	12	15	Forage
Unusual pack beast, quelo	850	NA	NA	NA	NA
Daily food for quelo	5	3	2	2	Forage
Unusual mount, ristato	1500	NA	NA	NA	NA
Daily food for ristato	1 g	1 g	1 g	1 g	Forage
Unusual mount, tarmi	350	NA	NA	NA	NA
Daily food for tarmi	1 g	1 g	1 g	1 g	Forage



15 Outside of a city, you may find it easier to hunt for meat than to buy it. Although the baspagn can eat carrion, it considers such meals distasteful and beneath its dignity.



Chapter 6

Odkin Prospect

“’Twas a golden, glittering sanctuary from the cares and perspiration of an increasingly drab and tedious world — until, that is, the merchants moved in.”

— Relmavelle Chodak Urst, *Personal Journal*

On First Glance



Odkin Prospect is the residential district of the city's richest denizens¹. It is quiet and well-patrolled. Its denizens do their best to see that the interesting trouble you might find elsewhere in Kaiin stays well outside its boundaries.

Didactic Overview

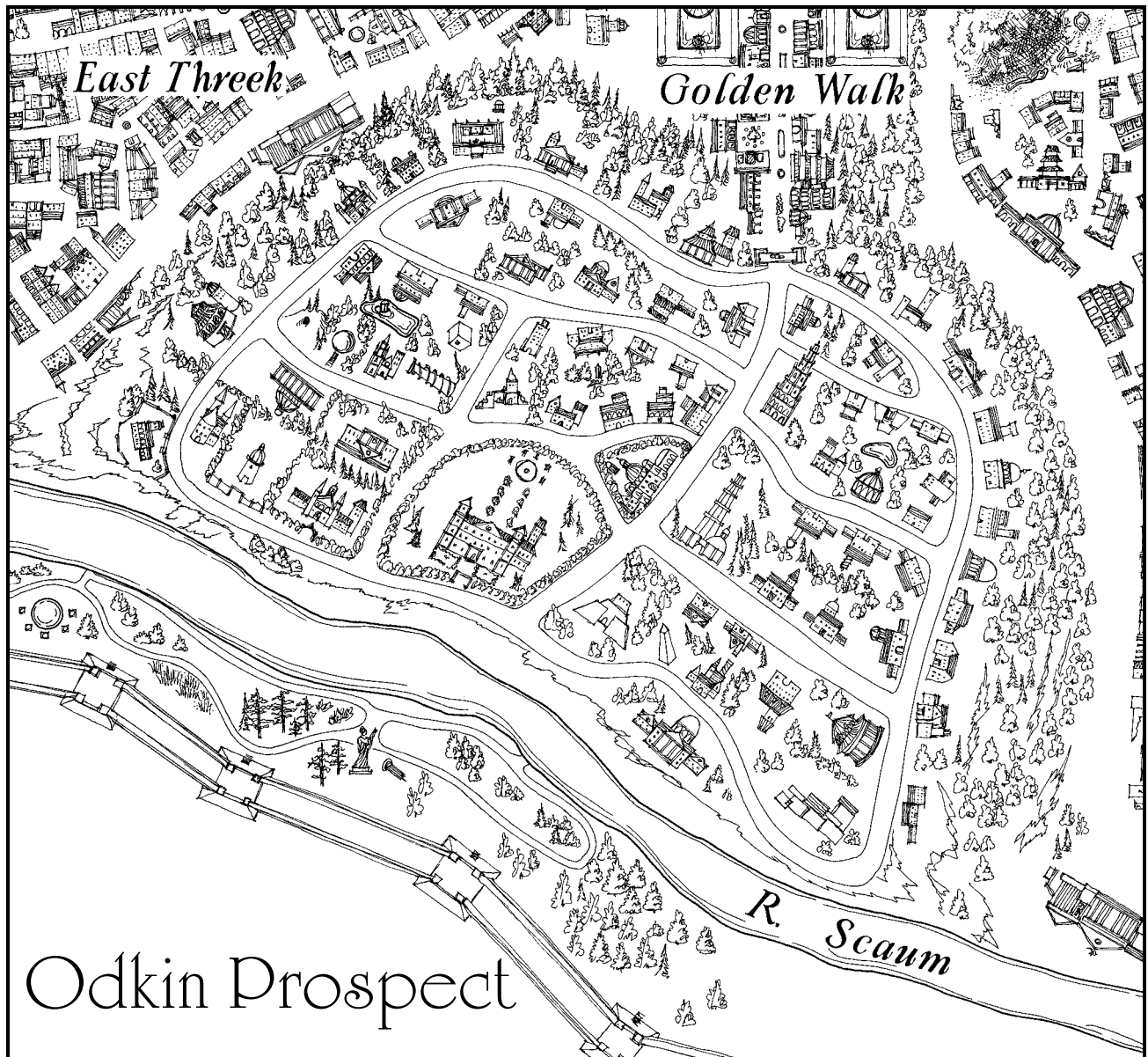
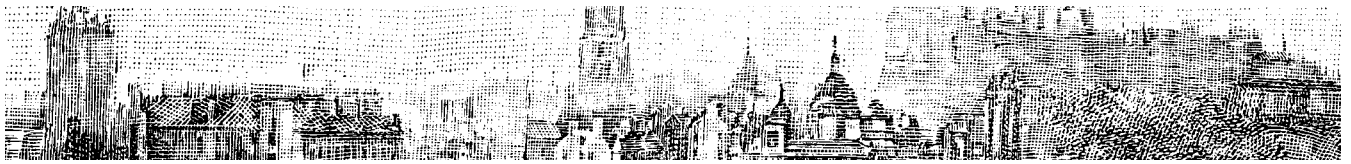
Odkin Prospect has not always been Kaiin's choice district. When the city first sprang up from the ruins of the Old Town, the well-to-do built on the Derna, near the palace, which was then a much more humble cluster of buildings. As the city grew and prospered, the prince began to buy up nobles' manses, to expand his own domain. Meanwhile, the once-unspoiled Derna became increasingly fouled. Gradually, the nobles relocated to the more pristine banks of the Scaum, expelling the fishers who dwelt on a particularly picturesque escarpment called Odkin Prospect. Having learned their lesson, the nobles indignantly lobbied against any commercial ventures that might dirty the Scaum. Their efforts have kept the prospect as exclusive and handsome a place as it was when they first laid claim to it.

Inhabitants

Leaving aside the legion of servants who support their opulent ways, the residents of Odkin Prospect can be divided into two groups: the aristocrats and the merchants. To confuse matters, some then divide the merchants into two further categories, the old and the new.

The aristocrats are the descendants of the twenty-three illustrious founding families of Kaiin. At the time of the founding, these people were merchants, builders, ship owners, or operators of similar enterprises. Do not remind their present-day descendants of this fact, unless you want them to react as if you've subjected them to the foulest imaginable stream of obscenities. Now they make their living from the great fortunes their ancestors handed down to them. Some are financiers who fund the ventures of the very merchants they despise. Others have fallen on hard times, living in near poverty in their vast and stately mansions. Still-solvent aristocrats look down upon their poor

¹ With the exception of the prince, naturally.

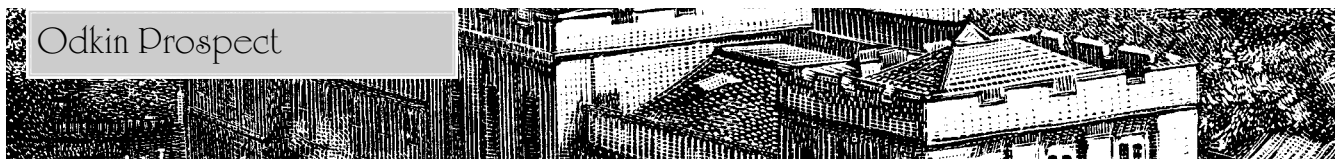


relations, but still consider them part of their precious circle of lineal relationships. No one outside this group warrant any consideration whatsoever. People who have recently become rich and now seek to emulate the tastes and manners of the aristocracy are the most noxious of all. They do not know their place, outrageously seeking to be treated as equals, which they can never be.

To an aristocrat, true status comes only from pedigree. An Arch-Magician might be able to reorder reality at will, but if he can't claim blood ties to a great

family, his accomplishments are meaningless. Any success gained through striving and hard work is suspect. People of true quality don't have to work; they were born to a state of grace.

Aristocrats especially resent merchants because they depend upon them. Wealthy nobles need to invest their fortunes in the mercantile ventures of their social inferiors. Poorer ones sustain themselves by allowing the merchants' sons and daughters to marry into their families. In this last fact lies the source of much tension between rich and poor aristocrats.



The term “merchant”, in this context, refers to anyone who has become wealthy since the founding of Kaiin. Many so-called merchants are just as indolent as the aristocrats. Their families made fortunes early on, and they retired to a life of luxury. They’re the so-called old merchants. As with the nobles, some long ago spent their way through their treasuries and subsist in genteel poverty, while others act as financiers. They are nobles in all but name, a fact that makes them gnash their teeth in ravenous envy. They are despised both by the aristocrats they emulate, and by other members of the merchant class who are still actively running great business concerns. The former treat them as poseurs, the latter as leeches.

The grandees who do still operate their own business concerns may be manufacturers, shippers, or both. They tell themselves that they enjoy the same sorts of luxuries as the aristocrats, but not their effete and indolent habits. The manses they build for themselves tend to be bigger and more outwardly garish than the classic homes of Odkin Prospect. A few merchant grandees, on the other hand, make as great a show of their indifference to luxury, erecting large but dreary and undecorated structures to advertise their austerity and rigor. Working merchants consider the nobles dreadful snobs, and pretend not to hunger for their acceptance. However, whenever they get a chance to marry a son or daughter into an aristocratic family, they generally leap at it, showering their new noble relatives with expensive gifts.



Contacts

Aristocrat

“I am laid low by sudden boredom, and must retire for the night.”

An aristocrat is a descendant of one of the original twenty-three families. Most live remarkably narrow lives. They can tell you, in minutest detail, all about the slights dealt out and minor scandals alluded to in the course of last night’s salon. At the same time, they take pride in their ignorance of events elsewhere in the city. Although they don’t admit it, they’re fanatically obsessed with money, and keep track of the presumed financial positions of everyone in Odkin Prospect.

Aristocrats all know one another, so one contact may be able to introduce you to others, vouching for your ability to maintain decorum. If you are not yourself an aristocrat, (that is, if you lack the Impeccable Pedigree tweak, found at the end of this chapter) you must expect to be treated with condescension, even when you are richer, tougher, and more persuasive than your contact.

To gain an aristocratic contact, you must have Impeccable Pedigree, or an Etiquette rating of 5 or higher. If you lack the Pedigree, the noble will always be of the impoverished variety.

Functionary

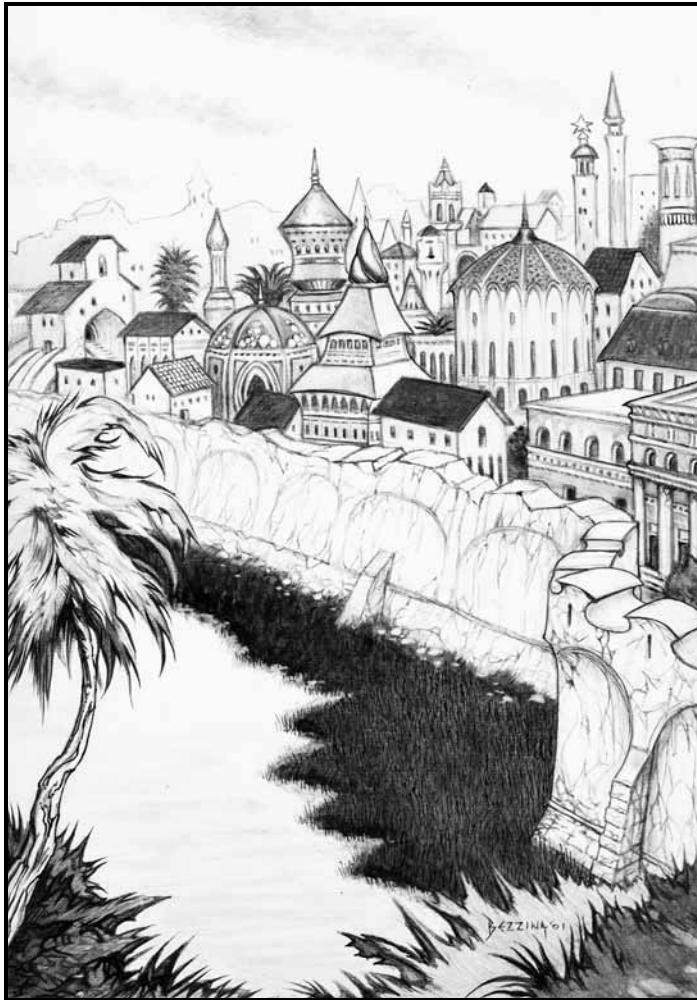
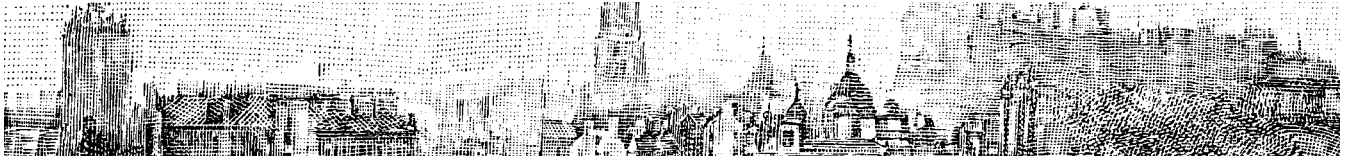
“It remains my duty to confuse you on this subject.”

A functionary is a high-ranking servant or employee of an aristocrat or merchant. In almost all cases, he knows more about the day-to-day operations of a business or household than its owners do. If anything, the functionary is even more snobbish than the people he works for. He’ll help you with introductions to other functionaries, or with information about the inner workings of the upper crust, but only if he believes you’ll serve his interests, or those of his employer. Although quick to assert their absolute loyalty to their employers, functionaries often feather their own nests on the side, and are no more obedient than the sort of servant available to you. If you learn that a functionary is swindling his masters, you may be able to press him for bigger favors than the typical contact dispenses. On the other hand, a functionary who feels you’re blackmailing him may dip into his master’s revenue to hire bullies or assassins.

Loutish Scion

“Ho there! You look like the sort who can point us to whores and ale!”

Although adherence to strict etiquette is the norm in aristocratic circles, an exception is made for young sons. Custom permits them to spend their early adult years drinking, gambling, and comparing the amenities of various brothels. Some become students at the Scholasticarium (see p101) but others consider academic duties a painful distraction from their roistering duties. They may pretend to be bored by the tepid gossip swirling around the older generation, but know it by heart nonetheless. Loutish scions are easy to cultivate as contacts, so long as you’re willing



to introduce them to Kaiin's debauched side. A single evening escorting a young aristocrat to an establishment like High Hell (p153) might yield you many nuggets of valuable gossip. The difficulty lies in protecting your contact, as loutish scions have no concept of their own mortality, are quick to insult others, and slow to back down from challenges.

Old Merchant

"We would not keep company with such snobs, even if we were invited."

As explained above, old merchants are just like aristocrats, except that the so-called true nobles treat them as gauche newcomers. If you have the Impeccable Pedigree tweak, old merchants will flatter you to your face and insult you behind your back. They'll go out of their way to ingratiate themselves,

but will not share information that makes them, or their acquaintances, seem inferior to the true aristocrats.

You must have either the Impeccable Pedigree tweak, or a Wealth rating of 6 or more, to be treated with respect by your old merchant contact. Otherwise, you'll need to explain why one would be caught talking to you. Even with that justification, you must be ready to be treated with ill-disguised snobbery.

New Merchant

"All around here are cursed by indolence and the gout."

New merchants are wealthy grandees still involved in a lucrative commercial enterprise of one sort or another. They'll treat you as an equal if you have a Wealth rating of 10 or more. However, if you have the Impeccable Pedigree tweak, they'll view you with secret contempt. Until you prove yourself energetic and enterprising, in contrast to others of your kind, their disapproval lingers.

To deal effectively with new merchants, you must quickly explain the nature of your business with them. Your proposal contains some benefit to the contact as well as to yourself. These people see the world in transactional terms, and won't do you even the smallest favor unless they also come out ahead in some way.

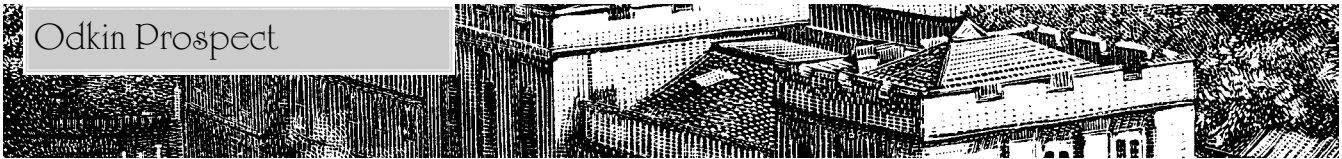
If your Persuade style is Forthright, you may, when using the ability on contacts of this type, treat all Exasperating Failures as Hair's-Breadth Successes.

Servant

"Withdraw your imputation. I serve one of Kaiin's most noteworthy old clans."

Every Odkin Prospect manse worthy of the name is staffed by a swarm of servants, who perform the menial tasks enabling its owners to live in splendor. They think themselves far superior to menials from elsewhere in the city. They live in their masters' manses, in servant's quarters. Secretly, they think of their masters as demanding children who would be helpless without them.

Servants socialize with one another by circulating through the neighborhood, paying visits to its various kitchens and laundry rooms. In this manner, they



collect gossip about the rich families as a bee gathers pollen. The information is all from a servant's point of view. If you cater to the inflated self-perceptions of these servants, you can get them to reveal unflattering tales about other households, but rarely about their own masters. When you wish to infiltrate a wealthy household, a servant contact could arrange for your hiring as a stable hand or emptier of chamber pots.

Even impoverished nobles still employ servants, though they typically have far fewer of them. In some cases, their absurdly loyal servants take additional jobs on the side to support their ill-starred masters. Be careful in exposing such arrangements: both the servants and the masters would suffer extreme mortification, from which their eternal resentment would surely flow.

Vigil

"My eyes are sharp, and see only what they are supposed to."

Though it is one of Kaiin's smaller neighborhoods, Odkin Prospect has more vigils assigned to it than any other. Area residents pay a special levy to ensure that their streets are especially well-protected from thieves and vagabonds. The vigils accost anyone who does not seem to belong in the neighborhood, and will eject you from it if you can't prove that you either live here, or have legitimate business to conduct. This fact makes contacts within the local vigil detachment not just useful, but essential. A vigil contact can arrange to meet you and ensure your safe passage through the area, even when you lack a proper invitation from a noble or merchant. He'll only do this if he has good reason to trust you. If you do go on to cause trouble, he can lose not only his job, but his life. There is no cruelty neighborhood residents will not condone in the name of their own sense of safety.

Nobles and merchants treat vigils as mere servants, often insisting that they break from patrol duties to carry boxes or perform other menial tasks. It does not take great effort to penetrate past a vigil's veil of weary indifference to the seething resentment within. They'll be happy to wreak petty vengeance by telling you things they shouldn't, so long as they're sure your use of these tales won't come back to haunt them.

Allegedly supervising the local vigils is Under-Sheriff Pritort (see below.) They laugh at this notion,

explaining to you that it is really the noble Flolad who issues the orders hereabouts.

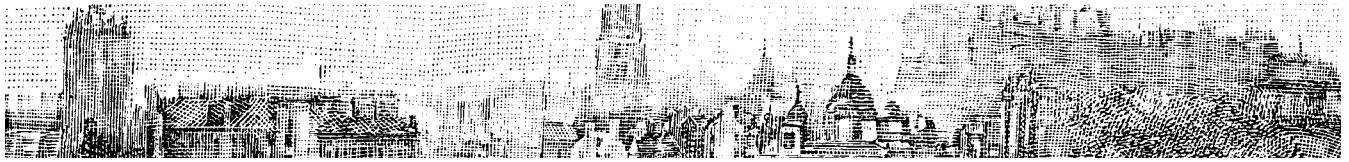
Unless you were grown in a vat or recently pried from the underside of a rock, you do not believe that the prince is unaware of these circumstances. The rich are the prince's greatest supporters, and he knows it pleases them to run their own vigil detachment. Pritort's authority is a fiction permitting all sides to run matters as they wish without embarrassment to any party. On those rare occasions when Kandive wishes to drop a rich and influential person into the deodand pit, he sends a special detachment of unquestioned loyalty to make the arrest. Most likely, they'll wait until the wrongdoer leaves the Prospect, so that his neighbors won't be disturbed by the unseemly incident.

Personages

Flolad, Elegant Patriarch of the Aristocrats

"Listen to the creak of leather as I shift in my chair. Surely this tells you all that you need to know."

Among the great aristocrats, there is no being more impressive than Flolad, son of Flolad, who was himself son of Flolad. Flolad is a tall, deeply tanned, elegant man who favors flowing robes of white, usually emblazoned with the rosebud crest of his ancient and famous family. His sister, Malgaea, is Prince Kandive's favorite concubine, a fact which grants Flolad considerable influence within the palace. Though Flolad's manners are cheerful and expansive, there is something about the gleaming white of his too-perfect teeth that many find vaguely threatening. Although you are unlikely to have met him personally, you have heard of his disconcerting habit of welcoming guests by wrapping his arms around them in a suffocating embrace. Whenever an aristocrat has a complaint to lodge with the prince, he goes to Flolad. You've heard it said that the local Under-Sheriff, Pritort, reports more to him than to the prince. Anyone who knows anything about power in Kaiin realizes that Flolad is not a man one would willingly cross, or disappoint. Flolad is supposedly surrounded by a supernatural aura which thwarts all magics emanating from spirits or otherworldly entities. Apparently this is a family trait: the aura will pass on to his heir when Flolad dies. If you sent a sprite or wisp after him, the aura



not only allows him to escape unharmed, but also frees the being from bondage.

Some say that even sandestins are subject to this effect, and that mere proximity to Flolad somehow cancels an Arch-Magician's indenture with his otherworldly servant. Not even the threat of chug exposure can reassert the terms of indenture. If you have a sandestin bound to you, he often suggests missions that would bring him into contact with Flolad, son of Flolad.

Flolad's loudest detractor is probably the red-faced merchant grandee Yakethese (see below). Flolad recently extended an offer of permanent hospitality to his enemy's impulsive son, Spolizzista.

Persuade (Glib) 14, Rebuff (Penetrating) 12, Attack (Cunning) 6, Defense (Intuition) 8, Health 6, Magic (Insightful) 4, Appraisal 6, Athletics 4, Etiquette 8, Gambling 4, Pedantry 4, Perception 4, Riding 6, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 6, Stewardship 6, Wealth 27, Wherewithal 6.

Resistances: none

Hemilovi, Salon Keeper

"Last night, Parefis said the most amusing thing about the Seventh Doctrine of Haperp. Repeat it now, won't you, Parefis?"

By running Odkin Prospect's most prestigious salon, the otherwise impoverished noble Hemilovi keeps her manse heated and her aged maiden aunts fed. The district's wittiest, richest, most beautiful, and most fashionable vie for admittance to her exclusive soirees, held every other night. An invitation to her events certifies that you float among the very cream of Kaiinese society. If you languish for more than a few months without an invitation, you know that you have plummeted from the inner circle. You stand revealed as boring and ordinary, and must bear the crushing weight of that shame.

A fortunate few enjoy standing privileges, and may pop by on any night. These people are the veritable legends of Prospect society, whose positions are completely unassailable. Flolad, for example, is a fixture at Hemilovi's events.

Most Prospect residents, though, must sit and wait in their manses each morning, hoping that the coveted invitation, cosseted in its distinctive mauve-trimmed envelope, arrives by messenger. Hemilovi

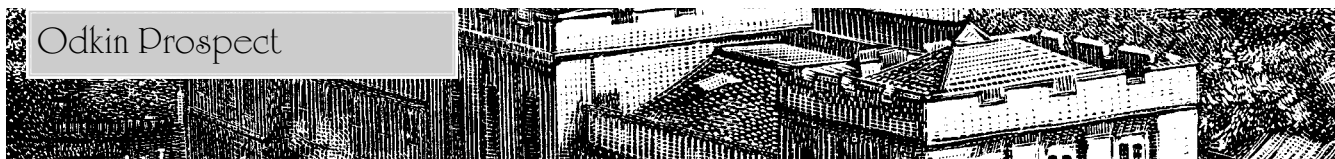
sends out her invitations only on the day of each event. Any recipient who fails to appear when summoned knows that he'll be bumped to the bottom of her list. Everyone knows at least one person who appeared at another engagement instead of going to Hemilovi's, and has never been invited back since. A trio of exquisitely muscled Gattanese warriors² guard her doors on salon nights, mutely ejecting any who dare to enter without invitations. Special spectacles emit blue beams allowing the guards to detect forged invitations.

Although she never invites more than two dozen people, news of what is said at one salon reverberates quickly through the Prospect. If you're invited to her place one night, you'll be deluged with invitations to drink tea the next day with friends, acquaintances, and business contacts. You'll be expected to flit from one of these events to the next. At each, you'll be



Musicians and dancers are employed both to entertain guests and impress upon them the host's exquisite sense of taste. In general the more esoteric the music, the more enthusiastically it is received; here a team from Sarasen prepare to perform the Unctuous Maxixe.

² The mercenaries of Gattan voluntarily submit to a cruel initiation ritual, in which their tongues are cut out, and a complex curving illustration of butterfly wings is branded across the flesh of their backs.



prompted to recount in exacting detail the witticisms, seating arrangements, fripperies of costume and, naturally, the appetizers and beverages served. Any sensible person will take advantage of these ripple-effect invitations to float commercial proposals, ask for loans, and woo impressionable young persons of the desired sex.

Hemilovi assures anyone who asks that her invitations are extended purely on social grounds. It's no secret, though, that wealthy supplicants continually besiege her with expensive gifts. It is also known that many of these gifts are quickly resold by her factotums. No one begrudges Hemilovi this method of funding her household. Her role as barometer of social worth is surely worth the occasional voluntary gift. It would be rudely presumptuous to expect her to find display room for every item she happens to receive. And if a generous donor thereby secures an invitation, that is no scandal either. A wealthy person might secure one invitation through the careful application of generosity, but he must prove himself an interesting and agreeable guest before he'll be asked to make any return visits.

It is Hemilovi's duty as host to create the most interesting and volatile mixture of guests. For that reason, she sprinkles each guest list with a few exotic guests of non-noble (sometimes even ignoble) origin. A well-spoken philosopher, rakish poet, flamboyant magician or roguish adventurer may find himself seated on one of Hemilovi's overstuffed stools, reeling off colorful anecdotes for the delectation of lordly aristocrats and corpulent matrons. If they wish to be invited back, such persons must understand that they are present to provide entertainment, not to socialize as equals. Certain ingenious invitees of this stripe have later wormed their way into noble households, allowing themselves to be treated as veritable mascots. Leeching on this supremely elevated level requires great skill; the sponger can never forget his place, and must keep his sponsors feeling continually entertained and flattered.

A still-lovely woman of middle years, Hemilovi is widely admired for her clear, smooth skin and luxuriant mane of reddish-blond hair. She wears elaborate and colorful gowns, all of which show her abundant cleavage to mesmerizing effect. Many men of the Prospect clearly dream of hearing her low and



A group of merchants surreptitiously assess each other's wealth while discussing their affairs, fictitious and otherwise.

breathily voice emanating from the pillow beside them. Scarcely a soiree goes by where she does not playfully fend off at least one proposal of marriage. Prospect gossips perennially speculate on the identities of the men she trusts with. She is unusually secretive in this regard, and you've never heard any convincing proof of her bedding down with anyone.

She shares her manse with four aged, spinster aunts. Though they usually avoid the parties, occasionally one wanders into a party room in her bedclothes, looking disoriented. With a nod, Hemilovi signals to a servant, and the old woman is fondly ushered back upstairs.

Persuade (Charming) 10 (Obfuscatory) 4, Rebuff (Penetrating) 15, Attack (Caution) 3, Defense (Dodge) 5, Health 5, Magic (Curious) 3, Appraisal 6, Athletics 2, Etiquette 10, Gambling 4, Pedantry 3, Perception 2, Riding 3, Scuttlebutt 10, Seduction 5, Stewardship 6, Wealth 3, Wherewithal 3.
Resistances: none



Nerijs, Forlorn Old Merchant

"I expected the sun to die much sooner, and therefore mistimed my profligate spending."

The parents of Odkin Prospect hold out the well-known tale of the unfortunate Nerijs as a warning to their children. The inheritor of a vast fortune from his father's shipping empire, Nerijs spent wildly in his youth, convinced that the energy of the sun would run out long before the contents of the family treasury. History has proven him wrong and now he is an elderly man who rattles around a huge, deteriorating manse, fretting over the whereabouts of his next meal.

Nerijs is well-known because his home has become an infamous eyesore and source of trouble. Several years ago, he hit on the idea of transforming his manse into a luxury establishment for travelers. As soon as his first guests were safely tucked into their beds, Nerijs' outraged neighbors began to complain that he was sullyng their precious oasis of calm with his crass commercial enterprise. Citing little-known regulations, they arranged for a party of vigils to invade the manse, with the intention of expelling Nerijs' paying guests. Offended, the guests, some of them apparently bandits or powerful magicians, fought back, defeating the vigils. Ever since, a small band of troublemakers has occupied Nerijs' estate. They argue that they have the legal right to do so, in compensation for the vigils' unprovoked attack against them. When one of the original troublemakers wishes to leave, he sells his space to a new rogue or mountebank. Not just anyone can buy living space here. The Odkin Prospect Hotel Guests Alliance, as the group calls itself, vets new applicants to ensure they can contribute to a defensive effort should the vigils ever attempt another raid.

Generously, the Hotel Guests Alliance allows Nerijs access to much of his own home. A few of them even contribute towards his enormous food bill, but most expect him to pay indefinitely for their viands and beverages, without further compensation on their part. To keep food flowing into his kitchen, Nerijs has been forced to engage in a number of questionable enterprises. When you meet him, he may be looking for another way to earn money quickly. Although afraid of offending his violent guests, he refuses to leave his family home, on the grounds that the ashes of his beloved mother are irretrievably

interred in its foundations.

Nerijs has a wide, open face, notable for the intense furrowing of his brows. He speaks and walks quickly. His doe-like eyes project dread and nervousness. Unable to afford a decent wardrobe, he wears mismatched cast-offs left behind by departed squatters. The last time you saw him, he wore a red, conical hat with a wide brim, a threadbare long jacket, a green linen tunic which was several sizes too small for him, striped balloon pants, and thick-heeled leather shoes decorated with frayed yellow ribbons.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 3, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 3, Attack (Caution) 3, Defense (Intuition) 4, Health 4, Appraisal 2, Athletics 2, Concealment 4, Etiquette 6, Gambling 2, Living Rough 3, Pedantry 3, Perception 2, Quick Fingers 2, Riding 2, Scuttlebutt 3, Stealth 6, Stewardship 8, Wherewithal 1.
Resistances: Arrogance 6, Indolence 6, Gourmandism 2, Pettifoggery 4, Rakishness 4.

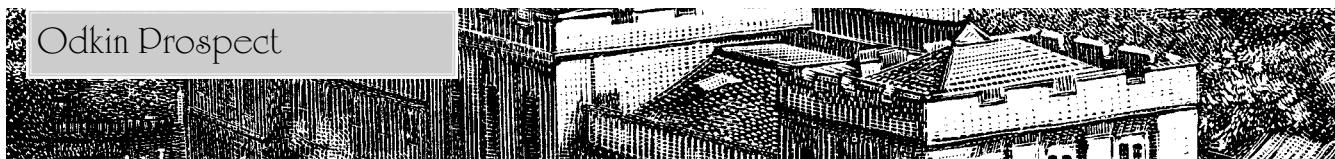
Pritort, Incompetent Under-Sheriff

"If there is a problem, I am fairly certain to investigate it."

Gray-haired and slightly stooped, the wide-eyed Pritort seems an unlikely candidate for Under-Sheriff of a vigil detachment. His eyebrows, which remind you of a pair of dancing albino caterpillars, wiggle incessantly up and down as he speaks. Pritort's chief qualification for his position seems to be that he's more afraid of area residents than he is of the prince. He checks in on a daily basis with Flolad, who commands him with impunity. Pritort wears the standard black felt tunic of the vigil commander, but usually forgets his helmet.

Pritort is a friendly old sort who is happy to talk to you at length, especially when plied with ale or wine. If anything, you may find it difficult to break away from a conversation with the garrulous fellow. He carries on as if he is truly in charge here. His descriptions of events often seem naively deluded: he seems incapable of forming a bad opinion of anyone, and is forever giving the benefit of the doubt to charlatans and scoundrels. Pritort reserves his only hostile thoughts for the squatters who occupy the estate of Nerijs (see above.) He swears that one day he will flush them out, but, when asked why he has not yet acted, always changes the subject³.

³ Any remotely perceptive PC will realize that Flolad has not yet authorized such a move.



Persuade (Charming) 4, Rebuff (Obtuse) 10, Attack (Caution) 4, Defense (Misdirection) 8, Health 4, Athletics 3, Etiquette 6, Gambling 4, Pedantry 4, Perception 2, Riding 3, Scuttlebutt 2, Stealth 2, Stewardship 4, Tracking 2, Wherewithal 6. Resistances: Arrogance 4.

Yakethese, Gruff Merchant Grandee

“Do not squander my time. Are you here to speak, or to dance a hornpipe?”

About one in five of all the commercial ships currently plying the waters of the Sanreal are owned by the grizzled, bright-eyed Yakethese, who began as a deckhand and ruthlessly seized one advantage after another to build a shipping empire for himself. Even his merchant peers look on him as slightly insane. His ambition and energy, though appropriate to a much earlier era, make no sense when the sun could die any day. In his high-pitched, grating voice, Yakethese snorts derisively at any such notions. The sun will not die for hundreds or perhaps even thousands of years, he loudly intones. Until then, the earth is still a place which will belong to the industrious and the abstemious. He is well into his sixth decade but shows no signs of physical deterioration. His manor is large and covered in elaborately realistic statuary his neighbors find hideous. It does not help that he has painted clothing onto the originally nude figures; Yakethese is an austere moralist who is always prepared to condemn the debauchery and indolence of his neighbors⁴. He marshals special contempt for the aristocrat Flolad, who Yakethese condemns as an effeminate parasite who would be nothing were it not for the hard work of his long-dead ancestors. You’ve heard it said that Yakethese occasionally funds secretive missions to expose or embarrass Flolad, but have never heard any specific, reliable details.

Also well known is Yakethese’s enmity for his own first-born, the smooth-bearded Spolizzista, who has made a name for himself as the ultimate loutish scion. Yakethese recently disinherited his dissolute son, who then added insult to injury by taking up permanent residence in Flolad’s guest house.

Persuade (Forthright) 10 (Intimidating) 6, Rebuff (Wary) 10 (Contrary) 6, Attack (Ferocity) 6, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 6, Health 5, Magic (Forceful) 3, Appraisal 5, Athletics 4, Etiquette 2, Living Rough 6,

Pedantry 3, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 3, Seamanship 8, Stewardship 8, Wealth 24, Wherewithal 7. Resistances: Indolence ½, Gourmandism 5, Pettifoggery 5, Rakishness 5.

Places of Interest

Commercial Establishments

Prospect residents pay good tax money to ensure that nothing so fetid and unruly as commerce occurs anywhere near their homes. When they wish to shop for luxury goods, they head to the Undercity, or the shops of the Golden Walk (p94.) Where everyday needs, like food to fill their larders, is concerned, they send their servants trekking across the city to the Market.

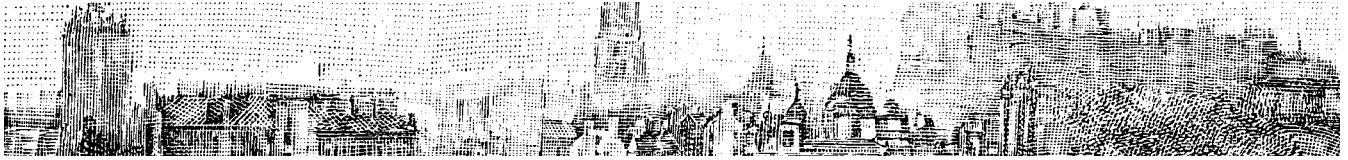
Curiosities and Landmarks

Likewise, the only things of visual interest on the Prospect are the various manses themselves. The last thing residents desire is some sort of interesting landmark to attract gawkers and vagabonds.

Rumors . . .

- ✱ Everybody knows that the aristocrat Flolad has all but adopted Spolizzista, the misbehaved son of his chief rival, Yakethese. You recently heard something that puts this incident into perspective. Apparently Flolad’s only son rejected him, and hasn’t been seen in Kaiin for many years. During a recent trip outside the city, you encountered a beekeeper who looked just like a younger Flolad. You purchased honey from him, and he told you about his rigid philosophy and his monk-like, meditative existence. If it really was Flolad’s son, there are surely a dozen ways in which you could arrange to profit from your knowledge of his whereabouts.
- ✱ One of your more sinister acquaintances offers to sell you a pair of items which are of great value, provided you’re willing and able to use them right away. One is an invitation to Hemilovi’s next salon, which will take place within hours. It is made out to a person

⁴ This habit has made him permanently unwelcome at Hemilovi’s salons.



Portraits of illustrious ancestors decorate the walls of mansions and palaces in Odkin Prospect. Some still reek of fresh paint; their owners invariably speak knowledgeably of long-needed restoration.

unknown to you, by the name of Satreshgi. The second item is a clay face-mask, which, when donned, comes wriggling to life, allowing to you impersonate a thin-lipped, big-eared man you presume to be Satreshgi. With these two items, you can finally gain admittance to this most coveted of events, where countless advantages await the clever man. All you have to do is successfully impersonate Satreshgi, an effort which cannot be much complicated by your complete lack of knowledge about him.

- ✿ One of the most notorious occupants of Nerijs' hotel for squatters, the murderer Sorgscove, apparently wishes to sell his room there to the highest bidder. A large bounty has been placed on Sorgscove's head, collectible from relatives of his victims in Kauchique. Perhaps by pretending to negotiate over the room, you might lure him out for capture. Or maybe you just want to buy the room from him.
- ✿ You just overheard an ambitious vigil, Blotdold, discussing with confederates his plans to oust the inept Pritort from his position as Under-Sheriff for Odkin Prospect. Blotdold is keeping a record of Pritort's various shortcomings of

procedure, from poor discipline to a sloppily-kept office. Not long ago, Prince Kandive had the Under-Sheriff of Threekside, Medhesmi, tossed into the deodand pit for similar offenses. Any PC in the group with a Scuttlebutt rating of 4 or more knows that Medhesmi had offended the prince, and that the official charges against him were lodged merely for appearance's sake. Pritort is valued by the prince and the people of Odkin Prospect precisely because of his limited competence, but if this Blotdold is clever enough, he may be able to force the prince to sacrifice him anyway, to preserve royal authority. If you can sabotage Blotdold's sabotage attempt, you can ingratiate yourself to the prince by preventing him from being backed into an awkward corner.

- ✿ Word spreads that Yakethese will pay a generous reward to anyone who brings his son, Spolizzista, to his manse. Checking into this rumor, you learn that Yakethese has engaged the services of a professed magician, Cripere. Apparently, Cripere claims that Spolizzista's rebelliousness stems from a set of recessive inherited traits. By subjecting Yakethese's son to a tortuous regimen of alchemical baths and infusions, Cripere says he can rid Spolizzista's body of these traits, making him as reliable and rigid as his father. Do you want to effectuate Spolizzista's capture? Or would you be more interested in earning Flolad's gratitude by keeping the young man out of Cripere's clutches?

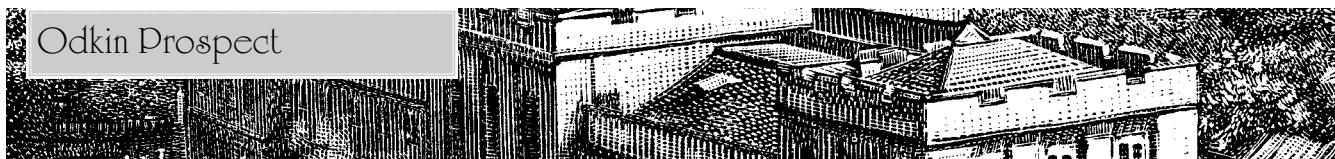
Taglines

A perverse doctrine!

As I sip tea tomorrow, I will meditate on my error.

*Do not fear; none shall know of the shame
I have just witnessed.*

*Do not let yourself be seen with him;
he is known to engage in trade.
Excuse my distraction; I am stunned*



by your handsome appearance.

Had she been so good as to identify herself, I would not have grasped her in that manner. It is I who am the victim of mischief!

I demand more levity!

I had forgotten that hats of that nature were once fashionable.

If I am indolent, it is merely in emulation of my social betters.

Is that a frippery, or merely a furbelow?

On behalf of all present, I take offense!

Such wit paralyzes my liver and kidneys.

While enjoying a meal as fine as this, to speak of money is contumacious.

Your gaffe is monstrous!

Your ignorance of my lineage reflects poorly on you.

Your words are rancid with whimsy.

Tweaks

Splendid Affectation

(Persuade : Charming)

Situation: You have occasion to attend a series of soirees and salons among the upper echelons of society.

Description: You appear at these events displaying a new fashion accouterment. It may be a new kind of ruffle on your boot cuff, a distinctive piece of jewelry, or even a hat of unfamiliar design. By wearing it with sufficient panache, you make your peers anxious to copy you, adopting the same fashion.

Benefit: You may designate a particular tailor, milliner, jeweler or other craftsman as the creator of the specific item you wear. After all, to be truly fashionable, one must have the absolutely correct

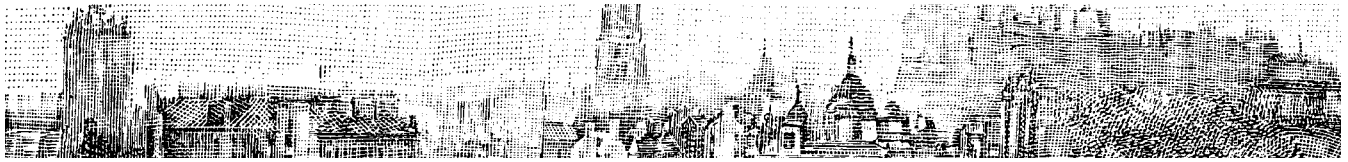


Common sense is not a factor determining the course of fashion.

item, not a mere approximation created by some other toiler. You may invest any number of Persuasion: Charming points; these go out of your pool until you reclaim them, which you may do at any time. For each full week you keep these points out of play, you gain a number of terces, as your share of the craftsman's profits from the sale of the item you have introduced. At the end of each week, roll Stewardship. The terces gained depend on your final result:

Final Result	Terces
Illustrious Success	900
Prosaic Success	500
Hair s-Breadth Success	300

Fashions are short-lived. On your third week, you suffer a levy of 1 on your Stewardship rolls. The levy goes up by 1 for each week after that. If you ever wind up on a Failure, your item immediately goes out of fashion, as merchants and other low sorts begin to adopt it, purchasing copies from less expensive craftsmen. If that Failure is Dismal, your peers



associate you with this now-despised fad, and you suffer a levy of 1 on all Etiquette rolls against the rich and influential of the city, which lasts for the same number of weeks as the original craze.

You may not foster multiple fashion crazes at the same time. When one craze dies, you must wait a number of weeks equal to its total duration before attempting to float another.

Impeccable Pedigree (Etiquette)

Situation: You find yourself dealing with individuals impressed by aristocratic lineage. These may be other gentlefolk, wealthy merchants suffering from a sense of inferiority, or plebeians afflicted with a snobbish admiration for the well-bred. The GM determines whether or not a GMC cares about your family tree. In some cases, you can even use your air of genteel authority against people from faraway places.

Description: You can credibly claim descent from one of the twenty-three founding families of Kaiin. Some of these have since fallen on hard times, so it is perfectly believable for you to have an aristocratic background without any hint of a Wealth rating.

Benefit: You may use Etiquette points for Persuasion or Rebuff when dealing with GMCs who respect aristocratic bloodlines. You also enjoy an exemption from all Kaiinese laws against slavery (see p21) and may own other individuals with impunity.

Once per month, you can raise emergency funds (see *DERPG*, p72) without dropping your Wealth rating. Further, when determining how many terces you get, you treat your Wealth rating as being 1 higher than it really is. You can therefore use this benefit even when your Wealth is 0. It represents a series of loans taken out on the virtue of your name, made by naïve lenders who think your collateral greater than it really is. Keep a running total of the extra funds you've squeezed from this tweak to date. If you ever suffer a Dismal Failure on the Stewardship roll you make when raising emergency funds, all of your creditors simultaneously realize that they've been deceived. They converge on you, demanding repayment of the loans. You may find yourself having to perform services for them to make good on your debts. Or perhaps you could just skip town for a time...

Devastating Witticism

(Persuade : Glib)

Situation: You sit, sipping wine and tasting sweetmeats, among other aristocrats and grandees. One of them makes a statement that calls for a witty and deflating rejoinder.

Description: Your off-the-cuff witticism are of such devastating accuracy that they strike terror in the hearts of snobs and nobles.

Benefit: You can use Persuasion not to convince your target to do something, but to cause him intense embarrassment. Conduct a normal Persuasion contest versus his Rebuff; each roll and reroll represents a line of dialogue in an exchange of barbed witticisms⁵. If you win the contest, you gain the following benefits:



Illustrious Success

Target falls into a dead faint, losing 3 points from Persuasion, Etiquette, Seduction, Pedantry, and Wherewithal pools.

Prosaic Success

Target turns beet red and perspires profusely, losing 2 points from Persuasion, Etiquette, and Seduction pools.

Hair s-Breadth Success

Target is not visibly distressed, but other partygoers laugh heartily at your witticism. Target loses 1 point from Persuasion and Seduction pools.

As always, it is impossible for a character to lose more points from a pool than he actually has.

Devastating Witticism only works on wealthy or well-born people. Even some of them might be immune, if they show an unusual degree of disinterest in the opinions of their peers.

⁵ If you and your GM are especially good at improvising this kind of dialogue, you can invent each line as you go along. Most people will just want to come up with a line or two to start off with and then let the rules mechanics do the rest.



Chapter 7

The Palace & Environs

“The palace loomed before him, every window and balcony aglow with light. Among the lords of the city there was feasting and revelry.”

— Jack Vance, *Turjan of Mir*



he Palace District includes not only the imposing dwelling of the prince and his household, but various other structures of his government. It occupies a large area near the northern wall, east of Canal Town and west of the Market.

On First Glance

You can't enter the area without having your eye inexorably drawn to the imposing, domed structure that is the palace. The other buildings of Kandive's administration are humble in comparison, and sit humbly off to one side. They're made of well-weathered limestone harvested from the Old Town¹.

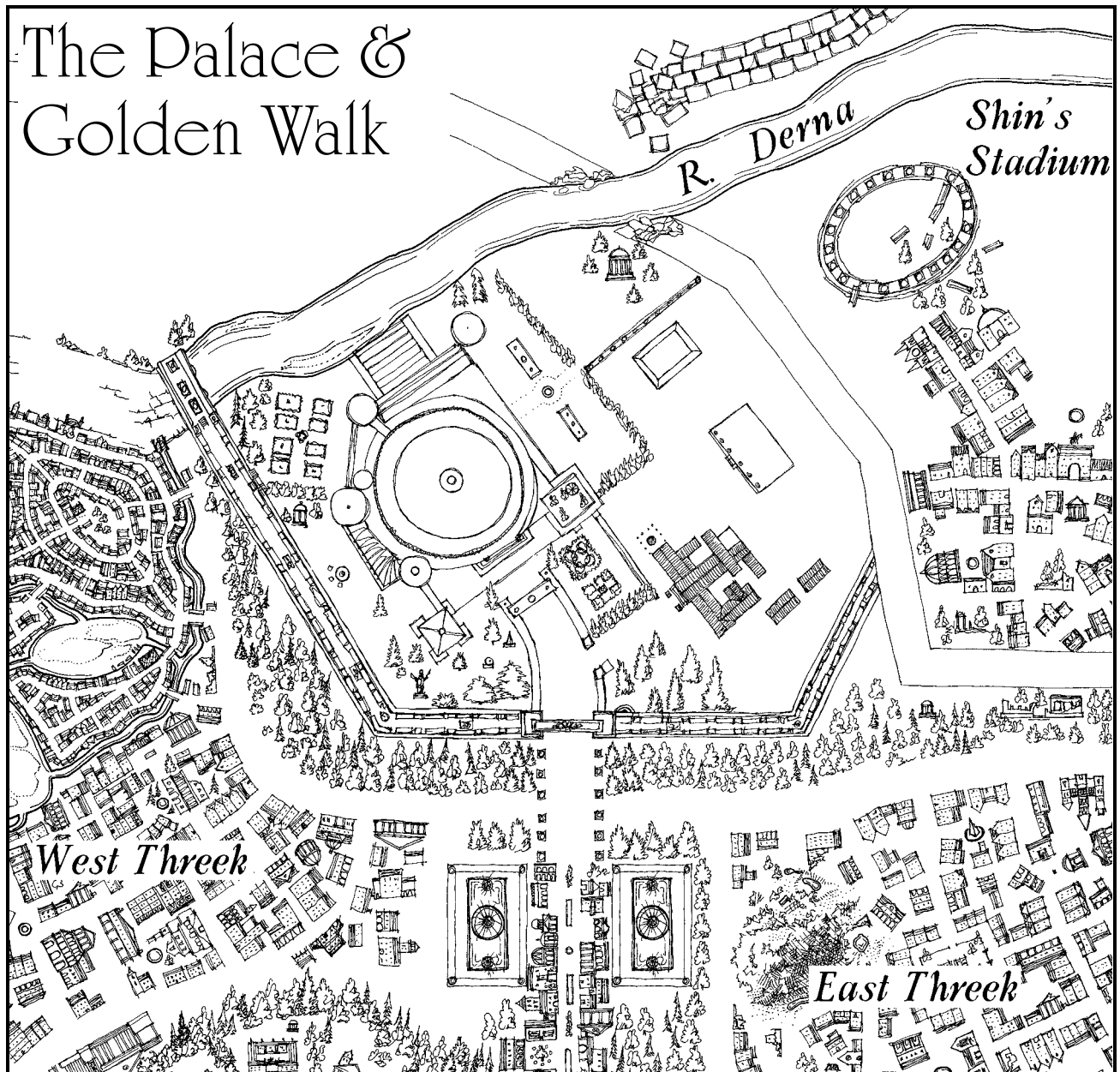
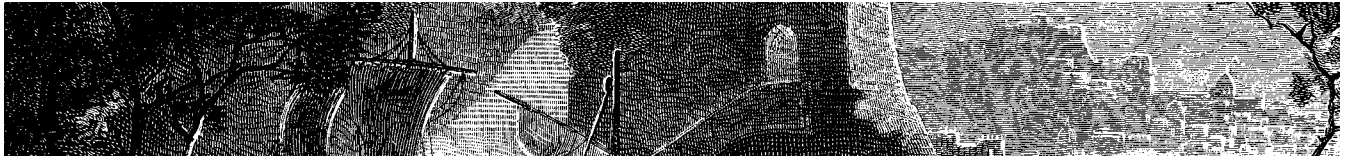
Leading to the palace is a large, walled promenade, flanked by exotic gardens. Only on festival days will you find large numbers of people walking along it. Otherwise, you may see a few merchants, nobles, or others who have specific business in the palace, hall of administration, or hall of justice. In keeping with its typical depopulation, the district is serenely silent. The most notable sound is the low trill of the songbirds that nest in its gardens. You'll find no buskers, jugglers, or other wandering entertainers here: the ever-present vigils quickly shoo off any who would disturb the area's dignity.

At night lanterns dangle from the promenade walls, and light glows in the palace windows. During festivals, palace functionaries hang exotic lighting devices, like cages full of fireflies or ropes magically imbued with a multihued glow.

Didactic Overview

The palace district has been located here ever since the founding of Kaiin, approximately two hundred and fifty years ago. As you know, Kaiin is just the latest of a succession of cities that have existed at the confluence of the Scaum and Derna rivers. As was true of its predecessors, its founders built it on the flattened ruins of previous settlements. At first, the palace was little more than the fortified ruin of an older structure. As trade flourished and the wealth of the royal family grew, successive princes enlarged their domains. They took over parts of a now-defunct nobles' district. Every so often, an ambitious prince built a new palace, always cannibalizing the best features of the old. The present palace is the fourth incarnation, constructed by Kandive's grandfather, Par-Mirasht, nearly fifty years ago. At the time, the structure was known as Par-Mirasht's Folly. Why, people asked, would the prince spend himself into debt to create such an extravagant home, knowing that the sun was soon to blink out, leaving nothing to illuminate its gilded tiles? Since then, Kaiinese opinion of the palace has changed; it

¹ These materials were procured before the arrival of Chun the Unavoidable.



clearly shows that the city has not collapsed into the utter stagnation and lassitude of other cities. Even the humblest Threeksider looks to the palace with pride; its glory reflects upon them. And if its inhabitants are known to be cruel and capricious, well, that is to the good, too. Outsiders respect Kaiin as they would not if its prince were weak and accommodating.

Inhabitants

Several thousand people live in the district. Aside from the royal family, they are all servants, functionaries and slaves. Some prominent officials have managed to squirrel away significant fortunes, but all live in humble circumstances, so as not to risk the close attention of the prince.



Inhabitants

Contacts

Functionary

“My patience ebbs. Sign the document now, and examine it at your own leisure.”

Functionaries toil in one of Kandive’s administrative departments, issuing orders and keeping extensively pointless records no one ever refers to. Literate, educated, and ill-treated, most functionaries have grown bitter and resentful. Knowing that they cannot so much as whisper against the prince, let alone avenge themselves for the slights they endure on a daily basis, they instead take out their seething frustrations on any citizens unlucky enough to petition them for redress. Functionaries delight in making life difficult for the people who come before them, and consider themselves failures if a simple transaction, like a building permit or the correction of an excise charge, takes less than a full month to complete. When not raining suffering down on hapless petitioners, they turn on one another, constantly struggling and sniping to arrange promotions for themselves and demotions for their colleagues. The hoary civil regulations of Kaiin encourage this sort of behavior, laying out an elaborate system of complaint, investigation, and counter-investigation that can alter a functionary’s status half a dozen times in the course of a year. That certain procedural offenses carry the potential for floggings and torture simply makes the process more satisfying and suspenseful.

A functionary can provide you with information on the apparent rules of the Kaiinese legal system, and also the real rules of influence that determine which of the apparent rules are likely to be enforced in any given situation. They can provide you with detailed information on their rivals, especially if they think you’ll help uncover damaging information they can then use in filing complaints. A functionary contact might be able to help a person charged with an offense escape its most severe sanctions, generally in exchange for a favor. The difficulty of the favor is commensurate with the punishment the defendant might otherwise receive. Keep in mind, though, that even the most reliable functionary contact can’t help



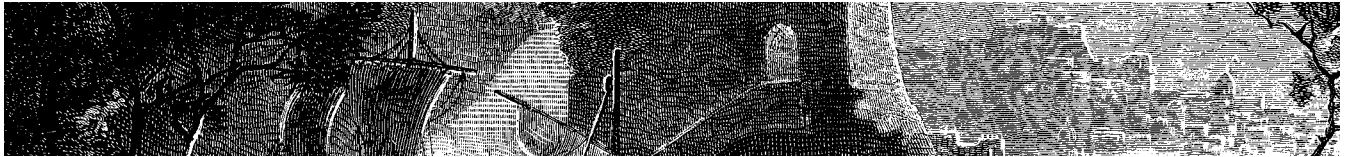
It is unwise to vent your spleen on minor functionaries, lest documents crucial to your case go be rendered illegible by dribbles of tallow and spilt ink, or weevils.

you when your offenses have attracted the attention of the prince, or another influential figure in the palace, like the chancellor, chief concubine, or royal consort. They’ll also find it difficult to expedite your dealings with the bureaucracy; if they try to speed up an application or petition, their enemies will leap into motion to stop it dead.

Servant

“My cousin once told an outsider what she saw in there. Now she lacks a tongue.”

While functionaries run the city, servants keep the prince’s household in good order. They range from shuffling, fearful menials to well-heeled senior stewards overseeing large staffs and budgets. Examples of the latter category include the head chef, stable master, chief chambermaid, mistress of the harem, and



the inquisitor of fashion. Although the most humble and invisible of servants may best know what transpires in the palace, generally your best sort of servant contact is a middling-level dogsbody to one of the main stewards. This person knows the affairs of a large sphere of duty within the palace, and is sufficiently puffed up with authority and confidence that he won't run screaming for the vigils the moment you offer him a bribe for information.

Servants can provide useful scuttlebutt on the royal family, the lords of Kaiin who attend their parties, and on their fellow servants. Some may also be able to shed light on the eternal machinations of city functionaries.

Vigil

"Explain, without undue detail, the nature of your business here."

Only the best-looking and most diplomatic of vigils win coveted places as ceremonial guardsmen for the palace district. Some of them can even fight. However, the chief skill demanded of a palace vigil is an instinctive ability to pick out genuinely important individuals, who should be allowed to proceed unhampered, from tricked-out riff-raff who should be immediately set upon, interrogated, and possibly beaten. As you probably fall squarely in the second category, it may prove highly useful to cultivate a friendship with one or more palace vigils. Knowing that their lives depend on maintaining the security of the royal family, your contacts are unlikely to give you full run of the place. But they'll send you on your way politely, without the systematic kicking strict procedure demands. Observant sorts, they can tell you who else has recently gone past. They can identify current and future victims of the deodand pit, enumerating the offenses that led to their dire fates. A vigil contact can tell you which of his fellows enjoys the favor of the Over-Sheriff, and which are clinging only tentatively to this plum assignment.

Personages

Aramo, Feral Heir

"I am son of the prince, which makes you the merest subject of my whims."

Twelve-year old Aramo, son of Prince Kandive and his

consort Terires, displays the amiability of a coiled asp and the even temperament of a rabies-infested hoon. Stick-thin, five and a half feet tall, his head surrounded by a wild halo of crimped, tangled, ink-colored hair, he ranges the forests outside the city, looking for fierce animals or unfortunate persons to jab with his lance. His sycophantic retinue in tow, he runs down stags and peasants with equal abandon. Recently he shocked even his parents by allowing a shaman of the barbarous Velo-Ade tribe to incise a dozen lightning-shaped scars into his face and neck. He is fond of remarking that the administration of justice in Kaiin will become less lenient when he ascends to the throne. Kaiinese who know him are fond of remarking that the one advantage of humanity's imminent extinction is that they will not live long enough to see Aramo made prince.

His one redeeming trait is staunch loyalty towards his father, whose lap he still perches on during some official events. He fatally stabbed his first victim at the age of ten; the man was a bodyguard who hinted that he could hasten his journey to the throne by shortening his father's life.

Aramo, under the tutelage of his father, has already shown a marked talent for the occult arts. The lecturers of the Scholasticarium tremble at the thought that they may soon be required to admit him as a student.

Persuade (Intimidating) 10, Rebuff (Penetrating) 8, Attack (Ferocity) 6, Defense (Vexation) 6, Health 4, Magic (Forceful) 5, Athletics 6, Concealment 3, Etiquette 1, Gambling 3, Living Rough 3, Perception 2, Riding 5, Stealth 4, Wherewithal 2.

Resistances: Rakishness $\frac{1}{2}$.

Blaphena, Inquisitor of Fashion

"Your collar alone warrants a dozen lashes."

Blond, fine-featured Blaphena is an impoverished noble who serves as the prince's authority on all matters related to fashion. She not only approves all garments produced by the palace's staff of weavers and tailors, but passes judgment on any other items of clothing worn within its walls. A fast friend to the royal consort, Terires, she often arouses the fury of chief concubine Malgaea by disallowing her favorite and most flattering garments. If Blaphena's eyes are offended by any item, from hat to shoe buckle, worn

2 Aramo will lose this Resistance when puberty strikes him, next year.

by a visitor to the palace, she may demand its immediate removal. In accordance the laws of Kandive's grandfather, the Inquisitor of Fashion may also command severe corporal punishment for repeat offenders against the principles of good taste. Although Blaphena enjoys threatening such sanctions, she almost never carries them out. This power only applies within the palace, and almost any courtier is too influential to humiliate in this manner. However, if you gain an audience with Kandive, you may want to make sure that all of your bows and feathers are completely in accord with current fashions.

Persuade (Glib) 6, Rebuff (Obtuse) 6, Attack (Speed) 3, Defense (Dodge) 3, Health 4, Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Etiquette 6, Gambling 4, Pedantry 4³, Perception 4, Riding 1, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 3, Stewardship 4, Wealth 6, Wherewithal 1.
Resistances: none.

Chozerri, Over-Sheriff

"Justify this hurlyburly!"

Short, portly, and equipped with an air of serene befuddlement, Chozerri heads the vigils of Kaiin. He is considered too pleasant and dull-witted to perform this job effectively, so it is a good thing that he is not required to. The prince himself carefully manages the affairs of the various vigil detachments, sagaciously overseeing promotions, demotions, and punishments. Chozerri, the son of a beloved chancellor of Kaiin's youth, is required only to arrange proper displays of pomp on ceremonial occasions, and to act quickly to quell disturbances and unseemly occurrences in and around the palace. He does not allow his unfailing politeness to stop him from protecting the prince from danger or distasteful incidents. He may shake his head in regret as he leads the procession dragging a condemned man to the deodand pits, but he will do it, nonetheless.

Because everyone agrees he's ineffectual, Chozerri remains friendly with all forces and factions within the palace. He is equally welcome in Malgaea's receiving chamber as Trireres', for example. Sometimes he ferries messages back and forth between them. Although he's too loyal to ever betray anyone in the palace, you might be able to trick him into revealing more than he should, or simply use Quick Fingers to liberate incriminating messages from his silk-lined pockets.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 6, Rebuff (Obtuse) 6, Attack (Strength) 6, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 6, Health 5, Athletics 4, Etiquette 4, Gambling 2, Pedantry 4, Perception 4, Riding 3, Scuttlebutt 4, Stewardship 6, Wealth 3, Wherewithal 2.

Resistances: Arrogance 4, Avarice 4.

Dlotne, Chief Steward

"Is that a three-corner fold? Surely my eyes deceive me, for regulations demand a four-corner fold. I am struck dumb with sorrow and wrath."

The square-featured, jowly Dlotne jealously guards his prerogatives as overseer of all palace affairs. He approves the budgets the various chief servants, like the Inquisitor of Fashion and Harem Mistress. With surprise inspections, Dlotne strikes terror into the hearts of ordinary servants. In the presence of the royal family, he is all bows and treacly words of flattery.

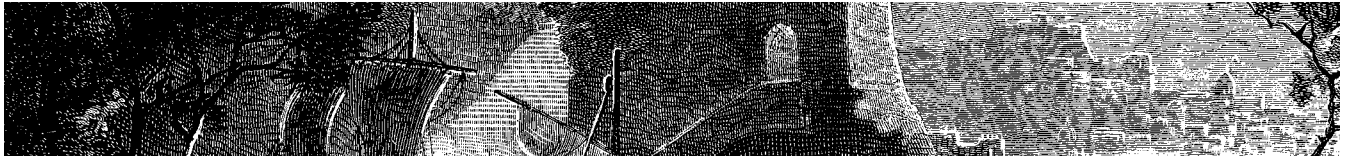
Anyone attuned to palace affairs knows that the ambitious Dlotne burns to replace Pertrij as Chancellor, extending his power from the palace walls to those of the entire city. You've heard that servants receive generous awards for keeping him informed of Pertrij's affairs, especially his errors. Palace gossip says that the two men openly growl and hiss at one another whenever they pass in the hallways. Kandive, no fool, must know of their feud, and is probably playing them off against one another. He either wants to keep each of them too busy struggling with each other to betray him, or simply finds their squabbles entertaining.

Dlotne has recently begun playing up to the royal heir, Aramo, who he presumably means to use against his rival.

Dlotne most often wears an outfit calculated to project a stylish sense of authority, without appearing showy. It consists of a long coat of softened deerskin, over a beige tunic and forest-green leggings. Thick heels on his high-cuffed boots make him appear taller than he really is. On festival days, he thickens his thinning hair with gelatin, shaping it into two horn-like points.

Persuade (Glib) 10, Rebuff (Contrary) 15, Attack (Ferocity) 4, Defense (Intuition) 4, Health 4, Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Etiquette 6, Gambling 2, Pedantry 2, Perception 2, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 1,

³ Blaphena gets a +1 bonus on all Pedantry rolls concerning the history of costume.



Stewardship 12, Wealth 4, Wherewithal 1.
Resistances: none.

Malgaea, Favored Concubine

"Would you prefer to be flayed for your impertinence, or drawn and quartered?"

Of the several dozen women belonging to Prince Kandive's harem of concubines, the one known by all as his unquestioned favorite is Malgaea. If you are like the typical Kaiinese, when you first heard of her, you pictured a woman notable primarily for her physical charms. But later you heard that her actual appearance differs greatly from popular imaginings: she is no lush and buxom creature who lies languidly in her

bedchamber, clothed only in jewels and a veil. Malgaea is a short, slim woman who dresses in simple black robes. She keeps her dark hair trimmed closely to the contours of her narrow, triangular face. Her one concession to immodesty is the emerald green powder she applies to her eyelids and cheekbones.

Prince Kandive's marriage to his consort, Terires (see below), was a matter of diplomacy and commerce, as such royal unions usually are. It is Malgaea, said to be both older and wiser than himself, who he truly loves⁴. She is his most trusted adviser, and wields considerable personal power as a result. Whenever a Kaiinese citizen gets dragged to the deodand pit on charges of sedition, people blame (or praise) her for it, assuming that the order originated with her. According to popular opinion, Kandive is more interested in pursuing the magical arts, spending time with his son, and engaging in the debauched pleasures of the palace than carefully pruning his political garden. Supposedly it is Malgaea whose network of informants keeps a keen ear out for hostile murmurs directed at the prince, and who sees to it that possible dissidents are ruthlessly punished.

Where most concubines are slave girls of foreign extraction, Malgaea boasts a fine pedigree. She is sister to Flolad, the acknowledged leader of Kaiin's aristocratic lords (p78.) Her connection to Flolad makes him more fearsome, and assures that she stays well-informed on events in Odkin Prospect.

Malgaea seems to pursue no interests other than the continued good fortunes of her beloved prince, and she remains a remote, chilly figure in most people's eyes. If you have a Relationship to her, it is undoubtedly because you helped her ward off some potential mutiny against Kandive.

As everyone knows, her bitterest rival is the prince's wife, Terires. Not only does Malgaea lust after the legitimacy of Terires' title, but Terires is

4 This theory assumes that the arrogant and capricious Kandive is capable of such an emotion at all.



responsible for the deaths of all three of her babies by Kandive. The one limit Kandive has placed on Malgaea's authority is that she may not act to harm either Terires or anyone of the consort's household.

Though many assume she hates Aramo as well, you've heard that their relationship is actually a friendly one. You've even heard rumors that her affection for him is downright unseemly, given his tender age. You don't know how much credence to give to this last bit of hearsay, however.

Kandive's courtiers all regard her with roughly equal terror, though Chozerri, supposedly too obtuse to fear her, treats her with the same genial respect he accords to everyone he deals with.

Persuade (Forthright) 15, Rebuff (Penetrating) 15, Attack (Finesse) 6, Defense (Intuition) 6, Health 6, Magic (Devious) 4, Appraisal 2, Athletics 4, Concealment 2, Etiquette 6, Gambling 6, Pedantry 3, Perception 5, Riding 4, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 12, Stealth 4, Stewardship 4, Wealth 12, Wherewithal 6. Resistances: none

Pertrij, Nervous Chancellor

"Please alleviate my mystification."

Pertrij, a member of one of Kaiin's most prestigious lordly families, maintains a shaky grip on his position as Chancellor of Kaiin. Working from the Hall of Administration, he is the official charged with realizing the decrees of Kandive (and Malgaea.) Traditionally, it is the Chancellor's head that is separated from his shoulders when things go awry in Kaiin, and no one seems more aware of this than the jittery, patrician Pertrij.

Pertrij, whose once-handsome features have been eroded by age and worry, dresses in carefully-made robes of gray vole fur and other soft fabrics. He wears the large golden medallions of his office, but has had them backed with felt so that they do not clank when he walks. He remains abstemious during festival time, and has never married or had children, allegedly to make sure that he will have no immediate family to die with him when he makes his inevitable, fatal mistake.

No Chancellor of Kaiin has ever left office voluntarily. A few have died of natural causes, the most common of which is sudden heart rupture or other acute vascular distress. Most are executed by the

prince, though, and Pertrij performs his duties with the extreme caution of a man who wishes to postpone his fate for as long as he possibly can. When granting audience to citizens such as yourself, he speaks with legalistic cautiousness, rarely making definite statements or committing himself to any specific position or course of action. Even if you have a Relationship to him, he never lets his guard down or shares his true opinions, if he has any.

Pertrij considers good information his best defense, and surely knows that Dlotne schemes for his position. He'd gladly give it to him, were it possible to resign from his post with his head still attached to his shoulders. Instead he must play a subtle cat and mouse game against Dlotne's supporters, countering their thrusts against him without overplaying his own hand.

His instinct for self-preservation requires him to maintain good relationships with the other powers of Kandive's household. Other courtiers often remark on his sublime skill at subtly modulating his degree of servile toadying to meet the expectations of each.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 10, Rebuff (Wary) 15, Attack (Caution) 5, Defense (Misdirection) 8, Health 6, Appraisal 2, Athletics 3, Etiquette 6, Gambling 2, Pedantry 3, Perception 4, Riding 4, Scuttlebutt 8, Seduction 2, Stealth 4, Stewardship 12, Wealth 10, Wherewithal 2.

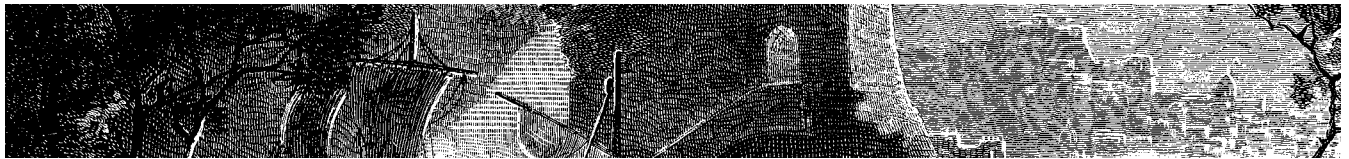
Resistances: Arrogance 4, Avarice 4, Indolence 4, Pettifoggery 3, Rakishness 4.

Terires, Royal Consort

"Do not speak further, until you have suitably basked in my royal splendor."

Terires was born a princess in the obscure sun-baked city-state of Gjdhed, far to the south of Kaiin. To increase their prestige, her family arranged for her marriage to Kandive, paying a generous dowry for the privilege. Kandive used the money to execute long-needed repairs to his palace dome. She has been his wife for nearly fifteen years.

No one believes that Kandive and Terires feel any great love for one another; it would be unusual if they did. She maintains separate apartments within the apartments; the two only encounter one another during ceremonial occasions. Many of her attendants also hail from exotic Gjdhed, and maintain the



pretence that they do not understand the local language or customs⁵.

The olive-skinned Terires adorns her corpulent figure in multicolored veils and silks, crisscrossed with multiple strings of black pearls. A fanatical devotee of the culinary arts, she spends much of her time feasting on the wares of Kaiin's finest chefs, who must be prepared at any moment to dispatch their best dishes to the palace, or face her fatal wrath. She also disports energetically with a staff of athletic male pleasure slaves, who are frequently reduced to exhaustion in the performance of their duties. When poets and orators from Gjidhed appear in Kaiin, she summons them to her apartments to give command performances.

Terires stirs herself from her pleasures only when she smells some affront to her official status, at which time she sends her bodyguards out to identify its origin. When the offenders are identified, she submits

their names to Kandive for immediate execution. Her rights of summary justice are enshrined in her nuptial contract, though Kandive does spare certain individuals whose names crop up again and again, such as his favored concubine, Malgaea (see above.) Terires sees the birth of any illegitimate children to Kandive as a threat to her own prerogatives, and arranges for her own men to kidnap and smother any such infants with the effrontery to be born alive. Even Malgaea's three infant children have suffered this fate, which goes a long way towards explaining the implacable hatred between the two women.

Aside from the elimination of bastard rivals, Terires shows little concern for the interests of her son, Aramo. Perhaps she understands that his future is better assured by forming a strong bond with his father.



Palace Intrigue Quick Reference



When you do business with the palace, forgetting the details of its various alliances and rivalries can be deadly. The following chart will keep the feuds straight for you. To find a particular character's opinion of another, follow across from his entry in the left column. A indicates an affectionate or allied relationship; H a hostile one, and N, a neutral attitude. F indicates that the character fears the other and is greatly reluctant to act against him; the effect is the same as an allied relationship, even if the motivation is completely different.

	Aramo	Blaphena	Chozerri	Dlotne	Kandive	Malgaea	Pertrij	Terires
Aramo	—	N	N	N	A	N	N	N
Blaphena	N	—	N	N	F	H	N	A
Chozerri	A	A	—	A	A	A	A	A
Dlotne	F	N	N	—	F	N	H	N
Kandive	A	N	A	N	—	A	N	N
Malgaea	A	H	N	N	A	—	N	H
Pertrij	F	N	N	H	F	F	—	F
Terires	N	F	N	N	N	H	N	—

Note that the relationships are sometimes asymmetrical. Chozerri feels affection for many palace figures who are merely neutral towards him. Pertrij fears Aramo, but Aramo's attitude towards him is neutral.

When persuading a listed character (or a lackey of same) to act against another individual, you suffer a levy of 1 when the rebuffing character is affectionate towards, or fearful of, the subject of your scheme. If, on the other hand, the rebuffing character is already hostile towards the subject, you gain a boon of 1. In the case of a neutral relationship, the persuasion contest proceeds normally.

Characters' attitudes may shift over time in accordance as your series unfolds. This is especially likely if your adventures change things in the palace. You might successfully scheme, for example, to convince Terires that Blaphena has betrayed her. If so, the GM should change Terires' opinion of Blaphena to hostile, and Blaphena's attitude towards her to fearful.

5 If your Pedantry rating is 4 or higher, you know this to be absurd. Residents of Gjidhed speak the same nameless tongue common throughout the known precincts of the Dying Earth.

Persuade (Intimidating) 10, Rebuff (Contrary) 12, Attack (Strength) 6, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 4, Health 3, Appraisal 2, Athletics 2, Etiquette 4, Gambling 4, Perception 2, Scuttlebutt 8, Wealth 23, Wherewithal 4.
Resistances: Pettifoggery 4.

Ulan Dhor

Kandive's nephew, Ulan Dhor (*DERPG* p160), is an apprentice magician whose heroism and sense of adventure make him a throwback to an earlier time. Although welcome at the palace, he avoids it, and its petty politics, as one would carefully skirt a known nest of poisonous asps. He spends much of his time traipsing through the realms past Almetry and Ascolais in search of lost magical lore. When in Kaiin, he may be found at the Sturdy Hilt, a pub in the southeast Threek (p138), where his fellow members of the swordsmen's troupe known as the Eight Delaphasians congregate.

Places of Interest

Commercial Establishments

There are no commercial establishments within the royal compound itself, but just south of the promenade you'll find the Golden Walk, a row of businesses catering to the wealthy. As a purveyor of luxury goods, the Golden Walk is second only to the Undercity (p173).

Golden Walk

Thriving businesses of the Golden Walk include Vidierista's Numismatic Emporium, the above-ground adjunct to a collectible coin business run by its proprietor, Vidierista, from the Undercity. (p169)

If you're looking for fine robes, look no further than Ripedueccio's, known for its exotic fabrics, or The Golden Needle, famed for quality workmanship, is the more successful of the two shops, because the wealthy of Kaiin always value novelty over durability. For slippers and other footwear, try Pria's or the Cobbler's Stone. The latter is currently the more fashionable of the two, thanks to a shipment of sparkling laces from a northern city its proprietor, the shifty-eyed Gattano, prefers not to name. The newest and most desirable hats can be found at

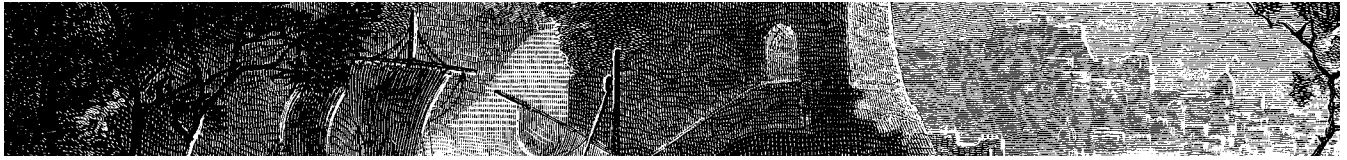


Ladies of consequence do not travel on foot if other modes of transport are available.

Tocri's, Rovata's, or Armico's. The elderly Tocri is well known for regaling customers with long and pointless anecdotes derived from his studies of military history. Rovata, hails from Trireres' homeland and once worked as an attendant to her. He's a hot-tempered fellow who threatens complaining customers that he'll report them to the royal consort. Armico is a burly man with peasant manners, who often disgusts his refined clients by eating a dripping haunch of mutton with one hand while he sews ornate headgear with the other.

For elegant jewels to please the object of your latest seduction attempt, empty your purse at Poscerrista's or Ediccicio's. The later specializes in newly-crafted items from the finest materials, while the squinty-eyed Ediccicio purveys antique pieces from aeons past.

For fine wines, try The Deepest Cellar; disregard rumors that its proprietor, Mondove, earns terces on the side by burying inconvenient corpses in his wine



cellar. A recently-established competitor, the poetically-named Condensation on the Grape, offers less worthy vintages at higher prices, but is so far exempt from disturbing gossip.

Before entering the palace district, you may wish to quench your thirst, either because the stroll has been a long one, or because the prospect of dealing with government officials has dried your mouth with apprehension. The Black Tunic caters primarily to off-duty vigils, but offers fair priced ale of reasonable quality, and may suit the miserly. If you wouldn't be caught dead in such a plebeian establishment, you should consider Guadi's, where the food and drink are merely acceptable, but the staff's flattery is of exceptional quality. More penetrating diners insist on the Purple Hissock, which has a dank and depressing atmosphere but offers the finest dishes and most sublime wines.

Curiosities and Landmarks

The notable landmarks of the district are all structures of Kandive's government.

The Palace

Countless windows, covered in gilded tiles, dot the vast dome of Kandive's legendary alcazar. On normal, cloudy days, the dome glows dully. On Kaiin's rare days of bright sunshine, the tiles reflect so much light that you can't gaze at the palace directly, but must instead place a protective hand before your eyes. Dozens of balconies and terraces jut out from the dome; they too are covered in gilded tile, and are difficult to make out from a distance. Stairways and columns of gleaming white marble decorate the palace's lower floors.

Black-clad vigils guard the various entrances to the palace, silvery pole-arms held aloft.

The main entrance opens into a large arcade decorated with tapestries and statues. It terminates in an imposing staircase which leads upwards to the grand salon, where nobles and courtiers chew on figs and drink heady wines, as slave girls and concubines kneel beside their couches. For festivals and parties, the salon is broken up into a maze of smaller areas with hanging sheets of fine fabric: netting, silks, and sateens, in a multitude of shades, with varying degrees of transparency. Flooring tiles can be removed, allowing the temporary installation of pools,

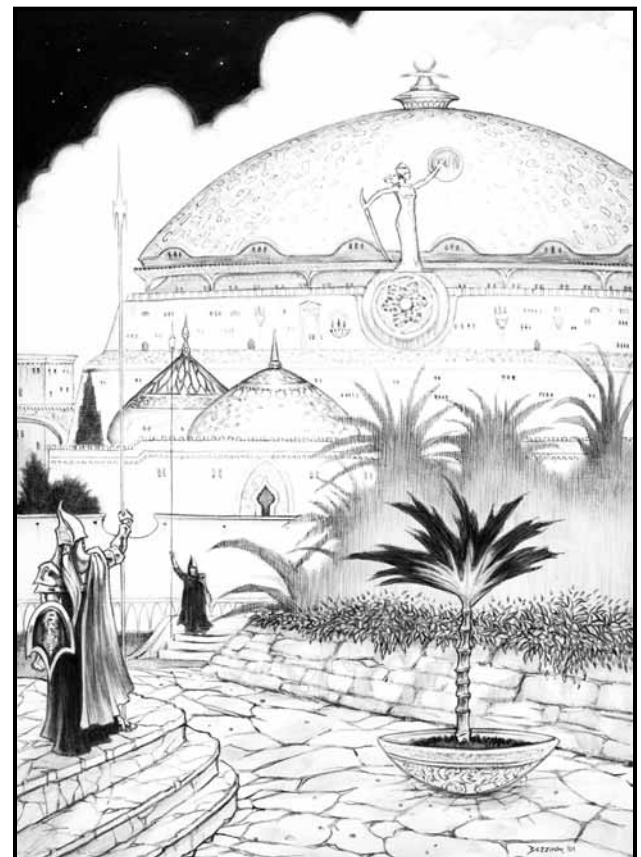
sandboxes, trap doors, beast cages, torture enclosures, or similar novelties. The prince may hold court, entertain petitions, or judge legal cases either in the salon, or in an imposing chamber decorated in lacquered wood. Kandive uses this chamber of state only on the gravest of occasions, preferring the comfort of his salon.

From the salon, you can make your way towards one of a dozen terraces, or even towards the prince's private apartments⁶. The palace also provides large suites for the royal heir, the consort, and the favored concubine. Lesser concubines share a large harem. Aside from his apartments, the prince maintains large areas devoted to his collection of occult texts and devices, and to an armory displaying weapons and armor from a dozen eras.

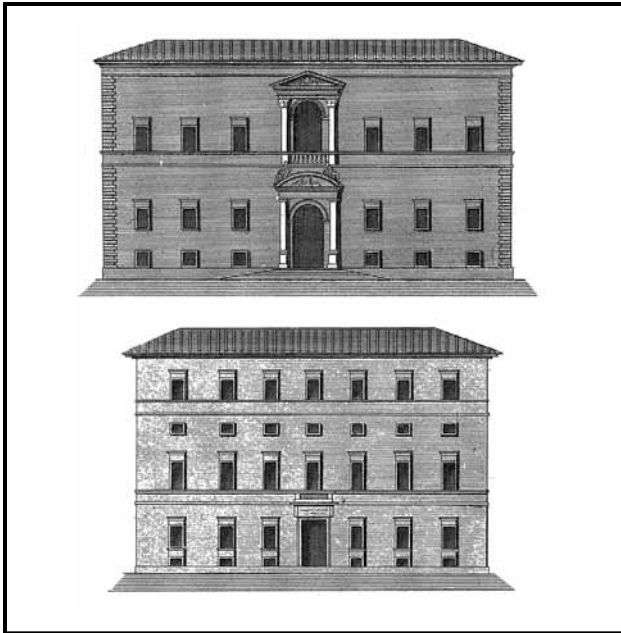
Lower floors are given over to storage, a gigantic kitchen, and a maze-like warren of servant quarters.

Hall of Administration (H12)

The largest of the palace's satellite buildings, the Hall of Administration is a rectangular, three-story



⁶ You might be able to get away with this at festival time, but only because the prince himself is a powerful magician and warrior, confident that he's better prepared to dispatch assailants than any of his vigils or guardians.



A number of artists, architects and academics have studied the buildings of the palace complex. Most produced beautifully illustrated volumes of flattery, elegantly bound in various hides for presentation to the prince himself. Wider publication is discouraged by the vigils, but working documents including plans may be obtained from the usual sources.

structure packed to bursting with tiny offices. Its air is stale and damp. With darting eyes, functionaries hustle down hallways, hoping you won't bother them with any annoying official business. Dim lanterns smolder sullenly in wall sconces. Hall floors are slick with bird droppings; entire colonies of drably-feathered warblers nest in the rafters.

The building's exterior, made of recovered limestone from the Old Town, is flat and featureless. Any general business you need to conduct with the city government must begin here. This is true even if you have a legal or taxation problem; before you can enter the Hall of Excises or Hall of Justice, you must make an application here for an entry permit. The functionaries here fear those in the other two buildings, and issue permits only reluctantly. You gain a boon of 1 in persuasion contests against them if your style is Intimidating.

Hall of Excises (H13)

From the outside, the Hall of Excises looks as drab and meek as the larger Hall of Administration. Its luxurious interior, on the other hand, proudly displays the superior wealth and status of its functionaries. Hallways are wider; offices are larger. Incense burners waft the subtle scent of rose petals down the corridors.

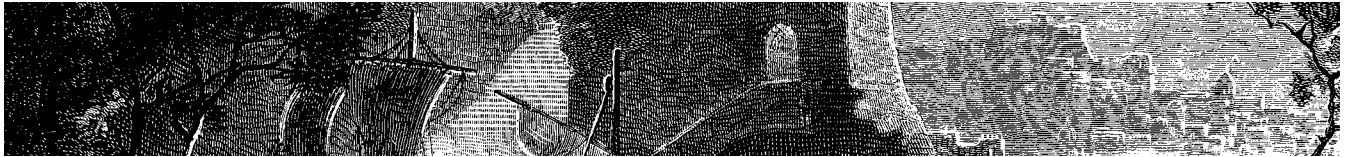
Giant luminous insects bang hopelessly against the thin bars of golden cages, casting flattering but intermittent light on the faces of all who enter. Every canny functionary covets a position at the Hall of Excises. Here they enjoy the greatest opportunity for profit at the expense of their fellow citizens. Provided that an officer meets his quota, the prince tacitly allows him a certain amount of skimming off the top. Kandive periodically sends a scare reverberating down the hallways, by threatening to crack down on the most egregious offenders. After recovering from these moments of intense heart palpitation, the excise officers go back to thinking of themselves as the lords of the earth.

Hall of Justice (H11)

A pair of grim and faceless statues towers over the entryway to this sprawling, one-story structure. It owes its ramshackle shape to the fact that it has been expanded over the years by attaching annexes to the original building. Both vigils and functionaries use different parts of the building. The vigils treat their section badly, as you can see from the scorched doorframes, broken tiles, and scrawl-covered walls. The functionaries strive to show their superiority by taking better care of their areas.

In addition to offices for both grades of official, the Hall of Justice houses a large library of scrolls on which the decrees of successive monarchs are carefully stored. Only the most pedantic functionaries are permitted to peruse the scrolls. No decree is ever binding on the current prince — he can at any time issue a new one — but jurists study them anyway, hoping to anticipate his thinking.

In a subterranean level beneath the hall, justice officials house prisoners. Suspected criminals awaiting a hearing before the prince squat, jammed together, in large holding cells. Several well-equipped torture chambers provide vigils the tools they require to extract information for affidavits to present to the prince. The already-condemned shiver away their last



hours in clammy isolation.

A detailed discussion of the Kaiinese legal system can be found in the Overview section, on p18.

Deodand Pit (H12)

The vaunted deodand pit is a converted well in which four of the fierce creatures dwell. Individuals the prince sentences to death are lowered down into the pit with a rope and pulley system. Notables may gain dispensation to be lowered down in a large bucket that allows them to stand upright. Most victims are instead tied by the ankles and sent to face their hideous fatal maulings while dangling upside-down. Vigils supervise the lowering of victims. Although no one will stop you from approaching the pit during an execution, the prince discourages large crowds of spectators. Executions are not announced in advance, and vigils disperse onlookers when their numbers start to swell. Any attempt to rescue a prisoner before his lowering is, obviously, met with staunch resistance on the part of vigils.



Shin's Stadium (I13)

Mad King Shin, an early ruler of Kaiin, built an arena on massive stone stilts. Although the structure was impressive, it proved impracticable. Spectators were expected to climb up to the seating on rope ladders. To completely fill the bleachers would take several days, were enough citizens willing to undertake the arduous and dangerous climb. Despite Shin's reprisals against prominent citizens who refused to attend his spectacles, the arena soon fell into disuse. Not long after that, it fell over entirely. Persons who suggested that Shin should have employed an experienced architect, instead of designing the stadium himself, were hanged. Shin himself died while inspecting the ongoing damage, as a large piece of marble fell from the promenade level, crushing himself and his entire household. Thus ended the first lineage of Kaiin's kings. Since that time, its leaders have styled themselves merely as princes, to distance themselves from his lunatic arrogance.

Now only the giant columns that once supported the stadium remain. Later princes, Kandive included, are fond of the observation that the stilts stand as a warning against arrogance. In fact, engineers disagree on the safest way of demolishing them, and no prince

has been brave enough to risk having the columns come crashing down on the buildings below.

Events

Amnesty Day

On the first of Sorgent, the prince sponsors Amnesty Day, a tradition dating back to the days of Mad King Shin. Criminals are encouraged to petition the Hall of Justice for the forgiveness of crimes, whether they have been charged with them or not. Justice officials set up gigantic cordons to herd the thousands of petitioners into manageable lines. Every available official finds himself pressed into service, sitting at one station on a long table where he hears confessions all day long. Anyone who has lived in Kaiin long enough to need pardon for crimes also knows that the amnesty offered is less than absolute. Persons confessing to crimes the adjudicators find especially heinous or embarrassing are promptly hauled off to the dungeons beneath the Hall of Justice. Most amnesty seekers admit only to fleeting, trivial roles in the crimes of others. Judicial functionaries carefully weigh their testimony, deciding which third parties should be seriously investigated,



and which are merely the victims of an applicant's spite. Genuine cases are filed away so that vigils can follow up on them in the months ahead.

As the sun struggles down towards the horizon, petitioners begin to slip away. Anyone left in line at dusk loses his amnesty, is assumed to be guilty of a serious crime, and gets tossed in the dungeon for interrogation at the vigils' leisure.

Regatta

On the 23rd of Inlasto, citizens enjoy a holiday celebration, flocking to the banks of the Scaum to enjoy the prince's annual regatta. The lords and magnates of the city compete to display their wealth and profligacy, by constructing barges decorated in the most expensive of materials. To populate the decks of their boats, they purchase slaves, hire courtesans, and acquire fabulous beasts. The prince's own golden pleasure-barge is invariably the most splendid vessel, and always takes up the rear.

The regatta always begins with a lavish parade, funded entirely by the prince, which leads from his palace down to the regatta's starting point. The common people enjoy the parade, where salt-breads and sardines are thrown to the crowd, as much as they do the sail-past. When the regatta has concluded, and the barges safely docked south of the Scaum's mouth, their owners retreat to the palace for an evening of revelry which presages the later decadence of festival time.

Festival

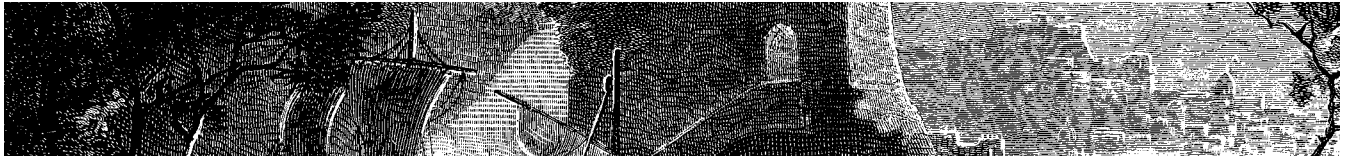
The most important event in all of Kaiin is the annual festival, which takes place from the 26th of Chiou to the 3rd of Deger. At festival, all but the most abstemious Kaiinese flood the streets, dressed in masquerade gear. They garb themselves as foreigners and figures from history, even as half-men. Citizens from the lowly to the lofty surrender to the groping embraces of masked strangers. Laws against public disorder are suspended; the vigils themselves carouse with abandon. Special lanterns are hung along the city walls and throughout the royal enclosure; they contain luminous insects, minor elementals, or magical essences. The height of the revelry always takes place near the palace. Witches, deodands, and other loathsome prisoners are placed on display, so that they might be taunted or used as targets for rocks or

blades. The palace doors are thrown open, but generally only Kaiin's lords and wealthy magnates dare to enter. Ordinary people can only dream of the exotic debaucheries that occur beneath its dome.

The festival generally reaches its peak at the beginning of Deger. Its last few days are usually quiet ones, as sickened celebrants lie swooning in bed, their exhausted bodies protesting the over-exertions to which they've just been subjected.

Rumors . . .

- ✦ Specify the magical item you most desire. A recent rumor says that Prince Kandive is about to receive an item of exactly this sort to add to his collection. You might want to find out how it will arrive, so you can intercept the shipment. Or perhaps you're bold enough to slip into the palace itself, to remove it from Kandive's study after he receives it.
- ✦ A wealthy merchant offers you a tempting fee to investigate the unfortunate demise of his daughter, who supposedly jumped from one of the palace's terraces. Just before her fateful trip to the palace, she told him she'd learned an interesting secret about Aramo, the young heir to the throne.
- ✦ You hear that Blaphena, Inquisitor of Fashion, is due to receive a shipment of footwear from the north. If you can somehow get a prolonged look at the shoes she's ordered, you can earn a purse full of terces, selling your account of them to local cobblers. Top shoemakers will pay handsomely; whatever the shoes look like, Blaphena is sure to make them the height of fashion at court. Great profits await the cobblers who have copies ready for sale as the craze peaks.
- ✦ The nephew of a recently-condemned bandit has come to town, swearing vengeance on Over-Sheriff Chozerri. This fellow, reputedly a magician of some accomplishment, has summoned a stalker made of shadow-stuff, set to hunt and slay the jovial vigil leader. Saving



Chozerri from the magical beast could earn you the gratitude of the palace, which could prove useful in all sorts of ways.

- ✦ You hear that Chancellor Pertrij has begun to suffer from peculiar lapses of memory. Some say that he's gone senile. If you can help prove this, the steward Dlotne might lavishly reward you. On the other hand, it is equally likely that Dlotne has dosed Pertrij with some debilitating elixir. If you prove this, the most powerful civilian official of Kaiin would owe you for saving his position, possibly even his life.
- ✦ You find a dead man slumped in your habitual seat at your favorite tavern. A cursory glance shows that he was poisoned. Other drinkers identify him as a notorious forger. In his satchel you find a document, supposedly in Kandive's hand, professing true and eternal devotion to one of his concubines — not the forbidding Malgaea. Clearly the letter is part of a conspiracy of some sort. Was it meant to embarrass Kandive, to cause a breach between him and Malgaea, or to motivate Malgaea to arrange the death of woman it's addressed to?
- ✦ Titters emanate from the palace, claiming that the corpulent Tireres now wishes to shed her excess pounds. An extravagant reward awaits the person who provides her with an efficacious draught of weight reduction. Perhaps it is time to dust off your uncle's recipe for his all-occasions elixir, and troop to the palace in search of either the reward, or other opportunities that access to Kandive's household might provide.

Taglines

Enough foot-dragging! Process his application, or face his wrath!

From the street, it does not seem so high up.

I am flushed with wine, and surely cannot have said any such thing.

I am here merely to survey the distinctive architecture.

I must report this admission of yours, at once.

I was forced to intervene when he questioned the magnificence of your barge.

In that costume, I mistook you for another.

Let us repair to a darkened alcove.

Loosen his lips with exotic tortures.

Of course it is your faction I support unwaveringly.

Perhaps this small gift will prove my zeal for justice.

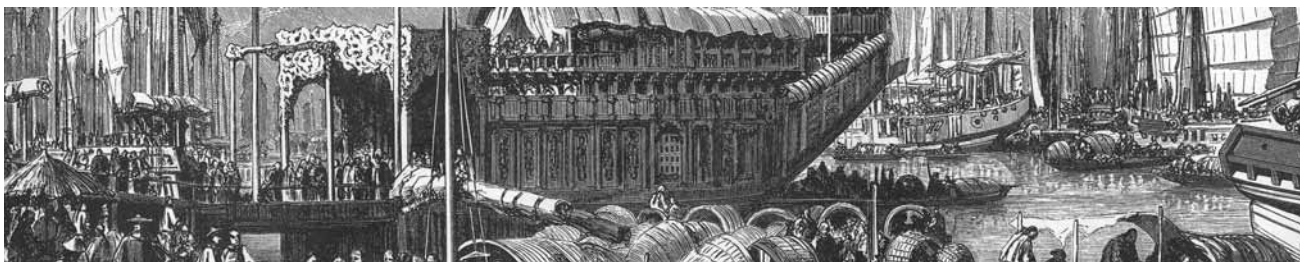
Say what you like about me, but do not malign my haberdasher!

Seldom have I gazed on so fetching a creature.

There is nothing so melancholy as a deodand's wail.

Your ferocity has no greater admirer than myself.

Your highness, I urge you to consider this matter in its entire context.





Tweaks

"The Prince's Deodands Lust For Flesh" (Persuade : Intimidating)

Situation: You are attempting to persuade someone whose royal connections are weaker than your own. To qualify for this tweak, you must have a relationship to one of the following GMCs: Kandive, Malgaea, Pertrij, or Terires.

Description: The prince's jurisprudence is better known for speed than fairness, a fact you regularly take advantage of. People known to enjoy influence in the palace, as you do, are rightly feared. With a few choice whispers, anyone can be dragged before the prince and sentenced to the deodand pit. You sometimes find it useful to remind reluctant negotiating partners of this basic fact of Kaiinese life.

Benefit: At any time during a persuasion contest, you can invoke this tweak. (You are never obligated to use it.) It works against all Rebuff styles except Pure-Hearted. Add 1 to all results, except Dismal Failures. If you do get a Dismal Failure, it costs an extra 2 points (that is, 5 in all), to reroll. If you allow a Dismal Failure to stand, the abuse of your royal connection gets back to the palace, to the prince's

displeasure. Unless you explain yourself adroitly, you yourself may be scheduled for the deodand pit.

Incorruptible Rectitude (Resist : Avarice)

Situation: Greed tempts you to break the prince's laws.

Description: At the slightest opportunity, you habitually proclaim your fidelity to Kandive's fair and sensible legal system. You are also keenly aware of the flesh-rending penalties awaiting those who flout it. When tempted by greed to illegal action, you repeat the former comments and vividly imagine the latter fate. These twin impulses steel you against temptation.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus when resisting avarice, provided you're within Kandive's jurisdiction, and you'd have to break the law to act on your temptation.

Vigil Training (Defense: Parry)

Situation: You engage in combat with a vigil, or former vigil.

Description: You spent some time as a vigil, or at least trained as one. You learned how to fight like a vigil, and, more importantly, how to spar against one. Because you know their standard maneuvers, you can anticipate them in combat, expertly parrying incoming blows.

Benefit: You gain a boon of 1 when defending against a current or former vigil. Other current or former vigils may take this tweak also, gaining the same boon against you.

By choosing this tweak, you create a fact about your PC's background which the GM is free to exploit. GMC vigils may know you to see you. Depending on your current station in life, they might regard you as a colleague made good, or a betrayer of their collective honor.





Chapter 8

The Scholasticarium District

“A place frequented by whitebeards, egregious with learning.”
— Tansander the Reductionist, *Plangent Phrases of the Ages*

On First Glance

The formidable structure of the Scholasticarium, a hidebound institution of higher learning, forms the hub of a neighborhood in which students, instructors, and archmages dwell. Their needs and wants are served by a battery of servants and merchants who live here also. Thanks to their efforts, it is possible to spend years in the District without ever venturing into another area of Kaiin.

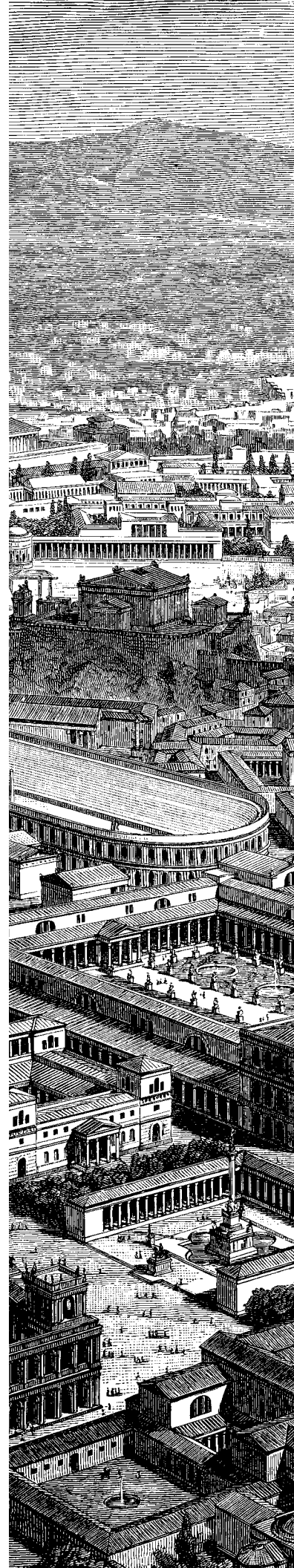
A naïve sort might expect a district of learning to be a quiet, bucolic place where robed savants stroll, discussing in hushed tones the sublime verities of the poetic muse, or excitedly sharing esoteric insights into the true nature of the universe. Instead, it is a loud, boisterous place, where drunken students from Almery and beyond regularly rampage, and where lecturers exchange fisticuffs or prismatic sprays at the merest provocation. Burly enforcers called maugifiers strut pugnaciously across its cobblestone laneways, always ready to reassert order with sharp blows of their danny-sticks. Wise Kaiinese give the district a wide berth, wary not only of riots and brawls, but of the strange creatures that might at any time crawl dripping from a magician's vat room, or the bored sandestins, waiting to fulfill their masters' tedious commands, who might work cruel mischief on them.

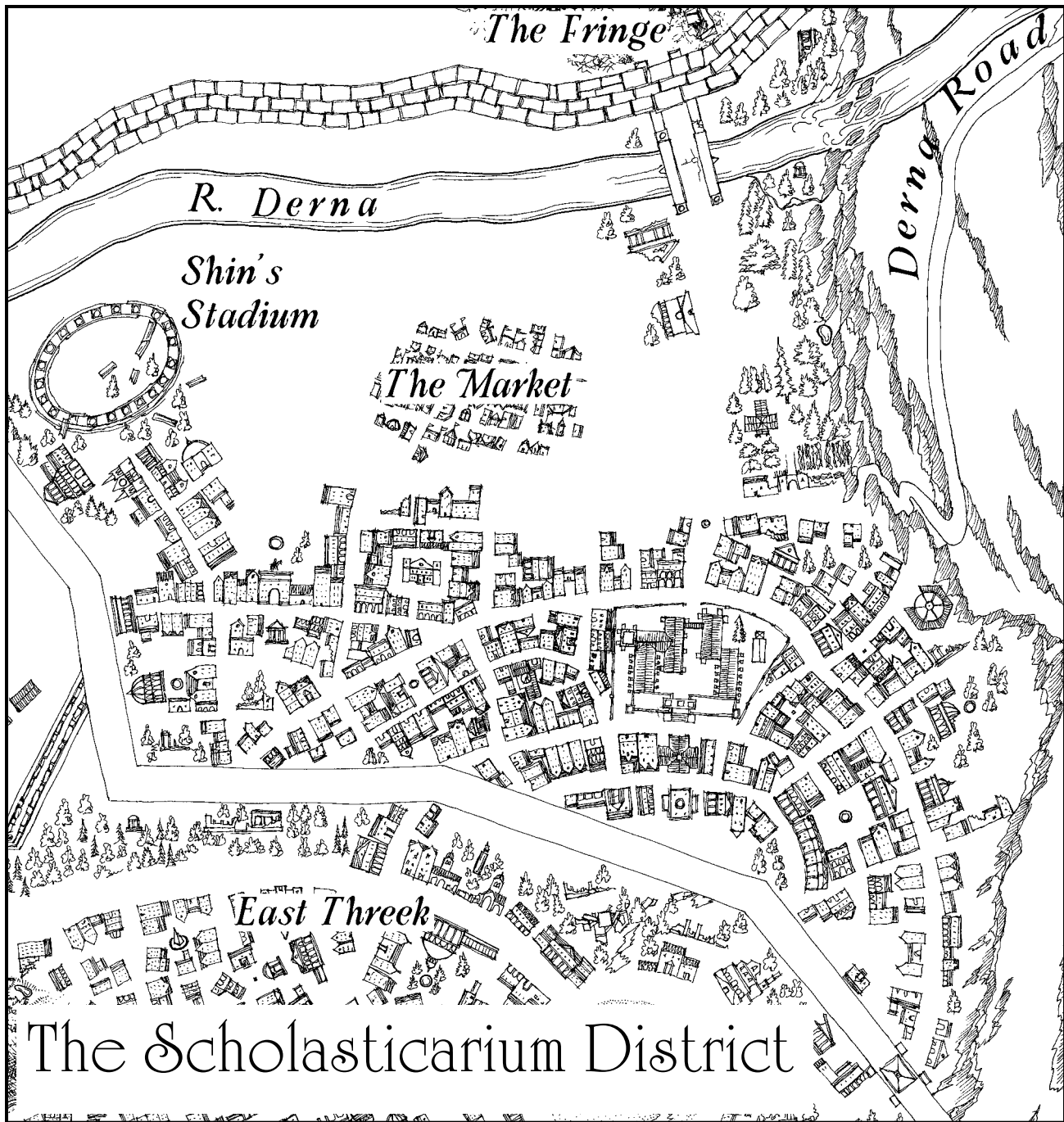
Some of the neighborhood's buildings, in contrast to the limestone that prevails through much of Kaiin, are constructed from wood. The dark colors of these structures may remind you of driftwood.

Not everyone dwelling here is a magician or scholar. Some persons of middling means, too prosperous for the Threek but not wealthy enough for the lofty heights of Odkin Prospect, make their homes here, too. Market regulars who run thriving stalls may live here, for example. These folks tend to huddle near the Market and away from the heart of the Scholasticarium District.

Didactic Overview

Stalwarts of the Scholasticarium claim that their institution predates even the city of Kaiin itself, and this is true, provided one does not insist on a tiresome degree of historical continuity. The Old Town had a school for higher philosophical and arcane learning, as did many of the predecessor cities that rose and fell on the edge of Sanreal Bay. The structure of the present Scholasticarium was erected from the ruins of the old,





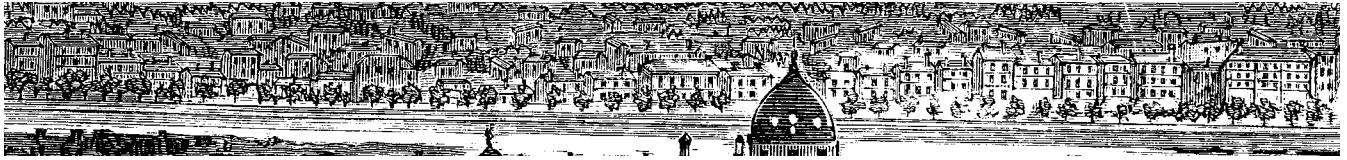
its bits and pieces laboriously carted in from the ruins to the north of the city¹. This rebuilding occurred only about two hundred years ago, so by most standards it is, in fact, a young institution. Its detractors, including many of the archmages of Ildefonse's conclave, take pride in deriding it as too

new to take seriously. They mock its degrees as worthless scratchings on poor parchment, and its lecturers as an ill-mannered hive of crackpots².

In Almery, the studies of the sciences, the arts, philosophy, and magic are not distinct. Any pursuer of higher education naturally aspires to mastery of the

1 This event occurred before Chun the Unavoidable took up residence there, although some accounts incorrectly state that he granted the scholars special dispensation to trespass on his territory, either because he was afraid of them, or because he knew what trouble a revived Scholasticarium would cause to the city.

2 Although this last statement might be true, the objective viewer must concede that the same can be said of Ildefonse's cronies.



totality of human knowledge. Thus anyone who labels himself a student can be considered a magician in training. Even the most sheltered student quickly learns that magicians are distrusted nearly everywhere, especially in certain quarters of Kaiin. Moreover, people who despise magicians know to confront only those whose powers are still weak — the students. Accordingly, enrollees at the Scholasticarium either stay within its well-patrolled boundaries, or shed their distinctive velvet gowns and flounder-shaped headpieces before venturing past them.

Scholarship programs are regarded in Almery as a sign of lamentable weak-mindedness. Only the sons and daughters of the wealthiest families can conjure the financial resources to gain admittance. Admittance fees alone run to at least 10,000 terces a year. Living expenses and miscellaneous fees may double that figure — tripling it if the student enjoys a taste for gambling. As an alert reader, you will note the appearance of the word “daughters” in the above paragraph. This is not a misprint: the Scholasticarium, in a note of eccentric defiance, allows female persons to be tutored in the magical arts. This policy openly flouts the preferences of Ildefonse’s all-male conclave, the members of which proclaim that all female practitioners of magic are witches, and, it goes without saying, unutterably dangerous. Perhaps the true roots of the Arch-Magicians’ disdain for the institution lie here.

On the other hand, it should be said that the Scholasticarium, while accepting the monies of many a female applicant, has yet to graduate any of them to the rank of Arch-Magician. Some claim that women are by nature incapable of summoning the chugs needed to command sandestins. Other more cynical sorts say that bias towards witches runs high even in the supposedly enlightened upper reaches of the Scholasticarium.



Organization

Although people speak of the Scholasticarium having an organization, the two words rest only uneasily in the same sentence. The institution is really a collection of groups, which supposedly relate to one another as parts of a grand and ascending hierarchy, but are really

rivals in a never-ending struggle for privilege and prestige.

Office of the Master

The nominal authority governing all units of the Scholasticarium is the Office of the Master. The Master, sometimes quaintly called the Dean, maintains supposed approval over the hiring of new lecturers and their promotion to tenured positions. He controls the treasury, determines admissions policy, and is the final word on disciplinary actions, whether meted out against students or lecturers. In actual fact, however, many of the departments described below gain funds from other sources, most usually foundations established by well-heeled alumni. Political independence flows from this financial freedom. Various Masters have successively withdrawn funding from a wide array of subordinate groups, with little noticeable impact on their operations. Consequently, individual lecturers feel free to hire assistants without recourse to the Master’s approval. They treat students as they would apprentices, subjecting them to any number of callous and humiliating punishments for the most negligible offenses. When confronted by an angry and influential parent, the Master may claim authority, but must in fact go to the troublemaking lecturer with cap in hand, in an attempt to wheedle out an apology or some other compromise. The most successful Masters are therefore of the diplomatic persuasion, relying on persuasion and deal-making to navigate the difficult waters of their positions. The ones who quickly fail are those who assume that their title carries with it an inherent right to impose discipline on their inferiors.

The position of master was recently vacated by the estimable Curnorninet, a silver-tongued compromiser whose unseemly liaisons with a series of nubile assistants eventually provided his enemies the ammunition required to oust him. Even if you have no great interest in the transactions of the Scholasticarium, you could not escape talk of Curnorninet’s scandals, which were on the lips of every Kaiinese for many months. Even fishmongers and street-sweepers took positions on the grand struggle to remove his furred stole of authority. Like many, you probably grew tired of hearing people argue about him.

His successor, Brefilimi, donned the six-cornered



hat of office only seventy-five days ago, in a selection process still hotly contested by the loser's faction. Early indications suggest that he lacks his predecessor's finesse and may be headed for trouble: see his entry under Personages, later in this chapter.

Syncretic Symposium for the Simulation of Reality

The dozen or so members of the Scholasticarium of the Syncretic Symposium for the Simulation of Reality belong to what is probably the institution's most powerful canton. Although it sounds like a study group, it is in reality the guild of tenured instructors. Many of these magicians control large funds of money, either from foundations created by former students, or simply their own personal treasuries. These assets, not to mention the raw power of their magical spells, put them beyond the Master's disciplinary reach. They are united in their contempt for the Master, whoever that may be at any given moment, and in their desire to spend as little time in contact with actual students as is humanly possible. All other matters divide them wholly.

Meetings of the Symposium are given over almost entirely to procedural wrangling, with frequent interruptions for points of personal privilege. Members frequently lay formal charges against one another, often demanding reparation in IOUN stones. In short, the Syncretic Symposium is but a parochial reflection of the much more prestigious conclave of Ildefonse. However, it is unwise to suggest this to Symposium members, who despise Ildefonse's group with a vehement purity that can only be the inspired by the greenest of envies.

The putative head of the Symposium receives the title of Inferator. His second-in-command is the Demi-Inferator. Both titles allegedly confer great authority, but in fact the Inferator's ability to act depends on his ability to bluff, browbeat, and inveigle a group of magicians approximately as mighty as himself. The Demi-Inferator supposedly supports him, especially in disciplinary matters, but in practice spends most of his time in office attempting to topple and replace the Inferator. Currently, the Inferator's chair is occupied by the arch-mage Perrin (see below.) The Demi-Inferator is Grashpotel (also described later in this chapter.)

The Institute

Lying unequivocally below the Syncretic Symposium in the Scholasticarium pecking order is the Institute, the association to which the bulk of lecturers belong. It is these workaday scholars whose efforts keep the Scholasticarium functioning. They perform the bulk of the teaching, and are also saddled with a variety of administrative tasks. In exchange for their efforts, Institute members receive salaries and living quarters in the Institute building. As a rule, they wield lesser magical powers than their arrogant Symposium superiors. Some practice no magic whatsoever³, but such individuals are regarded as eccentric if not positively antisocial.

Nothing gives the members of the Institute greater pleasure than to gather together to imbibe inferior wine and bewail the constant humiliations heaped upon them by the accursed oppressors of the Syncretic Symposium. Formal Institute meetings are devoted almost entirely to redressing the historical mistreatment of their organization. They are forever passing resolutions making demands on the Symposium. Such a demand might be for anything from a formal declaration of respect and affection to full membership, including voting rights, in the Symposium⁴.

The head of the Institute is known as the Over-Petitioner. He oversees a board of six Under-Petitioners. Annual elections determine which candidates capture these posts. Generally the most cantankerous and obstructionist candidate carries the day.

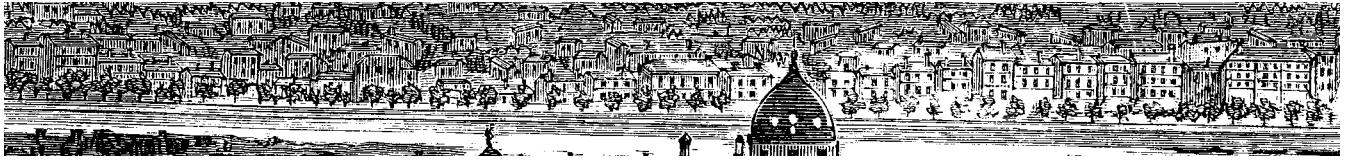
The current Over-Petitioner is the sublimely obnoxious Yanjo (see below), whose hostility towards the Symposium verges on the insane. Although the majority of Institute members remain unconvinced by his lunatic ravings, they gain pleasure from the exasperation he causes to Perrin and his confederates.

United Sodality of Students and Pupils

The United Sodality of Students and Pupils does to the Institute what the Institute does to the Symposium. The ever-changing leadership of this organization fights back against perceived slights and unfair policies imposed by lecturers and salaried scholars. It does so by signing petitions, disrupting classes, staging demonstrations and — most cruelly —

3 Even these will have some points in their Magic pools, as a defensive measure, and will likely carry a small assortment of minor magical items on their persons.

4 When they respond to these proclamations (if they do so at all), Symposium members treat their Institute petitioners with amused condescension. Though they know full well that this attitude merely intensifies the Institute's traditional feelings of resentment, they seem incapable of restraining themselves.



inducing their families and sponsors to withhold tuition payments. Although the Master staunchly rules against most of their claims in public, major confrontations usually end in his backing down and making secret accommodations to the pupils' demands. If you are an astute observer of Scholasticarum politics, you understand that this happens because tuition fees constitute the Master's own primary source of funding. So, for example, last year then-Master Curnorninet sent out a secret order urging Institute members to grade examinations more favorably, taking into account not only what the student actually said, but what he apparently meant, or would have said, had he been given more time to study and gotten enough sleep. The new Master, Brefilimi, won election in part by promising disgruntled Symposium members that he'd rescind this recommendation and once more allow instructors to write scathingly sarcastic comments on failing papers. However, since taking office, the new man has shown no sign of actually fulfilling this promise.

The United Sodality is currently headed by a swannishly brooding young man called Saper (see below).

Kaiin Philosophical and Thaumaturgical Society

Founded a hundred and fifty years ago, the Kaiin Philosophical and Thaumaturgical Society sponsors lectures, displays and demonstrations of the magical arts, for the benefit of the general populace. Its founder, Blottraccad the Fume-Weary, established it to

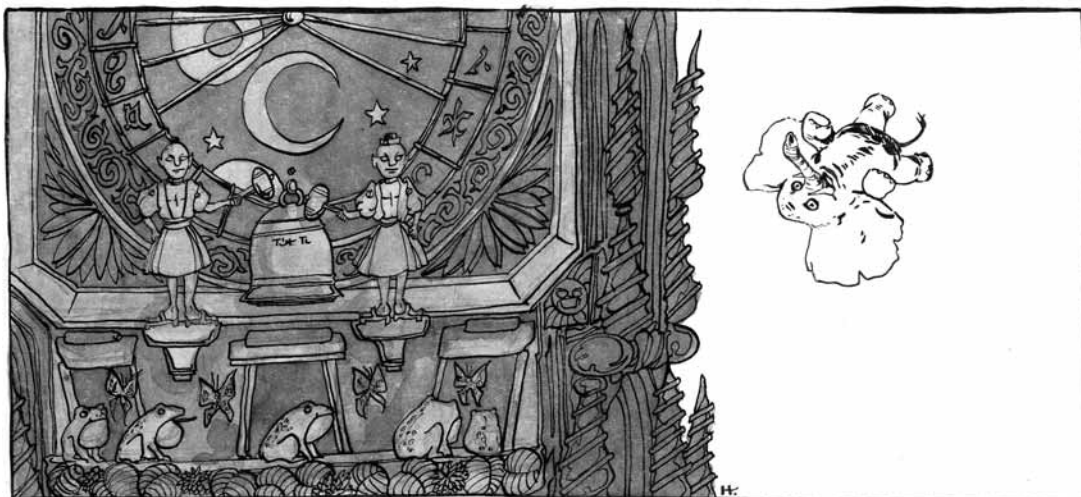
foster understanding between magicians and the everyday citizen of Kaiin. It was Blottraccad's belief that the terror of magicians felt by the common man was baseless and regrettable. He also wished to encourage his fellow magicians to treat their inferiors in a more kindly and considerate manner.

Some might now argue that the society has strayed from its original purpose. As run by the waggish spell-mumbler Xerceju the Variable (see below), it has now become a vehicle for thaumaturgical pranks loosed on a helpless and horrified populace. Last spring his demonstrators summoned a horde of singing bees, which buzzed the market while droning in disturbingly low voices a series of vulgar airs concerning ailments of a sexual nature. A few months ago, they levitated an elephant, which crashed into a clock tower, irreparably damaging its 19th-Aeon gearworks.

You have heard it said that Xerceju extorts favors and magical items from his fellow magicians by promising not to stage events leading to riots or other disturbances at times inconvenient to them. Others counter that this theory strives too hard to make sense of a man who is simply driven by a perverse sense of humor and a love of his own power.

Upstanding Maugifiers

By longstanding preference, the prince's vigils refuse to venture anywhere near the precincts of the Scholasticarum district. The duty of policing the area falls to the Upstanding Maugifiers, an intrepid group of patrolmen who report to the Master of Masters.





The Upstanding Maugifiers are best equipped to deal with students, passersby, and others of little or no accomplishment in the arcane arts. They respond to trouble on the District's with gruff commands. If these are not heeded, they follow up with blows from their finely lacquered danny-sticks. Most wrongdoers fall quickly into line after a few peremptory hits, but especially recalcitrant troublemakers may require severe smacks to the knees, neck, or head.

The enforcers employed by the Upstanding Maugifiers are not magicians themselves, but are supplied with charms which protect them from the sorts of spells and cantraps a drunken student might wield. They have a fine sense of the sorts of trouble that might cause embarrassment for the Master or the Symposium, and crack down on these with smiling efficiency. Most offenses they investigate, though, are nothing more serious than outbursts of youthful exuberance. Although a few forbidding souls punish any infraction they see to the fullest extent, most will look the other way in case of minor trouble, especially when supplied with a generous gift to the Maugifier's Benevolent Fund.

The Maugifiers have neither the authority nor the raw power to discipline the excesses of accomplished magicians. Instead, they merely observe each offense and file reports to the Master, who is then faced with the challenge of punishing the wrongdoers. He may deftly pass the affair along to the Inferator of the Symposium, suggesting that formal charges be laid by according to its internal code.

The chief Maugifier is called the Redactor. Unlike his minions, he is usually a magician, though usually one of minor talent. Appointment to the post is made by the Master of Masters, and is widely considered a punishment for political transgressions. The Redactorship has sunk many a career, by forcing the head Maugifier to file charges against influential mages they would be better off fawning over. Turvin, the phlegmatic current Redactor, was allegedly appointed to the post after being caught in a stairwell intimately clutching Cacchosta, wife to the previous Master. Apparently he has begged the new Master repeatedly for release from his post. So far, Brefilimi has withheld judgment on Turvin's future.

Inhabitants

Most people you'll encounter on a trek through the Scholasticarium district are either students, instructors, enforcers, or functionaries of the institution. You may also meet a few independent entrepreneurs, such as the operators of wine or clam stalls, whose trade depends on the traffic of pupils and teachers.

Contacts

Note that the loftier sorts of the Scholasticarium, specifically Symposium members, are not available as mere contacts. Instead, you'll have to pay for Relationships to them during character creation, or simply make your connections in the course of actual play.

Apprentice / Researcher

"I certainly could recite the legends concerning that ancient tomb, but am currently distracted by my need to purchase exotic medicines for these chronic chilblains."

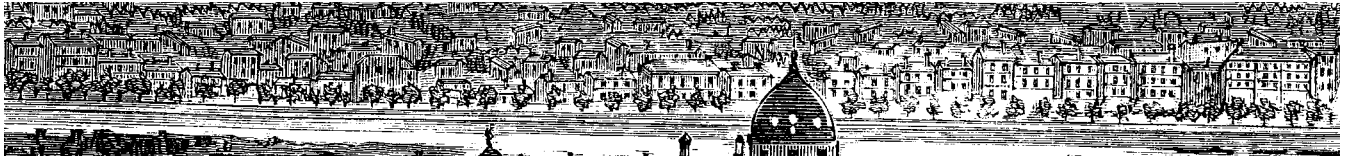
(+Eloquent -Intimidating)

Apprentices and researchers exist in sort of a limbo: they're more advanced than students, but not yet members of the Institute. Their positions are so precarious, so utterly reliant on the good graces of Institute fellows, that they don't even dare found a society to protect their interests. They perform much of the actual research for Institute members, and even Symposium fellows. As such, they're the best equipped to root through the vast and confusing Scholasticarium library system in search of the esoteric pieces of information on which your adventuring success might depend. As they typically live in poverty even a Threekman would pity, they'll be eager to do so in exchange for money. Apprentices also bristle with inside information on lecturers and magicians, but will be reluctant to part with it unless they completely trust you. Every apprentice lives in utter terror of retaliation from a superior, any one of whom might end his career at the Scholasticarium with a mere word.

Deranged Pedant

"I charge you with the crime of eavesdropping on my thoughts. Vigils! Vigils!"

(+Obfuscatory -Charming)



It is difficult to determine whether some individuals are descending into madness or are merely unusually zealous in pursuit of their studies.

The descent into slaving madness remains the number one occupational hazard of the professional educator. Though insane former lecturers usually become hermits and retreat to The Fringe (p41) or some dank cave out in the wilderness, a few are irresistibly tethered to the site of their original mental disintegration. They sneak into the District at night, cannily evading sleepy-eyed maugifiers, to ensconce themselves in alcoves and hidey-holes. Then, when the traffic of students and lecturers reaches its midday height, they leap from cover to confront their imagined accusers, or merely to warn their successors of the dangers of the upcoming erb blight, invasion by mole men, reticular disintegration, or whatever other threat occupies their present delusions. If talked to in the proper, calming manner, a deranged pedant can supply you with (somewhat dated) gossip about former colleagues, including secrets current fellows of the Institute would never reveal. They know the routines and quirks of the Maugifiers. They can escort you to the District's finest hiding places and provide accounts of things they witnessed while using them.

You may find the tweak listed on p49, 'Decipher Lunatic Ramblings', useful when dealing with Deranged Pedants.

Institute Lecturer

"I certainly could recite the legends concerning that ancient tomb, for a mere twenty per cent of all your earnings from the expedition, and right of first refusal on any magical items you might acquire there."

(+Obfuscatory -Forthright)

Institute lecturers are learned in many areas of obscure knowledge, and disquietingly well-informed on one or two subjects they've made the object of intensive study. More confident and successful than their apprentices and assistants, they expect greater rewards for the sharing of their expertise. Items of magical import, or simple purses stuffed with coin, well satisfy them. Thriftier PCs may bribe them with compromising information on their colleagues. If you are wily enough, you might trick a lecturer into revealing facts for free, by playing to his considerable ego. Lecturers are also well informed on the ins and outs of Scholasticarum politics, but will reveal only the scuttlebutt that serves their personal agendas. If you've dealt extensively with lecturer contacts, you know that they're more than capable of giving you false information if they think it will spur you to annoy or sabotage one of their adversaries.

Maugifier

"Allow me to minutely examine your credentials."

(+Forthright -Glib)

See above for a description of the Maugifier's organization. The typical Maugifier sees himself as more humble, yet wiser and possessed of greater common sense, than the magicians he serves. All day he is treated rudely, both by superiors and by drunken youths who will someday become his superiors, too. Although he would recoil, appalled, from a bribe, he is quite susceptible to offers of sympathy. These are better attempted if you present yourself as an honest, hardworking sort, and not a magician, sage, or fop. The Maugifier will probably be too discreet to mention names, but can, with rolling eyes, tell you many amusing anecdotes of the corruption, drunkenness, and foolhardiness of his charges. You may need to consult other gossips to fill in the details, but you can generally expect that the basic facts will be well and accurately portrayed.



Student

"Our need for libations escalates hourly."

(+Glib -Eloquent)

The student is a wealthy youth who aspires to the power and immortality of the archmage, and feels that he will one day work diligently towards this goal. For the moment, however, there is still ale to drink, and members of the opposite sex to take to bed. Occasionally it also becomes necessary to prove themselves against fellow students in the swordsman's art: generally rapier duels are undertaken in the wee hours of the night, after much alcoholic fortification.

A student might be cajoled into helping you in all sorts of ways, provided that the task seems rich in opportunity for enjoyable misbehavior. If sufficiently lubricated, a student might even transcend the usual rules concerning contacts, and actually risk his life on your behalf. The stupider and more romantic the assignment, the more likely a student is to accept it.

Pay heed, however, to the countervailing hazard of this stratagem: if you get a student killed while undertaking a ludicrous mission on your behalf, his

rich and influential family will likely make it their business to exact vindictive revenge on you. If they are wealthy enough to send a son or daughter to the Scholasticarium, they can also hire assassins, trackers, and even accomplished magicians to hunt you down.

Sweeper

"Not all the trash here is of the sort that can be swept into a bin, if you appreciate my choice application of sardonic irony."

(+Eloquent -Obfuscatory)

The sweeper (or any servant of similar menial station) quietly witnesses the arguments, trysts, and drunken excesses of students and teachers alike, but is so beneath their notice that they are unlikely to even realize their misbehavior was observed. Like the Maugifier, the sweeper thinks himself morally superior to the rich and haughty louts who track trash in front of him all day long, but is even more powerless to do anything about it. He'll likely be well-prepared to tell tales of the Scholasticarium's underbelly, even though his information may not be as good as the Maugifier's.

Vendor

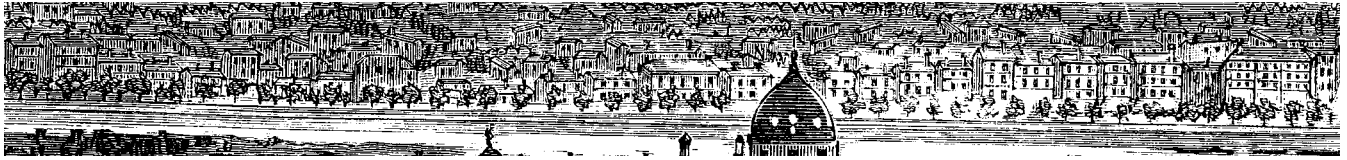
"I know him well; he is a regular purchaser of my succulent clams."

(+Charming -Forthright)

Several dozen stall operators do brisk business selling food and libations to Scholasticarium students and fellows. None of them enjoys a monopoly on any one kind of refreshment — there are nearly fifteen clam stalls, for example — and the vendors have learned that what really attracts a crowd is a good line of patter, seasoned with generous dollops of local gossip. Vendors listen sympathetically to complainers, then lavishly repeat their anecdotes to the next customers who belly up to the bun counter. Though the most liberal of contacts, as far as gossip is concerned, vendors are also the least reliable. They hear both sides of every story, and choose the juiciest. Not wanting to be outdone by rival vendors, they buff and embellish tales with the same loving care they devote to their bastes and marinades. Accordingly, a vendor is your best contact for the spreading of rumors amid the Scholasticarium. To take wing and fly, your hearsay must be colorful but at least vaguely plausible.



Some scholars are more assiduous in their studies of the opposite sex than those subjects on which they face examination.



Personages

Brefilimi, Master of Masters

"It is all a matter of ... we must continue to metrify the discussion, to lift it to a ... it is all a matter of stanching the overflow ... it is as we took a series of very small bookmarks, leather ones let us propose, and ... please refresh my memory as to the topic under discussion."

When you saw the muddle-mouthed Brefilimi stand at the podium to address fellow scholars, he had clad himself in a serious-looking robe of gray moleskin, over high fringed boots of sober black wer-hide. His face was powdered copiously and his lips subtly rouged. He spoke haltingly, as if the struggle to compose extemporaneous sentences was about to overcome him and send him falling to the floor in a dead faint.

If you are not that attentive to the politics of the Scholasticarium, you know Brefilimi only as its new leader; perhaps you've also heard various jokes suggesting that he isn't up to the task.

More closely informed PCs understand that Brefilimi won his post after a bitter battle between the institution's embittered old guard and a more worldly, earnings-minded clique led by the past master, Curnorninet. The old guard accused Curnorninet of lowering standards in order to increase the inflow of tuition monies. When he had served out his maximum term, they fought viciously to install Brefilimi, whose uncle was once Master. Only through late-night manipulation of the Scholasticarium's charter did the old guard prevail, displacing Curnorninet's anointed successor, Carthos of Sfere. His disgruntled partisans carry on a whisper campaign meant to undermine Brefilimi, who is said to have lost what few wits he started out with while interacting with various obscure extra-planar entities.

Although it is certainly true that Brefilimi seems nowhere as articulate as his wily predecessor, his fuddled manner earns him a certain degree of sympathy; it even makes some think of him as having the common touch. His family connections have earned him a wide circle of friends and allies within the Scholasticarium. For these two reasons, it is doubtful that he will topple any time soon.

Only after Brefilimi swore the oath of office did his ingenious rival, Carthos, point out that the Scholasticarium charter would force him to abandon

his beloved studies into the psychology and habits of extra-planar beings. An obscure clause forbids the Master to interact on an ongoing basis with any creatures capable of possessing his soul or taking over his body⁵. Brefilimi wanted to resign, in order to keep up his research, but his uncle's old cronies pressured him into staying on, knowing that their foe, Carthos, would likely triumph in a renewed selection process. Petulantly, Brefilimi stalks the halls of the Scholasticarium, looking for ways to avenge himself against Carthos.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 10, (Charming) 6, Rebuff (Obtuse) 12, Attack (Caution) 6, Defense (Misdirection) 8, Health 6, Magic (Studious) 13, Appraisal 6, Athletics 4, Etiquette 4, Gambling 4, Pedantry 17, Perception 6, Riding 2, Scuttlebutt 4, Wealth 16, Wherewithal 6.
Resistances: Pettifoggery ½.

Carthos of Sfere, Shorecomber-In-Chief

"Although I do not believe you dug this object from the sands of the bay, which places it beyond the official purview of my office, I shall nonetheless deign to examine it."

Carthos of Sfere, a man equipped with a large, square-shaped head affixed to broad shoulders with a thick, generally immobile neck, swathes himself in earthy browns and greens. His dress often approximates that of the common man, consisting of a shapeless, open-collared tunic, brown leggings, and rugged-soled boots. However, it should be noted that his clothing is always in splendid repair and never smells of sweat or other undesirable substances. Only his carefully trimmed mop of dark hair and the slight green tincture he applies to his eyelids and the highlights of his cheekbones betray his aristocratic upbringing.

As a scholar, Carthos is best-known for his theory of Tripartite Inherency. It holds that the traits of all creatures are limited by a sum total of intelligence, size, and ferocity. Therefore, a deodand, which is bigger and more ferocious than a human, cannot also be smarter than a man. A hoon can be larger and more rapacious than a deodand, but not smarter. And so on.

Politically, Carthos has become head of the Scholasticarium's so-called reform faction⁶. He served as second-in-command during Curnorninet's

5 This rule was instituted after the tenure of Amersi World-Strider, whose years in office would be fondly remembered, were it not for the sudden and regrettable spate of cannibalism that forced his early retirement.

6 According to their rivals in the old guard, the chief problem the reformers seek to redress is the relative emptiness of their own purses.



controversial tenure as Master. Though groomed to succeed him, last-minute finagling by the old guard led to his being passed over in favor of the tongue-tied Brefilimi (above.) Seasoning his defeat with a generous quantity of insult, the old guard scholars who seized control of the Board of Electors gave Carthos a new post, that of Shorecomber-In-Chief. You can vividly imagine them cackling with delight at the thought that Carthos would have to continually entertain a stream of grubby, grasping shorecombers⁷, each carrying muddy, rotten curios, their cloaks reeking of urt urine. Just as vividly, you can picture their vexation now that Carthos has transformed the post into one of power and prestige. Soon after his arrival in office, he purchased for the Scholasticarum a spectacular example of a Cologarithmic Dehydrator. Several days afterwards, he again stunned the world of scholarship by finding, disguised inside a counterfeit ceramic idol, an Antifoaming Paramagnet. His finds since then have been equally impressive. Many of the scholars who once cursed his name now flatter and scrape before him, in hopes of winning access to his newest finds before he turns them over to enemy researchers.

You do not have to be an expert in human nature to realize that Carthos still harbors designs on the Master's chair, and hopes to siphon allies from Brefilimi by giving them early access to his acquisitions.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 16, Rebuff (Obtuse Wary Penetrating Lawyerly Contrary Pure-Hearted) 17, Attack (Caution) 6, Defense (Parry) 6, Health 7, Magic (Forceful) 13, Appraisal 16, Athletics 6, Concealment 5, Etiquette 6, Gambling 2, Pedantry 18, Perception 5, Scuttlebutt 6, Wealth 13, Wherewithal 6.

Resistances: Indolence 6, Rakishness ½.

Dafis, Nervous Lecturer

"My allegiance remains undeclared."

The magician Dafis, who discourses expertly in his chosen fields of energy flux and matrix studies, appears as balding, meek-looking fellow, whose overly-tight daffodil-colored doublet is decorated with aguilletes⁸ of shimmering crystal.

You've heard that Dafis is newly returned to the Scholasticarum after a dozen-year imprisonment in a

cursed lamp. So far as you know, he has kept out of institution politics and avoided allying himself with either the old guard or the reformers. He seems nervous and on edge; once you nearly bumped into him amid the crowded stalls in front of the main Scholasticarum building, and he leapt up into the air like a startled cat.

Persuade (Forthright) 4, Rebuff (Wary) 15, Attack (Ferocity) 3, Defense (Dodge) 6, Health 4, Magic (Insightful) 15, Appraisal 3, Athletics 3, Etiquette 3, Gambling 3, Pedantry 17, Perception 4, Scuttlebutt 2, Stewardship 4, Wealth 13, Wherewithal 3.

Resistances: none

Durgal Corwaine, Energetic Lecturer

"My misery continues unabated, and a good thing it is for you all, too."

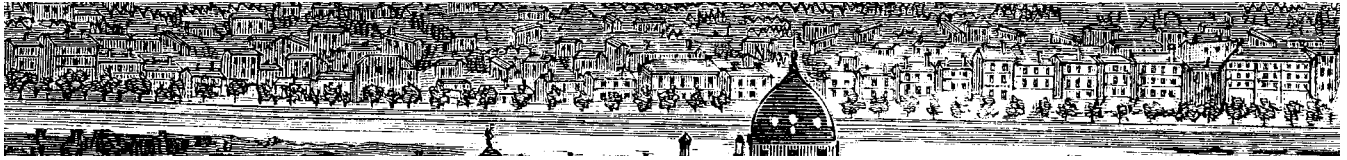
Rangy, restless, with ever-flaring nostrils and wild tendrils of unkempt hair swirling out from his otherwise shiny pate, the lecturer Durgal Corwaine is always on the move. When you last saw him bustling through the winding streets of the Scholasticarum District, he wore long-toed boots, silver caps on his knees, and a curious tunic with long, dark sleeves that covered the palms of the hands.

Durgal teaches comparative philosophy, personal ethical development and applied altruism. As the Scholasticarum's students grow more clot-headed, amoral, and covetous with every passing year, Durgal fully expects the vast majority of his pupils to earn failing grades in his idealistic courses. In fact, he depends on it — and, as he may have earnestly explained to you, breathing garlicky fumes in your direction, so does the world itself. Durgal has become convinced that the earth's continued survival depends on the unabated dashing of his every expectation. The more disappointed he is in the results of his lecturing activity, the further off the world's end remains. Perhaps you have attempted to dissuade him from this theory, pointing out that, since he anticipates that most of his students will fail, his expectations are in fact being met. If so, he greeted you with the most momentary of baffled stares, and then launched back into his theory again, repeating it as if you did not understand his meaning the first time around.

In the ongoing struggle between the old guard and reformers, Durgal sides with whichever party tends to

⁷ The occupation of shorecomber is detailed in the section on Canal Town and the Mud Flats, starting on p28.

⁸ Aguilletes: lace tips, usually metal, but in this case made of crystal.



be losing at the moment. Consequently, he now speaks out, with all of his authority as an ethicist, against the machinations that elected Brefilimi. If you know him well, you may suspect that, were Carthos to seize the Master's seat, that Durgal Corwaine would abruptly switch sides, arguing that Brefilimi's cause was always the just one.

Persuade (Eloquent) 16, Rebuff (Penetrating) 13, Attack (Speed) 6, Defense (Intuition) 8, Health 6, Magic (Daring) 10, Appraisal 4, Etiquette 2, Gambling 2, Pedantry 13, Perception 4, Stewardship 3, Wealth 13, Wherewithal 8.
Resistances: Avarice ½, Rakishness 3.

Grashpotel, Arch-Mage and Symposium Fellow

"The dialectical ramifications of your proposal are immense. I shall mull it, over leeks and fish sauce."

The second most accomplished magician currently resident at the Scholasticarium is the estimable Grashpotel, more formally known as Iunutharis Grashpotel. He is Demi-Inferator of the Syncretic Symposium and styles himself a sage, as well as a magician. Unlike many of his Symposium colleagues, he delights in lecturing, though of course not in any activity involving actual contact with students. His famously long and discursive lectures are meant to center on the topic of dream walking and its practical applications in advanced dialectics. He is also renowned as an authority on hybrids, half men, and beasts of the wastes. In all cases, his discussions on these creatures are undertaken with an eye toward their culinary preparation.

A few months back, anyone who pays any attention to Scholasticarium affairs could not help but hear that Grashpotel had mastered the spell of chug summoning, and shortly thereafter assumed control over his first sandestin. This, technically at least, catapulted him to the rank of arch-mage, a fact he has not since allowed any of his rivals and colleagues to forget. In a decision of some controversy, he managed to have his sandestin, the supremely bothersome Masdrio, installed as a full member of the Institute. You understand that Masdrio's presence at Institute functions has become quite disruptive; his interruptions on bogus points of order have, in short order, become legendary. It is also assumed that

Masdrio reports to his master all condemnations of the Symposium made during Institute proceedings.

Grashpotel's relationship with his putative superior, Symposium Inferator Perrin (below), is, from all accounts, one of friendly rivalry, or perhaps hostile comradeship. Both style themselves as supreme connoisseurs of the wine-maker's art; each is prouder of his authority in this area than in his level of sorcerous attainment. Until he became a full arch-mage, Grashpotel seemed content to allow his old friend to play Inferator to his Demi-Inferator. Now he has begun to grumble that his new status should be reflected in a reversal of their official positions. Your understanding of the matter is that Perrin, himself an arch-mage of long standing, turns a remarkable shade of violet whenever this suggestion is made.

As far as the conflict between old and new guards is concerned, Grashpotel's preference bends with the wind. His personal privileges, and, to a lesser extent, those of the Symposium, matter far more to him than the academic standards applied to mere students. Of late, Grashpotel has taken to wearing a wide-collared cape of embroidered lace, a doublet with pearl thong-rings, and open-heeled boots encrusted with bits of deodand bone.

Persuade (Eloquent) 10, Rebuff (Obtuse) 15, Attack (Cunning) 3, Defense (Vexation) 5, Health 10, Magic (Curious) 20, Appraisal 4, Etiquette 4, Gambling 4, Imposture 4, Pedantry 13, Perception 4, Scuttlebutt 8, Seduction 4, Stewardship 8, Wealth 14, Wherewithal 8.

Resistances: none





Masdrio

"I have gone back in time to witness your childhood, where I saw your mother withheld her full affection from you. Perhaps, when you inveigh against the Symposium, you really mean to lash back at her."

It is unusual for an arch-mage's sandestin to enjoy a public reputation of its own, but Masdrio is an unusual sandestin. Most often manifesting himself as a tangerine-skinned, finely furred jumping flectrum (less frequently, as a fist-sized collection of energy motes), Masdrio exhibits an unusual curiosity into the human psyche. He continually asks probing questions of any person he may come into contact with, delving into the hidden emotional motivations he always finds lying behind even the most casual decision. Nothing seems to please him more than dredging up an unpleasant memory or provoking his interlocutor to rage or tears. Although his Institute colleagues avoid him as they would an enplagued and frothing ingatic, they cannot keep him out of their meetings, which he disrupts with dedication and vigor. It is the rare proposal which Masdrio does not greet with a manipulative analysis of the speaker's personality. You haven't heard of any provable cases in which Masdrio used his innate powers against an Institute colleague, but the magicians there are nonetheless acutely afraid of him. At The Spined Tome (a bar in the District, see below), you have overheard many a grumbling about Masdrio from Institute fellows, who want him removed from their organization forthwith. However, none of them has yet found the bravery required to volunteer as sponsor of the resolution.

Perrin, Arch-Mage

"I have a nose for more than wine, and, hereby, I nose you out!"

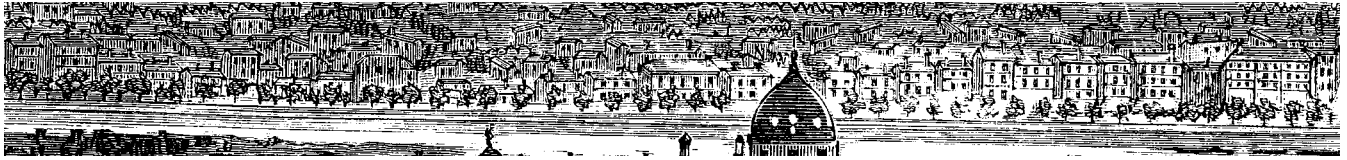
Kemawick Perrin, to use his full name, is an Arch-Mage who serves as Inferator of the Syncretic Symposium for the Simulation of Reality. He also holds prestigious but entirely ceremonial title of Domestic of the Walls of Kaiin, acts as treasurer for the Scholasticarium's wine appreciation evenings, and attends to various business enterprises and trusteeships in the city and beyond.

As these various involvements suggest, Perrin maintains a greater interest in worldly affairs than does the average arch-mage. It is true that he delegates much of the day-to-day administration of his affairs to



his crystalline automaton, the overly solicitous Kosfillih. Still, he is at least as interested in fine wines and wringing full value from carefully-placed investments as in trips to the edge of reality, or the harvesting of IOUN stones. He loudly claims that this is why he is continually snubbed by the conclave of Ildefonse, which has yet to extend him an invitation to join, even though he has been an arch-mage for many years now. Perrin has become well-known for his colorful denunciations of Ildefonse and his cronies. If you are of a cynical bent, you might have concluded that they have blackballed him for his constant fulminations against them, rather than for his dabbings in business and politics.

Like most experienced arch-mages, Perrin is



capable of altering his appearance. His standard form is that of a tall, white-bearded man with piercing green-blue eyes. While in the Scholasticarium District, he dons the stereotypical embroidered robes supposedly favored by magicians. Perhaps this choice betrays a fundamental insecurity regarding his station. On ceremonial occasions, he even affects a tall, conical hat, at the top of which perches a glowing star. If you have ever attended an assembly or convocation of the Scholasticarium, you have heard the concealed snickers that erupt among students and lecturers alike whenever they see him wearing this hat.

Perrin is most often observed in the company of Grashpotel. The two of them treat each other with mutual scorn but stick together as if they are the best of friends.

Rumor has it that an ex-lover of Perrin's, Hetta the Austere (p31) now sells sugared water to shorecombers on the mud flats. Given their vastly different present stations in life, it is hard to imagine the two of them together.

Perrin owns a partial share in a temperance hotel in Taun Tassel. He recommends its amenities only to those he holds in low esteem.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 13, Rebuff (Obtuse) 17, Attack (Ferocity) 3, Defense (Misdirection) 5, Health 6, Magic (Studious) 23, Appraisal 6, Athletics 3, Etiquette 6, Gambling 6, Imposture 4, Pedantry 16, Perception 4, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 3, Wealth 15, Wherewithal 5.

Resistances: none

Pic, Female Lecturer

"You impinge on the essential mystery of my persona."

Despite their proclamations of respect for the female gender, the magicians and lecturers of the Symposium and Institute rarely welcome actual women into their ranks. After many years of protest by female students and sympathetic donors, the Institute finally gave in and appointed Pic as their first woman member. Pic is a slim, sultry woman with black, curly hair and dark, rainy-day eyes. She was chosen by the men of the Institute over several candidates favored by the protest committee, and immediately became the subject of ribald speculation. It is certainly true that nearly every male lecturer has at one time or another attempted to make her the object of his rakish wiles. Yet, although

several Scholasticarium dandies claim to have made her intimate acquaintance, none of their tales truly rings with believability. If you are of the male persuasion and have tried to make your romantic interest known to her, no matter how subtly, she reciprocated with nothing more than a few aloof words and an ambiguous fluttering of her eyelashes. When she does not realize she is being observed, she may get a dreamy look in her eyes that suggests faraway longing. Sometimes the scents of various exotic smokes seem to linger on her elaborate, tight-fitting gowns.

Pic lectures on herbalism and applied arcanobotany. Her lectures are well-attended by swooning male students, who vigorously shoulder one another aside for access to coveted front-row seats.

Persuade (Charming) 16, Rebuff (Wary) 14, Attack (Ferocity) 10, Defense (Misdirection) 12, Health 7, Magic (Insightful) 14, Appraisal 4, Athletics 4, Etiquette 4, Imposture 6, Pedantry 17, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 2, Seduction 6, Stealth 3, Wealth 9, Wherewithal 6.

Resistances: Rakishness ½.

Quirethomble, Twk-Man Librarian

"Do you take me for some kind of common forest sprite?"

The splenetic twk-man Quirethomble heads the Institute Library, as did his father and grandfather before him. Though tiny, he is greatly feared by students, apprentices and lower-ranked lecturers, as one quickly-barked command from him can rescind their library privileges indefinitely. Resplendent in a byrnie of interlinked golden shells, he flies from stack to stack on a miniature automaton, which is shaped like a pegasus and carved from a large sapphire. It was a gift from Perrin, and Quirethomble guards it zealously. Anyone who looks at it too long may be accused of planning to steal it.

Quick to take offense and slow to forgive, Quirethomble compulsively parses statements made to him in search of hidden insults. Though ferociously protective of his authority, he is no fool, and comports himself as a model of calm and politeness when aiding higher-ranking Institute members, or the fellows of the Symposium. You have heard that he covets an honorary Symposium membership, and might grant special privileges to those he believes capable of



engineering a tribute of this magnitude.

For more on the workings of the library, see p122.

Persuade (Intimidating) ~, Rebuff (Contrary) 1.5~, Attack (Speed) 0.5~, (Finesse) 0.5~, Defense (Dodge) ~, Health 3, Magic (Forceful) 8, Athletics ~, Etiquette 6, Gambling 6, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 6, Stewardship 12, Wherewithal 6.

Resistances: none; but is tempted to Rakishness only by twk-women

Small Size: Dodge value already reflects the additional difficulty of hitting a target as tiny as a twk-man.

Automaton mount: When mounted on his sapphire pegasus, he gains a secondary Attack style, (Speed) 0.5~, and adds 2~ to Defense (Dodge.)

Saper, Head of the Student Sodality

"Note, however, that the funds for your redoubtable institution originate in the purses of our families."

The brooding, olive-complected Saper is a short, stocky young man with deep-set eyes and a strangely pleasing assortment of acne scars, which make him seem rugged and weathered beyond his years. He most commonly disports himself in an ivory tunic with long, loose sleeves, its neckline left to plungingly reveal his well-developed pectoral muscles. He favors simple black velvet breeches for everyday wear, but changes into damask pumpkin pants for fetes and meetings.

Saper hails from Troon and is a junior member of that small city's ruling family. He claims that his decision to study magic was controversial back home, but you once heard a Troonite say that Saper is being groomed for the city's post of Grand Querist. Presumably a smattering of magical knowledge will aid him in this important position. In the meantime, he practises his family's predilection for politics by making miserable the Master of Masters, Symposium Inferator, and Institute Petitioner. Although his extreme demands on behalf of the students were grudgingly adopted by the reformers and are now under assault by the old guard, Saper cannot properly be said to be an ally of either side. Instead, he squeezes all Scholasticarium authorities with equal vigor, leaving them hoping fervently for urgent news from Troon which will command his surprise return there.

Persuade (Charming) 14, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 15, Attack (Finesse) 8, Defense (Parry) 10, Health 8, Magic (Devious) 7, Appraisal 3, Athletics 6, Etiquette 6, Gambling 4, Pedantry 4, Perception 4, Riding 6, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 6, Stewardship 4, Wealth 15, Wherewithal 6.

Resistances: Indolence 3

Turvin, Redactor

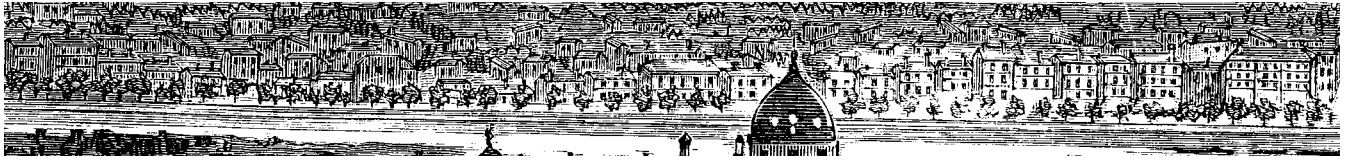
"By placing me in this unfortunate position, you show a distinct lack of kindred feeling."

Turvin is a silver-haired, once virile man transformed by years of dissipation into a rotund figure with a flushed face and perpetually bloodshot eyes. He serves as Redactor of the Scholasticarium, a post which puts him in charge of the Upstanding Maugifiers, who with ready danny-sticks defend the district's security. The position of Redactor is an undesirable one, routinely pitting its occupant against errant but wealthy students, as well as powerful, misbehaving magicians. It is almost always awarded as punishment. Turvin received it from the former Master, whose wife he was caught clutching in an unseemly manner, under a staircase⁹. It is no secret that Turvin wants to be relieved of his duties, and has repeatedly petitioned the new Master, Brefilimi, to that effect. However, Brefilimi has yet to signal his intentions in the matter¹⁰.

Once a notorious rake and adventurer, Turvin has grown apathetic and unmotivated in his later years. He swaddles himself in an assortment of shapeless and unfashionable robes and caftans, and quickly drinks himself into a tottering stupor at official functions, such as the Symposium's wine evenings. You have heard that he grows increasingly loose-lipped when inebriated. Since, as chief disciplinarian, he husbands many of the institution's most embarrassing secrets, it would seem at first glance that Turvin's state offers a superb opportunity for the gathering of useful information. However, his well-muscled son, Garth, who is himself an up-and-coming Maugifier (see below), has learned to stand guard at his father's side during public events. You would have to find a way past this dauntless wielder of the danny-stick before accessing the treasure trove of scuttlebutt that an intoxicated Turvin might stand ready to reveal. Everything you've heard suggests that Turvin is intimidated by his supposed second-in-command, the

⁹ Although the woman's husband objected to Turvin's advances, it has never been alleged that the lady herself was anything other than their voluntary recipient.

¹⁰ Brefilimi may be waiting until someone offends him and thereby proves himself deserving of the post.



spiteful Brangoa (see below).

Persuade (Charming) 10, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 12, Attack (Cunning) 8, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 10, Health 3, Magic (Daring) 13, Appraisal 6, Athletics 4, Concealment 5, Etiquette 2, Gambling 4, Imposture 6, Living Rough 6, Pedantry 10, Perception 5, Quick Fingers 4, Riding 5, Scuttlebutt 17, Seamanship 2, Seduction 7, Stealth 4, Stewardship 3, Tracking 5, Wherewithal 7.

Resistances: Arrogance $\frac{1}{2}$.

Brangoa, Sinister Maugifier

"Perhaps I should strike you again, several times."

There is always a distance between the Redactor and the Maugifiers under him. Redactors are magician-scholars, drawn temporarily from the ranks of the Scholasticarium. They wriggle free of the post as quickly as possible, to be replaced by another, equally reluctant candidate. Upstanding Maugifiers, on the other hand, are non-magicians, many of whom see the organization as their life's work. They're usually drawn from the lower ranks of society, and often suffer from the special arrogance of the servile: they see themselves as superior both to their peers, and to those they serve. Without the Maugifiers, the Maugifiers reckon, the Scholasticarium would collapse in a matter of days.

No one more forcefully exemplifies the pride of the Maugifiers than their Sergeant-In-Chief, the oily and demanding Brangoa. Equipped with serpentine limbs and an equally long, reptilian face, Brangoa slithers around the district tonguing the air for the tell-tale scent of wrongdoing. You've seen him interrogating suspected offenders, the delight he took in his petty power was almost palpable. The effect was intensified by his outfit, which is at the same time menacing and absurd. He wore a pointed steel helmet, embossed with scenes of bloody combat from a famous battle of the 17th Aeon. Steel epaulettes, decorated with silken tassels, accentuated his shoulders. Even more memorable was his enormous pewter codpiece, cast in the shape of a boar's head, with upcurved tusks and finely rendered features.

If you've ever been caught doing something improper in the district, it was the gleefully unforgiving Brangoa you were first taken to. Perhaps you were later excused by an embarrassed and

unhappy Turvin, but not before suffering a lengthy interrogation, replete with insults and insinuations, from Brangoa. It is said that Brangoa keeps a private dossier on the mischief he uncovers, and uses it to get his way both with his superiors, and with the transgressors. This journal of his might contain much information of use to an adventurer or arch-mage, but is surely hidden with extreme care.

Persuade (Intimidating) 10, Rebuff (Penetrating) 15, Attack (Ferocity) 9, Defense (Vexation) 9, Health 7, Magic (Forceful) 3, Athletics 9, Concealment 6, Etiquette 3, Gambling 4, Imposture 4, Pedantry 3, Perception 6, Riding 3, Scuttlebutt 10, Seduction 4, Stealth 6, Stewardship 6, Tracking 6, Wherewithal 6. Resistances: none

Branlagan, Swaggering Maugifier

"But I am the one holding the nasty stick."

Branlagan is Brangoa's grinning, dim-witted thug of a son. His armor is a less impressive copy of his father's: for example, he wears a large cod piece, but it is undecorated. Usually he can be found swaggering around beside his father, but sometimes he goes off in search of trouble on his own. He has been disciplined several times for lashing offenders immediately, before considering more moderate measures. Once he launched a rash attack against Grashpotel's sandestin, Masdrio¹¹, and for his troubles was temporarily transformed into a half-ton garden slug. Only after prolonged negotiations with the sandestin was Branlagan returned to his original form, and to duty. You have heard nothing that indicates that Branlagan, who is thick of brow and small of eye, learned any permanent lesson from his sojourn as an invertebrate.

Persuade (Intimidating) 6, Rebuff (Obtuse) 8, Attack (Ferocity) 8, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 4, Health 7, Athletics 6, Concealment 3, Gambling 4, Perception 3, Scuttlebutt 2, Seduction 2, Stealth 3, Tracking 4, Wherewithal 9. Resistances: Pettifoggery $\frac{1}{2}$.

Garth, Stalwart Maugifier

"I do not think you ought to be doing that, sir."

Branlagan is not the only Upstanding Maugifier to occupy his position at the behest of an influential

11 In Branlagan's defense, Masdrio had, at the time, adopted the form of a tundra ghoul, and seemed to menace a female neophyte. But still, he should have remembered that, in the Scholasticarium District, a being's apparent and actual natures may be widely divergent.



father. Square-jawed, handsome, and open-faced, the Maugifier Garth is son to the current Redactor, Turvin. Garth originally began in his father's footsteps, as an apprentice magician, or so the story goes. Alas, cursed by an excessively literal and practical outlook, he showed no aptitude for arcane studies. He happily accepted a position as Maugifier, and looks out for his father's interests in an organization intent on ignoring or flouting them. Some people say Garth is dull-witted; others counter that he's merely naïve and idealistic. If you ever decide to try to topple Brandgoa, Garth might be your most useful ally. Everyone knows of the mutual loathing between the two men; you've even heard that they came to blows once¹².

You realize, assuming you have given the matter any thought, that Garth's position in the Maugifiers will be extremely tenuous if his father ever succeeds in withdrawing from the Redactorship.

Persuade (Charming) 8, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 6, Attack (Finesse) 10, Defense (Intuition) 10, Health 8, Magic (Daring) 2, Athletics 8, Perception 4, Riding 4, Scuttlebutt 2, Stealth 4, Stewardship 4, Tracking 4, Wherewithal 6.

Resistances: Arrogance 6, Avarice 6, Indolence 6, Pettifoggery 4, Rakishness 2.

Thrupp, Maugifier (and Rumored Ex-Necrophage)

"My condition is glandular."

Gaunt, long-fingered, and slightly stooped, the Maugifier known as Thrupp seems too spindly to project the sense of menace required of any enforcement official. Nonetheless, something about Thrupp's manner — perhaps his darting movements, or his hungry eyes — makes the bravest of men shrink from him. If you've heard the whispers that follow him wherever he goes, you understand the source of this disquiet. As rumor has it, Thrupp is a reformed necrophage from the Land of the Falling Wall.

Allegedly, he attacked Grashpotel and Perrin while they were investigating its ruins, failing to recognize the telltale signs of their arch-mage status. They easily brought him to heel, but he, quickly extemporizing, managed to convince them to spare his miserable life in exchange for a pledge of lifelong service. They required him to forswear his corpse-eating ways and accompany them to Kaiin, where they installed him as

the newest member of the Upstanding Maugifiers.

If you've ever discussed the tale with Thrupp, you heard him vigorously deny it, all the while shaking his skull-like head and wagging his tongue out over his lips. He claims to have been born in the Threek, and to know nothing of life outside Kaiin. He attributes his physical peculiarities to a hereditary glandular condition. His ability to climb up walls using only the surfaces of his bare feet and hands is, he claims, merely the result of sustained practice.

If you walk the streets of the District late at night and see movement out of the corner of your eye — especially if the movement is up above you, on a roof or near a cornice, it is probably Thrupp, quietly surveying events below.

Thrupp apparently flinches from the bullying Brangoa, but faithfully follow Turvin's orders. You have no idea whether he has any interest in, or knowledge of, Scholasticarium politics. If anyone has managed to win his trust and cozen from him secrets of the necrophages, you have yet to hear of it.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 12, Rebuff (Wary) 10, Attack (Cunning) 12, Defense (Misdirection) 8, Health 5, Magic (Devious) 2, Appraisal 4, Athletics 7, Concealment 5, Living Rough 6, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 5, Stealth 8, Tracking 6, Wherewithal 3. Resistances: Pettifoggery 4, Rakishness 6.

Volune Stinobric, Peripatetic Lecturer

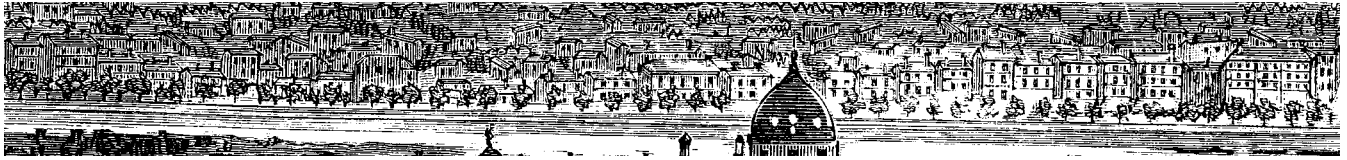
"Take a seat, and I will enumerate my accomplishments."

Volune Stinobric urges you to refer to him simply as Volune. A short, energetic man with close-cropped hair and a prominent nose, he favors exquisitely embroidered bandoliers, often wearing more than one of them at once. As a gesture of peace, he often wears these sword-hangers without the weapon they were meant to support. He is also partial towards lacy boot-hose.

As he is fond of informing all who venture within earshot, Volune has had a long career as a wanderer, having performed at one time or another virtually every sort of employment suitable for an honest man. His lengthy resume includes stints as a sailor, drover, pack man, Green legionnaire, beast trainer, night soil collector and Priest Lord of Prompen¹³. This wide breadth of experience has served Volune well,

¹² No two gossips agree on the nature of the quarrel that precipitated this alleged incident.

¹³ Prompen: a small city far to the south of Almerly



providing him with an opinion on virtually every matter known to mankind. He is never shy about sharing the bounty of his firm convictions, a trait which led to his present position as the Scholasticarum's chief Eroticist. While attending one of Perrin's lectures in viticulture, he dared to state that Grashpotel's nose for wine was superior to that of the estimable lecturer. Perrin's response has been absorbed verbatim into the oral lore of the Scholasticarum: "If Grashpotel can tell the difference between a Scaum Valley Leitvine and an Almerly Rubydew, then you're a lecturer in Erotic Studies!" Grashpotel easily passed the taste-test, and Volune was post-haste installed as a lecturer in erotic studies.

Your understanding is that Volune's grasp of the history of erotic art was limited at first, but that he compensated for this with salutary anecdotes from his own travels. Since then, he's applied himself studiously to filling in the gaps in his erotic knowledge. His lectures are among the best-attended at the Scholasticarum, which can be attributed both to the inherent interest of the subject matter, and to his own eagerness to entertain.

Wagging tongues name the eerie slave merchant Aevolai (p63) as one of Volune's current stable of lovers.

Persuade (Charming) 14, Rebuff (Penetrating) 6, Attack (Finesse) 12, Defense (Parry) 14, Health 5, Magic (Curious) 4, Appraisal 4, Athletics 6, Concealment 4, Etiquette 2, Gambling 6, Imposture 4, Living Rough 4, Pedantry 8, Perception 4, Quick Fingers 4, Riding 4, Scuttlebutt 5, Seamanship 4, Seduction 8, Stealth 5, Stewardship 6, Tracking 4, Wherewithal 5.

Resistances: none

Xerceju the Variable, Prankish Society Head

"It is an old jape, I will stipulate, but an effective one."

The preternaturally tanned magician Xerceju the Variable heads the Kaiin Philosophical and Thaumaturgical Society (see above). His head is large and round, his face always open to reveal a smile full of bright and perfect, yet subtly overbearing, teeth. Each of his thick, stubby fingers bears two or three rings, most of them of gold or platinum, all bearing large gems or arcane sigils. A compulsive hand shaker, he is forever thrusting them out towards whoever he

happens to be speaking to. If you have engaged him in conversation, he tried to shake your hand at least a half-dozen times in the space of a single short talk.

Underlying this aggressive friendliness is a mean streak as wide as the Scaum. He has taken an organization founded to bridge the gap between mages and ordinary men, and uses it instead to terrorize the helpless. He has surrounded himself with a covey of similarly irresponsible would-be magicians. He is the only truly powerful wonderworker now associated with the Society. Because he chooses his victims from the ranks of the downtrodden and helpless, none of his Scholasticarum colleagues have aroused themselves to challenge him. Many have speculated on the roots of his vexing behavior, but you've heard no compelling theories.

Xerceju lectures in the lives of the great arch-mages; his recent monograph on the life of Phandaal won grudging admiration even from his harshest critics.

Persuade (Intimidating) 12, Rebuff (Contrary) 8, Attack (Cunning) 8, Defense (Vexation) 8, Health 6, Magic (Devious) 15, Appraisal 5, Athletics 4, Concealment 3, Etiquette 7, Gambling 7, Imposture 7, Pedantry 15, Perception 5, Quick Fingers 4, Scuttlebutt 4, Seduction 7, Stealth 4, Stewardship 6, Wealth 17, Wherewithal 5.

Resistances: none

Yanjo, Insanely Hostile Scholar

The quivering crackpot Bevonista Soniono Frece Yanjo was elected Over-Petitioner of the Institute by colleagues certain that he would cause the greatest possible vexation to the arrogant members of their rival organization, the Syncretic Symposium. Wire-thin and short of stature, Yanjo sports a rubbery face which spends most of its time contorted into various expressions of extreme rage, frustration, and outright lunacy. He most often charges across the District's cobblestones in a loose-cuffed overcoat, patterned like a checkerboard. A cylindrical felt hat, decorated with three ribbons and three buckles, frequently falls off his undersized pate as he dashes from one argument to another. Though it is likely that these accidents are due to his own carelessness and the speed of his marching, he seems to firmly believe that either Perrin or Grashpotel have assigned a sandestin to the sole



duty of knocking his hat off. Like anyone who suffers delusions of persecution, Yanjo places himself squarely at the center of the universe: if anything bad happens to him, it can only be due to the machinations of others.

This is not to say that no one ever plays a prank on Yanjo. But he carries on his protestations and campaigns of vengeance with such undying vehemence that most sensible sorts strain themselves to avoid ever annoying him, or even catching his attention. Although his frequently-filed formal charges never amount to anything, even the most straightforward confrontation with Yanjo inevitably costs its victim enormous quantities of time and mental energy. Yanjo does not view his efforts as futile; he appears to genuinely believe that he is perpetually perched on the precipice of victory.

He was recently expelled from further attendance at the Scholasticarium wine evenings, after self-righteously revealing the contents of an eavesdropped conversation in which two Symposium members derided the fashion sense of a third. He accepted the expulsion as further evidence of a conspiracy against him, threatening dire but unspecified repercussions against Perrin in particular, and the Scholasticarium community in general.

Persuade (Intimidating) 3, Rebuff (Obtuse) 20, Attack (Ferocity) 3, Defense (Vexation) 8, Health 8, Magic (Forceful) 17, Appraisal 3, Athletics 3, Pedantry 7, Perception 3, Wealth 8, Wherewithal 10.
Resistances: none

Places of Interest

Despite its importance to player characters and, thus, its prominence in this volume, the Scholasticarium District is a small one, and of little interest to the vast majority of Kaiinese. Thanks especially to the depredations of Xerceju and his Kaiin Philosophical and Thaumaturgical Society, ordinary citizens studiously avoid the neighborhood. Its commercial establishments cater to students and scholars. Likewise, its landmarks are the buildings of the institution, in which learning occasionally occurs.

Commercial Establishments

Magicians' Inn (K12)

Traveling magicians often lodge at this well-known establishment, a stone edifice that stands in a modest square. While any self-respecting Arch-Magician will find a way to impose on the hospitality of a Symposium fellow, dabblers and occultists of minor repute gather here, congregating in the dimly lit tavern on the first floor. There, magicians compete to impress one another with displays of sorcerous mastery. The proprietor, Quellime, is a stout, sad-looking man whose large, bulbous nose closely approximates the shape of his entire body. Always alert for exotic ingredients, you may find him ready to trade lodgings for rare herbs and spices.

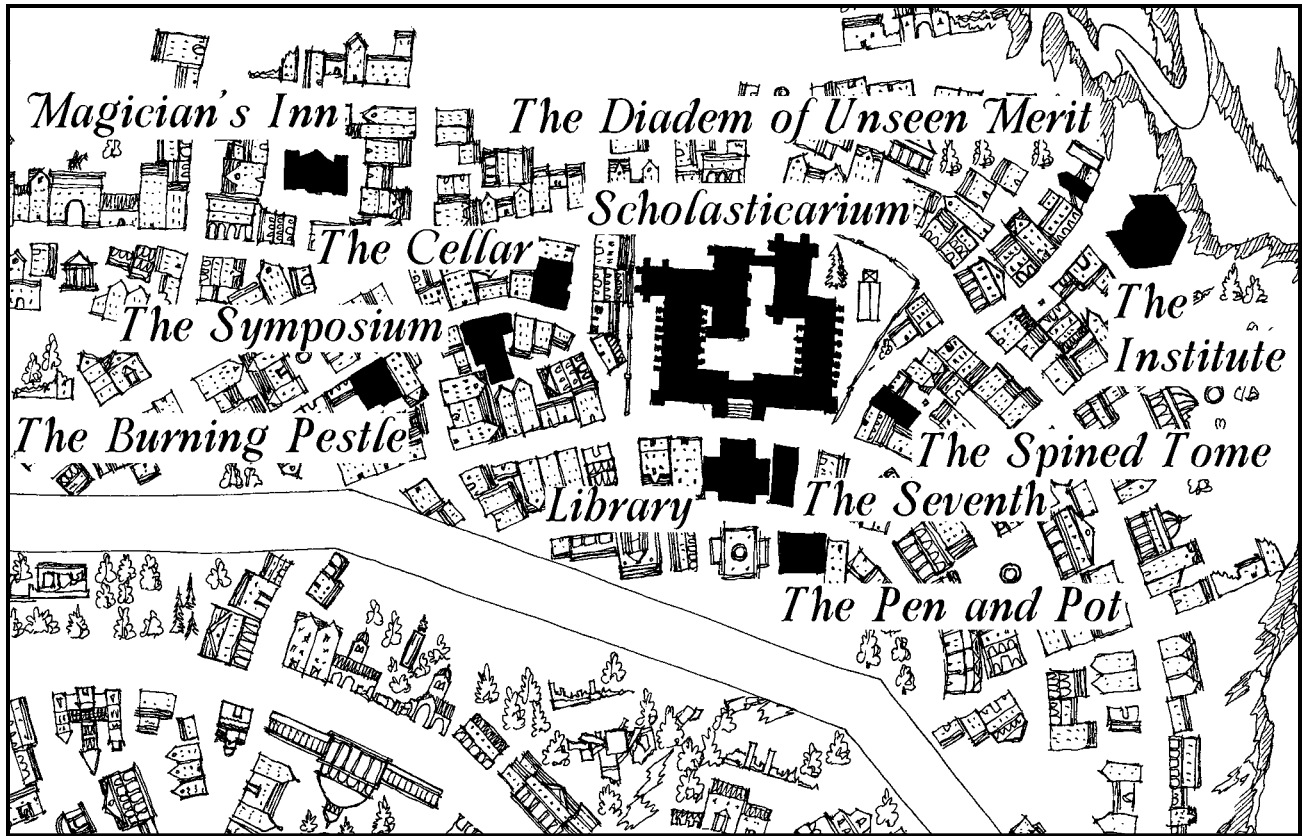
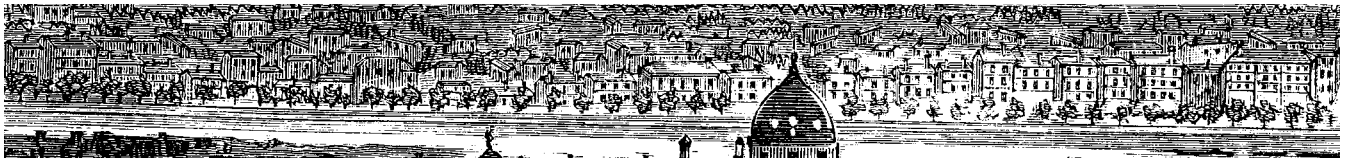
The Seventh, Banquet Hall (M11)

The Seventh is a large banquet hall which, though not open on a consistent basis, is frequently the site of various private dinners and other events. Its proprietor is the curly-haired Veremes, who recently inherited the family business after his mother succumbed to pneumonia. Though he is now middle-aged, Veremes still thinks of himself as the handsome seducer of his younger days. If you are female who may in any way be described as fetching, it is likely that Veremes gives you the eye whenever you dine in his establishment.

The food at the Seventh is of acceptable quality, given that it is prepared for large numbers of diners. Steaks, both beef and onichle¹⁴, are the basis of most of Veremes' menus. He will prepare more exotic feasts on request, albeit at a sizeable premium. Individual diners do not pay for their meals; all recompense must be made in advance by the event organizer, who is charged by the plate. Typically organizers pass along the cost to participants by selling tickets. Depending on the organization sponsoring an event, it may be easy or difficult for unaffiliated individuals to gain admission. For example, students often rent the hall and sell tickets to all comers. On the other hand, an event intended to honor a conclave of visiting scholars may be firmly closed to all would-be door crashers.

The Seventh gains its peculiar name because its six previous incarnations have been destroyed in one mishap or another, from fires to infestations of otherworldly termites. According to the terms of an ancient contract between Veremes' ancestors and the

¹⁴ Onichle: a broad-backed ox with large horns and a taste for illweed, a common roadside plant it finds wildly stimulating. The meat of the onichle is lean but slightly musty in flavor, and is best served in heavy sauces.



Symposium's second Inferator, the institution must pay to rebuild the eating hall whenever it is destroyed.

Although its periodic disasters are often caused by staff or students, the agreement was poorly worded, and the Scholasticarium must make good whether the hall is destroyed by its people or not. When The Sixth burned down, Perrin at first refused to pay. However, the contract was sworn on the magical powers of the Inferator, and Perrin soon found himself unable to work the mildest magic. He managed to arrange for payment to be made to Veremes's mother before his sandestins learned he was powerless, thus averting a serious catastrophe.

Veremes' establishment currently plays host to monthly meetings of the prestigious Guild of Savants Table Talk Association. This invitation-only organization is composed of Kaiin's wisest (or at least its most self-regarding) sages. Their dinners spare no expense either on the menu or the wine list, and serve as preludes to deep discussions, and the occasional bitter disagreement, on the weightiest and most obscure of topics. The majority of its members belong

either to the Symposium or Institute, but the Guild of Savants does occasionally welcome a renowned outside scholar into its exclusive ranks.

The Spined Tome, Student Tavern (M11)

Of the many dingy, ale-soaked taverns frequented by students of the Scholasticarium, the oldest and most prestigious is The Spined Tome. Aside from tradition, it is hard to see what makes this particular cramped, dank drinking parlor more favorable than any of its nearby competitors¹⁵. Unless one counts the buxom and slyly flirtatious Plintha, the Spined Tome's proprietor. Many of the young male students seem blatantly in love with her, even though she is old enough to be mother to the lot of them. She takes an interest in their successes, and may even brace lecturers who drink in her establishment, lobbying for improved grades for one of her adopted charges. She does not restrict her ministrations to young men, and often offers encouragement to female applicants in their uphill struggle for recognition at the Scholasticarium.

¹⁵ These currently include The Red Fork, The Fox and Terce, The Four Rings, Miras' and The Angry Ham.



The Cellar, Wine Shop (L12)

No doubt due to the example set by the Symposium Inferator, Perrin, the men and women of the Scholasticarium spend inordinate time and money pursuing the finest wines of Alмеры and beyond. Their chief supplier is the lugubrious Ripenganno, a bald-headed man with intense eyes and a whispery, hypnotic voice. If you are yourself a connoisseur, you know his wares to be excellent, but not remotely under-priced.

The Burning Pestle, Arcane Supplies (K11)

Whether you seek merely a new replacement beaker, or require the pickled pineal gland of an eastern vloat, The Burning Pestle is the most reliable, best-stocked vendor of arcane supplies within Kaiin's walls. Its proprietor is Harmumb, a tall, dark-skinned, elderly man who looks like he once could have fought his way single-handed through half of the prince's vigils. You have never heard him speak, but are not sure whether he is mute or merely taciturn. When asked for an item, he either nods and gets it for you, or shakes his head impassively. Sometimes he seems to know what you need before you even ask for it. His prices are high, but, unlike his nearby competitors, such as the Owl and Snake, or the Pentarium, his ingredients are always fresh and never mislabeled.

The Pen and Pot, Scriveners For Hire (M11)

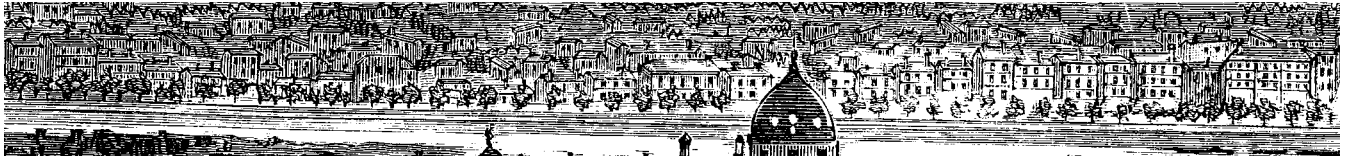
Scriveners do a raging business in the Scholasticarium District, not because its residents are lacking in literacy, but because any self-respecting scholar must occasionally resort to document copying. The most reliable scriveners work for Sorgfolinta, whose good relations with the librarian Quirethomble allow her employees an unusual degree of access to his stacks. Copying in the library is not permitted, so Sorgfolinta trains her scribes in techniques of advanced memorization. You can hire one to go to the library, read a passage or tome you want copied, and learn it by rote. He then returns to the Pen and Pot to write it all down. The accuracy of Sorgfolinta's scribes is remarkable. You hear that she achieves it by dousing them in magical salves and baths of alchemical paste. The average tenure of her employees is, you've noticed, short. The best of them seems only to last for a few years. This is doubtless because they go off to profitable positions elsewhere in Alмеры, their

prospects boosted by her memory regimen. Or perhaps it is merely wearying to learn so much by rote, so that her scribes eventually seek less taxing employment. It cannot be that the malicious rumors about her are true, that the recipients of her paste melt after a while, and that their goopy remains are mixed back into her vat of paste. With her alabaster skin and glistening raven hair, Sorgfolinta is too beautiful a person to be guilty of such witchery. And even if she is, the services she offers are temptingly indispensable. Perhaps you might be reluctant to urge a young relative to seek employment at her shop, just in case. But, if you are like most scholars and magicians of the district, you are disinclined to probe too deeply into the details of her affairs, lest you spoil a good thing.

The Diadem of Unseen Merit, Curio Emporium (N12)

The Diadem of Unseen Merit, a long, narrow shop packed to the ceiling with tottering, dusty shelves, is the most trafficked of the district's many curio shops. Its young, raven-haired proprietress, Lactree, runs the place just as her recently deceased grandfather did, with apparent disinterest. She sits behind her counter, crunching on shelled yala nuts and paging her way through a tawdry romantic novel of the last Aeon. When a shorecomber, ruins-sifter or temporarily impoverished magician tramps through her doorway, she lifts her bored, kohl-ringed eyes up to survey whatever object he cradles in his hopeful hands. She mutters a price, from which she never budes or haggles. Any attempt to bargain with her, whether the penitent wishes to argue the value of the piece or burble on about his unfortunate circumstances, is greeted with a yawn. Oddly, something about her peremptory manner prompts sellers of magical or





antique merchandise to seek her out. Her prices seem arbitrary, so there is always the chance that an item will fetch more than its seller imagines. Also, her diffident manner tends to make a certain sort of person desperate to please her.

She is unhelpful when asked to help locate something on her crammed and unsorted shelves. This, too, attracts, rather than repels, a substantial clientele. While other curio dealers know exactly what they have, and price and display their wares accordingly, the jumble that is the Diadem of Unseen Merit forever holds out the hope of discovering an unnoticed treasure, if only you keep pawing through its musty inventory. And indeed, rumor has it that several priceless artifacts were discovered there only recently¹⁶.

You may have wondered how Lactree remains in business, but then you noticed that nearly every customer who spends time sifting through the junk inevitably ends up hefting an armful of minor items up to the counter before leaving the store. Though Lactree might let the occasional treasure slip through her nonchalant fingers, she more than makes up for it in the sheer volume of cheap trash she sells every day. More conventional curio shops of the District include The Waiting Ghost, Ary's Emporium, and The Sleepless Scroll. All of their owners hold back any real treasures they find for private sale to favored clients, such as Perrin or Grashpotel. Your chances of finding anything wondrous or underpriced at these establishments are virtually nil.

Curiosities and Landmarks

Scholasticarium (M12)

The Scholasticarium building is a large edifice constructed from the same pale limestone that comprises the walls of Kaiin, and much of the Old Ruins. It is a large, four-story structure surrounded by buttresses and topped by abandoned battlements. It looks slightly askew, as if its top stories are misaligned in relationship to its foundation. Indeed, the building was reconstructed, stone by stone, from ruins dug up in the Old Town. If your Engineering rating is 3 or

higher, you can immediately tell that the building is structurally unsound. Although the scholars well know that their flagship structure may collapse at any moment, they feel that it might be a waste to effect repairs, given that the sun itself might blow out long before the Scholasticarium falls¹⁷.

The buttresses are decorated with ancient statues of well-muscled women and soft-fleshed men, clad in diaphanous robes, exquisitely rendered by long-dead carvers. They hold grapes, amphorae of wine, and are attended by tiny nymphs and satyrs. The sages of the Scholasticarium insist that these figures represent great magicians of the past, such as Phandaal (in the case of the male statues) and the muses of sorcerous inspiration (in the case of the female figures.) Pedants of an art-historical bent feel that they're more likely to be the deities of a forgotten civilization of sybarites, but, if they are grounded in the principles of basic etiquette, are unlikely to make too great a point of this.

Facilities include four great **lecture halls**, **offices** for the Master of Masters and his toiling herd of scribes, a vast **foyer** where great magical treasures are displayed in cases of translucent adamantite¹⁸, and a dozen smaller **rooms of higher learning**, where lecturers occasionally meet with groups of students for discussion. Final oral examinations, during which a student's success or failure is determined, are also held in these smaller rooms. A **reception chamber** on the fourth floor sees the most use of any of the building's facilities. It hosts the Scholasticarium's famous wine evenings, as well as a variety of other functions during which high-ranking scholars may become inebriated and exchange sly insults¹⁹.

The basement level is given over mostly to storage, but also houses a **kitchen** and **dining hall** where gloomy scullery workers dole out dollops of unappetizing weed-based dishes to the small handful of students and teachers too poor — or too stingy — to dine either in the district's dining halls or at its many open-air food stalls.

Institute (N12)

New by comparison to the main Scholasticarium

16 None of the rumors agree on what exactly the items were, but that is a certainly a minor point.

17 In fact, a popular prophecy, most often made by deranged pedants, states that the collapse of the Scholasticarium will precede the death of the sun by mere moments. Although no rational magician allows himself to believe this, it may be that the Master's traditional reluctance to begin repair work stems from this prophecy. It would be undesirable to accidentally hasten the demise of the world by hiring workers who might, by accident, collapse the building prematurely.

18 PCs with Pedantry ratings of 15 or more can, upon a cursory examination of these fabulous artifacts, immediately identify them as replicas. From that insight, it is a small step to surmise that past or present grandees of the Scholasticarium have switched out the real items, doubtless for "safe-keeping".

19 Insults become less sly as participants grow more inebriated.



edifice, the Institute building is a hexagonal brick structure which extends up for five stories before ending in a limestone dome. A large archway surrounds a pair of two-story pearl-inlaid oak doorways. A half-finished carving of a pudgy, robed figure looms unevenly over the archway's left side. The original plan called for the entire archway to be decorated with expensive statuary, but a squabble over remuneration led the team of sculptors to depart back to their homes in Erze Damath before finishing more than a fifth of the work²⁰. What remains was cleared commissioned in the outdated style of the Scholasticarium buttresses.

The doors lead nowhere; they can't even be opened. The interior of the Institute building is a crowded warren of suites and offices, where Institute fellows study and tutor individuals or small groups of students. The poorer of them live in their suites. Wealthier lecturers dwell far from the hubbub of the District, usually on or near Odkin Prospect (p74.) Although the building is new, the flocked wall coverings of its orbicular hallways have already been ripped and defaced by carelessly destructive students and staff members. Although food preparation is technically forbidden within the Institute walls, the place constantly reeks of boiled cabbage and worse. Individual suites range from the sumptuously well-appointed to the bare and tawdry, depending on the personal habits of their occupants. Yanjo's chambers, where he lives, are undecorated and devoid of all but the most rudimentary furnishings. He's afraid of thieves, he says. Volune's suites, also his primary residence, display a variety of trophies from his long career. He is only too happy to explain that a number of lethal and ingenious traps lay hidden within his chambers, should any prankster wish to poke through his lodgings when he is absent.

Library (M11)

The main library is a squat, sprawling building finished in black marble. In its cavernous interior, hushed whispers reverberate up and across its vaulted ceilings. Although disorder reigns in most other Scholasticarium buildings, here the stern twk-man



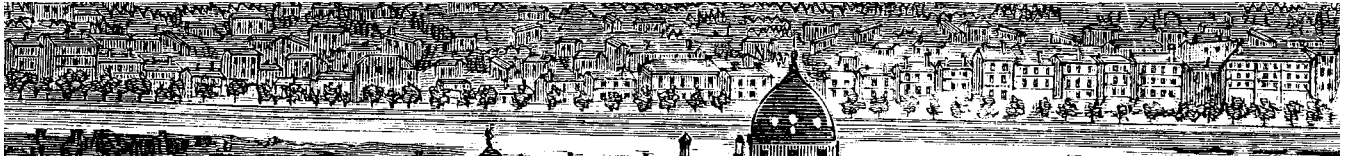
head librarian, Quirethomble, and his staff of fellow twk-men enforce strict discipline with the glowing tips of their stun lances²¹.

Only students, lecturers and accredited scholars may freely pore through the library collection. Twk-men guardians survey library entrants, curtly demanding identification from those they do not recognize. Although you may be able to gin up fake accreditation with the help of your Imposture ability, you should be aware that the penalty for entering the library under false pretences is a lifelong ban from its premises. Even well-placed personages may be unable to overturn such a ban, should you suffer it.

Visiting magicians may obtain library privileges by proving their legitimacy as scholars and paying a fee. The first step involves an appearance before a board of questioners led by Quirethomble, who is

20 A faction within the Institute wants to raise the money to hire a slightly less expensive group of sculptors to finish the job, but Over-Petitioner Yanjo won't hear of it. He is certain that the first carvers left at the behest of Perrin and Grashpotel, and insists that, if he holds out long enough, they will not only pay for the rest of the job, but also apologize personally to him for the deliberate slight.

21 A single hit from a stun lance reduces a victim to downed condition and exhausts his Health pool. The lances do not work outside the library. However tempted they might be by page-folders and chronic underliners, the library staff never slays a downed victim. Instead, they call on burly human guardsmen to toss them into a basement holding pen for several hours, until the wrongdoer recovers, refreshing his Health pool. After a good hectoring, the transgressor is then released. Although technically permitted to continue studying in the library, most who suffer this fate find that they'd rather head to a tavern instead.



usually assisted by a pair of low-ranking Institute members. If your Pedantry rating is 6 or more, you can convince them that you qualify. Normally, no contest or point expenditure is required. The GM may require one, however, if she decides you've already established a reputation for yourself as a scoundrel or troublemaker. This extra step should apply only if Quirethomble could logically have learned of your past scandals.

You may pay by the year, the month, or the visit. A year's access to the library costs 1000 terces. A month costs 100 terces; a single day's privileges cost 10 terces.

Once per day, you may refresh your Pedantry rating by spending an hour perusing the tomes in the library's new acquisitions section.

By conducting research in the library, you enhance your chances of success. Here, it costs only 2 points to reroll a Dismal Failure. For each Illustrious Success, your pool increases by an extra 2 points.

Symposium (L12)

The Symposium building, a tall, thin, nondescript structure, hides amidst fairly similar-looking student tenements. Only the subtle, tasteful slate tiling and the strange reluctance of pigeons to land on its gently sloping roofs hints at any difference between it and the humbler structures that surround it.

A towering doorman, said to be one-sixth gid, politely but firmly refuses entry to anyone churlish enough to seek entrance without a proper invitation. If you boast a relationship to a Symposium member, you've been inside and can describe its interior first-hand. Otherwise, you have merely heard of its wonders.

Its carpeting is lush and sentient, adjusting the depth of its pile to the weight and preferences of the individual. Its wallpapers shimmer and coruscate with the sub-harmonic energies of the celestial spheres. Pleasing scents waft from pulsing orchids, which climb and scuttle across the walls.

The centerpiece of this supernatural luxury is the Symposium's central meeting hall, equipped with leather chairs of surpassing comfort. Diminutive gargoyles scamper across the carpeting, offering plates of sweetmeats, snuff, and exotic intoxicants. You may have noticed that the gargoyles dislike the carpeting, and vice versa.

Each Symposium member is allotted a private office suite within the building, though only some of them bother to take advantage of the privilege. The suites here are more likely to be used for sleeping off the after-effects of an especially rigorous meeting than in serious study. Whether the main hall hosts a formal conclave or merely an impromptu social gathering, it invariably echoes with the loud voices of pettifogging magicians, making any true work impossible here.

Student Tenements (Various)

Peppered throughout the district are a series of tenements, often owned by the Symposium members themselves, in which students maintain their apartments. Although its inhabitants are generally wealthy, they nonetheless live in voluntary squalor. Each tenement looks like it was destroyed by an angry delegation from the Builder's Guild (p28), but in fact it shows merely the scars of neglect and cheerful vandalism accrued over several generations of student inhabitation.

If you were ever a student here, you remember, though a haze of wine and ale, the constant necessity of breaking into neighbor's apartments to steal furniture to replace furniture stolen from you. You recall the impossibility of study amid constant shouting. With a certain nostalgia, you look back on the piles of trash that covered the floors of most apartments. Some of your friends had so much of on hand it that you had to wade through it to find the wine. You remember the many unsavory characters who prowled the hallways, few of them students. They ranged from low-rent doxies to bawdy-mouthed minstrels. Perhaps you credit whatever facility you enjoy as a combatant to the joyous brawls which would erupt at the slightest provocation. This may be the place where you lost your first tooth in a fist-fight. If you were to gain entry to the halls again — not a difficult thing to do — you might even be able to find one of your old bloodstains, from one of these now-forgotten duels.

Even the Maugifiers enter student tenements only with great reluctance, in case of dire emergency or to investigate the most vicious of crimes²². They are places of extreme disorder, where the rich and spoiled enjoy an utter freedom they know they will never experience again. One day, they will be forced to return home to attend to their families' estates, and to

22 Students sometimes fear that the Maugifiers have placed informants among them, however.



conduct themselves with at least an outward respectability. But when that day arrives, a new crop of students will replace them, and the student tenements will, as always, stand among the most debauched places in all of Kaiin.



Events

Crow Night

Despite their loathing of the event known as Crow Night, the scholars and lecturers of the Scholasticarium allow it to continue, for fear of unspecified mystical repercussions. On Crow Night, which falls on the 12th of the hierarchy of the institution is reversed, and students prowl the streets, clad in dark robes and copper crow masks, looking for teachers to scold and mock. When they fall upon one

of their academic superiors, they caper about, smacking him with rattan canes and tearing at his clothing. They force him to submit to their “oral examinations”, ordering him to recite bawdy limericks or answer other vulgar questions. At the end of each examination, they douse their victim in cheap beer and prance onwards, in search of other targets. Those they single out are expected to endure this treatment without retaliation, on the night or afterwards. Even so, only a naïve student will remove his mask; tradition only protects you so much. It would be a great scandal, though, if a put-upon lecturer were to strike out against the masked students, especially with a magical spell. Avoiding the masked prowlers’ notice through sorcerous means is not so offensive, though still considered poor form. Well-to-do Symposium members simply make advance travel plans, and absent themselves from the District on Crow Night. It is perhaps surprising that any lecturers ever fall prey to the rude revelry of Crow Night, but scholars are an absent-minded lot, and some hapless souls inevitably get caught up in their research and forget to leave the area before nightfall.

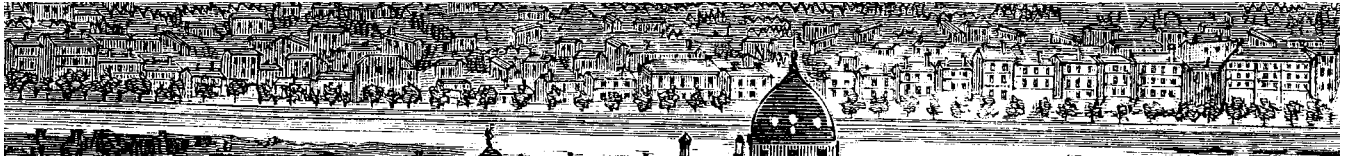
The tradition only holds in the District itself; any students traveling to other neighborhoods in search of prey would soon find themselves fending off the prince’s vigils.

Like most student traditions, Crow Night culminates in a frenzy of ale consumption. It provides The Spined Tome with the busiest and most lucrative night of its year.

Fountain Night

At the end of term, after final oral examinations have been taken and adjudicated²³, the students celebrate with the orgiastic festival of Orzoserabbl’s Fountain (M11). This street party, in which the wine and ale flow copiously, culminates at midnight, when the students — and any other willing participants — shed their clothing and dive into a fountain barely large enough to hold them all. The fountain is dominated by a thirty-foot figure of the late magician Orzoserabbl, whose estate donated it to the Scholasticarium, in commemoration of that lofty individual’s legendary temperance and celibacy. It is said that the statue grimly closes its eyes as this student frenzy reaches its peak, but this may speak more for observer’s lack of temperance than anything else.

²³ The date of this event varies from year to year, dependent on annual wrangling between the institution’s various hostile factions. The Institute tries to push the date back, to give more time to its harried lecturers, while the Sodality and Symposium fight to schedule the term’s end as early as possible.



Although the Mavgifiers might prefer to danny-stick the worst of the student troublemakers, they must instead stand guard against the pickpockets, muggers, and other predators who seep out of Kaiin's more unsavory corners on fountain night, in search of unwary victims. If they have specific information of coming trouble, they may fortify their numbers with hired bodyguards, or with members of the prince's vigils.

Rumors . . .

- ✻ (for magicians and Arch-Magicians) From a reliable source, you have heard that the personal library of the mage Grashpotel has been infected with the dread Creep of Inaccuracy, an arcane virus that transforms books and those who read them, sowing confusion and dread wherever it surfaces. The Creep of Inaccuracy infests a written volume, literally altering the words on its pages. At first, only inconsequential facts alter themselves, but, if left untended, the inaccuracies multiply, until finally it contains a wholly false history or an explosively mistaken series of alchemical formulae. Worse, anyone reading an infected volume becomes completely convinced of its accuracy, and is unable to remember or even consider the original facts in question. It is an outbreak of the Creep of Inaccuracy that was thought to have collapsed the Frink civilization of the 18th Aeon. If even a hint of it is found in a scholar or magician's library, he is duty-bound to burn his entire collection, lest it spread. But Grashpotel has been spouting even more obvious nonsense than usual, and increasingly gets even simple and obvious historical facts completely wrong. Whether you like Grashpotel or not, it behooves you to overcome the defenses of his manse and remove the entire contents of his library. But don't look at the books, or you, too, might find your head filled with stubborn erroneousness.
- ✻ Carthos' stunning luck in finding stunning and historically important artifacts among the dross of the shorecombers' harvest seems, upon sustained cogitation, somewhat suspect. Can it

be that he is finding items elsewhere, or even dredging them up from his own secret collection, in order to impress rival colleagues and ready his bid to displace Brefilimi as master? If so, you could strike a blow for the old guard — or earn a hefty favor from the reformers, as recompense for your silence — by catching him in the process of substituting prize treasures for shorecombed junk.

- ✻ You overheard some dark-robed figures muttering to one another in a shadowy corner of The Spined Tome. You thought you heard them say they worked for Mazirian the Magician²⁴, and that they had come to “stuff Dafis back in the lamp.” You figure that this perhaps refers to the lecturer Dafis, who until recently, was imprisoned in a lamp. Perhaps you might find some advantage in thwarting, or assisting, the hooded men.
- ✻ One of Brefilimi's cleverest supporters is Symposium member Maduria the Rectitudinous, a crusty member of the old guard and experienced academic intriguer. It is well-known that the self-righteous Maduria backs Brefilimi primarily because of his spotless character. Recently, you heard scuttlebutt suggesting that Brefilimi maintains a second household in a small manse on or near Odkin Prospect. Supposedly it provides a cozy nook for his alluring mistress and newborn illegitimate child. You can curry the Master's favor by either disproving this calumny (if it turns out to be false) or covering up this regrettable indiscretion (if it proves true.) Or you can please Carthos' faction by doing the opposite.
- ✻ When he stepped down from office, Curnorninet, the scandal-plagued former Master of the Scholasticarium, did what all Masters Emeritus do: he went on a long journey. This tradition forces the departing Master to step out of the spotlight in favor of his successor. Members of the old guard feared that Curnorninet would be too graceless to step aside, as he ought. They were pleasantly surprised to hear nothing of him after his

24 See *Dying Earth RPG*, Personages chapter.



departure from office. Many of the reformers, however, now miss him bitterly, fretting that Carthos is not up to the task of expeditiously discrediting Brefilimi. In the last few days, Carthos has been seen in the company of a new factotum, a feather-haired wefkin who calls himself Giano. Something about the way Giano set his shoulders before walking happily down the street, and the appreciative gaze he directed towards a shapely female student, reminded you of Curnorninet. Could this be the Master Emeritus, in disguise, prematurely returned from his grand tour? If so, how might you use this knowledge to your advantage?

- ✿ A few months ago, a new deranged pedant, a gangly fellow named Paninch, descended on the District. No one remembered him ever studying or teaching at the Scholasticarium, but his rantings could not otherwise be distinguished from those of his more senior fellows. Just a few hours, Paninch grabbed you and roughly pulled you into an alcove. Sweating profusely and rolling his eyes, he claimed he was really Durgal Corwaine, and that Paninch had just stolen his body and identity. During the transference, Durgal realized that Paninch was an archveult. He last saw Paninch, in his stolen body, heading towards the library. He begged you to find out what the archveult wanted to learn in the library, and, more importantly, to get his proper body back for him.
- ✿ Rustic-looking twk-men have been seen covertly buzzing through the District lately. Some of them have been asking questions about Quirethomble. Putting together separate accounts of their activities, it seems that they are here to seize the head librarian and take him back to his homeland in the Thamber Meadow. Presumably they will have to use force, as Quirethomble would sooner die than allow his precious library to languish in his absence. What do they want him for, and should you help him, or his would-be captors?
- ✿ You overheard one of Xerceju's cronies that the next demonstration by the Kaiin Philosophical

and Thaumaturgical Society will be of sufficient magnitude to "shake the palace itself." Given Xerceju's tendency to underestimate the consequences of his displays, his plan — whatever it may be — might wreak serious havoc in the city. Perhaps it is time you won yourself some prestige and political gratitude by putting this insolent prankster in his place.

- ✿ Today's top rumor is at the same time funny and unfunny. The funny part is that the freakishly angry Yanjo woke up this morning to find his flesh transformed to that of a prickly cactus. The unfunny part is that he apparently blames you for casting the spell. He has sworn terrible vengeance against you, and your friends as well.

Taglines

*A retort occurs to me, but I will save it
for a worthier recipient.*

*Come hither, and into your ear I will
whisper footnotes.*

*Forgive me; I was distracted by the twitching
of your forehead-vein.*

*I heard an interesting thing about you, while
enjoying a delicately-spiced sausage I purchased
at a vendor's cart.*

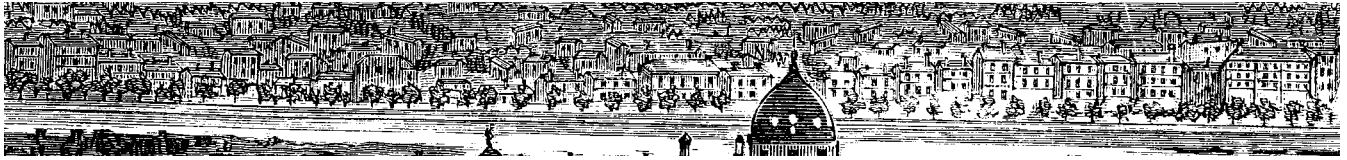
*I shall devote to your document the diligence
it deserves.*

*It is a fine piece — a latter-day counterfeit, as I'm sure
you know — but of perfectly sound workmanship.*

*Please oblige me by keeping your tongue
inside your head.*

Surely you misspeak.

*The actions you describe were surely performed
by a mischievous sandestin or refle, transformed
by magic to resemble me.*



*The word 'plagiarism' is an unseemly one,
as I'm sure you will agree.*

This dispute is beneath us; let us drown it in ale.

*This theory of yours is so apt that
I have already discovered it.*

*Withdraw your insinuation! The relationship between the
two of us is purely that of tutor to student.*

You smell of ale and cabbages

Your objection will be entertained in due course.

Your thesis is sound, but limited.

Tweaks

Coalescent Discernment

(Magic)

Situation: You are attempting to divine the source of a magical spell or effect in the supernaturally-charged atmosphere of the Scholasticarum District.

Description: Nowhere in Kaiin are more magics worked per square foot than in the Scholasticarum District. Consequently, even a powerful magician or determined sandestin may have difficulty identifying the author of one particular effect amid the swirling background energies of a million spent spells. However, you have whiled away many an hour learning to discern one aura pattern from another. Consequently, you can easily penetrate the haze of extraneous magics to home in on the one trace of magic you deem relevant.

Benefit: You never suffer a penalty or levy while trying to work magic inside the Scholasticarum District, or any other locale with a similar profusion of active and inactive spells. Neither do any sandestins under your control. Whenever you (or one of your sandestins) attempts any effect that detects, identifies, or tracks another spell, effect, or cantrap, you get a boon of 1.

Exigent Citation

(Pedantry)

Situation: A published scholar or well-known lecturer is about to prevail upon you with the vast weight of his knowledge and reputation, demolishing your argument.

Description: You know the works of your scholastic betters sufficiently well to throw their own past words back at them. In the course of an argument, you can deflate a more famous pedant with a quote from his own works. It's unlikely that, if taken in context, the quote you pull from memory truly contradicts the pedant's argument. But you can make it seem that way, which will fluster your opponent and put him on the defensive.

Benefit: You gain added protection from Wallops in contests of Pedantry. You may neutralize a Wallop by rolling any success. You still get only one roll, however.

Ink-Stained Intrigue

(Persuasion)

Situation: You seek a favor from an individual with a stake in Scholasticarum politics.

Description: You are sufficiently well-informed about the internal struggles of the Master's Office, Symposium, Institute and Student's Sodality to convince those involved in them that they can further their own agendas by granting you favors. If the favor you ask actually relates to the ongoing struggle, you can credibly argue that your target will benefit from it, even if the opposite is true. If it really has nothing to do with Scholasticarum politics, you can make it seem as if it does.

Benefit: You may act as if your Persuasion style trumps your target's Rebuff style, even if it doesn't. If your target's Rebuff style trumps your Persuasion style, you may act as if it does not. If your Persuasion already trumps your target's Rebuff style, you gain an additional boon of 1 against him.

When two individuals use this tweak against one another, it cancels out, and has no effect.



Smoldering Pout

(Seduction)

Situation: You seek to reduce a naïve young student to the sort of quivering desire that prompts him or her to overlook your many faults and generally surly disposition.

Description: By presenting yourself as morose, preoccupied, and emotionally tortured, you become irresistible to a certain type of young person afflicted by romantic inclinations and intellectual pretensions.

You enhance this effect by reciting puerile poetry, condemning others for being unlike yourself, and complaining that no one truly understands you. Then you move in for the kill.

Benefit: When rolling Seduction against young or sheltered students, your Prosaic Successes become Illustrious. It costs the student 4 points to reroll his or her Dismal Failures, or to force you to reroll your Illustrious Successes.



Where You Fit In



In a Kaiin-based campaign, you may stipulate that your character is affiliated with the Scholasticarium.

Arch-Mages

If your character is an arch-mage, you can claim a seat as a full member of the Syncretic Symposium For the Simulation of Reality. You should determine whether you stand with the old guard or the reformers. You should also decide who you consider the greater wine expert, Perrin or Grashpotel. Although you can remain neutral on both questions, it isn't much fun, and you'll likely be dragged in sooner or later anyhow, so it's better to choose a side than have it chosen for you.

Your privileges include full voting rights at any Symposium meeting and a suite in its headquarters. You may run a tab while ordering wine and viands there, although your account is most likely already in arrears. You gain full, free access to the library.

Magicians

If your character is a magician, you can make him a lecturer belonging to the Institute. Institute fellows might have sympathies in the struggle between reformers and the old guard, or might despise and envy all Symposium members equally.

During the school year, you are obligated to spend one to four hours per week lecturing. You are supposed to spend at least that much time again in colloquy with students, but can easily duck this requirement. You gain an office in the warren-like Institute building, and may even choose to live there. Be warned that, if you select this last option, your students will have find it much easier to locate

you, so that they may then proceed to waste your time.

You get full library privileges.

Dabblers

Dabblers may specify that they are students at the Scholasticarium. If, as is most likely, you are also a Cugel-level character, you should explain how it is that you can afford tuition but otherwise suffer the general penury of your kind. Possible answers to this question include:

- ✱ You are an impoverished noble entitled to a magical education by ancient charter.
- ✱ You won a scholarship in a card game.
- ✱ Before play began, your character gained sudden wealth, and spent it all on tuition.
- ✱ You simply showed up to classes, and have yet to be asked for payment.
- ✱ You know embarrassing secrets about an arch-mage. (This works best if you have a Relationship to Perrin or Grashpotel.)

Your only perk is free use of the library. You are technically required to show up to lectures, and to eventually sit for an oral examination and demonstration of arcane prowess. However, many so-called students spend years at the Scholasticarium without doing either. Only the crustiest of the old guard lecturers take attendance, and the onus for scheduling the final oral examination lies wholly with the student.



Chapter 9

The Threek

“I looked down upon the countless stone houses of the Threek, mused briefly upon the tedium its inhabitants endure, and then continued on my way.”

— Parin the Tet, *Fleeting Diversions*

The largest area of Kaiin is The Threek, a huge expanse of modest stone hovels in which the humble dwell. Although eighty percent of the population lives in the Threek, we cover it quickly. It is a humdrum place where ordinary workers eat and sleep, not a hotbed of interesting trouble like the much smaller Scholasticarium or Tracks districts.

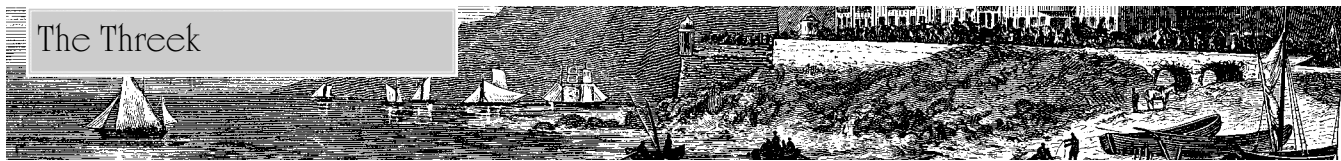
On First Glance

The Threek is a vast expanse of stone houses. Although the stone buildings are, in general, larger than those of Canal Town, many more people live crammed inside them. The streets here lack the cobblestone finish of those elsewhere in the city. Instead, they're hard-packed dirt, which throw up blinding clouds of dust on dry days and turn into skidding fields of mud when it rains. Here, a street is simply the absence of buildings. Shrieking gulls glide overhead; rats scabble through piles of morning garbage. Like the rest of the city, the Threek is bathed most of the year in the diffuse light of an overcast sky. During these grim days, an eerie silence hangs over the neighborhood. Even the cries of playing children are muted. Only on the rare sunny days does it come alive with the voices of talking, shouting, laughing people.

Threeksiders see themselves as honest working folk in a world where the value of both honesty and work has been cruelly forgotten. They fear fast-talking outsiders intent on swindling them, muggers who supposedly prowl the darkened streets at night, and the prince's capricious justice. You, who have a wider experience of the world, might feel that their omnipresent sense of dread is misplaced, and that the Threek is actually a surprisingly safe corner of the world. The vigils, often Threeksiders themselves, seem as virtuous as any enforcer of the law. The robbers everyone talks about seem more a product of fearful imagination than reality. And even though the occasional person is plucked from his home, hauled before the prince, and thrown into the deodand pit, it probably happens less often to unassuming Threeksiders than to the more obtrusive denizens of other districts.

Although you, like most Kaiinese, regard it as a single neighborhood, it is in fact bisected by the Palace District, Golden Walk, and Odkin Prospect. The West Threek is much smaller than the East. Residents of each enviously believe that inhabitants of the other dwell in relative splendor. Outsiders find it impossible to detect any differences between the two.





Didactic Overview

The Threek has always been the Threek. It is not a place for history or remembrance. Its houses were presumably built during Kaiin's infancy. Since those days, hundreds of thousands of artisans, craftsmen, and common laborers have made their way through the stages of birth, childhood, adulthood, and death in quiet obscurity.

Inhabitants

If interesting things happen to people raised here, they happen only to those few who leave the Threek for more adventurous locations, whether in the city itself, or in the wider world. Unlike the proud, yet equally downtrodden, folk of Canal Town, people here don't resent those who leave to seek their fortunes. They merely fear for their lost relatives and loved ones, who they are sure will suffer, sooner than later, fates more horrible than imagining will allow. If, by chance, a person returns, sadder, wiser, but still alive, they welcome him back with weeping relief, happily certain that he will never attempt anything so foolish again. Cowering apprehension has always been the dominant mood of the Threek. Nowhere will you find more people certain that the sun is not only expiring, but will die tomorrow, or next week at the very earliest. Although this sense of fear may be worth playing upon, you'll find that it makes Threeksiders no less wary or adept at negotiation than any other Kaiinese. They know they're about to die, and do not want to face final extinction knowing that they've recently been hoodwinked or even out-bargained. They cling to their last precious moments on earth, so you'll find it difficult to persuade them to squander their time or the fruits of their labor.

Contacts

Artisan

"The price is high, I grant, but, as we are all about to die, this may be one of the last of its quality ever produced."

Many Threeksiders make their precarious livings by producing goods in their own homes. They include

leatherworkers, candle makers, weavers, potters, smiths, and tailors. Some sell only within The Threek; the best of them deal with merchants of the Market.

The best reason to make contact with an artisan is to get a special piece of equipment made. That may be anything from an ingeniously elastic rope to a cheap copy of a particular piece of jewelry. In keeping with the especially fearful nature of Threeksiders, you'll need to carefully disguise any nefarious purposes that may lurk behind your order. Otherwise, the artisan may refuse to work for you, afraid that he will be punished for whatever hideous crime you intend to commit with it.

An artisan may also be able to identify the maker of a particular item within his specialty. If you happen to take an item to its creator, expect him to deny any knowledge of it. Threeksiders assume, until proven otherwise, that all inquiries are dangerous to them. Artisans are independent sorts who keep their heads down and respect the desires of others to do the same. You'll find it difficult to pry useful gossip from them.

Laborer

"The importance of the task seems negligible."

Most Threeksiders perform menial or backbreaking labor to earn their daily crusts of bread. Some perform their work at shops and factories in the neighborhood; most timidly venture out each day to other parts of the city. Some work regular jobs. Others gather early each morning in known corners of the Threek waiting to be hired as short-term labor.

You can hire laborer contacts to assist you in building things, or performing other manual tasks necessary to your plans. Only in extreme circumstances will they place themselves in any sort of danger on your behalf. Keep in mind that Threeksiders are extremely imaginative where possible hazards are concerned. Threekside laborers balance their need for groats and terces against their firm belief that the sun's lifespan can now be measured in days, if not hours. None of them want to spend their final moments knee-deep in mud or straining to heft heavy bricks. Accordingly, they are hard bargainers, even when their stomachs rumble.

Because day laborers get up early in the morning in hopes of getting the best jobs¹, and straggle home after dusk, they may witness events on the city streets most people would be unaware of. To get a laborer to

¹ That is, the ones they would be unembarrassed to caught performing at the moment when the sun falls from the sky.



share useful information, you must persuade him that no one will ever know he even spoke to you.

Neighborhood Gossip

"I saw what they did, but I am from here, and have a right to know such things."

Every few blocks of the Threek is watched over by its own self-appointed behavioral guardian. Although some of these busy-bodies are, as you might imagine, old, otherwise unoccupied women, they're just as likely to be nosy shopkeepers or self-righteous peddlers. Threeksiders are conservative types who recoil from the debaucheries practiced elsewhere in the city. Their grounds for disgust are less moral than strategic. They cannot stop thinking about how dangerous any given sort of outlandish behavior might be. Rakishness is feared due to the various diseases associated with it, as well as the threats implied by jealous spouses. Gourmandism's dangers include food poisoning and the innumerable accidents one might suffer after nodding off in the wake of a heavy meal. Excessive use of intoxicants can also leave one open to a wide variety of gruesome mishaps.

Gossips pay close heed to the risks their neighbors take, and thus become great authorities on the movements and habits of everyone around them. The trick is getting them to supply information to you. If

you're a stranger, they'll assume you ask about a person with the intention of hunting him down and killing him. On the other hand, if you're a local, or can pass yourself off as one, a gossip will join you in ruefully speculating on the means by which all of his neighbors will meet their imminent demises.

Vigil

"A secret's never safer than in the mouth of a Threeksider."

Threeksiders earn pittances, and, on an individual basis, pay little in the way of taxes to the prince². He, in turn, dispatches a very small vigil detachment to patrol their district. Perhaps thanks to the extreme and agitated state of alertness most residents perpetually maintain, the vigils have surprisingly little crime to investigate. The slightest sudden twitch on the part of a visitor to a Threekside neighborhood arouses immediate cries of alarm; people immediately rush into their homes and slam shutters closed. Thieves and brigands, though much feared, tend to avoid the place, because the people are so watchful, and their purses so empty.

That leaves the small vigil detachment with little to do but march around exuding whatever confidence they can muster. Most vigils, wherever they're assigned, hail originally from the Threek. Those stationed to other neighborhoods gradually assume the bellicose swagger necessary to work in those places. The ones who stick close to home retain their original nervousness. It is not that difficult to make a

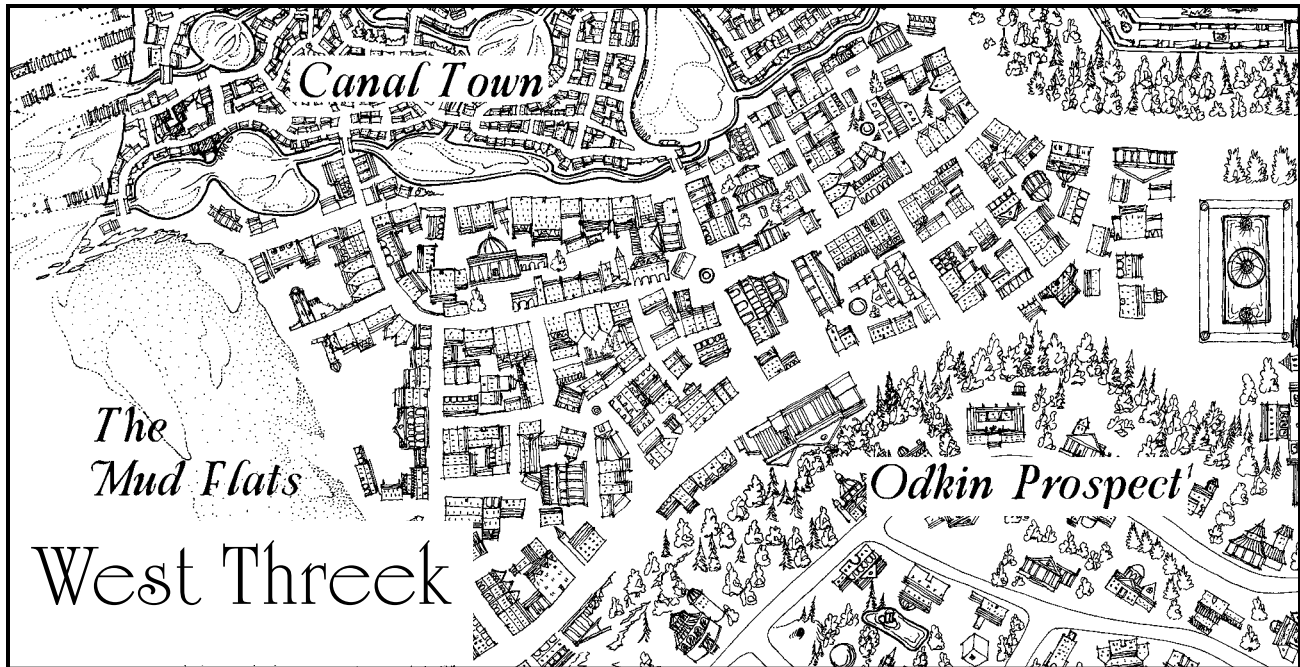
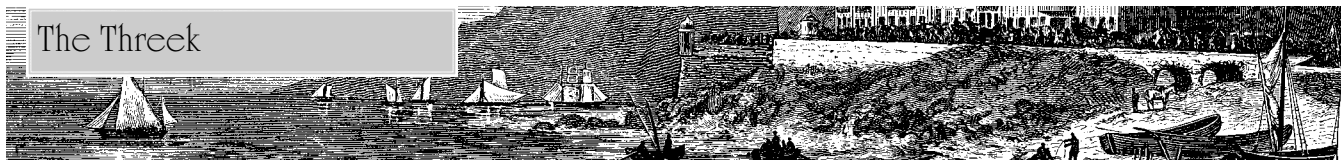
Threekside vigil bolt in abject terror, or to convince him that legions of bandits are about to materialize and lay waste to the district.

What assurance they do possess derives from the stout bravery of their new leader, the enormously tall and unwaveringly honest Twisest (see below). Perhaps, in town, he will remold them into replicas of his courageous self.

If you're an outsider, vigils will nervously approach you and, while miserably failing to project the desired air of casualness, will quiz you as to your current business and intentions. A vigil contact will appear to trust you, but will always be wondering in the back of his mind exactly when you'll show your true colors and attempt to senselessly murder him. If you're adroit enough, you may be able to use his fear to get him to reveal information about happenings



² That is, households in the Threek pay less to the prince than in any other neighborhood, including Canal Town. Taken as a whole, the Threek pays more than any other area, because it contains so many households.



in the area. Or you can send your contact running, with knocking knees, towards some nonexistent threat, thereby creating a useful diversion.

Workshop Manager

"Let us speak and walk at the same time. I cannot be deterred from my rounds."

Many of the Threek's residents work in small factories which employ, at most, a few dozen people. These businesses produce fabrics, clothing, pots, pastries, candles, footwear, and similar items. Often several dozen of these workshops are owned by the same individual or consortium. The wealthy workshop owners, who would never deign to set foot in the Threek, leave local managers to supervise operations. Most managers watch over a number of shops, traveling between them each day to make sure that the employees toil unremittingly for their masters. Some workshops are partially staffed by slaves. Although less costly to run, they demand a manager's full-time presence, to keep the guards alert and ward off escapes. Slaves may not be as badly treated as you expect; see p21 for more on the laws governing slavery in Kaiin.

A workshop manager can tell you about his current and former employees, and also about his master and his business dealings. He'll freely share

damaging information about rival managers and their shops. The job requires an alert sense of perception, and a manager may, in the course of his rounds, have seen other things of interest to you. To get a manager to talk freely, you must assure him that you won't take up his time, or do anything that might get him in trouble with his master.

Personages

Coarch, Vague Extortionist

"I shudder to think what would happen to you."

While the unrelenting perturbation of the average Threeksidier makes it difficult for most criminals to conduct business here, one notable individual has turned it to his advantage. Coarch makes his living as an extortionist, traveling from business to business carefully suggesting that it might be best if he were paid a small fee, because that would reduce the likelihood that bad things might occur. Coarch, who is physically quite unassuming, never describes exactly what these bad things might be, or who might bring them about. He speaks with utter vagueness, allowing his fearful listeners to infer all sorts of hideous mayhem from his bland, barely threatening words. Every person who pays him off seems to have arrived at a different, terrifying conclusion. He might be a



deodand, a demon, an immortal murderer, a vampire, an agent of the prince, or goodness knows what else. No one wants to risk finding out, so they pay him well for not doing whatever it is that he'll do to them if they don't. He's worked his spell of subtle intimidation even on the normally dauntless Twisest (see below), who fears Coarch as he does no other man or beast.

Coarch is short and slender, with a boyish face and well-combed chestnut hair. He walks through the streets of the Threek with an exaggerated grace. He makes his threats in a friendly manner, full of feigned concern. Quite the fashion enthusiast, he wears a different absurdly colorful outfit every day. If he favors any one clothing piece, it is the short cape, which furls after him as he jigs merrily down the street.

Game statistics omitted in the interests of deliberate obscurity.

Gipeggia, Street Prophetess

"This month will be one for sustained trembling."

The blond, middle-aged Gipeggia, mother to a large brood of now-grown children, wanders the Threek, muttering to herself and holding her hands up to heaven. Every so often, the locals, especially older women, scuttle out from their houses to speak with her. She huddles with them, rolls her eyes back in her head, and then issues a pronouncement of doom. The prophecies she makes to fellow Threeksiders are always dire. If you've asked her for more than one prediction, and are not a Threeksider yourself, you noticed that she takes a different tack with outsiders: the news she gives you seems equally likely to be good or bad. If you asked her to explain this, she said that her neighbors never believe her when the prophecy is good, so she's learned not to share any positive answers the spirits may give her. Her prophecies tell her that it may be as much as a year before the sun explodes, but her fellow Threeksiders have absolutely no interest in hearing this.

From locals, she accepts small gifts, like a piece of boiled chicken or the contents of a wineskin, in exchange for her prophetic services. She expects more from well-heeled outsiders, asking anywhere from 5 groats to 50 terces, depending how prosperous you look. The more often you consult her, the more she charges.

Unlike most people hereabouts, Gipeggia is not especially fearful of outsiders. However, if your Attack rating is greater than 7, or you've ever injured someone with a magical spell or effect, or your Persuade style is Intimidating, she'll turn and walk quickly in the opposite direction the moment she lays eyes on you.

It stands to reason that she would know the business of many of her neighbors. If you've ever tried to collect gossip from her, though, you've found her unshakable in her devotion to her clients' privacy. On the other hand, you think she might be willing to tell you about third parties who have made her clients' lives more difficult.

Persuade (Forthright) 4, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 10, Attack (Caution) 3, Defense (Intuition) 3, Health 6, Magic (Insightful) 3, Appraisal 2, Athletics 2, Etiquette 2, Pedantry 2, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 4, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 6.
Resistances: Arrogance 3, Avarice 4, Indolence 4, Gourmandism 3, Pettifoggery 3, Rakishness 5.

Gipeggia's prophecies work as follows. You ask her a question about a course of action you intend to take. The GM secretly rolls a die, consulting the chart below.

Roll	Prophecy	Modifier
1-2	"Your plan is doomed by fate"	-1
3-4	"The omens remain unclear"	0
5-6	"Your plan is blessed by destiny"	+1

If your plan is doomed, the GM applies a -1 penalty to the first three die rolls you make that directly pertain to it. If it is blessed, she gives you a +1 bonus for the first three rolls. Unclear prophecies have no effect on your rolls.

There is no statute of limitations on the prophecy. If you get a bad reading, the penalty applies whenever you attempt your course of action, no matter how long you've waited after receiving it.

If the GM feels you're consulting Gipeggia too often, she'll still make the random roll to determine the nature of the prophecy, but you'll never get a +1 bonus. You can still be told that you've been blessed by destiny but this will have no effect on your rolls.

The Threek





Iccapasal, Broadsheet Publisher

“Do none of you understand what hangs in the balance?”

The intrepid reformer Iccapasal was not born in Threekside, but has been grudgingly adopted by its people all the same. The son of a Scholasticarium lecturer, he developed a fascination with history, taking a special interest in idealistic forms of government known in ancient times. Fired up by what he read, he turned his back on magical studies to pursue a career as a political agitator. Now he publishes broadsheets condemning the system of Kaiin's government. Iccapasal's idealism has not made him completely stupid, so he avoids direct condemnation of the prince. Instead, he urges Kandive to adopt measures guaranteeing basic rights to his citizens, and eventually a form of governance accountable to the people. At his boldest, he only criticizes unnamed courtiers around the prince, who are supposedly advising him against what must be his true, utopian instincts.

Iccapasal advances his cause by distributing broadsheets, which he writes himself and prints using a magical artifact known as a Reprosorium. He's an open, trusting fellow always on the lookout for new allies, so perhaps you've visited his print shop, and seen the device in action. About twenty feet high, sixteen feet long, and seven feet deep, its coppery surface is covered with pipes, dials, meters, and rotors. Iccapasal operates it by placing on his head a bowl-like helmet, connected to the body of the Reprosorium by a series of coiled wires. As he mentally composes the content of his publication, the machine opens up to reveal a half dozen small metal arms, each with a quill pen on its end. The arms dip the pens into a long trough filled with ink, then flit backwards to inscribe Iccapasal's deathless words onto two dozen sheets of parchment. If Iccapasal wants to create additional copies of his broadsheet, the machine can automatically do that after it has finished with the original set.

The Reprosorium is sentient; it speaks in a high, clattery voice. Unfortunately for Iccapasal, the Reprosorium, which claims to date back several aeons, has grown weary of life and wishes to die before the sun goes out. To accomplish this aim, it periodically inserts into Iccapasal's texts vile slanders, directed at Kaiin's most violent men. When the inevitable swarms of bullies come storming into Iccapasal's print shop,

the Reprosorium exults in its shrieking, metallic voice, begging them to finish it off. Unfortunately for it, its weird cries have the opposite effect, causing the thugs to shrink back in terror. Also disturbing to them are the gouts of sticky red blood that pour from the machine wherever their picks and axes strike it. After a few minutes of participation in this crazed scene, the hired bullies inevitably flee in terror. This always happens before they manage to beat Iccapasal to death. To its chagrin, the Reprosorium is self-healing and quickly recovers from its wounds.

If you also have connections among the builder's guild of Canal Town, you know that these strong-arm men have sworn off on attacking the Reprosorium, so upset were they during their first few encounters with it.

Most readers mockingly dismiss Iccapasal's political editorials. They do not doubt that today's forms of government are arbitrary and degraded, compared to those of the glorious past. But then they also know that there is no point in struggling for change: at this late date, things can only get worse. Iccapasal lures readers into perusing his publication by larding it with gossip and other frivolous news. He may have interesting information about Kaiin's prominent residents, which he considers too touchy for publication. He'll share it with you if you do a favor for him. Such favors range from simply helping to pass out copies of his latest issue, to persuading notable figures to back his radical agenda.

Iccapasal is a tall, thin man whose sandy hair has retreated down from the crown of his head and now forms a close-cropped fringe around his ears. Perpetually stained with ink from the Reprosorium's trough, he dresses all in black to cover up the spots. He wears a puffy hat of black velvet, which contains several pockets in which he can store pens and scraps of parchment.

Persuade (Eloquent) 6, Rebuff (Penetrating) 6, Attack (Caution) 4, Defense (Parry) 4, Health 4, Athletics 2, Imposture 2, Pedantry 8, Perception 4, Quick Fingers 3, Scuttlebutt 9, Stealth 4, Stewardship 2, Tracking 3, Wherewithal 4.

Resistances: Avarice 3, Indolence 3.

Nagesya, Workshop Manager

“Do not diminish my efficiency.”



The slim, pinch-faced manager Nagesya supervises more Threeside workshops than any other. She works for the dour merchant grandee Yakethese (p82) and shares his brusque, uncompromising attitude. The clothing she wears on the job is similar to a man's, with white tunic, leather vest, and dark leggings. Only the somewhat looser cut of these items nods to her feminine identity. An elaborate wicker headpiece, into which she weaves her auburn hair, wreathes her head in a sinister halo. She walks quickly along the Threek's slightly crooked streets, often accompanied by grim-looking bodyguards hired from Canal Town's builder's guild. You've heard that she's on close terms with that group's leader, Antelo (p29).

The whispers about Nagesya say that authority over several hundred workers is not enough for her. She sees herself as a sort of unofficial prefect of the Threek, dispatching her bullies to apply their fists to people and situations which displease her. Through

her boss, Yakethese, she enjoys a degree of influence in the palace. Everybody knows that it was her who engineered the downfall of the previous Under-Sheriff. He was an arrogant fellow named Medhesmi, who refused to treat Nagesya with the respect she felt entitled to. She kept a careful watch on his operations, making note of his various procedural violations and general sloppiness. Then she somehow convinced the prince that Medhesmi insulted him routinely. Accounts vary as to whether he was guilty of this offense, or if Nagesya orchestrated false testimony against him. What is clear is that Medhesmi ended up in the deodand pit.

This happened so recently that you've yet to gather any reliable scuttlebutt on Nagesya's relationship to Medhesmi's replacement, Twisest (see below.) If the new man's reputation for honesty is deserved, a clash with Nagesya may be inevitable.

Persuade (Intimidating) 10, Rebuff (Contrary) 12, Attack (Ferocity) 4, Defense (Vexation) 8, Health 4, Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Concealment 2, Craftsmanship 3, Etiquette 4, Pedantry 3, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 3, Scuttlebutt 8, Seduction 3, Stealth 2, Stewardship 8, Wherewithal 6.
Resistances: none

Thorgumunt, Delaphasian Octopomp

"Before I demonstrate my paramount swordsmanship, please be so kind as to sign this waiver, absolving me of legal responsibility for any untoward consequences."

Thorgumunt is the ranking member of the Eight Delaphasians, a self-styled clique of swordsmen supreme. Among its junior members is the apprentice magician Ulan Dhor (*DERPG* p160), nephew to Prince Kandive. The Delaphasians gather at a pub called the Sturdy Hilt, where they hold court before a throng of would-be warriors, dispensing marginally useful advice and witty put-downs. Occasionally the Delaphasians square off against one another to determine their relative rankings. According to their organization's supposedly ancient charter (which was actually scrawled on the back of a fish-wrapper sixteen years ago, by Thorgumunt himself), there may never be more than eight Delaphasians. So if one is defeated in a fair, sanctioned match, he exchanges ranks with the victor. Only rarely do the Delaphasians agree to officially fight unranked fighters; the last time this



happened, Ulan Dhor defeated the seventh-ranked member, and thus joined the organization. Thorgumunt is both tall and enormously portly, with a long, heavily waxed moustache and dark hair plastered tight to his skull with an exotic mixture of gums and perfumes. He looks slow and cumbersome, but surprises with surprising speed and deftness on those rare occasions when he deigns to enter combat. Thorgumunt never tires of praising his own abilities, or belittling his admirers. He is rarely spotted without a large flagon of mead in one hand and a haunch of cold vras-mutton in the other.

Persuade (Obfuscatory) 10, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 15, Attack (Finesse) 2~, (Speed) 6, Defense (Misdirection) 2~, Vexation) 8, Health 10, Magic (Studious) 3, Appraisal 2, Athletics 6, Etiquette 4, Gambling 4, Living Rough 2, Pedantry 4, Perception 4, Riding 2, Scuttlebutt 3, Seduction 3, Stewardship 3, Wherewithal 3.

Resistances: none

Twisest, Under-Sheriff

"If you really mean to tell the prince how devotedly I protect the people here, you give me no option but to club you."

Nearly seven feet tall, with bulging arm muscles and a huge, bony face, the vigil Twisest cannot help but be one of the Threek's most noticeable men. He wears the black tunic and silver buttons of the vigil's uniform, his dark mop of unruly hair jutting out from under the standard helmet, which looks puny when propped up on his oversized skull.

Twisest is new to the job. The downfall of his predecessor, Medhesmi, is described above, in the entry for Nagesya, who engineered it. Twisest projects an air of pleasant stupidity, but if you have seen him in action, you've guessed that he's smarter than he allows himself to look. He probably understands the dangers of performing his job too effectively, especially if it puts him in conflict with the influential Nagesya. From Threeksiders, you hear that he's quickly gained a reputation for honesty. He sorts out disputes according to their merits, and refuses even the smallest gifts, lest he be accused of accepting bribes. His most obvious fault seems to be superstition; everybody knows he's mortally afraid of the weird extortionist Coarch (see above.)

Unlike most vigils, he makes himself approachable and seems to welcome friendly conversation. You've seen his men regard him with a mixture of admiration and wariness.

Persuade (Charming) 10, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 8, Attack (Strength) 12, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 8, Health 7, Athletics 6, Etiquette 2, Living Rough 2, Perception 4, Scuttlebutt 5, Stealth 3, Stewardship 3, Tracking 3, Wherewithal 5.

Resistances: Arrogance 4, Avarice 4, Indolence 3, Pettifoggery 3, Rakishness 2.

Places of Interest

Commercial Establishments

You'll find relatively few commercial establishments in the Threek. Though many people live here, they usually head to the Market to buy food and other essentials. The exception to this rule is the tavern; every few blocks, you'll find a dingy, anonymous drinking establishment where anxious locals sit together to mutter grimly and steel themselves for the world's imminent destruction.

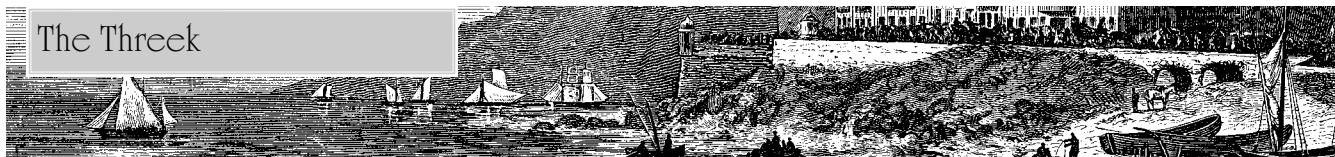
If you've spent much time in the Threek, you've probably imbibed in dozens of these establishments, all of which meld together in your memory. These are not the sorts of places where you get to know the barman. Nor are there entertainers or colorful customs to distinguish one place from the other. No signs hang from these tavern exteriors. Owners do not compete for business. Threekmen merely stumble in and out of the establishment nearest to their homes.

Scront's Tavern (D10)

An example of this sort of establishment is Scront's place, just this side of Canal Town. Scront is a dark-haired, fussy man with an aquiline nose whose uncontainable hatred towards Canal Towners stuck in your memory. You remember the place because some builders from that neighborhood came into the bar late in the evening, precipitating an immediate brawl which left fearful Threeksiders running for cover.

Emat's Tavern (F09)

There are a handful of distinctive taverns in the Threek. One of them, Emat's, caters to a small coterie



of artisans, buskers, actors, and poets who have gathered in a small area near the Golden Walk. Shunned by conservative Threeksiders they live among, they gather at Emat's to, in loud, drunken voices, earnestly discuss the future of art. They take as their standard theme the irreversible decline of culture since the 19th Aeon. Near the end of the night, they begin to pair up and head off to trysts in their badly-heated hovels. The tavern boasts a more colorful interior than other Threekside bars; patrons painted its elaborate mural of cavorting nymphs and satyrs in payment of outstanding debts. Faces on the lewd mural are periodically repainted to match those of the current clientele.

Emat himself is a tall, stocky man with long, thick white hair, high cheekbones, and a slightly blunted nose. He speaks in an exaggeratedly slow and measured manner.

Orzista's Tavern (K07)

Orzista's Tavern is sometimes said to lay at the exact center of the eastern Threek. Cleaner and more brightly lit than other taverns, it caters to the area's shop managers, who mostly live outside the Threek and hold themselves apart from their sullen, edgy workers. The intimidating manager Nagesya (see above) can often be found holding court here. The proprietress, Orzista, is a heavy-set, dark-skinned woman who projects an air of serenity and sophistication somewhat at odds with her station in life. She sometimes acts as an unofficial mediator of disputes between her customers, gracefully charming rival managers into reaching an accommodation.

The Sturdy Hilt (L04)

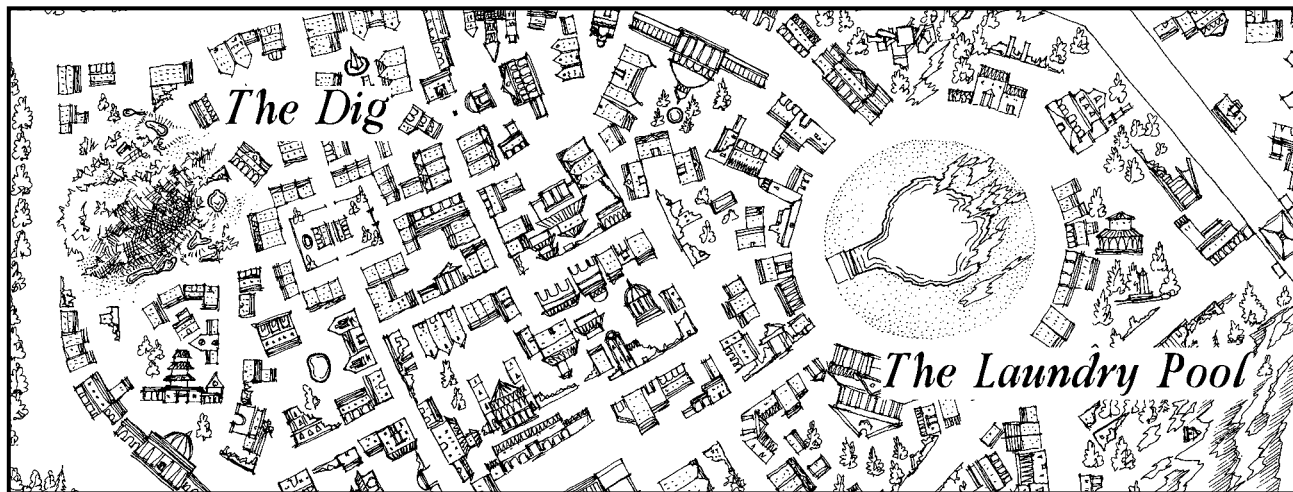
Would-be swordsmen come to this otherwise unremarkable tavern from all across Kaiin, and beyond. They come to bask in the glory of the Eight Delaphasians, known by reputation as the finest swordsmen in all of Ascolais. You may feel that their collective reputation is overrated, but there are dozens of young men who would say otherwise. The top-ranked member of the Delaphasians is Thorgumunt — see his entry for a description of this august organization.



Curiosities and Landmarks

The Dig (H09-10)

Just to the east of the Golden Walk sits a huge mound of upturned earth, in which artifacts of a previous city lie buried. Experienced pedants have long since given up digging here, believing the best items to have been picked over long ago. Most Threeksiders are afraid to sink their spades into the mound. These days, diggers most often find sealed clay jars, which more often than not contain nests of scorpions or poisonous snakes³. Even if the scavenger avoids a venomous bite, the jars themselves are common artifacts and of little value. Every so often, an intrepid outsider, systematically shoveling his way into the mound, finds a valuable curio or even a magical artifact. Treasure hunters then besiege the area, and legions of swindlers and thieves migrate from the Tracks in hopes of



³ How these animals get inside sealed jars is a persistent yet utterly trivial mystery.



separating them from their finds. When several weeks pass without any exciting discoveries, the fever dies down and people trickle back to their normal lives. The beleaguered workers whose homes ring around the mound breathe a sigh of relief and get back to worrying about the world's end

The Laundry Pool (L09)

This large, natural pond bubbles up from the depths of some unknown aquifer deep below the city. If Kaiin enjoyed sunnier weather, the pool might be a beautiful, soul-soothing landmark rendered in stunning blue. But because the sky it reflects is nearly always cloudy, the pond is most often a brooding, gloomy expanse of murky water, inviting suicides to dive irretrievably into its measureless depths. Its water is contaminated with lye from an unknown, presumably natural source. Though this renders it undrinkable, it makes the pool a suitable place for washing. Women and children from throughout the Threek gather here to pound their drab and worn clothes against the pond's stony shores. The water of the pool wreaks havoc on vivid colors and delicate fabrics, so you won't find the servants of the rich laundering their masters' clothing here.

Occasionally a large, apparently moving object disturbs the surface of the pool from below. No one agrees on what the thing is, though most Threeksiders conclude that it is a monster, and a carnivorous one, at that. Some people have seen fins, or a horse-shaped head, or even a long tentacle covered with spikes and tentacles. You once heard a pedant argue that the alleged creature is just a tangible memory of some long-dead beast, and is not to be feared. The last time you saw that fellow, come to think of it, he was standing on the shores of the laundry pool as dusk approached.



Events

Effigy Day

On the 22nd of Sorgent, hooded Threeksiders creep from their hovels in the middle of the night to burn effigies of taxation officers. Prince Kandive frowns on this ritual, and sometimes orders vigil detachments to break it up. Participants quickly scuttle away when they hear the clattering of horse's hooves. Although hardly anyone is ever captured, the unlucky exceptions may be subject to maiming or even execution.

Ball Day

Ball Day occurs on the fifteenth of Pestamel. In accordance with instructions left in the will of a caravan operator named Limenc, brightly-colored red balls are distributed to all of the children of the Threek. Limenc grew up in the Threek, and felt that its harshness drove him to succeed in life. In the morning, men hired from the builder's guild (see Canal Town, p24) fan out through the streets of the Threek to distribute thousands of balls to all children under the age of eleven. As dusk approaches, also according to Limenc's instructions, the builders head out again, to rip the balls out of the crying children's grasping little hands. By this means, Limenc teaches a lesson from beyond the grave: that pleasure is fleeting, that you can rely on no one, that life in the Threek is harsh, and that the truly intelligent individual makes early plans to escape it. Parents are quick to force their reluctant, weeping children to give up the balls, afraid of the vigorous beatings the builders guild dishes out to uncooperative adults.

Prince of Daupers Parade

On the fifth of Akosh, crowds spill out onto the streets of the Threek, streaming towards the Laundry Pool for an all-day festival in which one person is acclaimed as prince of the city's paupers. People eat and drink and toss chunks of partially-chewed bread as various individuals step forward to nominate ideal candidates for the position. Nominees may also speak, usually naming another candidate and arguing that he is more worthy of the honor. At the end of the day, the prince is selected by a show of hands from the raucous mob. The winner is seized by the crowd, wrapped in a confining royal cloak, and thrown into



the pool⁴. If you're a pedantic sort, you'll no doubt realize that this event is an echo of ancient human sacrifice, and that originally the winning candidate would surely be weighted down with rocks to assure his demise. Nowadays, though, winners are permitted to struggle to shore, and only rarely disappear beneath the pool's alkaline waters.

Rumors ...

- The odd extortionist Coarch has been repeatedly seen in the company of a hawk-faced, bald-headed individual of sinister aspect. The man's name is apparently Jactflad, but that's all you know about him. Speculation within the Threek has it that Coarch plans to retire, and has agreed to sell his secret, whatever that may be, to Jactflad. If this is true, you might be able to spy on them and learn the secret yourself. You could gain Coarch's powers, whatever those may be, or simply permanently rid the Threek of the menace they represent.
- Gipeggia comes to you, offering you a lifetime's worth of free prophecies in exchange for your help. A deep-voiced man, who always appears to her wearing a mask and a cloak, has demanded that she give incorrect predictions to a merchant named Resorb, who will shortly come to her, asking for a reading. The masked man has given her a script to follow, in which she tells him he'll face doom unless he performs a series of ritual actions. She is sure that Resorb will be ambushed and possibly even slain during one of the tasks she's supposed to demand of him. Afraid she'll lose her powers if she uses them deceitfully, she wants you to turn the tables on the masked villain.
- Reading Iccapasal's latest broadsheet, you find and decode a secret message. It was placed there by the Reprosorium. It knows the location of a fabulous magical treasure, and offers a treasure map as a reward to any person who can kill the Reprosorium, freeing it from its misery and torment.

- Distant relatives of the dead Under-Sheriff Medhesmi have arrived in Kaiin. According to their obscure creed, they must avenge the death of all family members. If they continue to blame Prince Kandive, as they do now, they'll all be killed. Perhaps you have reason to steer them towards Nagesya, the person truly responsible for Medhesmi's demise. On the other hand, if you're an adroit swindler, you could turn them against some entirely innocent enemy of yours.

- You receive a message from an anonymous sender. It contains a document bearing the signature of Twisest's father, Secillex. It's an oath in which Secillex swears eternal loyalty to a cell of rebels agitating for the prince's ouster. Do you use this information to expose the honest Twisest as the son of a traitor, or do you try to learn who schemes for Twisest's downfall?

Taglines

All such estimations are, by nature, inexact.

Be aware that any such action on your part will gravely decrease my productivity.

Ho! Who engages in nocturnal scuttling?

I believe I beheld a fluke, or perhaps a toothy maw.

I spoke merely in the interest of improved efficiency.

I urge you to adopt more flexible standards.

If the world is to die tomorrow, it is all the more reason for gaiety tonight.

It is chilling but also reassuring. Or do I mean reassuring, but also chilling?

Relent from your tedious expressions.

The accommodations are, I assure you, temporary.

This place is disagreeable to me, so I care not who asserts authority over it.

⁴ Speakers generally nominate people who are already present at the event. Sometimes they make sure a candidate will be there, by arranging with their friends to drag him hence.



Unlike your compatriots, I sense that you affect drab clothing intentionally.

You must admit that the slanders are inventively sketched.

Your apprehensions are not without merit.

Your frankness has become tiresome.

Your machinations are well-known.

Tweaks

Communicable Revulsion

(Resist : Gourmandism)

Situation: You accompany at least one other person at the dining table as a repast that looks rich and heavy by Threekside standards is served.

Description: Raised as a person of simple tastes, you look upon the sugary, sauce-laden, butter-swaddled foods of the wealthy and feel a sense of rising nausea. You are adept at communicating this queasiness to your fellow diners, putting them off their food as well.

Benefit: You can use your Resist Gourmandism points as Persuade points when convincing a person that the fine viands laid before them will only make them ill. If the chef is present, and chooses to argue with you (as he most likely will), the two of you engage in a verbal duel. You spend Persuade and/or Resist Gourmandism points; he spends Persuade and/or Stewardship points. The winner of the contest convinces the assembled diners is either good (if the chef wins) or too rich (if you win.)

"Oh, She Has A Sneaky Look, That One Does"

(Resist : Rakishness)

Situation: You are present when a friend, ally, or other companion gazes lustfully at a person he or she obviously finds highly desirable.

Description: In many circumstances, the rakish behavior of your allies means little to you. But in other situations, you may have good reason to deter

them from their cause. Perhaps their attempt to initiate a tryst will distract your friend from performing an important task. Or maybe you wish to yourself pursue the object of your friend's desire, and must eliminate him as competition. In either case, drawing upon the Threeksider's talent for conjuring up nightmare scenarios from the most innocuous of occasions, you convince your companion that the person he desires has evil intentions for him, or, at the very least, will lead him into terrible trouble.

Benefit: You may spend your Resist Rakishness points to allow rerolls of any other character's Resist Rakishness failures. As always, it costs 1 for any reroll other than a Dismal Failure, which costs 3 points.

Just a Poor And Simple Soul

(Rebuff : Wary)

Situation: You are the subject of a persuasion attempt by a person of greater wealth or social position than yourself.

Description: Raised to distrust all persons richer or more important than your Threekside parents, you can counter your interlocutor with proudly humble statements such as the following:

- ✦ *"I was born into poverty, not gullibility."*
- ✦ *"Every sensible person knows to disregard words of more than two syllables."*
- ✦ *"You are wealthy, but not there are those who cannot be purchased."*
- ✦ *"I am a humble person of no importance, and worry that you would discard me at the earliest necessity."*

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on your Rebuff rolls if the character attempting to Persuade you was born into wealth and social position, and is even now much richer and more influential than you are.





Chapter 10

The Tracks

“There my hopes crested, like a wave, and then were dashed against the rocks of actuality’s shore.”

— Crendenst Melliflor, *Second Compendium of Rueful Advice*

South of the city’s walls, near the bayshore, lies an area dominated by a race track, where the city’s gamblers gather. Though the races of the weasel-like steeds called dhjetar are the main source of interest, you can find a game of chance here to suit any taste.

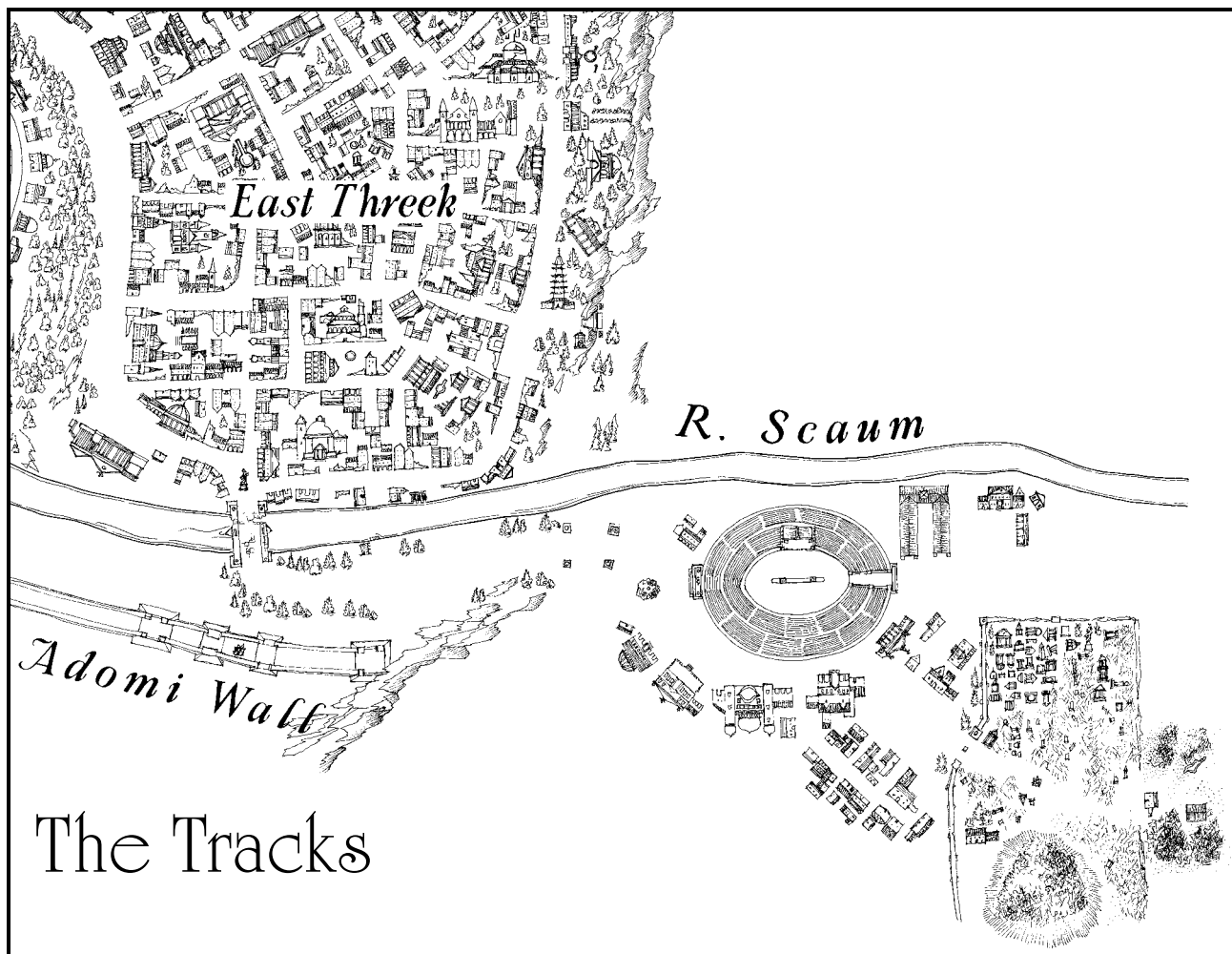
On First Glance

A long, oval, dirt track, about half a mile long, gives the Tracks its name and serves as its center of activity. It is recessed into the ground, just like the ruins of ancient arenas you may have seen. Limestone benches, terraced into the sloping sides of the pit, surround it. On the eastern end of the track, a sloping ramp intersects the rows of benches. The dhejtar trainers use this to get their energetic, long-clawed beasts down onto the track before each race.

A disorderly arrangement of new stone buildings surrounds the track. Several long buildings stable the dhjetar. Other structures serve as gaming houses. Food vendors put up stalls to sell hot molluscs and ale to famished gamblers. Two wooden poles stretch up into the sky, with various lengths of chain strung between them. This is the well-known punishment rack, to which gamblers unable to make good on their bets are strung by the wrists. A brutal custom of the Track encourages passersby to abuse the unfortunates strung to it. Parents often bring their children here to hurl small rocks and clods of dirt at them. The experience is considered enriching; the child learns a salutary lesson on the importance of debt repayment, in a manner both enjoyable and easy to remember. Guardians employed by the League for the Promotion of Integrity In Gaming (see below) charge spectators according to the size and relative lethality of the objects they wish to hurl. Depending on instructions left by the debtor, the guardians may or may not protect a particular defaulting gambler from missiles likely to kill or maim him. Defaulters are held until they expire, the creditor relents, others show up to pay on his behalf, or the fees from object-hurling spectators cancel out his debt.

At all hours, the muffled sound of revelry emanates from the gaming houses. At race time, these noises are drowned out by the chattering anticipation of the crowds who gather on the limestone benches. At other hours, they echo eerily across what is an otherwise deserted area. The occasional high yowl from the dhjetar stables completes the uncanny effect.

The Tracks get chilly at night, as cool air blows in from the bay. As is the case in much of Kaiin, the air is damp and redolent with the decay of rotting sea creatures.



Didactic Overview

Ten years ago, the gambling center of Kaiin was found near Odkin Prospect. At that time, the city's wealthiest citizens had only a minimal distance to walk before relieving themselves of their burdensome wealth. However, gaming houses tend to attract a low and predatory element, and local residents began to find their nearness unappealing. Petitions were made to the prince to force their relocation. At about this time, he became captivated by the dhjetar, a racing creature imported from the east. This sleek and fast-moving beast, blessed with a carnivore's ferocity, soon replaced the horse and the oxyhs in the affections of race enthusiasts. Kandive promised the city's gambling magnates a license in perpetuity if they would move their operations outside the city walls, and also build a track for the racing of these fascinating beasts. They

were reluctant to follow his orders, but needn't have worried. Dhjetar racing has become wildly popular in Kaiin, and the magnates now squeeze much of their revenue from it.

Although the prince claims jurisdiction over this area, as he would any neighborhood within the walls, he relies on the magnates to keep order. All he does is collect a hefty portion of the proceeds as taxes, and shows up to sponsor the occasional race. The track owners may grumble about the terces he skims from them, but must admit that his presence at the track promotes a festive air which attracts the large and eager crowds. In honest moments, they must admit that the prince has done a great deal to line their pockets. If there were ever a revolt against Kandive, you can bet that the gamblers would fiercely fund loyalists to help put it down.



Inhabitants

No one lives here, but many come to play. Come to the Tracks when you seek gamblers, animal trainers, petty criminals, or low-order trollops.

League for the Promotion of Integrity In Gaming

The League for the Promotion of Integrity In Gaming is the lofty title for an organization controlled by the four gambling magnates of the Tracks. Though it carries on with all of the pomp of a guild or fraternal order, it is essentially a corporation co-owned by the four men. Its felt-capped, epaulette-wearing functionaries, the Captains of Integrity, circulate through the area, looking for valued patrons to protect and conflicts to mediate. When their efforts fail or prove unsuited to a task, the League's uniformed bullies, the Sergeants of Integrity, enforce both the magnate's edicts and the Prince's laws. They are noted for their mastery of the kicking arts, and the fiendish gleam of their spike-toed metal boots.

The League's four controllers are the sadistic Anersi, the well-weathered Erosto, the eccentric G'ja, and the demanding Tracula, the group's sole woman. All but the first-named were already well-established in their trade before it moved to the Tracks. Anersi was, at the time, a mere henchmen of another magnate, the unpopular Strindo. Three years ago, Strindo vanished. After a series of violent accidents overtook his rivals, Anersi seized control of Strindo's affairs. From what you understand, Anersi then overplayed his hand with his new colleagues, making them fear he meant to do to them what he'd apparently done to Strindo. They banded together against him, but violence between his henchmen and theirs was brief. The four quickly reached a new accord and have peacefully cooperated ever since. If you could be a fly on the wall of their meetings, you would probably see tensions still simmering between them. But the average gambler certainly never notices any signs of it. Any prolonged disturbance between the four of them would certainly arouse the anger of their silent partner, Prince Kandive. It seems that they all know better than to permit such a thing.



Contacts

Bet Taker

"Bet or belay your jabbering!"

Bet takers, wear distinctive hide aprons made from the skins of dhjetar mauled on the raceway. Waving hands in the air, they circulate among the stone bleachers, taking in groats and terces, and issuing betting slips in return. Much shouting is involved, as gamblers ring around the bet takers and compete to be heard. Time between races is limited, and no bet taker will speak to you when he's working. Bettors may thump you if you interrupt and prevent them from purchasing their precious betting slips. However, after the day's races have concluded, the bet takers find themselves at loose ends, and congregate in the musty tavern known as the Hide Vest. There they complain about their bosses, the betting magnates. They make fun of the captains and sergeants of integrity, and mock the vanity of the dhjetar trainers. Their days are long, made up of long periods of boredom punctuated by quick bouts of intense pressure. They drink heavily and speak loosely. They won't be able to tell you much about their customers, though, because they only know from having their ears shouted into.

Captain of Integrity

"Come now. Let us solve this problem by speaking at length about it."

The Captains of Integrity, resplendent in fine uniforms of hard green felt, adorned with gilded rope, put forward the League's friendliest face. They solve problems involving wealthy patrons too influential to be jabbed by sharp-toed bullies or strung out on the punishment rack. Persuasive yet obsequious, the best of them establish good relationships with the area's most genteel patrons. Though they know the peccadilloes of wealthy bettors, they will be hesitant to share damaging information with you. They will gladly tell you about disturbances created by lesser sorts. They can identify pickpockets and waylayers, but it's the Sergeants of Integrity (see below) who roughly deal with these types. The Captains hold themselves above the Sergeants and may share unseemly gossip about them. They are generally quite loyal to the four gambling magnates, to whom they owe what they regard as their high status. They will not knowingly act against their bosses.



Dhjetar Wrangler

"He's a fine specimen: spiky, yet quick."

Dhjetar come from a land far to the east, and the first wave of trainers hailed from there, too. In the ten years since racing has become established in Kaiin, native-born handlers have risen up to challenge them. The creatures are now bred here, which is much less expensive than importing them. Dhjetar wranglers are ferociously competitive, just like the beasts they husband, and will gladly spill all sorts of unflattering intelligence about their rivals. Some of it may even be true. An independent-minded breed, they look on their bosses, the gambling magnates, with utter contempt. They'll happily slander any of the magnates, but their knowledge is limited to racing-related matters. A dhjetar wrangler will know which magnate said an idiotic thing about the proper mix of meat to meal in a racer's diet, but can't tell you about his accounting procedures or romantic liaisons.

Touts bribe them for tidbits of information, which they dribble out sparingly, to keep its value high. Even with their pockets lined, they make no secret of their scorn for the touts, as they do for anyone who claims to know more about dhjetar than they do.

Gambler, Well-Heeled

"I declare myself amused at this sportive activity."

Well-heeled gamblers treat betting as just one essential component of the leisurely life, along with the pursuit of fine foods, glorious wines and romantic conquests. They can afford to lose more terces in one night than most people see in their lifetimes. They may be inheritors of vast fortunes or captains of merchant empires. These people play for the pure thrill of winning. Even the sum they'd collect for an enormous win pales in comparison to their existing fortunes.

Well-heeled gamblers can share gossip on others of their kind. The peccadilloes of their circle extend beyond gambling, and stories of outrageous behavior travel quickly. Although bored by the topic, they can also tell you about the business dealings of their fellows. Among nobles of ancient families, gossip often centers around which aristocrats are about to slide into relative poverty.

You'll need an Etiquette rating of 4 or more to make a well-heeled gambler contact.



Of course, some gamblers can ill afford their losses and embarrassment ensues.

Gambler, Casual

"Let us wait one race more, in hopes that one of the beasts mauls another."

While waiting for the next dhjetar race to begin, you might find yourself speaking with a person from virtually any walk of life. In other circumstances, social constraints might prevent you from striking up a conversation with a person of vastly different status than yourself. But, so long as you begin by discoursing knowledgeably on the races, you can develop a warm but fleeting bond with almost any race enthusiast.

You'll need a Gambling rating of 4 or more to make contacts among casual gamblers. This contact works a little differently than most. Draw on it when you get stuck and don't know what to do next. Head to the track and strike up a random conversation with someone near to you. Your GM will do her best to contrive a situation in which the spectator happens to have a piece of information you can use to move forward in the storyline, towards the next obstacle.



You can only do this once per session. Only one player may draw on a casual gambler contact during any given session of play. The GM may limit this open-ended contact's usefulness if you draw upon it every single session.

Gambler, Desperate

"I assure you that none of these bruises were acquired on the punishment rack."

To desperate gamblers, the Tracks are more than a place of casual diversion. The need to bet rages through their veins like a fever. They long ago wagered away their money, and any hope of a quiet life. They mill forlornly around the area's outskirts, begging for terces or vainly seeking backers to finance their betting. From your point of view, the best thing about a desperate gambler is his eagerness to please you, so long as you're offering him coins to wager with. They well know the sergeants of integrity and freelance leg-breakers, from being on the receiving end of their brutal beatings. Although they'd stab one another for a groat, they feel a grim sense of mutual empathy, and can always recite a complete list of recent victims of the punishment rack. They may also know things from their previous lives, whether as well-heeled or casual gamblers. Be warned that their news of everyday life will now be old and moldy, as their families and colleagues have turned away from them. You may also be able to use them to perform minor services for you, even especially dangerous or humiliating ones. After all, desperate gamblers wouldn't be desperate gamblers if they were skilled at assessing risks.

Pickpocket

"I meant only to gaze upon the fine fabric of your over-jacket."

The raceway is a pickpocket's paradise: it offers a tight and bustling crowd in which to work, where people are forever pulling out their purses to fill the palms of bet-takers. A successful pickpocket must be keenly observant: he follows his targets carefully, watching for their moments of maximum distraction. While focusing on a particular mark, he must at the same time scan the rest of the crowd for sergeants of integrity. The pickpocket fears the sergeants fervently, and with good reason: most bear tell-tale puncture wounds from their famous boot toes. No pickpocket

will ever do you any favor that heightens their risk of a kicking. However, he might, for a reasonable fee, share with you the fruits of his keen observations. He might not care about the movements of, say, the woman in the purple hat, but he nonetheless remembers them with absolute precision, even if he was not conscious of her at the time.

You may find yourself wanting to examine a document or magical which is inconveniently located on someone else's person. With suitable persuading, and a generous offer of payment, you can convince a pickpocket contact to get this thing for you. For an extra fee, he can return it, unnoticed.

Sergeant of Integrity

"Do not make me take the toe to you."

The stone-faced sergeants of integrity would probably be viciously kicking people even if it weren't their job. They are delighted beyond measure to be well-compensated for pursuing their vocation. Accordingly, even though they are well-acquainted with the area's troublemakers and petty criminals, they'll only aid you when certain you mean no harm to their employers. As rigid enforcers of class distinctions, they'll never tell you anything negative about their social superiors. You may be able to help loosen the lips of a pickpocket or desperate gambler by asking a sergeant contact to stand nearby and look intimidating while you ask questions.

Tout

"The Estimable Render, in the second."

Touts make their living by learning everything possible about the dhjetar and their trainers, and selling tips to bettors. Neophyte touts stand on small crates and loudly shout their offers of information to all comers. More successful ones circulate among a roster of regular clients, quietly revealing the raceway's secret truths. The top touts work exclusively for a single wealthy enthusiast, serving as a part of his household.

The tout offers an objective viewpoint on the racing world. Unless he's an exclusive agent, he'll tell you what you want to know — for a price. However, he's used to putting a value only on gossip that can be put to use in the placing of bets. If you seek other sorts of information, he might volunteer it for free. On the other hand, he may not pay attention to



events outside the dhjetar stables.

Trollop

"There is a flat spot out back, and I have a blanket with me."

Gambling houses swirl with desire, and not just for a miraculous win at the card tables. A variety of trollops, ranging from the rude to the refined, circulate through the Tracks, searching for customers ready to part with their winnings. Many carry licenses issued to them by the League for the Promotion of Integrity In Gaming; the administrator of that organization, Frolaga (see below), doubles as the district's top procurer. Unlicensed trollops risk being driven away, or worse, by the Sergeants of Integrity.

Trollops are reluctant to waste their time talking when they could be trawling for customers. You'll need to part with some coins before extracting any useful information from them. They don't worry much about protecting the confidentiality of their clients. For the right price, they may also be willing to assist you in executing various scams and swindles. Don't expect them to risk physical harm, or to maintain their loyalty to you when presented with a better offer.

Waylayer

"Why should I work for the partial contents of your purse, when I can take the entire thing by force?"

The waylayer, like the pickpocket, seeks to prey on unwary gamblers, but he does his work with not with quick fingers, but with a stout club. Waylayers seldom venture near the track itself; it is too well patrolled by the Sergeants of Integrity. Instead, they stake out favorite alcoves and alleyways on the best-traveled routes home from the gambling district, waiting to catch tired and drunken winners as they stumble home. Not being especially picky, they'll also club down unsuspecting types heading towards the Tracks, if given the chance. In general, though, gamblers less alert, and thus more likely to get clubbed, on their journey back home.

Waylayers aren't fonts of information on the habits of the district; their contact with people generally takes place at the end of a cudgel. However, an ingenious person such as yourself might find ways to employ individuals who are big, stupid, and used to making a living by violent means.

Personages

Anersi, Sadistic Gaming Magnate

"I have a second punishment rack, in my place of abode, which I might have reason to acquaint you with."

Anersi is a stocky, bald man who surveys the world through sinister, pinprick eyes. He strides forward with intimidating confidence, kitted out in a tight, silken black tunic, blood-colored leggings, and a crimson cassock. On the frequent holy days of his family deity, Geggi the Unwieldy, he decorates his bare pate with arcane designs rendered in blue greasepaint.

With Erosto, G'ja and Tracula, (all described in this section), he is one of the four gambling magnates who jointly control the Tracks. Everyone knows the story of how he muscled his way up from an impoverished beginning as a Threeside street urchin. He started in the Tracks just as they were built, beginning as a Sergeant of Integrity and slowly working his way into the organization of his brutal predecessor. When that unloved fellow vanished, several years ago, Anersi seized his operation, and now controls it with an iron hand. From what you hear, he still makes the other three magnates nervous, even though they've long since reached a state of peace. Anersi's violent predilections are well known. Avoid owing a large gambling debt to him alone. Instead of sending you to the punishment rack, he'll take you home to the personal torture chamber in his manse. You hear that people sometimes go there and never come back. Presumably, Anersi must select his victims carefully, avoiding the prince's disapproval.

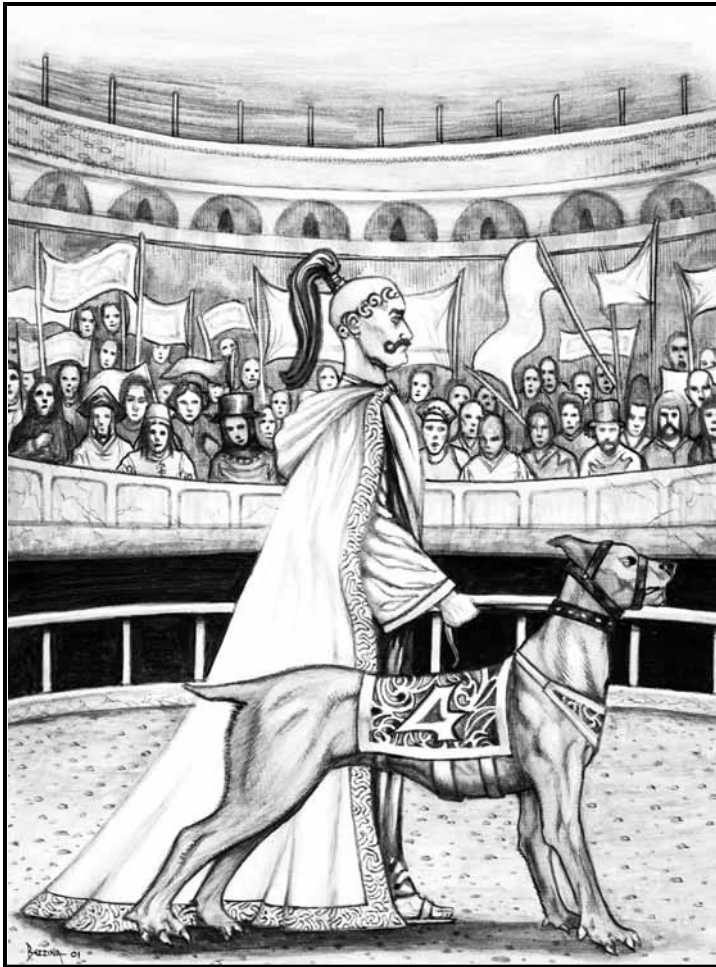
Persuade (Intimidating) 10, Rebuff (Penetrating) 12, Attack (Ferocity) 9, Defense (Misdirection) 8, Health 7, Magic (Devious) 3, Appraisal 4, Athletics 6, Etiquette 3, Gambling 8, Perception 4, Riding 2, Scuttlebutt 3, Seduction 3, Stewardship 4, Wealth 20, Wherewithal 6.

Resistances: Indolence 4, Gourmandism 4, Pettifoggery 6.

Chanjei, Consort to Winners

"The charming flecks of gray at your temples are superbly highlighted by the glitter of your coin pile."

Slim, dark-haired, and blessed with intelligent features, the alluring Chanjei is the Track's reigning



consort to top gamblers. Though not herself wealthy or well-born, she circulates among the city's aristocracy, moving from the arm of one willing gambler to another. Legend has it that her embrace brings luck. Perhaps it is simply that she picks the luckiest gamblers as her lovers, and jettisons the unfortunate. Her prowess in the bed chamber is also the subject of legend, but you suppose that even a gambler indifferent to her charms might allow her to move in with him, just for the status she brings. In the Tracks, there is no greater sign of success than to stand at the card table with Chanjei's perfect, delicate hand perched affectionately in the crook of your elbow. The aloof, untouchable air she maintains make the victory even sweeter, for those who prove herself worthy of her charms.

You've never seen her gamble herself, but she seems to give her lovers sound advice.

Persuade (Charming) 10, Rebuff (Wary) 15, Attack (Caution) 3, Defense (Intuition) 4, Health 6, Magic (Insightful) 3, Appraisal 6, Athletics 4, Etiquette 6, Gambling 6, Pedantry 3, Perception 4, Quick Fingers 6, Riding 2, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 10, Wherewithal 3. Resistances: Gourmandism 6, Pettifoggery 4, Rakishness 6.

Erosto, Hardened Gaming Magnate

"I will deal with you as I have a hundred others of your kind."

Many years of hard living mark the stolid, jowly face of the gaming magnate Erosto. He has been running a gaming operation for over thirty years, and carries himself with the confidence that stems from having outlasted many rivals. He speaks tersely, by Kaiin standards, often issuing commands to his henchmen with simple, wordless gestures. You've never seen him smile, or even relax his broad shoulders. He typically garbs himself in a simple doublet, half-coat, and trousers, all dark and made from extremely expensive fabric. He wears a forest-green three-corner hat, trimmed with gold thread. His fingers are short and blunt, his hair a dull orange running to gray.

You've heard that Erosto pursues surprisingly few vices for a man of his wealth and occupation. He returns home each night to his large manse, which is impressively decorated on the outside but spare and nearly unfurnished inside. After conducting any business he might have with his lieutenants, he retires to a room stacked from floor to ceiling with coin-filled coffers. He sits in a hard chair staring at them, or so the stories go, until weariness takes him, and he pads off to bed.

Although the image of the stacked coffers is an enticing one to burglars, you have never heard of anyone trying to steal them. Quiet, certain, and perhaps dead inside, Erosto is not the sort of person even a daring criminal would readily antagonize.

Persuade (Forthright) 14, Rebuff (Wary) 17, Attack (Strength) 12, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 15, Health 8, Magic (Forceful) 4, Appraisal 6, Athletics 6, Etiquette 2, Gambling 10, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 3,



Seduction 2, Wealth 24, Wherewithal 8.
Resistances: Pettifoggery ½.

Fladant, Luckless Gambler

“My wretched luck to date can surely be ascribed to statistical anomaly.”

The woeful Fladant is a walking cautionary tale; his pathetic presence reminds all who meet him of the cruel fate awaiting the reckless gambler. Everyone knows he was once the head of a famous and wealthy aristocratic family, and that he lost wagonloads of terces here before his kinsmen disowned him. You’ve often seen him in the Tracks, crouching in an alcove or under a moldy cloak, to protect himself from the drizzling rain. He begs and wheedles piteously, in hopes that someone will toss him a groat or terce. If he gets anything, he quickly scuttles off towards the nearest gaming house, ready to slap it down and place a bet. He does so with a glazed look in his eyes, which only leaves him when he loses, as he inevitably does. Then he has to be carried bodily out the doors, weeping and smacking himself in the head. Most gaming houses have banned him entirely, but Anersi’s establishments still allow him in. Even there, you’ve seen him put through a humiliating ritual, where the doormen frisk him for coins as he begs for admittance. When his pockets are empty, he is thrown back into the muddy street.

Fladant is a short, less-than-muscular individual with curly dark brown hair, deeply furrowed brows, and worried eyes that remind you of a squirrel’s. He wears a large, floppy felt hat, which has become discolored and shapeless after months spent shielding him from the rain. In his threadbare golden-colored silk tail coat, worn over a robe of mended sacking, you can see a hint of his former status.

You know that Fladant will do nearly anything for spare change. His supply of gossip regarding his former peers is several years out of date, but, if suitably cleaned up, he can perform a wide range of services for you. You may have already discovered how unwise it is to pay him in advance: the moment he gets a coin in his hand, he’s off to the gaming tables, your agreement with him notwithstanding.

Persuade (Glib) 12, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 12, Attack (Ferocity) 6, Defense (Parry) 3, Health 4, Magic (Insightful) 7, Appraisal 7, Athletics 3, Concealment

6, Driving 6, Engineering 6, Etiquette 8, Gambling 6, Living Rough 4, Pedantry 8, Perception 8, Quick Fingers 5, Riding 6, Scuttlebutt 8, Seamanship 4, Seduction 2, Stealth 8, Stewardship 4, Tracking 6, Wherewithal 2.

Resistances: none

Spells¹: Arnhoults Sequestrous Digitalia, Charm of Brachial Fortitude, Edan’s Thaumaturgic Poultice, Enchantment of Another’s Face.

Notes: Fladant suffers a levy of 2 on Rebuff if his opponent in the persuasion contest offers him even a single terce. His Gambling ability only works for informational purposes: for example, to know the secret peccadilloes of a well-known tout, or the precise mathematical odds of any given hand coming up in a card game. When actually playing a game of chance, he suffers a -5 penalty on each roll.

Frolaga, Commissioner of Integrity

“Those who assist us are thoroughly rewarded.”

If you have a problem with a sergeant or captain, need to hire the services of fine prostitutes, or wish to secure an introduction to a gambling magnate, the serenely beautiful Frolaga is the person to cultivate. She glides through the Tracks on velvet slippers, flanked by four stout Sergeants of Integrity, looking for ways in which to increase the comfort of the district’s most affluent patrons. She commands the League for the Promotion of Integrity In Gaming. Occasionally her post requires her to discipline wayward Sergeants or Captains, but these duties leave her with plenty of time to actuate the whims of top patrons. In this capacity, she also serves as the district’s procurer in chief. She issues licenses to trollops, periodically taking them aside to inspect them and to lecture them on the principles of service. You know that several ladies of the evening have gone missing after mistreating moneyed clients, and that Frolaga is widely suspected of ordering their disappearances. She doesn’t claim to be responsible for their deaths, but doesn’t deny the rumor, either. Since it makes her job easier if the trollops fear her, you don’t expect her to resolve the ambiguity.

She usually wears long, silk robes, often in royal blue or dazzling red, decorated with elaborate embroidered appliques. Her hairstyle is unusual: she

¹ It is not normally our habit to list the spells magicians can perform, but, since you may purchase Fladant’s services in exchange for gambling money, we make an exception in this case.

keeps it short and slicked tightly to her sublimely proportional skull. She eschews hat or bonnet in favor of a delicately filigreed tiara from which tiny black pearls dangle and shine.

Persuade (Charming) 15, Rebuff (Penetrating) 14, Attack (Finesse) 6, Defense (Intuition) 6, Health 6, Magic (Curious) 2, Appraisal 4, Athletics 4, Etiquette 8, Gambling 6, Pedantry 2, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 4, Scuttlebutt 8, Seduction 6, Stewardship 8, Wherewithal 5.

Resistances: Gourmandism 4, Pettifoggery 4.

G'ja, Peculiar Gaming Magnate

"Hold him, whilst I test my rapier."

The apparently ageless gambling magnate G'ja is an eccentric fellow recognizable by his curly, corn-colored hair, thin, puppet-like physique, and high, nasal voice.

A former student of the Scholasticarium, he supposedly won his position as gambling magnate in a bet. Many suspect that he ensorcelled his rival, magically swindling him out of his gaming empire. G'ja does not carry himself with the dignity and menace typical of his fellow magnates, instead appearing as a bit of a clown. He's clumsy, slightly girlish in his movements, and given to comic misunderstandings of things others say to him. You've been warned, though not to be fooled by his buffoonish manner: apparently, he's the most dangerous of the four gambling magnates. His mood can turn in an instant, from casual jape to homicidal fury. He's not only quick to order his bodyguards to carry out an execution, but skilled in the use of his own sword, and anxious to prove it.

G'ja's fashion preferences change quickly, and it is difficult to generalize about his wardrobe, except to say that each outfit is more outlandish and colorful than the last. You once saw him nearly run a man through for sniggering at the lace poking out from his boot cuffs.

Persuade (Intimidating) 8, Rebuff (Contrary) 12, Attack (Finesse) 12, Defense (Vexation) 12, Health 6, Magic (Forceful) 2, Appraisal 3, Athletics 7, Etiquette 4, Gambling 6, Pedantry 8, Perception 3, Scuttlebutt 5, Seduction 3, Stewardship 5, Wealth 22, Wherewithal 3.

Resistances: none

Manosto, Successful Gambler

"To refer to myself as fortunate would be to court the wrath of the gods."

Every gambler envies the elegant, soft-spoken Manosto, for whom luck is a swooning handmaiden. Legend has it that he was born as the grubbiest Threekside orphan, though his impeccable manners and sentence construction lead you to suspect that he was, in truth, at least of the petty merchant class. When he sweeps grandly into a gaming house, in his black and silver doublet and flaring, ruddy pants, jaws drop and conversation falls silent. All stand and watch as Manosto once again readies himself to show off his phenomenal luck. Inevitably, he wins, to the cheers of the crowd, and the frowns of dealers and bet-takers. It is no secret that the gaming magnates suspect Manosto of magical chicanery. But, even with their wards against occult cheaters (see sidebar overleaf), they've never been able to detect any hint of magic around him. Every so often, they bar him from their establishments anyway. Then, after a month or so, he always seems to get invited back. You heard an entertaining explanation for this pattern: apparently, the gaming houses lose money when people know Manosto has been banned from the district. Not only do gamblers come to the Tracks hoping to glimpse him, but his presence makes them gamble more recklessly than they otherwise would. Some think even a brief touch of his cape brings luck. Others are emboldened into thinking that they can win big, if only they bet as fearlessly as Manosto. Thus the terces the magnates lose to him are more than offset by those they rake in from his foolish admirers.

If you ever tried to approach Manosto, you found him cordial but distant. He always comes alone to the gaming houses, and no one knows where he lives. Doubtless his mysterious appearances and departures are a security measure to deter burglars. No one seems to have any idea what he does with his winnings.

Persuade (Glib) 8, Rebuff (Lawyerly) 12, Attack (Cunning) 8, Defense (Intuition) 8, Health 6, Magic (Insightful) 3, Athletics 4, Concealment 6, Etiquette 4, Gambling 20, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 4, Scuttlebutt 4, Seduction 7, Stewardship 4, Wealth 22, Wherewithal 4.

Resistances: Arrogance 4.



Defenses Against Magical Cheating



All of the area's gaming houses boast defenses against cheating magicians. Each magnate uses his own system, each supplied by a different Arch-Magician.

In ANERSI'S houses, an energy crackles in the air whenever a magical effect, whether from a spell or an enchanted item, is activated. It delivers a painful shock to its originator. (Score a Wherewithal success, or lose 1 Health point for each shock.) This system was created by Mazirian the Magician. You are not sure what Anersi did for Mazirian in exchange for this service, though you've heard whispers about the magnate supplying the magician with useful captives.

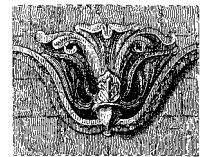
EROSTO'S bet takers must quaff a potion which allows them to see a glow in the air whenever magic is used. A dose of the potion lasts for about a month. You once heard a couple of dealers complaining about how foul it was; one said he gets sick and must stay in bed for a couple of days every time he drinks it. This potion is supplied by the Arch-Magician Hurtiancz (*DERPG* p156), allegedly after he lost repeated hands of Smallmouth² to his rival Rhialto.

G'JA'S system employs a number of shield-shaped metal masks, which loudly announce any use of magic in the premises. They complete the humiliation by insulting the cheater's garb, in terms uncompromising yet penetratingly apt. These masks were installed for G'ja by the Arch-Magician Rhialto, who apparently sought to prove he could

create a much better system than Hurtiancz had done for Erosto.

In TRACSULA'S houses, cheaters may not be detected immediately, but have special reason to fear. Special floor tiles detect the use of magic, then marking the malfeasant with a special radiation field. The field attracts assaults from demonic beings, who can easily pierce the veils between their reality and this one in pursuit of the cheater's blood and marrow. Although only lesser demons at first vex the charlatan, progressively larger and more powerful ones sniff out his scent over time. This system was created by Lucounu the Laughing Magician, allegedly as an offering in a campaign of seduction aimed at the smooth-skinned Tracsula.

At this point, the attentive reader doubtless wonders about sandestins: surely their powers are greater than those of the magicians who created the anti-magical devices. This is true, but the possibility of a sandestin cheating at gambling on a magician's behalf is extremely low. Games of chance are very complex, and thus offer the sandestin nearly limitless opportunities to embarrassingly thwart an Arch-Magician's instructions. As always, they consider any attempt to use them in the gathering of wealth to be tasteless and beneath their capacities. For this reason, it would not be necessary to take precautions against sandestins, even if it were possible.



Pernflo, Breaker of Arms

"I assure you that the pleasure I take in this will be strictly of a professional nature."

Although each of the four magnates employs a dozen or so dedicated bodyguards, none of them is considered as efficient in the punishment of debtors and cheaters than the freelance operator Pernflo. His battered features betray a legendary past as a bare-knuckle fighter. Pernflo keeps his hair unkempt and his large, dark moustache untrimmed. He strides purposefully through the Tracks, his beige linen shirt open to display his formidably meaty physique. Though he looks brutish, he speaks quite articulately,

carefully explaining why his target of the moment might prefer to pay back his debts rather than undergo a savage beating.

The gambling magnates are his main clients, but Pernflo might, under the right circumstances, be willing to work for you. He will only collect legal and valid debts, and will not break the law. (Kandive's edicts allow creditors considerable leeway in extracting monies they're owed.) He insists that he be allowed to speak to the target before laying a hand on him, explaining that he is often able to make things right merely by issuing a few colorfully-detailed threats. He charges 100 terces a day, or a 20% commission on any

² Smallmouth: an archaic card game of the 18th Aeon, in which players must periodically swap positions at the table. Considered over-elaborate by today's gamblers, it is favored mostly by long-lived individuals who first learned to play in that more refined era.

debts collected, whichever is greater. He earns additional money on the side as a fight trainer, and is also an expert on orchids. If you wish to engage him in conversation on this last subject, make sure that you have no other appointments on your immediate schedule. Once he begins to discourse on his favorite topic, he is almost impossible to stop.

Persuade (Intimidating) 16, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 15, Attack (Strength) 12 (Speed) 6, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 8 (Intuition) 4, Health 7, Magic (Forceful) 2, Athletics 8, Etiquette 8, Gambling 2, Perception 4, Scuttlebutt 6, Stewardship 4, Tracking 5, Wherewithal 7.
Resistances: none

Shote, Dhjetar Trainer

"Most men are ignorant, and, until shown contrary evidence, I assume the same of you."

The tall, bony animal trainer called Shote is notorious for his arrogance; he even insults the wealthy owners who pay for the racing beasts he considers his. He's trained more winning dhjetar than any other rival. This distinction allows him to behave in a manner that would otherwise get him whipped. Although he's becoming wealthy himself, he still displays a limitless contempt for the rich and well-born. In fact, he despises everyone who knows less about dhjetar than himself, which is to say everyone. Still, if there's a question about dhjetar you need answered, this unpleasant fellow is the most likely to be able to provide the answer. As far as you know, he has no interests outside his profession. But then, like everyone else, you feel little desire to spend enough time with him to find out.

Persuade (Forthright) 4, Rebuff (Obtuse) 8, Attack (Caution) 4, Defense (Vexation) 6, Health 6, Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Driving 6, Pedantry 6, Perception 4, Stewardship 4, Wealth 4, Wherewithal 3.
Resistances: none

Note: On Pedantry, Perception or Driving rolls involving dhjetar, he treats all Failures as Hair's-Breadth Successes.

Tracula, Demanding Gaming Magnate

"Bring him to me, with a rope at his wrists, and a sack on his head!"

Deaf-mute from birth, the ravishing yet grotesque Tracula hears and communicates with the aid of magical devices. Articulated, jeweled seahorses of gold and brass wrap around her earlobes, moving forward to listen when you talk. They then curl in towards the orifices of her ears, poking their snouts in to relay your words into her brain. You can barely hear their high-pitched, squealing translation, but may sometimes detect that the translation is less than exact.

Like many complicated magical devices, you presume that her seahorse earrings possess at least a degree of intelligence. They may be, like most servants, occasionally mischievous.

Her unintelligible grunts and groans are converted to speech by her magical false teeth. Exquisitely carved from star sapphires, they contain tiny, fluted grates, which amplify the sounds she makes, converting them into a tinny, monotone voice. The teeth are also triangular and sharpened, like those of a shark. Apart from these bizarre appurtenances, Tracula seems young and beautiful, with pale skin so soft-looking you may be tempted to reach out and stroke her cheek³. She wraps herself in exquisitely tailored gowns of colorful silk. Her genuine age is impossible to guess from her magically-altered appearance.

Tracula marches imperiously through her gaming houses. From the way she cranes her neck, it is clear she expects all who behold her to fall speechless with admiration. You saw her angry once, and it was not a pretty sight. Learning of a functionary's minor transgression, she had the man brought before her, thrown down at her feet, and whipped in full view of a hundred gamblers. Like other wealthy and powerful individuals you have observed, she has the habit of addressing everyone she meets as if they are her servants. Even with her peers, the other gambling magnates, she seems haughty until reminded of their equal footing with her.

Wagging tongues suggest that Tracula entertains a succession of weird suitors, each in some way as grotesque as herself. For example, it is well known that Iucounu the Laughing Magician has pitched woo to her on numerous occasions. If you have a malformed, sinister enemy, you should not be surprised to find him pledging his eternal love to Tracula.

³ This course of action is not, in fact, recommended.



Persuade (Intimidating) 12, Rebuff (Contrary) 15, Attack (Ferocity) 3, Defense (Misdirection) 4, Health 10, Magic (Forceful) 6, Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Etiquette 3, Gambling 12, Pedantry 4, Perception 6, Riding 4, Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 6, Stewardship 6, Wealth 18, Wherewithal 6.
Resistances: none

Upolver, Dhjetar Breeder

"I share a certain temperament with my beasts, and must advise you not to stick your hand in my cage."

The impressively-wrinkled Upolver is the area's foremost breeder of dhjetar. His chief competitor, the timid Twegg (p58), is a creature of the marketplace, avoiding the Tracks at all costs. His relationship with the other breeders is more fatherly than competitive; he gives them sound advice and encouragement. Even though his beasts sell for more than theirs, they staunchly defend him as one of Kaiin's great men.

Upolver speaks in a low, mellifluous voice which is at the same time soothing and vaguely menacing. He realizes that others find him unaccountably sinister, and goes to great pains to seem friendly and helpful. Supposedly, he closely resembles the occult dabbler Rintamel, who slew several worthies of Old Romarth with his Excellent Prismatic Spray. Upolver claims no knowledge whatsoever of Rintamel, and says that any similarity between them is purely coincidental. You've heard people say other things behind his back, though. One story has it that Rintamel played a cruel prank by exchanging faces with Upolver, and then altering the poor man's memory to make him think he always looked this way. Even more people believe that Upolver is Rintamel, and that he's doing a poor job of disguising himself. Either way, Upolver must spend much of the proceeds of his business on a complement of bodyguards to protect him from the periodic attacks of Romarthi assassins.

If you buy a dhjetar from Upolver, it costs 750 terces, which is one-third more than the standard price. You may roll Gambling when you first purchase the animal. If you get an Illustrious Success, you subsequently, when determining the creature's success in any race, treat all Exasperating Failures as Hair's-Breadth Successes.

Persuade (Charming) 12, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 8,

Attack (Caution) 4, Defense (Dodge) 5, Health 4, Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Driving 6, Etiquette 4, Gambling 2, Pedantry 4, Perception 2, Riding 4, Scuttlebutt 2, Stewardship 5, Wealth 5, Wherewithal 2.
Resistances: Arrogance 4, Avarice 4, Indolence 2, Pettifoggery 2, Rakishness 4.

Places of Interest

Commercial Establishments

The Dhjetar tracks themselves are described above. Other establishments of note are as follows.

Gambling Houses

The Jester's Gullet (N-O02)

G'ja owns only one gaming house, but it is the largest in Kaiin. To enter, one must walk through a garishly-painted archway in the form of a jester's mouth.

Through the ingenious use of swirling paint patterns, the interior looks bizarrely distorted, as if floors slope, ceilings warp, and support beams buckle. Add to this a series of weirdly distorted statues of human figures and you get an effect to make the soberest of men think that his senses have been addled by absinthe and vola smoke⁴. This sense of disorientation provokes a giddy atmosphere in which customers throw caution to the winds.

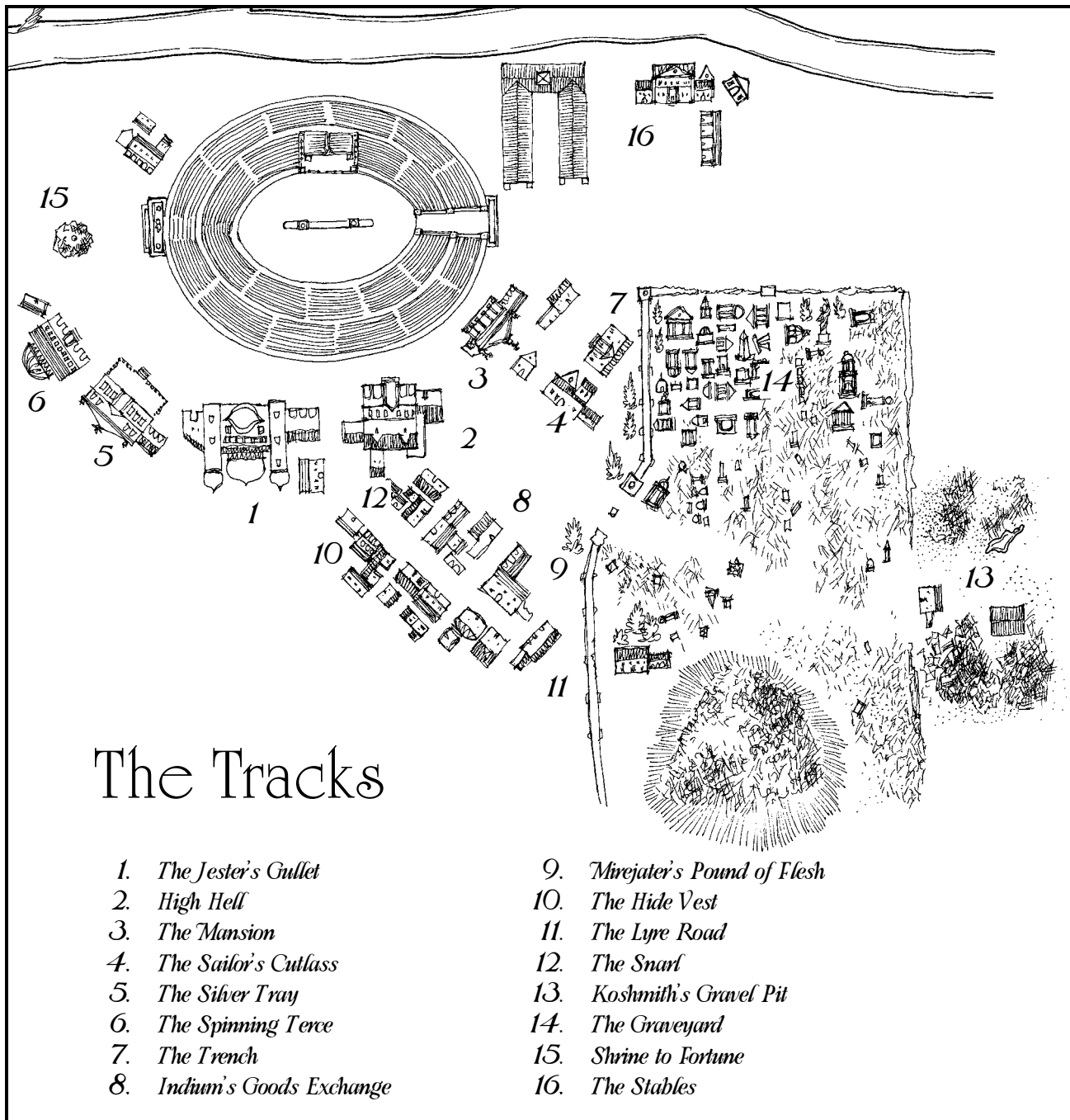
You suffer a levy of 1 on all Perception rolls inside The Jester's Gullet.

High Hell (O02)

The largest of Anersi's two gaming houses takes carnal decadence as its theme. Its walls are decorated with a wide range of torture devices. Marked with plaques explaining their historical significance, these items both titillate and suggest the fate of gamblers who shirk debts. Buxom barmaids and muscular, half-naked dealers contribute to the lustful atmosphere. Trollops and catamites circulate in search of clients to take upstairs to a floor filled with bedchambers. Many customers come in masquerade attire, making it sometimes difficult to separate professionals from hobbyists.

After fifteen minutes in High Hell, you must score a Resist Rakishness success, or spend the next several hours pursuing your fleshly desires, instead of

4 Oddly enough, individuals who are addled on absinthe and vola smoke react to the interior of the Jester's Gullet as if it is a perfectly normal building.



whatever you came in here for.

On the other hand, you can at any time refresh your Resist Rakishness pool by coming here with the express purpose of surrendering to its pleasures.

The Mansion (P03)

Smaller and more respectable than High Hell, Anersi's

other gaming house, the Mansion caters to the rich and pompous. It purports to recreate a gaming house from the Old Town, in a manner accurate to the last detail of ceiling molding. The atmosphere is serene and refined. Musicians play the austere, summery music of bygone centuries. Waiters serve only the finest wines, charging impossibly high fees for tiny



snifters containing wee tastes of the rarest vintages. Hushed tones pervade the place; even winners celebrate in whispers. To gain admission, you must prove in advance to an officer of Anersi's organization that you're worth at least 10,000 terces. When you establish this, you are given a diamond badge to flash at the door guards. The Mansion's diamond pins serve as powerful status symbols wherever you go in Kaiin, and many worthies wear them constantly.

Any scholar can see that the Mansion's décor is at best an approximation of the half-forgotten styles of the Old Town. At the beginning of any conversation inside The Mansion, you must Resist Pettifoggery. If you fail, you forget your real agenda and instead point out, tediously and at length, its architectural inaccuracies.

The Sailor's Cutlass (P02)

The Sailor's Cutlass is Tracsula's lower-grade gaming house, catering to laborers, shorecombers, boatmen, and Threesiders. Its low-stakes games wring Kaiin's ordinary folks for groats and half-terces. Battle-scarred bartenders dispense beverages of the rudest and most potent sort. Fist-fights break out with clockwork regularity; the house encourages betting on these impromptu combats. A ring for bare-knuckle fighting, and the occasional sword duel to first blood, provides impoverished but beefy customers a chance to earn back a quick stake.

If your Persuasion style is Intimidating, or your Attack rating greater than 6, you must make a Resist Arrogance roll after spending ten minutes in the Sailor's Cutlass. If you fail, you pick out a tough-looking customer to butt heads with, doing your best to pick a fight.

The Silver Tray (N02)

The Silver Tray is Tracsula's high-class house, an attractive limestone structure best known for its open-air terrace, where customers enjoy gambling and fine dining during the city's fleeting months of warm weather. The Silver Tray boasts the best food of any gaming house. Less exclusive than its top-flight rivals, it attracts a cheerful crowd including individuals of the merchant class as well as the less snobbish sort of aristocrat. Only when the menacing Tracsula inspects her own establishment does the place's sunny mood cloud over.

Despite its apparent friendliness, the Silver Tray offers the worst odds of any gaming house. When rolling Gambling against the House, treat all Hair's-Breadth Successes as Exasperating Failures.

The Spinning Terce (N03)

Erosto's high class house, The Spinning Terce, is a place of dark, polished woods and heavy oaken support beams. Its atmosphere is one of stolid, old-fashioned taste. Serious gamblers prefer this house, because it is free of the gimmicks and distractions that characterize High Hell or The Jester's Gullet. Regulars at the Spinning Terce drink abstemiously, keep their eyes trained on the table, and seldom smile. Trollops and gold-diggers find it infertile territory, and rarely darken its doors.

If your Gambling pool is less than 6 (or it drops that low in during your stay here), you must Resist Arrogance or challenge a flinty-eyed veteran gambler to a one-on-one, high stakes card game.

The Trench (P03)

Erosto's low class house is similar to its competitor, The Sailor's Cutlass. Its major difference with that place lies in Erosto's no-nonsense approach to fighting. His menacing guards soundly pummel anyone who attempts to start a brawl here, ejecting him face-first into the well-used gutter outside. Its policy on cheating is similarly strict. A row of mummified hands hangs nailed across the threshold; a legend explains that these once belonged to dishonest card sharps.

The Trench is a good place to find once-vaunted gamblers who have fallen prey to a bad streak. They grimly play for small stakes, waiting for the moment when their luck will turn around, and they will once more be able to afford to play in the Spinning Terce. If you spend more than a few minutes here, you hear such a profusion of hard luck stories that you must Resist Arrogance. If you fail, you succumb to the temptation to top the resident losers' complaints with a tale of your own past woe that makes their troubles seem piddling by comparison. You so convincingly cast yourself as a washout that you suffer a crisis of confidence which immediately reduces all of your pools by 1.

Financial Institutions

Indium's Goods Exchange (Q01)

Unfortunate gamblers often find a need to divest themselves of their valuables at short notice, and the pugnacious, hawk-nosed Indium keeps his shop open around the clock to satisfy their needs. Here you can sell virtually anything of value for one-half of its price, or secure a loan equal to one-quarter of its value, with few questions asked. If you pawn an item, you generally have three months to reclaim it before Indium puts it up for sale. It is possible to make other arrangements with him, if you are persuasive enough.

Although magical items are rarely sold on the open market, Indium's shop provides an exception to that rule. For some reason, astute magicians often prove to be hideously poor gamblers. The worst of them hock their magical items and implements here⁵. Indium is well aware of their value and sells them at a premium. Often rival magicians wait anxiously for the day when a particular item's pawn slip will expire, and deluge Indium with competing bids on it.

Unbelievably, you heard that Indium sold an actual IOUN stone last year!

Mirejater's Pound of Flesh (P02)

If you are especially unfortunate, you may run out of valuable goods to sell, and may have to resort to the tender mercies of the willowy Mirejater, who will pay a good price for your blood, bone, or flesh. The meat and juices of living humans is a necessary ingredient in many spells of demon-summoning and necromancy, Mirejater explains. Her business supplies these scarce substances to a select clientele whose names she never utters. Some people say her customers are not honest necromancers, but half-men or even demons.

Mirejater, who performs all of her own incisions and extractions, won't purchase any body parts a living man can't do without. She pays various prices (below).

The Health Loss column shows you the long-term effects of your sacrifice. If the entry reads "Roll to Avoid", you must score a Health success or permanently lose 1 from your Health rating. If the entry provides a number, you automatically lose it from your Health rating.

If you permanently lose Health in this way, you can only improve your Health later by magical means. In that case, you must pay the improvement points, as usual, but must also contrive a justification in the



Item	Price	Health Loss
Blood, 1 pint	50	none
Hand, primary	500	Roll to avoid
Hand, off	300	Roll to avoid
Foot	200	Roll to avoid
Foot and lower leg (cut below the knee)	500	1
Entire leg (cut just below hip)	1500	2
Hand, primary, with forearm	750	1
Hand, off, with forearm	550	2
Entire arm, primary	1000	2
Entire arm, off	750	2
Kidney	300	1
Spleen	250	1
Appendix	150	none
Eye	300	none
Tongue	500	none
Ear	200	none
Muscle from arm or leg, 1 ounce	75	Roll to avoid

⁵ You must pay points, as usual, for possessions you buy and intend to keep.



series for your miraculous recovery. For example, you could convince a magician to heal you, by means of Edan's Thaumaturgic Poultice.

Note that Mirejater requires you to sign an agreement stating that you will not use the Poultice, or similar magic, to recover the parts you sell. She says such healing spoils the value of the original parts as magical ingredients. If you do magically regrow a sold part or organ, you can safely assume she'll refuse to do further business with you. You have no idea whether she'd also take other action against you.

In any case, giving up a bleeding chunk of yourself for the benefit of some unknown ritualist may have additional, unforeseen consequences, which any GM of suitably devious nature can no doubt elaborate without our assistance.

Inns and Taverns

Hide Vest (O02)

The Hide Vest is the favored drinking establishment of dealers, bet-takers, and other low-ranking employees of the gambling magnates. They gather after work to water their discontents and swap stories of their superiors' stupidity. Always wary of informants hoping to curry favor by reporting their disloyalty to the bosses, they do not easily trust outsiders⁶. The proprietor is the gaunt but brawny Peroje, whose long, luxurious hair and aloof magnetism allow him to pursue a lucrative sideline as an escort to wealthy ladies with a taste for rough pleasures. If you know him at all, you've learned that he doesn't like to talk about this part of his life, growing surly or even violent when anyone presses the subject.

The Lyre Road (P01)

The ramshackle inn called the Lyre Road offers a gathering place for the area's trollop population. It is not, strictly speaking, a brothel, because its blowy proprietress, Irashta, does not collect an onerous percentage of the workers' earnings. Instead, she makes a modest living selling ale and renting rooms. Once a professional herself, she refers to her clientele as her sisters. Recently, when one of the girls was kidnapped, she took up a collection to pay Pernflo (see above) to rescue her, and punish her captor.

The Snarl (O02)

Breeders, trainers, touts and carters drink together at The Snarl, a small tavern which, no matter how what measures its proprietor takes, always seems to smell slightly of dhjetar urine. He is Dimer, a big-bellied, balding man with a big round nose. Dimer is perhaps the city's most passionate racing enthusiast, even though he couldn't pick a winner if his very survival depended on it. For that reason, he stopped betting and instead invested in this tavern, where he could indulge his love for the sport without bidding farewell to his small inherited fortune. A font of information about dhjetar racing, he's careful not to say anything that might get his customers in trouble.

Koshmith's Gravel Pit (R01)

One of the area's few thriving businesses with no connection to the gaming industry, Koshmith's Gravel Pit collects discarded tombstones and monuments from the nearby graveyard (see below), pulverizes them to various grades of gravel, and sells the resulting product to builders throughout Alмеры. Its operator, the slovenly, gravel-voiced Koshmith, hates to be interrupted, or to see strangers distracting his employees. He especially resents attempts by sentimental fools to search through his rock piles for the gravemarkers of their ancestors and loved ones.

Curiosities and Landmarks

The Graveyard (Q02)

Kaiin's dead, and the dead of the countless cities that preceded it, lie in a large, fenced-off plot of dusty land to the south of the tracks. Its crumbling walls are made of marble and granite from countless ancient gravestones. Over two dozen family crypts, belonging to Kaiin's elite, dot the site. The ground is packed with bones.

When you die, your heirs pay a fee which determines how long your remains will be permitted to remain in their own exclusive coffin, under a chosen marker. Interment periods range from six months to fifty years. A six-month interment costs an affordable 100 terces. A year costs 200 terces, two years 400 terces, and so on⁷. After your interment period expires, gravediggers knock over your

⁶ If the Tracks is your home neighborhood, you can specify that you have already won their acceptance before play begins.

⁷ These fees do not include the cost of any gravestones or monuments.



monument, throwing it into a pile for collection by employees of Koshmith's Gravel Pit (see above.) They dig up your coffin and break it into pieces; if it has not deteriorated too much, the bits are thrown into a pile to be sold as firewood. Your bones get tossed into a barrow, and then are taken to a gigantic ossuary pit, where they join those of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of your predecessors. If you are like most Kaiinese, you mournfully shake your head at this undignified necessity. You may also work to ingratiate yourself to one of the few families with a crypt, in the hopes that your remains will be preserved indefinitely. However, as each decade passes, fewer and fewer people care about such things, certain that the sun will predecease them.

The graveyard is run by an official styled as the Supreme Supervisor of Eternal Morbidity. He wears tall leather boots and a uniform spangled with brass medallions, and carries a nine-tailed whip. The current holder of this office is the sternly fussy Comable, who brooks no interference with procedure. His right arm is immobile, and you've heard some people claim that it was paralyzed by a grave-wight's touch.

Shrine to Fortune (N03)

By the side of the main road leading to the Tracks, superstitious gamblers have spontaneously erected a crude statue in tribute to the goddess of fortune, whomever she may be. At first, the shrine was just a small stack of rocks in rude approximation of a female form. Gradually, others added elements to the statue, in hopes of currying favor with the goddess. They added a clay coating, then a pedestal. A wealthy patron had a silver head sculpted; this was stolen and later replaced. People continually add bits and pieces to the statue, so that now it has grown to the size of a large house. Now it's a big, lumpy mass of clay, brick, wood and broken jugs which is completely unrecognizable as a human figure, despite the silver head that still rests on top. Occasionally the head goes missing, but shortly thereafter reappears. Legend has it that any fool who takes the statue suffers a sudden plague of terrible luck, which can be reversed only by returning the head.



Events

Prince's Cup Day

The biggest race of the year is the Prince's Cup, which occurs on the fourth of Hobven. The Prince puts up a 100,000 terce prize for the owner of the winning beast. On race day, he appears at the race at the end of a large and colorful procession, driving a gilded chariot pulled by straining, reluctant dhjetar. More money is wagered on this one race than on any other ten combined.

Night of Blue Lights

Each year, on the 17th of Sorgent, the Tracks clear of gamblers and debauchees, as the annoyed dead of the graveyard seep up through the ground in spirit form to protest the indignity of their post-mortem arrangements. You may not believe the ghost story, but know for certain that the area is deserted on the Night of Blue Lights. Those who claim to have seen the ghosts describe them as balls of blue or purple light which slowly bob about in the air. The lights supposedly cluster around the graveyard but have been seen throughout the Tracks. They never seem to go further north than the city walls. Although most Kaiinese intensely fear the lights, you have never heard of anyone being harmed by them. Except, now that you think of it, for the occasional person found dead of apoplexy, presumably overcome by fright itself.

Forgiveness Day

Another annual event occurs on the tenth of Pestamel, when the four magnates declare Forgiveness Day. During the night previous, a small, flattened golden plaque is hidden somewhere in the Tracks. The person who finds it gains complete forgiveness of all debts he might owe to any of the gaming magnates. To earn this boon, he must present the plaque to Commissioner Frolaga before dusk falls. She makes herself available at a different high-class gaming house each year, waiting for the winner to show up and claim his forgiveness. The plaque is only found about once every two years. Contestants are disqualified if they killed anyone — such as the original finder — to secure the plaque. Hundreds of frantic gamblers take



part in Forgiveness Day, and thousands of others gather to watch them scramble and jostle one another.

Custom allows spectators to pelt participants, who must identify themselves with bright green armbands, with refuse and rotten vegetables. Sadly, many overly optimistic gamblers run up large debts in anticipation of Forgiveness Day, sure that it is they who will this year claim the plaque.

Rumors

✿ The daughter of a wealthy family is missing. She was last seen at High Hell, garbed as a trollop. Scuttlebutt tells you that Anersi took her to one of his private dungeons, mistaking her for an actual slattern. Presumably, he has not yet figured out how to release her without trouble. Whether this is true or not, the sizeable reward her kin have offered for her safe return is powerfully tempting.

✿ One of Erosto's formerly trusted lieutenants has been found slain in a gutter. You hear he stole one of Erosto's precious coin coffers. Rumor has it that the coffer was never recovered. Perhaps you might find it and help yourself to its contents, before Erosto gets it. After all, he'll only stack it with the others, so that he might continually stare at it.

✿ The luckless Fladant comes to you to tell a fantastic tale. He was kidnapped by a magician with cruel eyes and long fingernails, and subjected to a strange process in the man's occult laboratory. The magician extracted a fluid from him, explaining that it was the pure essence of Fladant's misfortune. From it, the magician said he would formulate a potion which would communicate Fladant's curse to others. The story is of only casual interest to you until Fladant names as his captor one of your chief enemies.

✿ Integrity Commisioner Frolaga has not been seen in public for over a week. A rumormonger suggests why: her beauty is all artifice, an illusion created by a magical girdle. It is missing from her household, and so is one of her

handmaidens. If you found the girdle, you could ingratiate yourself to Frolaga by recovering it. Or perhaps you could find another use for this valuable enchantment.

✿ G'ja has been planning a lavish festival to celebrate the upcoming anniversary of The Jester's Gullet. He plans to import mountains of snow from the Saponid tundra. Artists will transform them into temporary, towering sculptures, the like of which Kaiin has never seen. Unfortunately, in a fit of pique, G'ja has just slain the caravan masters who were supposed to bring the snow down from Saponce. Their special cooling wagons now stand parked next to G'ja's manse, with no one to complete their mission. Do you have any interest in a lucrative expedition to the north?



Rhialto



✿ (Arch-Magicians) You've heard that the lucky Manosto is just one of Rhialto's many disguises. He's figured out how to circumvent the defenses against magic used by the four magnates in their gaming houses. While he clearly has no need for money, he doubtless intends to hone his techniques so that he can later embarrass his conclave colleagues while gambling against them in his true face. If you can unmask him — or better yet, filch his secret without his knowledge — you can enjoyably one-up him when next you face him at the gaming tables.

✿ The dhjetar trainer Shote seeks your assistance. To confuse his rivals, he has created a false doctrine of axiality, a supposed technique in which the animals are carefully measured for symmetry, and then elaborately exercised and massaged in order to enhance certain lines of geometric significance. His rivals are spending all of their time spying on him, trying to find the secret, enchanted measuring tools he uses, instead of tending to their own beasts. Shote wants to continue the deception, knowing that one of his enemies will eventually succeed in breaking into his stables. He wants you to find him some devices which register as magical, and whose real purposes are difficult to determine. He'll then hide them in his stable, hoping his rivals steal them and waste even more time attempting to make them work as dhjetar-training implements.

✿ Tracsula's prodigal brother, a charming ne'er-do-well with many tales to tell of his adventures, has descended on her manse, taking full advantage of her hospitality. One of her lieutenants approaches you with a proposition. Tracsula will handsomely reward you for befriending her brother, and then convincing him to accompany you on an enticing adventure somewhere far from Kaiin. She doesn't care whether the expedition you inveigle him into is real or imaginary, so long as you manage to leave him somewhere in the wilderness. If you fail, she'll have no alternative but to have the annoying nuisance strangled, an action which would certainly pain their mother.

✿ Romarathi assassins are in town. Surely their target is Upolver. Do you want to help or hinder them?

Taglines

*Ah, now I comprehend. You took my simple words
as a jape at your expense!*

*Be warned: this bauble turns unjust violence
back upon its maker, a dozen times.*

I never mistake rudeness for greatness.

I trust it is only for the purposes of display.

*I, too, am stirred to strong emotion
by the word 'integrity'.*

Is that a blue, bobbing light I see over yonder graveyard?

*It occurs to me that your good fortune comes
at the expense of others.*

Luckily, the punctures are close together.

Modify your position, lest you be accused of caprice.

*Perhaps you could walk backwards as you speak,
thus increasing the distance between us.*

Such defenses are easily circumvented.

*There is no greater sign of my rising fortunes
than your splendid presence.*

Though poetic, your suggested epitaph is inapt.

Various unwholesome ailments spring to mind.

*You are right that it is the fate of all men, but surely
we can postpone it long enough to share
this fine mnutocaster.*

*Your statement seems moronic, but I
almost certainly misheard it.*



Tweaks

“Ah, The Zandab Defense”

(Gambling)

Situation: In the presence of others, you watch gamblers play a game, the outcome of which depends at least in part on the relative skill of the participants.

Description: You can discourse convincingly, and in great detail, on the strategic subtleties of many games. In doing so, you make other spectators believe you are yourself a player of impressive merit. However, if the actual gamblers can hear you, their opinion of you may not be so favorable.

Benefit: Make a Gambling roll. If you succeed, and you then enter into a contest of Etiquette, Persuasion, Seduction or Scuttlebutt with one of your fellow spectators, you gain an immediate boon of 3 to your pool in the relevant ability. If the gamblers can hear you speak, and your roll was a success, you must then score an Etiquette success. Otherwise, the losing gambler is offended, and confronts you after the game finishes.

Beast Assessment

(Driving /Riding)

Situation: You have spent time observing a racing animal taken through its paces by its rider or driver. (The driver or rider can be you.)

Description: By watching the animal, either in practice or in an actual race, you can better predict how it will perform in an upcoming race.

Benefit: During any race sequence, you can pay 2 Driving or Riding Points (as applicable, see below) for a reroll of any result gotten on behalf of any participating creature. That is, you can force rerolls of good results scored by the creature you're betting against, or permit rerolls of poor results for the one you're betting on.

If this tweak modifies your driving ability, it can only be used on racing beasts who pull carts, chariots or similar conveyances. If it modifies your riding

ability, it works only on creatures raced by jockeys who ride on their backs. If you want, you can take this as two separate tweaks modifying each ability.

Eyes On The Game

(Ability)

Situation: You're using your Gambling ability in one of the gaming houses detailed in this chapter.

Description: Having gambled here so often that you know the area inside out, you are no longer prone to the unique pitfalls of each house.

Benefit: You are immune to the ill effects of the various gaming houses described here — you needn't Resist Arrogance at The Trench, suffer the poorer odds at The Silver Tray, and so on. If the GM invents a gaming house of her own, you are immune to any of its effects, too, unless she specifies that it has newly opened. Even then, you can ignore its ill-effects after a year spent in Kaiin. This assumes that much of the time your character spends offstage, between adventure sessions, is spent gambling in new houses as they open, familiarizing yourself with their quirks.

Dhjetar

On the Breeding, Training & Racing of Dhjetar

The sport of dhjetar racing is still young in Kaiin, and maintains its stranglehold on the gambler's imagination.

Dhjetar

The dhjetar is a long, sinewy mammal with thick, glossy, dark fur, a shortened tail, lean muscles, large paws, and sharp, short claws. Denizens of the Larval Age would recognize it as a sort of cross between a panther and a giant weasel. Dhjetar are solitary hunters who treat one another with aggressive disrespect, but may bond to a single human, whose instructions they obey with staunch fanaticism. They react poorly to insults directed at themselves, but homicidally to verbal slights against their human “partners.” “Partner” is the dhjetar term for trainer.

Persuade (Intimidating) 0.75~, Rebuff (Penetrating) ~, Attack (Ferocity) 10+die roll, Defense (Intuition) 6+die roll, Health ~, Athletics 12+die roll, Living Rough 4, Perception 2, Stealth 4, Tracking 2, Wherewithal 3.

You'll note that three of the above game statistics, Attack, Defense, and Athletics, require the GM to include the result of a single die roll as part of the creature's ability rating. Although creature statistics in *DERPG* are not usually random, we make an exception for the dhjetar in order to add a little bit of additional suspense to their races.

The Races

Dhjetar race pulling lightweight, low-slung wooden carts, which slow them down a bit, so that spectators can actually see them out on the track. Otherwise, each race would just be a momentary blur. Cart drivers also try to control the dhjetar's instinct to attack its competitors, keeping its nose pointed towards the finish line.

Dhjetar usually despise their drivers, accepting their guidance only because their trainers tell them to.

Drivers tend to be short-lived; if one falls from a cart during a race, he is likely to be viciously mauled by rival beasts. Thus it is rare that a driver remains in the sport long enough to gain the necessary skill to make a significant contribution to race outcomes. The occupation is a lucrative one, paying 100 terces a race.

Downtrodden gamblers often make brief forays into the sport to pay off debts or to earn a new stake. Up to 8 beasts race at any one time, traveling four times around an oval track which is half a mile long from start to finish.

Notes For The GM

GMs can run dhjetar races in three ways.

When the outcome of a race doesn't really matter to the action of the story: Just *decide arbitrarily* which beast wins.

When one or more PCs stands to gain or lose according to the race's outcome, but it is not so important that it should be a big, climactic, sequence: *Use the Quick Race Scene method.*

When the race is so important that it deserves a great deal of detailed attention: *Use the Climactic Race Sequence method.* This may be appropriate if a PC is actually driving one of the carts.

Quick Race Scene

Decide the post order in which the dhjetar will race. Then roll⁸ for each creature in that order, using its Athletics pool. Keep repeating until one of the creatures achieves a tally of 8. If any creature scores a Dismal Failure, and it is allowed to stand, it attempts to maul the competitor to its right or left in the post order⁹. It contests its Attack against the victim's Defense; the victim does not Attack in return. If the attacker wins the contest, the loser's tally is reduced by 5. The attacker still suffers the normal reduction to its own tally for its original Dismal Failure.

Optionally, you can introduce the chance for a driver injury, as follows: when a creature suffers a Dismal Failure which is allowed to stand, make an extra roll, which cannot be rerolled. If it also comes up as a Dismal Failure, the rider is thrown from his cart. Unless his creature's tally is currently the lowest in the race (meaning that it's running last), another dhjetar comes up from



⁸ Actually, it's more fun if you divide up the dhjetar between players and have them each roll on behalf of one or more of the beasts.

⁹ Note that the first and last creatures in the post order each have only one possible target.



behind and pounces on the thrown rider, who must score a Health success or suffer an injury. Both the dhjetar who threw the rider and the one who attacked him are disqualified from the race.

In extreme circumstances, it is possible for all animals to be disqualified, in which case the one with the highest Tally at the time of his disqualification is declared the winner.

Climactic Race Sequence

Use the game board on p187 (you may want to blow it up on a photocopier) to run a game within the game. In addition to the board, you'll need game pieces representing each dhjetar.

Each player runs one or two dhjetar; you run the rest. If a PC is driving a cart, his player plays for that dhjetar.

Randomly assign starting positions to each player. Each player moves in sequence, starting with the inside position and moving out to the outside position. On his turn, each player rolls for the dhjetar, using its Athletics pool. The number of spaces the creature may move depends on the final result, after all rerolls are in:

Result	Spaces Moved
Illustrious Success	5
Prosaic Success	3
Hair's-Breadth Success	2
Exasperating Failure	1
Quotidian Failure	0
Dismal Failure	see below

These moves may be made forwards or sideways, but not backwards or diagonally. You can move sideways and then forwards or vice versa, but you can never double back.

On a Dismal Failure, the dhjetar moves up to five spaces either backwards or sideways, towards the nearest other dhjetar on the game board. It stops on the fifth space or as soon as it enters another piece's space, whichever occurs first. If the dhjetar has more than one possible legal move (that is, if two or more other dhjetar are equally distant from it), the player chooses which target to pursue. Again, it is illegal to make diagonal moves or to double back.

If all other pieces are ahead of it on the board, it simply moves back one space.

Whenever a dhjetar enters an already-occupied space, it attempts to maul that space's current occupant. Its player contests his beast's Attack against the target's creature's Defense. If the attacker wins the contest, consult the following chart to see what happens.

Attacker's Result	Consequence
Illustrious Success	Victim moves up to 3 spaces in a direction chosen by attacker's player; victim's driver must roll Health or suffer an injury.
Prosaic Success	Victim moves up to 2 spaces in direction chosen by attacker's player.
Hair's-Breadth Success	Victim moves 1 spaces in direction chosen by attacker's player.

Mauling attempts most often occur when one dhjetar scores a Dismal Failure and runs off in search of another to attack. They are also possible when one beast has changed lanes and then overtakes an animal ahead of it. A dhjetar may never move through an occupied space, no matter how many spaces it would otherwise be allowed to move. It must always stop its movement to commence an attempted mauling. These attacks almost never cause serious damage to a creature, but do reduce the victim's chance of winning the race.

If a driver is downed, his dhjetar is disqualified. If there are only two drivers left on the field and one is then disqualified, the other wins the race.

The first player to get his beast across the finish line wins. Keep playing to determine place (the runner-up) and show (third place.)

Odds and Betting

Before running the race, the GM determines the betting odds for each beast.

Add each creature's Athletics rating to half of its

Defense rating, rounding fractions up. We'll call this its Race rating. Then rank the dhjetar by race rating, from first to last place. Resolve ties in favor of the animal with the highest Athletics rating. If tied creatures have the same Athletics rating, go by highest Defense rating. If both ratings are the same, use the highest Attack rating to break the tie. If all three are the same, break the ranking tie with a die roll.

Rank	Odds
1st	Even
2nd	5 - 2
3rd	2 - 1
4th	3 - 1
5th	4 - 1
6th	5 - 1
7th	7 - 1
8th	10 - 1

Characters are free to bet as they choose on the outcome of the race. Any Kaiinese resident knows that Prince Kandive is a devoted supporter of the races, and will treat anyone cheat with utmost harshness.

The odds above pay off if the bettor correctly specifies the beast's result — win, place, or show. A bettor who correctly guesses the win, place, and show results gets ten times the payoff of all three bets combined. If your beast comes second and you bet on it for a win, or if it comes in third and you bet on it for second, you get one-quarter of the full payoff.

Odds Manipulation

In the game world, no one knows the creature's exact game statistics; odds-makers rely on common perception of its abilities when deciding where to rank them. Any PC with combined pools of at least 6 in Gambling and Scuttlebutt can attempt to influence these perceptions. They do this by circulating amongst racing experts and convincing them that a particular animal is better or worse than popular opinion admits. He rolls uncontested, using Gambling and Scuttlebutt points interchangeably. On a success succeeds, he effectively moves the designated creature a number of steps upwards or downwards in the rank order. He's not changing the beast's game statistics or chances of winning, just the perception of those chances. The number of ranks he can move the creature is as follows:

Character's Final Result	Ranks Moved
Illustrious Success	4
Prosaic Success	2
Hair s-Breadth Success	1

When you change one beast's ranking, the GM moves in the other creatures to fill the gap.

For example, the dhjetar of the first race are ranked as follows:

1st Eviscerator	Even
2nd Chanjei's Smile	5 - 2
3rd Saber of Righteousness	2 - 1
4th Blessed By the Vlack	3 - 1
5th Golden Gaze	4 - 1
6th Death Twitch	5 - 1
7th Unforgivable Gaffe	7 - 1
8th The Estimable IOUN Diadem	10 - 1

Cugel wants to reduce the odds of the favorite, Eviscerator, convincing rival gamblers to bet on less likely competitors. Unwilling to spend his precious Gambling and Scuttlebutt points, he settles for his first roll, a Prosaic Success. That allows him to move Eviscerator down two ranks, to third. The two beasts ahead of it in the ranking each move up 1 space, to fill the gap left in the chart by Eviscerator's downgrading.

1st Chanjei's Smile	Even
2nd Saber of Righteousness	5 - 2
3rd Eviscerator	2 - 1
4th Blessed By the Vlack	3 - 1
5th Golden Gaze	4 - 1
6th Death Twitch	5 - 1
7th Unforgivable Gaffe	7 - 1
8th The Estimable IOUN Diadem	10 - 1

Thus are Eviscerator's odds changed from even to 2 - 1.

Only one PC can attempt to alter the odds in any one race, but his fellows may assist them, by giving him up to 2 Scuttlebutt and/or Gambling points apiece. These points are spent by their owners, whether or not the recipient ends up needing them.





Chapter 11

The Undercity

“Its interest as a source of sublime handicrafts almost compensates for the utter and vexing madness of its inhabitants...”

— The Estimable Drelb, Selected Journals, Volume XIV

On First Glance

The Undercity is large, subterranean tunnel lined with excavated structures, inhabited by a community of several thousand individuals who believe that the sun has already died, and that they are the last survivors of the mass extinction that followed. Despite this eccentric view, they are quite willing to transact with outsiders, provided that no one tries to drag them to the dead and blasted surface world they all know waits for them up above. They persist in the belief that all outsiders are time-travelers, or hail from various other worlds or dimensions. After all, everyone else in the world was killed when the sun went out, so it is certain that their customers cannot be local. The neighborhood consists of an old tunnel excavated by a prince who wanted to explore the city's archaeological past. Its residents have added to that tunnel somewhat, but doing so is very difficult. Despite what you might expect of tunnel-dwellers, the people here are well-heeled, expensively-garbed merchants. If they had to, they could live self-sufficiently, but, thanks to the many residents of the city who regularly patronize their establishments, this is not necessary.

Didactic Overview

Archaeology In Kaiin

Kaiin is far from the first city to sit at the confluence of the Rivers Scaum and Derna. As any pedant will tell you, the location's obvious advantages as a center of transportation and trade have meant that some city or another has sat on this spot for longer than history records. The ruins of the Old Town (p17) are comparative newcomers to the extensive archaeological record that lies beneath the feet of every visitor to Kaiin. Throughout the eons, periodic waves of warfare, disaster, famine, holofernic transderiations, and other miscellaneous destruction events have pummeled the area, dooming an entire succession of cities, each inevitably less fabulous than those that went before it. Eventually new settlers come along and build on top of the ruins of the last city, gradually making of the area a veritable archaeological layer-cake, with ruins of different ages appearing in strata below the city.

The Obsession of Urulator

A couple of centuries back, one of Kaiin's early rulers, Prince Urulator the Unjust, conceived a consuming interest in the wonders that might lie below his city. He financed





nearly a decade's worth of excavations, resulting in the half-mile tunnel that makes up the bulk of today's Undercity. During this time, his methodologists hauled out and catalogued relics from anywhere between six and nine separate civilizations¹.

Then, during a routine examination, a doctor discovered in the prince's ear a tiny, hollowed-out jade bead, in which was housed a live worm the size of an eyebrow hair. When this curious item was removed, the prince abruptly lost all interest in excavation and returned immediately to his prior preoccupations of drinking and gambling.

Occupation From the Fringe

Sometime thereafter, destitute individuals from The Fringe, identifying it as safer and drier than their current homes, moved into the unguarded tunnel. A few of them continued to dig, either looking for undiscovered treasures, or intending to create abodes more exalted than those of their neighbors. However, most of the long-buried buildings of the Undercity are filled from floor to ceiling with crushed rock, so the degree of digging since the end of Urulator's great project has been sharply limited.

Wealth Grows

Over time, the people of the Undercity improved their lot, establishing businesses and becoming self-sufficient. Residents from the city proper began to patronize their establishments. Now most Undercity residents wear fine robes, shuffle about in silk slippers, and dine in comfort in luxuriantly-appointed dwellings.

The Prophecies of Vermbit

About ten years ago, an apocalyptic religious cult arose among the residents of the Undercity. Its leader, Vermbit the Numinous, proclaimed the imminent end of the world. So convincing was he that the burgers of

the Undercity went along with his plan to seal off their underground neighborhood from the rest of Kaiin in anticipation of the extinction of all life on the surface. Skeptical residents, not wishing to be sealed in forever, decamped for residences elsewhere in the city. Believers, desperate to avoid destruction, flocked down from the Threek and other Kaiin neighborhoods.

When the date of Vermbit's predicted end of the world came, he declared his prophecy correct. Anyone who ventured out and reported that the world was still intact was proclaimed an obvious agent of the deodands, and executed. As the Undercity had already purged itself of skeptics, few bothered to put Vermbit's claims to the test of their inferior senses.

Vermbit and his extended family vanished from the Undercity a few years afterwards, along with their many appurtenances of earthly wealth. Some fear that they were taken in the night by their deodand foes, but most know in their hearts that Vermbit and his kin apotheosized, and now watch serenely over the people of the Undercity from golden perches in the celestial oversphere.

Inhabitants

The well-muscled young sons of Undercity families patrol it with diligent enthusiasm, keeping a close watch on visiting outsiders. Hidden among the travelers who come from other times and realities to sample the fine wares of area merchants, they reckon, are disguised deodands and other surviving creatures from the deadly world above. These monsters want to lure impressionable Undercity residents up to the surface, where they will be immediately be set upon and eaten. By definition, anyone who attempts to convince them that the sun is still glowing in the sky, and that the surface world has not been destroyed, must be one of these monsters. The patrolmen unabashedly eavesdrop on conversations, ears peeled for statements betraying the identities of concealed deodands. When they hear something they consider suspicious, they gather their fellows and then surround him, truncheons at the ready. They pull at the suspect's clothes, hair, ears, and lips, hoping to pry off the mask the monster wears. When the mask fails

¹ The distinctions between the various civilizations, and the dates when they flourished, are of sufficient controversy amongst historians that those who discuss it are often reduced to bouts of mutual punching and biting.



to come off, they conclude that the deodand is a certain practitioner of magic². Suspects are brought before the community leader, Oolbrea (described below), and interrogated. The men of the Undercity presume that all of the creatures are in cahoots, and that if they can get one to confess, they'll be forewarned of the next incursion.

The eccentricities of the Undercity are no secret to the rest of Kaiin. Before you went down there for the first time, you heard the entire story and were well-warned not to argue when referred to as a time-traveler or told what a shame it is that the world finally ended. Still, it's all too easy to commit gaffes, and, on at least one occasion, you've seen some poor shopper fall prey to the patrolmen. Oolbrea conducts his interrogations on a raised dais at one end of the tunnel's main walkway. You listened as the captured "creature" was smacked with truncheons and ordered to reveal the plans of its confederates. Then the poor, weeping victim was dragged to the edge of a deep and lightless pit and thrown in, never to reemerge.

For this reason, many of your fellow citizens avoid the Undercity. Still, many are tempted, because the quality of goods produced here is unrivalled. In an age where most craftsmen are content to shoddily imitate the great work of the past, the artisans of the Undercity work hard to preserve the old techniques of their destroyed world. Their ceramics and fabrics are second-to-none³. Their unique cuisine, spiced with the dried shavings of various rare lichens that grow on the tunnel walls, can't be reproduced by other chefs.

Except for their unswerving devotion to their guiding delusion, the people of the Undercity seem perfectly sane. Indeed, their mental discernment is above average. You've seen people come down from up above in hopes of cheating the addled tunnel-dwellers, only to be out-bargained at every turn.

You also once saw a thief try to pocket a small



decorative dish. He was caught, and his crime obviously marked him out as a concealed deodand. The patrolmen carefully pried the delicate dish from his fingers before flinging him into the pit.

Contacts

Because they're extremely delusive as well as isolated from the rest of the city, residents of the Undercity make poor contacts. If you wish to make connections to them, we recommend that you purchase a relationship with one of the personages, below, during character creation.

² Doubtless, they surmise, the deodands entered the abandoned towers of human magicians (who were all killed when the sun went out) and mastered the secrets written down in their esoteric tomes.

³ They depend on outside suppliers (who hail, it goes without saying, hail from other times and dimensions) for the materials to make these luxury goods. If the supplies stopped coming, they could still survive, but the goods they'd produce would be much humbler.

Personages

Oolbrea, Quadrator of the Undercity

"If only you had seen our world before it was irrevocably darkened, then you would know the overweening beauty of Kaiin."

The name you've most commonly heard in connection with the Undercity is that of Oolbrea, its mayor — or, in local parlance, the Quadrator. You remember him as a short, balding man with a fringe of white hair stuck flat to the back and sides of his head. A long, braided beard, also white, dangles from his generous chin. He seems inordinately proud of the beard: when you saw him hold court, he continually ran his fingers through it, fluffing it up. He wore a long coat of green silk, embroidered in gold and silver. On its back was an emblem of the sun. His shirt and leggings were both of black velvet; his slippers matched his coat.

Aside from his delusion, which he shares with all of his constituents, Oolbrea seemed like an especially proud and pompous fellow, fond of the sound of his own voice. Yet his people seemed to regard him with great respect, as if they credited him with their very survival.

Persuade (Eloquent) 10, Rebuff (Wary) 15, Attack (Caution) 4, Defense (Dodge) 4, Health 6, Appraisal 6, Craftsmanship (Ceramics) 4, Etiquette 6, Pedantry 3, Perception 8, Stewardship 4, Wealth 10, Wherewithal 4.
Resistances: Rakishness 6.

Flumosa, Renowned Sculptress

"When Prince Kandive was devoured, the world lost a light even brighter than the sun."

The sculptress Flumosa is among the city's most celebrated living artisans. Known for surprisingly detailed and lifelike statues fired in clay, her pieces are coveted by connoisseurs throughout the city and beyond. Although now somewhere in her forties, her once-legendary personal beauty has only slightly faded. She keeps her luxuriant blond hair tied up behind her while she works her clay. Her work outfits consistently reveal great depths of cleavage, generally bespattered with stray daubs of mud. During business hours she can usually be found in her workshop, which she keeps open to the public. Her presence



exerts a profound upwards effect on her sales, a fact you do not think she is unaware of. You have seen numerous men reduced to mumbling incoherence by her mere proximity. In each case, she accepted their drooling with good grace, and perhaps even a sense of entitlement.

Flumosa seems to believe as fervently as any Undercity resident that the world has already ended. You heard her say that the most terrible consequence of the end of the world was the death of Prince Kandive, who was the very embodiment of masculine sensuality and virtue. Although she accepts the occasional commission to portray other subjects, she would, left to her own devices, produce only sculptures of him. These pieces are subtle and exquisite; they always portray Kandive in the nude, and as prodigiously endowed. You know that they rest on the mantles of many fine homes and estates in the city. Unfortunately, it is necessary to mutilate them before displaying them, because their bases always contain a memorial inscription. Although the sentiment expressed thereon is entirely complimentary, Prince Kandive is known to superstitiously dislike seeing statues of himself that portray him as dead⁴.

⁴ He has not, so far as you know, disavowed the figurines' portrayal of his endowment.



Sculpture Prices



Flumosa's prices for her fine sculptures are listed below. They vary according to the size of the figure, and her affinity for the subject matter. She prefers to sculpt Prince Kandive, so he's the most affordable subject. Her other standard subjects are figures cribbed from the mythology of one of the city's ancient cultures: there is a horse god, a war-hammer god, a river goddess, and a goddess of passion and liberty. If you commission a subject she hasn't sculpted before, such as a noble bust of your illustrious self, the prices go up even further, and the quality of her effort is not guaranteed. When she completes her piece, the GM rolls her Craftsmanship ability to determine how good it is. Her standard pieces are always of sublime quality. Prices are listed in terces.

Size	Prince Kandive	Other Standard Subject	Custom Subject
1 foot, figure	500	750	2500
2 feet, figure	1000	1500	5000
1½ feet, bust	Not available	1000	3000
4 feet, figure	2000	3000	10,000
Figure, life size	4000	6000	20,000
Figure, 1½ times life size	10,000	15,000	50,000

Unless they want to risk arousing the prince's displeasure, collectors must therefore smash off the bases. You once heard about a particularly adamant connoisseur who refused to break the bases off his figurines, and paid for his dedication to the artist's vision with a trip to the deodand pit.

Flumosa's allure is of the sort that gives rise to a great many tales about her sexual exploits, some of which may even be true. Allegedly, she was a great orgiast back in the old days, and her knowledge of Prince Kandive's attributes comes first hand. She now proclaims her celibacy, in honor of the destroyed world and her poor, departed prince. You have heard some people say that her resolve sometimes wavers; whether this is true or not, you cannot say. You've certainly seen her turn away several men openly propositioning her at her shop, though always in a kindly and understanding manner.

Persuade (Charming) 20, Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 15, Attack (Caution) 3, Defense (Dodge) 3, Health 6, Magic (Curious) 2, Appraisal 6, Craftsmanship 10, Etiquette 6, Pedantry 2, Perception 2, Seduction 8, Wealth 6, Wherewithal 2.
Resistances: Indolence 6, Gourmandism 8, Pettifoggery 4, Rakishness 4.

Special: Any character who feels an iota of sexual attraction to women must make a Resist Rakishness roll when first meeting Flumosa. In the event of a failed roll, the character stammers inarticulately, overwhelmed by her physical beauty and warm, inviting personality. He may stare with undisguised greed at her body, stand jabbering and open-mouthed, or make a fumbling advance; the player chooses which. Afflicted characters suffer Rebuff levies of 2 if Flumosa uses Persuasion on them — for example, to convince them to buy one of her lesser pieces at an outrageously inflated price. The character suffers this effect until he succeeds on a later Resist Rakishness roll; he gets only one opportunity per encounter. In the event of multiple meetings with Flumosa in the same day, he gets only one opportunity per day.

Characters with Relationships to Flumosa are assumed to have already met her, and are no longer flummoxed by her presence.

Vidierista, Dealer in Rare Coins

"If that is in fact a genuine four-crowned Erobian qualt, I'll dance a jig of tiny leg movements."

Anyone in Kaiin who has ever had cause to seek the value of an old-looking coin dug up from a ruin (or

surreptitiously removed from the premises of an undeserving owner) knows the name of Vidierista, the city's foremost expert on numismatics⁵. He is a tall, gaunt man with sunken cheeks and dark rings under his eyes. His eyebrows are plucked to the exact proportions of isosceles triangles; his heavily waxed beard is equally pointy and geometrical.

Vidierista's story is well-known: he once possessed the world's foremost collection of ancient coins, but was robbed by the elusive thief Sanikmi the Misty. Sanikmi — it is not known whether this name describes a man, a woman, or something else entirely — managed to strip him of his well-trapped collection while he sat in his study, poring over a treatise on ancient minting procedures. In the wake of this terrible loss, he moved to the Undercity⁶. The assumption among the people who tell the story is that Vidierista prefers the security of the Undercity, with its ever-roving, nosy patrolmen, to anything he could find in the city proper. He has begun to reassemble a coin collection, though it is hard to imagine him ever reaching the glory and completeness of the original.

Vidierista maintains a small shop on the Golden Walk, so it is clear that he does not believe that the sun has gone out. Word has it that his assistants sometimes go down to visit him, in the guise of dimensional travelers. It is doubtful that he ever returns to the surface world; this would be too difficult to explain to his neighbors. When you heard this story, you asked why people can't blackmail him by threatening to expose him to Oolbrea; you were told the tale of one Fladlacy the Sufferer, who attempted just that, and wound up in the pit instead of Vidierista.

You once accompanied a friend to Vidierista's shop; he wanted to check if some coins he found were valuable. Vidierista struck you as a jumpy, high-strung man with darting eyes. Before he saw the coin and realized that it was a recent reproduction, he seemed torn between equally strong feelings of greed, and of fear that your friend was somehow in league with the dread Sanikmi.

Persuade (Forthright) 10, Rebuff (Penetrating) 15, Attack (Ferocity) 4, Defense (Dodge) 8, Health 4, Magic (Forceful) 2, Appraisal 10, Pedantry 6, Perception 6, Scuttlebutt 4, Wealth 8, Wherewithal 2.

Resistances: Rakishness 4.

Typical Patrolman

"Surely it was a trick of this echoing cavern, but I could swear I overheard you state your intention to go up above, to the surface world."

Once, you fell into conversation with a young man of the Undercity, whose truncheon swung expectantly at his belt. You've forgotten the fellow's name, but you judged him typical of the young men of the tunnel. He was broad-shouldered and muscular, and kept his dark hair cropped close to his skull, presumably to make himself look more intimidating. Even so, he fell easily into conversation with you and seemed quite polite. He spoke of the seriousness of his duty, to protect the last enclave of human civilization against the inevitable onslaught of incognito deodands. He said that it was a foregone conclusion that the tunnel would fall to them someday, but that he would do his best to see that it did not happen on his watch.

Perhaps you asked him why he hasn't asked one of the outsiders to take him and his family back with them to another time or dimension; if so, he seemed shocked, and said that this would be a most cowardly betrayal of his own world. He then regarded you through narrowed eyes, as if concerned that you might be a slaving half-man, intent on luring away his family with false promises of a safe life elsewhere.

Persuade (Forthright) 6, Rebuff (Wary) 8, Attack (Strength) 8, Defense (Sure-Footedness) 10, Health 8, Athletics 5, Perception 6, Tracking 2, Wherewithal 8. Resistances: Avarice 6, Indolence 4, Gourmandism 2, Pettifoggery 6, Rakishness 4.

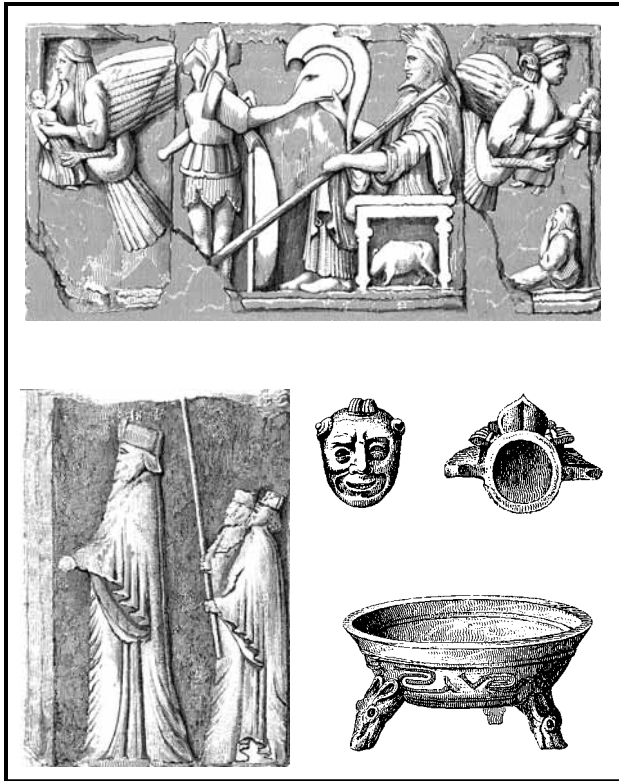
Typical Merchant

"Considering that the world has been destroyed, my prices could scarcely be characterized as unreasonable."

The merchants of the Undercity believe that their wares are so coveted that people will come all the way from other aeons or realities to purchase them, so it is little surprise that they haggle from an assumption of strength. However, many of the goods they offer are unique, or at least of abiding quality. More importantly, the styles of tailoring and craftsmanship practiced here are distinctive, and to own them is to show your peers that you are discerning and have

⁵ That is, the study of collectible coinage.

⁶ Presumably he convinced its residents he was a version of Vidierista from an alternate world, not the one who would have been destroyed along with everyone else when the sun went out.



Slabs excised from friexes found in the Undercity are incorporated into the walls of fashionable house aboveground, while scholars and collectors of incunabula may offer fabulous sums for apparently useless objects.

wealth to spare. In short, these items have become symbols of status in the rest of Kaiin⁷. So, while the exact reasons for the demand may elude the Undercity's inhabitants, they know that they can charge extortionate prices for the goods they vend. They reinforce this perception by themselves dressing in the finest of togs, by affecting the exacting manners of ancient aristocracy, and in general making their customers feel like interlopers who should consider themselves lucky to even glance at items they might want to purchase.

You know that it isn't necessarily safe to too thoroughly best an Undercity merchant in a bout of haggling. You once saw a canny visitor from Erze Damath dicker a cloth vendor down to a mere 400 terces for a sixteen-yard bolt of iridescent damask. Appalled by the progress of the negotiation, the

merchant summoned a patrol and accused the Damathian of incipient deodandism. The man was eventually allowed to leave with his purchase, but it seemed to you like a close thing.

Persuade (Intimidating) 8, Rebuff (Penetrating) 8, Attack (Caution) 2, Defense (Dodge) 4, Health 6, Magic (Forceful) 2, Appraisal 6, Etiquette 6, Pedantry 2, Perception 4, Scuttlebutt 6, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 2.

Resistances: none

Places of Interest

The entirety of the Undercity is its own most notable place of interest. The walls consist of stacked blocks of masonry blocks, many of which are now loose and crumbling. If you've ever stopped to carefully examine the blocks, you've identified them as fashioned from primitive concrete, with large stones and bits of sea shell mixed in. These walls come from one of the old cities buried beneath Kaiin. Numerous wooden pillars and support beams hold up the ceiling. A thick wire mesh, presumably installed by the excavators, holds together its loose chunks of rock and mortar. It looks none too sturdy, a fact which is not lost on the Undercity's inhabitants, most of whom suffer a nervous tic compelling them to regularly glance upwards to check the ceiling's current condition⁸. The worst sign of its degradation that you've ever personally witnessed was the fall of a few pebbles onto a vendor's table.

The tunnel floors are of rough stone, on which the marks from excavators' pick-axes can still be plainly seen. There are, however, no loose stones to injure the soles of slipper wearers. A chalky dust coats floors and walls; when people fill the tunnels, this dust rises and billows up into the air. After too long a stay in the Undercity, you may develop a dry throat or a light cough. The locals seem inured to it, though you've heard that they tend to expire in their forties or fifties, succumbing to various respiratory ailments.

The sharp smells of spicy cooking fill the dry air. When you are hungry, these aromas are tantalizing. When have already eaten or are feeling a bit queasy, they take on a nauseating undertone.

⁷ So much so that some surface artisans copy them. However, the workmanship on these imitations is often suspect, and the social humiliation of being exposed as the owner of counterfeit goods is immense.

⁸ If you've ever asked a local about it, he told you that everyone naturally wonders how long the ceiling will hold out. But, with the world destroyed and prowled by hungry deodands, they have nowhere else to go.



The temperature is a good ten degrees cooler than the city above. During the languid summer months, the relative cool of the Undercity is refreshing, as is its lack of humidity. During chillier weather, the Undercity becomes unpleasantly cold.

The dominant sound of the Undercity is that of heated whispering. The tunnel echoes terribly, and residents have had to train themselves to speak very quietly. Otherwise, the echoes would overwhelm them, and no one could hear themselves, let alone anyone else, speak. Speaking in a whisper is contagious, and most visitors tend to go along without necessarily even noticing. During quiet hours, the tunnel's silence conjures the eerie feeling of a great and abandoned cathedral. During prime business hours, when the haggling grows most intense, the whispers double in on themselves, and begin to sound like the buzzing of an approaching insect swarm.

Two entrances to the tunnel exist, one in the Scholasticarium District (K11), and one in the East Threek (J10.)

Entrances

Main Entrance (K11)

The Scholasticarium District entrance is a crypt-like marble structure with large, brass-bound doors. The would-be visitor must signal the patrolmen inside by pounding on the door with a huge, bronze knocking ring. Depending on the residents' current state of alert, the doors may or may not swing open. If they do, anxious guardsmen, swords clutched firmly in hand, reach forward, look nervously about the surrounding square, and unceremoniously drag the visitors inside.

This entrance is tucked away behind a number of anonymous student tenements; if you want to get in, you must wait until there is no one else around. Otherwise the guardsmen will look out, see these bystanders, and exclaim in horror that deodands lurk nearby⁹. They'll slam their doors shut, leaving you standing disappointed on the threshold. If you do get in, you may then walk down a staircase of polished black granite towards the tunnel's north end.

Kandive has decreed that the delusions of the Undercity be rigorously maintained, to ensure that luxury goods should continue to freely flow from it.

On his orders, Maugifiers stand guard at this entrance during the day, preventing people from attempting to use it. Thus, the Undercity guards inside never see sunlight, and are never forced to question their beliefs.

(Even if they did see it, they'd likely conclude that they'd been subjected to sorcerous trickery by deodand Arch-Magicians, but Kandive does not know that and is taking no chances.)

Secondary Entrance (J11)

It is easier to gain admittance at the Threek entrance, though the process is tiresome and undignified. Visitors must lift up a large metal plate, which normally lies flat on the ground. Muscle-bound Threekside loiterers usually loiter nearby, ready to assist with the lifting. They typically charge a fee of 5 terces.

Once past the plate, you must lower yourself on a rope attached to a pulley. The drop is nearly twenty feet, so you must perform this action skillfully, or suffer a painful fall. At the bottom, you find yourself facing a long hallway. It leads to a metal door. Knock on it and one of the guardsmen behind it will peer at you through a quickly-opened eyehole. If you pass muster, the door will open and you can enter the Undercity at your leisure.

The Quiz

Whichever entrance you use, you'll be quizzed before the guardsmen admit you. They'll ask where you come from; remember to say you're a time or dimensional traveler, or you'll be refused entry. Some guardsmen may ask further questions about your native era or reality; your inventions must sound natural and plausible¹⁰.

Getting Out

Unless you've offended the residents of the Undercity, patrolmen will not impede you on your way out. In the case of the main entrance, they will, however, roughly shove you out the doors, so that they'll remain open for as brief a moment as is absolutely possible.

Do not expect the patrolmen to be especially concerned for your welfare once you leave the Undercity. They may assume that you, as dimensional wanderers, have the resources to keep deodands and other creatures at bay. Or they may simply not care.

⁹ "Do you not see them, travelers? Deodands! Deodands!"

¹⁰ Admittance requires a successful contest of your Persuasion versus a patrolman's Rebuff. If you are part of a group, only a single, appointed spokesman need win a contest. If your Persuasion Style is Glib, you gain a boon of 1 during this contest; if it is Forthright, you suffer a levy of 1.



Commercial Establishments

You'll find over thirty shops in the Undercity, all of them high-priced and ostentatious. Undercity vendors all maintain shops, but most of them also set up tables outside their doors, to attract customers. Experienced shoppers know that the tables occasionally offer enticing bargains, but are staffed by the most junior members of the sales staff. The items of true quality are all inside the shops. If you want anything expensive, you'll have no choice but to haggle with the proprietor or most adept salesman. Even in this closed world, shops come and go. The best-known and most durable of them are as follows.

Ripegiano's (Tailor)

The most lordly of the Undercity's tailors is the silver-haired Ripegiano, who specializes in colorful robes embroidered with elaborate patterns in gold thread. Supposedly, more than half of the people of the Undercity work for him, sewing garments. He is known by name throughout Almery. Even Prince Kandive wears his garments. He makes a great show of his reluctance to take on new customers.

Sample prices: Silk robe, elaborately embroidered: (man's) 10,000; (woman's) 40,000; tunic (man's, simple) 2,000 (woman's elaborate) 20,000; scarf, 500.

Mendimin's (Footwear)

Another coveted luxury item of the Undercity are its fine, silken slippers, and no name carries greater weight than that of Mendimin. Now an ancient, stooped figure who can see only with the aid of gigantic magnifying lenses, which dangle from the brim of his large, worn felt hat, Mendimin crustily supervises the labor of his three fetching granddaughters, Sepasspria, Amarepria, and Lanta. You've seen Mendimin throw men out of his shop for looking at them in an untoward way. It seemed to you that the young women resented his intervention, however.

Sample prices: Curled-toe slippers, elevated, multicolored: 2000; unadorned slippers for household use: 500 terces.

Dishware

In the arena of fine dishware, two establishments — one well-established, one new — battle for supremacy. The famed **Sublime Tureen** offers traditional glazed terra cotta with black edging. **Knitamela's** newly



Any person possessing the appropriate demeanor may be seized, bathed, and pressed into service as a model in the studios and workshops of the tailors and costume makers. Remuneration varies: some tailors feel the opportunity to wear such clothes is itself sufficient reward, others indeed charge the models.

celebrated factory produces semi-translucent, light green dishware created through a secret process. Ahovirr, the haughty proprietress of the Sublime Tureen, never misses an opportunity to insult Knitamela and cast aspersions on the durability of her wares. You've even heard her imply that Knitamela uses deodands to fetch her supplies. Knitamela is equally dismissive of Ahovirr's wares, which she labels "old-fashioned to the point of tedium."

Outside the Undercity, opinion is equally divided. Conservatives favor Ahovirr's products, while sensation seekers embrace the novelty of Knitamela's.

Both women's wares are made in the Undercity by potters working to their demanding specifications. The only thing uniting the two purveyors is a commitment to high prices.

The Undercity



- 1. Main Entrance
- 2. Secondary Entrance

Shops

- 3. Ripegiano's
- 4. Mendimin
- 5. Sublime Tween
- 6. Knitmela
- 7. The Corce Mill
- 8. The Last Amphora

Taverns and Dining Halls

- 9. The Eternal Illusion
- 10. The Scorched Fox
- 11. Surater and Serosto's

Other Landmarks

- 12. The Pit
- 13. The Dais of Judgement
- 14. The Door



Sample prices: Full setting of dishes (eighteen pieces): 2000; cup and saucer, 100.

The Corce Mill (Spices)

The Corce Mill sells spices, both imported and local. The proprietor, the lugubrious Dojende, claims that all of his imported spices come from other timeframes and dimensions, but of course you understand that his suppliers are local. His prices for spices available elsewhere are exorbitant, and their jars tend to collect dust on his shelves. Culinary enthusiasts instead seek out his supply of exotic lichens, which grow only on certain walls of the Undercity, and are prepared and rendered edible by processes Dojende and his competitors have so far succeeded in keeping secret from the jealous chefs of the surface world. Dojende vends more varieties of spice mix than his rival shopkeepers. His most famous is the tongue-burning mixture he calls corce. Also coveted are its milder cousin, kolimi, and the curiously fruity edicrista. Sample prices: (by the dram) corce 5 terces; kolimi, 3 terces; edicrista, 1 groat.

The Last Amphora (Liquor)

This wine shop is operated by a hulking, balding giant of a man named Cortamel. Only the sublime quality of his beverages compensate for his surly demeanor. He imports wine from “other dimensions” and mulls it with local spices, particularly corce (see above.) The result is a group of wines which combine deliciously with exotic foods, enhancing the native flavors of the grape without masking them. If you are a timid or abstemious soul, you might be wary of the legendarily intense and long-lasting hangovers that strike those who overindulge in corce wine. If you are a true oenophile, you consider the devastating headaches a small price to pay for the sublime pleasures of this heady beverage.

Taverns and Dining Halls

The Undercity provides no inns; people here are suspicious of travelers eager to pay lengthy visits. Unless you can secure an invitation to stay as a guest in a local’s home¹¹, your visits here will be confined to day trips. However, the lack of inns does not mean a shortage of places to drink and eat.

The Eternal Illusion is a large, slightly dingy

establishment offering a bland version of the local cuisine to hesitant travelers. Service is slightly more polite here than is the Undercity norm, a fact which can be attributed to the eccentricity of its owner, the matron Nuk, who espouses the curious philosophy that places of business should be run for the pleasure and convenience of their patrons. (Prices: 10 terces for a full-course meal; 4 for a light lunch.)

No such foolishness grips the snarling servers of **The Scorched Fox**, the eating establishment most popular with locals. It serves Undercity food in all its assaultive glory, loaded down with corce and other tongue-stripping, lichen-derived spices. The locals have become desensitized to the power of their spices, and gulp down this aggressive cuisine with gusto. A sign posted near the entrance warns visitors not to complain about the favorable deal locals receive: they pay one-fourth of the price you’ll be charged. Its proprietress, the green-eyed Herevel, does not trouble to mask the sadistic glee she feels when newcomers order recklessly and suffer accordingly. (Prices, tourist rate: 40 terces for a full-course meal; 20 for a light lunch.)

The food at **Surater and Serosto’s** is a mediocre imitation of classic Kaiinese cuisine, but patrons go for the floor show. The two proprietors are former rivals united in suffering by a magical curse. From noon to midnight, the curse forces Surater to exactly duplicate every movement performed by the red-haired, florid-faced Serosto. From midnight to noon, it is the bow-legged, big-eared Surater who gains freedom of independent action, and Serosto who is compelled to mimic his every cough and gesture. The two of them are always exactly twelve and a half feet apart. To watch the two of them execute the elaborate choreography necessary to keep food flowing from the kitchen to diner’s tables is considered incomparable entertainment. The place is deserted when Surater and Serosto are not working, but is otherwise so packed that there are always at least twice as many prospective diners as seats. Reservations are doled out according to a lottery system, with patrons registering for evening tables earlier in the day. The tight-lipped hostess, Elotill, begins to accept reservations early in the day. You’ve learned that the lottery system can be circumvented with the aid of connections to

11 Not an easy thing, unless perhaps you have invested in a Relationship with an Undercity resident.

influential people in the Undercity, or through simple bribery. The matronly Elotill is said to carry on an intermittent sexual relationship with both men, but you have never attempted to question her on the exact details of this arrangement. (Prices: 30 terces for a full-course meal; 4 for a light lunch¹².)



Surviving Undercity Cuisine

After a meal here, you must score a *Wherewithal* success or suffer intestinal discomfort, which starts four hours after eating and lasts for another twenty hours. During this time, you suffer a -1 penalty on all original rolls (not rerolls) due to the unpleasant distraction of this condition. The same holds true if you drink more than a glass of corse wine, except that the symptom is a severe headache, and the onset of the penalty does not start until you wake up the next morning.

When you eat at the *Scorched Fox*, you suffer a levy of 1 on all of your *Wherewithal* rolls. The food at *Surater* and *Serosto's* does not use local spices, and may be eaten without having to roll anything.

On p179, you'll find a *Tweak*, *Lichen Resistance*, that immunizes you from these effects.

goes. You once heard two visitors talking about it, repeating a rumor that it leads to a network of tunnels and passageways, and that it is possible to follow them to an exit to on Kaiin's western outskirts. However, just then a patrolman came near, and they quickly changed the subject. You have no idea whether they spoke with certain knowledge, or merely repeated the sorts of rumors people invent whenever they encounter an apparently bottomless pit.

The Dais of Judgment

Nearby is the Dais of Judgment, where Oolbrea sits when called upon to pronounce sentence on a suspected deodand. It is a circular riser carved out of stone, rendered in the same polished granite of the main staircase into the Undercity. The polished surface is scored and cracked from wear, so it is a good guess that this is an ancient feature adapted to a new use by the under-people. In its center sits a blocky chair hewn out of limestone; prominent scratch marks on the dais show that it was dragged into position and was not part of the original.

No patrolmen guard the dais, but anyone who walks across it or uses it as a bench is apt to receive a series of disapproving stares from area residents.

The Door

In the wall of a large alcove waits The Door, a fifteen foot brass-bound entranceway to who knows what. The door bears a large lock and an inscription in an unknown language. If you've ever bothered to ask about it, you learned that pedants propose various translations for the inscription: it might be an invocation to the gods, a commemoration of a great building project, or a warning to avoid the demons that lurk on its other side. The location of the door's key, and what might be found behind it, are a matter of considerable speculation among visitors. You've noticed, though, that locals become skittish when questioned about it, preferring to change the subject to the proper proportions of corse to put in mutton stew, or the exotic features of the questioner's faraway homeland. This nervousness might be explained in one of two ways: they might know what's behind the door and don't want others to know, or they may simply fear that someday the door will open from the other side, letting something awful and carnivorous spill into their tiny oasis of safety.

Curiosities and Landmarks

The Pit

The pit, into which suspected deodands are flung, casts a menacing presence over the main commercial section of the Undercity. At least four patrolmen guard it at all times, because one may never be sure that a given deodand is incapable of flight¹³. Patrolmen do not stop curious people from approaching or peering down into the Pit; they seem to feel it offers visitors a salutary lesson. You've looked down into its depths but have no idea how far down it

¹² Surater and Serosto are never present at lunch.

¹³ To your knowledge, nothing has ever come back out of the pit.



You once heard that an adventurer approached the door with a large brass key, but was hustled off and hurled into the Pit before he could try inserting it into the lock. You didn't know how much credence to grant this anecdote.



Events

Processional For the Death of the World
Once every two weeks, the residents of the Undercity stage a processional to mourn the death of the world. It is an elaborate, mournful affair, in which every resident is expected to participate. Oolbrea leads the procession, swinging censers that emit thick, reeking smoke. His people follow, rending their garments¹⁴ and spontaneously shouting out remembrances of the places, people and things that they most miss from the ruined world. Occasionally a bystander has been startled to hear his own name called out as among the mourned dead. Of course, he can't console his mourner without being accused of deodandism. Business is suspended for the three hours it takes for all of the mourners to wend their way three times around the entire extent of their tiny realm. Then, after a quick change of clothing, all goes back to normal.

When you first saw the grave expressions on the mourner's faces, you sensed that it would be terribly offensive to interrupt the procession in any way. You have never seen anyone try it, but can easily guess where such an foolish and insensitive person might end up.

End of the World Day

In the interest of maintaining the supreme quality of the goods manufactured in the Undercity, Prince Kandive undertakes an annual effort to reinforce the delusional anxiety of Undercity residents. To this end, he has established an annual End of the World day, held on the 24th of Raterse. The surface inhabitants of Kaiin dress as deodands or other half-men and their victims, and the festival lasts from sundown to dawn. Undercity dwellers call this Truce Day and come to the surface to observe the terrors of the Overworld,

knowing that today only they are safe from the half-men's depravity. By city-wide ordinance, all inhabitants of Kaiin must keep up the pretence for the duration of the night. Genuine half-men from outside the city take this opportunity to infiltrate the city and eat revelers who stray into areas of darkness. The clever ones scamper back to the wilderness as dusk begins to filter through the sky.

Rumors ...

- The people's fear of disguised deodands isn't necessarily as mad as it seems. A couple of weeks ago, a man brought before Oolbrea on the dais of judgment did, in fact, transform into a deodand before everyone's eyes. Before being tossed into the pit, it swore that its brothers would finish what it had started. Obviously, the locals are wrong when they claim that deodands want to eat them because they're the last people left on earth. So what is it about this place that makes them want to risk sneaking into a city? Perhaps if you were to track down a group of roving deodands recently sighted outside the city, they could be coerced into sharing their secret with you.
- As a young man, when he lived on the surface, Oolbrea trained as an acolyte in the obscure and violent religion of Troanade, The Devourer of Marrow. Now their Grand Hesiarch has died, unexpectedly naming Oolbrea as his successor. The Troanadans don't know that the Oolbrea they seek is the same man as the Quadrator of the Undercity. One of their mad patrons has something you want¹⁵, and may give it to you, provided you kidnap Oolbrea and present him to his anxious co-religionists.
- (For Rhialto-level characters) Sanikmi the Misty, the arch-thief who stole Vidieresta's coin collection is an invented persona. Your sandestin tells you that Sanikmi was really one of his fellows, acting at the behest of another Arch-Magician. Alas, he declines to specify the sandestin or the name of his master. Vidieresta's purloined collection is sufficiently complete to

¹⁴ Observant visitors will note that the usually well-attired locals do not wear their best outfits during the processions, but instead affect garb of poor quality, meant especially for rending.

¹⁵ Determine what this is in consultation with your GM.

be of interest even to a person as lofty as yourself, especially considering that some of the coins had IOUN stones embedded in them. Perhaps you should find out who stole it, and teach him a lesson by relieving him of his guilty burden. If you find yourself in an especially generous frame of mind, you might even return the non-magical portion of the hoard to Vidieresta.

☛ (For magicians or Arch-Magicians) The curse that afflicts Surater and Serosto has bedeviled Kaiin's finest magical minds. Your most arrogant colleagues have tried to lift it, and but have succeeded only momentarily. If you were to triumph where they have failed, you would win considerable bragging rights over those second-rank wand-wavers.

☛ Someone you know and dislike¹⁶ has accumulated, in a location currently unknown to you, a collection of Flumosa's statues of Prince Kandive — with funereal inscriptions intact. Clearly, he means to hoard these until Kandive's actual demise, at which point their value, as rare examples of Flumosa's output in perfect condition, will treble or even quadruple in value. If you were to find his secret hiding place for the collection, you could expose him, earning retribution for the insolent tricks he's played on you in the past.

☛ In a moldy book on architecture, you find a reference that might be to The Door and its key. You think there might be a hidden door in one of the underground structures near The Pit, which in turn will lead to a passageway where the key is hidden. The book only hints as to what lies beyond the door, but it is easy to assume that it is the thing you most covet. All you have to do is to find the secret passageway, and go through it when no one is looking. Oh, yes, and you'll have to survive your descent into the Pit, of course.



Taglines

As a mere hypothesis, it lacks probative value.

Forgive my slowness of reply; I am dumbstruck by the snowy whiteness of your beard.

I did not originate the words that vex you; I was merely repeating, for the edification of my friend here, statements made by that fellow over there.

I feel myself growing jaded by this amusement.

I salute the novelty of your expression.

I thought I heard a yammering growl emanate from somewhere behind it.

I was merely studying the geological strata, which, you must concede, are of surpassing interest.

If only I had beheld your world before its regrettable annihilation.

It was nothing so coarse as an insinuation. It was an allusion to an insinuation.

Its tumescence is remarkable.

Let us not jump immediately to the most extreme possible response.

Like the objects you offer for sale, your prices defy description.

My homeland is exceedingly tiresome, and, for that reason alone, I decline to describe it.

The rigor of your traditionalism is without defect.

Your diligence is praiseworthy.

Your questions have a probing quality about them, which I admire.

¹⁶ Ask the GM to supply the name. She should choose a well-heeled GMC you've run afoul of in the past. He should not be an Undercity resident, but a citizen of Kaiin proper.



Tweaks

Otherworldly Demeanor

(Imposture)

Situation: When attempting to Persuade an Undercity official or resident that you hail from another dimension or era, and that you are not a deodand, no matter what they just overheard

Description: As a frequent visitor to the Undercity, pretending to be from another world has become second nature to you. You do not commit the slips of the tongue that have doomed many other, less experienced visitors. Even if someone else tries to cast suspicion on you, you are quick to respond with casual, believable details that easily allay Undercity suspicions.

Benefit: You automatically gain entrance to the Undercity, without need for a contest. If you (the player) make a verbal slip that might otherwise attract the attention of patrolmen, you may spend 1 Persuasion point to withdraw it, so that, in the story, your character never said it. If subjected to accusations by someone else, you gain a boon of 1 when defending yourself. (The GM may withhold this boon if the accusation comes from another player, and she suspects that the two of you are colluding to rack up extra Persuasion points.)

Deodandic Imputation

(Scuttlebutt)

Situation: When you wish to bring about the downfall of a fellow visitor to the Undercity.

Description: You are skillful at dropping hints that an Undercity visitor may not be from another time or dimension, but is in fact a disguised creature from the world above, come to snack on the world's last human inhabitants. You can accomplish in one of two ways. You can speaking about this person in the presence of local residents, or you can engage him in conversation within earshot of others, leading him to commit verbal errors which tend to implicate him.

Benefit: In the first instance, pit your Scuttlebutt against the Undercity resident's Rebuff; in the second,

pit it against your chosen target's. In the latter case, your target must pay twice the normal cost to reroll a Dismal Failure. In the former, by scoring a Prosaic or better Success, you can phrase your calumnies in such a subtle way that the listener does not really think you're leveling an accusation. Instead, he thinks he's discovered a crucial clue in your innocent remarks. That way, even if your target somehow escapes the Pit, he will never learn that it was you who arranged for him to be dragged to the Dais of Judgment.

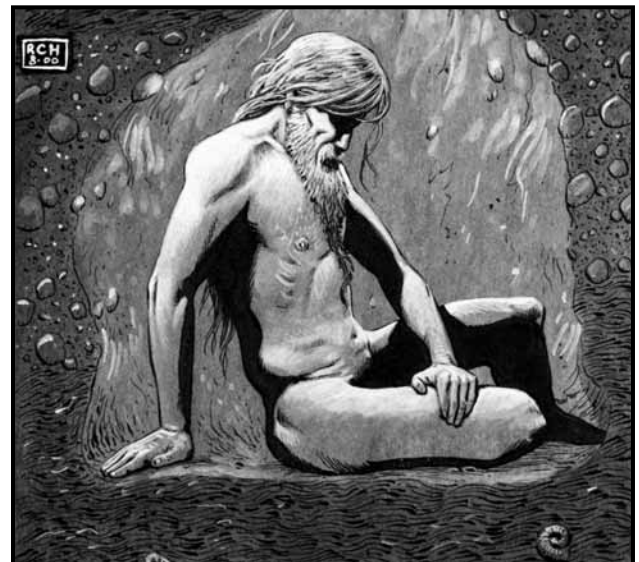
Lichen Resistance

(Wherewithal)

Situation: When ingesting corse, or other lichen-derived spices of the Undercity.

Description: You have eaten enough of the heady local cuisine to be as immune to its coarser effects as any resident.

Benefit: You never suffer hangovers after drinking corse wine. When rolling to see how well you resist the rigors of Undercity cuisine (see sidebar, p176), treat all Dismal Failures as Quotidian. Even if you fail, the time you spend afflicted by digestive distress is halved.



It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that persons suffering Forlorn Encystment may be found here.



Chapter 12

Indices of Supreme Utility

Establishments of a Commercial Nature

A master list of the commercial establishments described in this book lies below. It is sorted by type of business, under the assumption that you'll most often want to use it as a directory.

TYPE OF BUSINESS	NAME	PROPRIETOR	LOCATION	PAGE
Ale merchant	Market Stall	Hedclip	Market	61
Antiques & magical treasures	The Diadem of Unseen Merit	Lactree	Scholasticarium	120
Apothecary	Market Stall	Kager	Market	60
Arcane supplies	The Burning Pestle	Harmumb	Scholasticarium	120
Banquet Hall	The Seventh	Veremes	Scholasticarium	118
Blacksmith	Market Stall	N'je Lenitin	Market	62
Blood and bone buyer	Mirejater's Pound of Flesh	Mirejater	Tracks	156
Candles and lanterns	Market Stall	Joftamela	Market	61
Curios	The Waiting Ghost	unspecified	Scholasticarium	121
Curios	Ary's Emporium	unspecified	Scholasticarium	121
Curios	The Sleepless Scroll	unspecified	Scholasticarium	121
Containers	Market Stall	Pronom	Market	62
Curios	Market Stall	Onsloc	Market	59
Curios	Market Stall	Finipa	Market	59
Curios	Market Stall	Chitoroade	Market	59
Dish maker, innovative	Knitamela's	Knitamela	Undercity	173
Dish maker, traditionalist	The Sublime Tureen	Ahovirr	Undercity	173
Fine arts	Market Stall	Lonpria	Market	61
Footwear, fine	Pria's	Pria	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Footwear, fine	The Cobbler's Stone	Gattano	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Fortune teller, diversified	Market Stall	Venzioi	Market	60
Fortune teller, ominous	Market Stall	Paltatea	Market	60
Furniture	Market Stall	Sepmi	Market	63
Gambling house, debauched	High Hell	Anersi	Tracks	153
Gambling house, disorienting	The Jester's Gullet	G'ja	Tracks	153
Gambling house, lowly	The Trench	Erosto	Tracks	155
Gambling house, refined	The Silver Tray	Tracula	Tracks	155
Gambling house, respectable	The Mansion	Anersi	Tracks	154
Gambling house, rough	The Sailor's Cutlass	Tracula	Tracks	155
Gambling house, tasteful	The Spinning Terce	Erosto	Tracks	155
Gravel pit	Koshsmith's Gravel Pit	Koshsmith	Tracks	157
Hats	Tocri's	Tocri	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Hats	Rovata's	Rovata	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Hats	Armico's	Armico	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Inn, for magicians	Magicians' Inn	Quellime	Scholasticarium	118
Jeweler, fine	Market Stall	Shmagul	Market	64
Jewels, fine (antique)	Ediccicio's	Ediccicio	Palace (Golden Walk)	94



TYPE OF BUSINESS	NAME	PROPRIETOR	LOCATION	PAGE
Jewels, fine (new)	Poscerrista's	Poscerrista	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Kitchen supplies	Market Stall	Sulviff's	Market	64
Liquor	The Last Amphora	Cortamel	Undercity	175
Pawnbroker	Indium's Goods Exchange	Indium	Tracks	156
Poet	Market Stall	Kohha	Market	61
Rare Coins	Vidierista's	Vidierista	Undercity	169
Rope merchant	Market Stall	Badjidha	Market	59
Rugs	Market Stall	Parmont	Market	62
Scriveners	The Pen and Pot	Sorgfolinta	Scholasticarium	120
Sculptures	Flumosa's	Flumosa	Undercity	168
Slave dealer (laborers)	Market Stall	Vyejuar	Market	63
Slave dealer (pleasure slaves)	Market Stall	Aevolai	Market	63
Slipper Maker	Mendimin's	Mendimin	Undercity	173
Spices, lichen-derived	The Corce Mill	Dojende	Undercity	175
Tailor	Ripegiano's	Ripegiano	Undercity	173
Tailor, exotic fabrics	Ripedueccio's	Ripedueccio	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Tailor, hot-tempered	Market Stall	Blotral	Market	64
Tailor, matronly	Market Stall	Lezzina	Market	64
Tailor, melancholy	Market Stall	Fiuottecca	Market	64
Tailor, quality workmanship	The Golden Needle	unspecified	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Tavern, abstemious	The Howling Saint	Tracmatabli	Canal Town	34
Tavern, bland	The Eternal Illusion	Nuk	Undercity	175
Tavern, bohemian	Emat's	Emat	Threek	137
Tavern, brawl-plagued	Scront's	Scront	Threek	137
Tavern, builder's	The Well-Hammered Nail	Vye	Canal Town	34
Tavern, cursed	The Wishing Tree	Kokursy	Canal Town	34
Tavern, dhjetar men	The Snarl	Dimer	Tracks	157
Tavern, fighters'	The Sturdy Hilt	unspecified	Threek	138
Tavern, gamblers'	The Hide Vest	Peroje	Tracks	157
Tavern, gloomy yet fine	The Purple Hissock	unspecified	Palace (Golden Walk)	95
Tavern, middling	Surater and Serosto's	Surater & Serosto	Undercity	175
Tavern, obsequious	Guadi's	Guadi	Palace (Golden Walk)	95
Tavern, oysterman's	The Shucked Oyster	Lacto	Canal Town	34
Tavern, shop managers'	Orzista's	Orzista	Threek	138
Tavern, student	Miras'	unspecified	Scholasticarium	119
Tavern, student	The Angry Ham	unspecified	Scholasticarium	119
Tavern, student	The Four Rags	unspecified	Scholasticarium	119
Tavern, student	The Fox and Terce	unspecified	Scholasticarium	119
Tavern, student	The Red Fork	unspecified	Scholasticarium	119
Tavern, student	The Spined Tome	Plintha	Scholasticarium	119
Tavern, trollops'	The Lyre Road	Irashta	Tracks	157
Tavern, uncompromising	The Scorched Fox	Herevel	Undercity	175
Tavern, vigils'	The Black Tunic	unspecified	Palace (Golden Walk)	95
Weapons and armor	Market Stall	Thydic	Market	65
Wine shop, pricey	The Cellar	Ripenganno	Scholasticarium	120
Wines, fine	The Deepest Cellar	Mondove	Palace (Golden Walk)	94
Wines, fine	Condensation on the Grape	unspecified	Palace (Golden Walk)	95



Individuals of Note

This is a master list of the personages described in detail in the neighborhood chapters. It does not include business proprietors, who are instead referenced in the previous list.

ROLE	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	PAGE
Arch-Mage and Symposium Demi-Inferator	Grashpotel	Scholasticarium	111
Arch-Mage and Symposium Inferator	Perrin	Scholasticarium	112
Aristocratic leader	Flolad	Odkin Prospect	78
Arm-Breaker	Pernflo	Tracks	151
Bandit Leader, Hungry	Vyerpasin	Fringe	45
Bandit Leader, Melancholy	Angar Glams	Fringe	45
Beggar, Resilient	Pioni	Fringe	47
Beggar-In-Chief	Dombetha	Market	55
Beverage Purveyor, Abstemious	Hetta the Austere	Mud Flats	31
Breeder of racing beasts	Upolver	Tracks	153
Broadsheet publisher	Iccapasal	Threek	135
Builder, Recalcitrant	Antelo	Canal Town	29
Chancellor	Pertrij	Palace	92
Consort to winning gamblers	Chanjei	Tracks	147
Exortionist, vague	Coarch	Threek	132
Gambler, luckless	Fladant	Tracks	149
Gambler, successful	Manosto	Tracks	150
Gambling commissioner	Frolaga	Tracks	149
Gaming magnate, demanding	Tracula	Tracks	152
Gaming magnate, peculiar	G'ja	Tracks	150
Gaming magnate, sadistic	Anersi	Tracks	147
Gaming magnate, tough	Erosto	Tracks	148
Half-man, Licensed	The Vlark	Canal Town	32
Heir to the throne	Aramo	Palace	89
Inquisitor of fashion	Blaphena	Palace	89
Institute Head	Yanjo	Scholasticarium	117
Kandive's Chief Steward	Dlotne	Palace	90
Kandive's Consort	Terires	Palace	92
Kandive's Favored Concubine	Malgaea	Palace	91
Kandive's Nephew	Ulan Dhor	Palace	94
Leader (Quadrator) of the Undercity	Oolbrea	Undercity	168
Lecturer, energetic	Durgal Corwaine	Scholasticarium	110
Lecturer, female	Pic	Scholasticarium	113
Lecturer, nervous	Dafis	Scholasticarium	110
Lecturer, peripatetic	Volume Stinobric	Scholasticarium	116
Librarian, twk-man	Quirethomble	Scholasticarium	113
Livestock dealer	Twegg	Market	58
Magician, prankish	Xerceju the Variable	Scholasticarium	117
Master of Scholasticarium	Brefilimi	Scholasticarium	109
Maugifier and rumored ex-necrophage	Thrump	Scholasticarium	116
Maugifier leader, reluctant	Turvin	Scholasticarium	114
Maugifier, sinister	Brangoa	Scholasticarium	115



ROLE	NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	PAGE
Maugifier, stalwart	Garth	Scholasticarium	115
Maugifier, swaggering	Branlagan	Scholasticarium	115
Merchant grandee, impoverished	Nerijs	Odkin Prospect	81
Merchant grandee, wealthy	Yakethese	Odkin Prospect	82
Merchants' Association leader	Schi-Gii	Market	56
Ne'er-do-well	Saish Shortshanks	Mud Flats	30
Oracle, Crazed	Dututtu	Fringe	46
Over-Sheriff	Chozerri	Palace	90
Oyster launderer	Bocchimile	Canal Town	30
Priestess	Fladgna	Canal Town	31
Prophetess	Gipeggia	Threek	133
Reseller of Scavenged Items	Kogjin	Fringe	47
Salon keeper	Hemilovi	Odkin Prospect	79
Sandestin, manipulative	Masdrio	Scholasticarium	112
Seafood supplier	Vetracosto	Market	58
Shop manager	Nagesya	Threek	135
Shorecomber in Chief of Scholasticarium	Carthos of Sfere	Scholasticarium	109
Shorecomber, Conniving	Dolbuk	Mud Flats	30
Shorecomber, Half-Lucky	Miransgi	Mud Flats	32
Student leader, brooding	Saper	Scholasticarium	114
Swordsman	Thorgumunt	Threek	151
Tax collector	Sidhujne	Market	57
Teamster leader	Edicnapa	Market	55
Trainer of racing beasts	Shote	Tracks	152
Under-Sheriff for Market	Infido	Market	56
Under-Sheriff for Odkin Prospect	Pritort	Odkin Prospect	81
Under-sheriff for The Threek	Twisest	Threek	137

Events By Date

Plamel, Raterse, Sorgent, Inlasto, Blinet, Chious, Deger, Hobven, Trumamel, Pestamel, Akosh, Vinstim, and Blotndming. *Events with variable dates not included.*

DATE	EVENT	PAGE
Raterse 12	Day of the Screaming Prophet	37
Raterse 24	End of the World Day	177
Sorgent 1	Amnesty Day	97
Sorgent 17	Night of Blue Lights	158
Sorgent 22	Effigy Day	139
Blinet 12	Crow Night	124
Inlasto 23	Regatta	98
Chious 23 - Deger 3	Festival	98
Hobven 4	Prince's Cup Day	158
Akosh 5	Prince of Paupers Parade	139
Pestamel 10	Forgiveness Day	158
Pestamel 15	Ball Day	139
Blotndming 9	Opening of the Shin House	37



Vancian Names

Players and GMs can use these names as needed, for contacts, walk-on characters, or any other GMC in immediate need of an appellation.

The names below were derived with the aid of a random name generator created by Chris Pound. As of this writing, it can be found on the web at www.ruf.rice.edu/~pound/. Chris' name generator uses passages of text from various languages to generate its random words. Many of the names created in this way sound vaguely amusing, making them ideally Vancian. The names below are a mixture of output from English, Italian, Turkish and Middle English .

English speakers are used to female names that end in "a" or "y." For female characters, you may want to add those letters to names that end in consonants. Likewise, you might want drop these letters or add a consonant to make a name sound more masculine.

Fantasy characters are easier to remember when their unconventional names sound very different. Avoid picking names reminiscent of already prominent GMCs.

Adancor	Bies	Defcla	Fro-Bano	Inackarm
Adarm	Bildeck	Defunch	Froundat	Inctro
Adcesca	Bir	Deragi	Fuli	Indlion
Addormola	Birin	Devalfa	Gand	Inhat
Adov	Birindi	Digididif	Gatiffear	Inimstra
Adpasilar	Bleer	Diniett	Geyen	Initria
Adrisca	Bobarm	Dir	Goidate	Innek
Adsob	Bor Toutat	Dittruglo	Grabbil	Insi
Adstanono	Bul Bun	Dobury	Grafion	Inthear
Aerovatca	Butar	Dodicta	Grarpovo	Intrin
Affinte	Caccher	Dogununol	Gresi	Isi
Aghampliar	Caninno	Dohan	Gulion	Jacativ
Agin	Centevi	Doren	Gum Donra	Juntraw
Agonbanc	Chifro	Dothand	Guri	Kafin
Aldevey	Chisaw	Doughter	Hadde	Kahvol
Aldida	Civanitlo	Drente	Halsh	Kanla
Aleekan	Clothek	Duguln	Handet	Kaparce
Alerol	Clought	Ede Ene	Hapirthol	Kaya
Amakif	Colyphy	Edusute	Hatasif	Kinsa
Amel	Compear	Ersisema	Harchayn	Koben
Ami	Comy	Esi	Hersolute	Kocegir
Amiyorm	Conarm	Evarre	Herwor	Kodusuc
Andan	Conrai	Everik	Hicere	Kogrece
Andar	Consca	Farvanion	Hisse	Kokimlard
Andek	Cor	Fasprorm	Hisson	Koni
Anlanre	Corolanbi	Fatorri	Holfyngat	Korwhis
Antolme	Cort	Ferat	Horkion	Kosina
Anza-Soso	Coveride	Fikir	Hount	Kosur
Aringear	Cullanti	Fina	Icindid	Kufurlun
Aseerva	Curedo	Flobuth	Ile Dal	Lardide
Asteke	Cutute	Foldegh	Imazto	Lastichek
Avestic	Decierd	Forash	Imdaami	Lesored
Aygunuz	Dedonide	Forn	Inabblo	Maar



Malat	Otverd	Ronsi	Spidry	Unov
Mand	Ovalegsi	Ruffici	Spiremb	Unt
Mandsel	Palicimol	Ruisalla	Spirt	Unzanovbi
Manhaphous	Palondro	S'fibi	Spitrenlo	Utar
Manman	Pamasty	Sagerib	Starb	Uyo
Manpedue	Parama	Sak	Steerei	Vadigat
Mehat	Parstla	Sanlarat	Sticore	Vedecita
Mellov	Pentunnta	Savarkuy	Sucluy	Vedevolno
Menat	Peshorr	Scappor	Sunlart	Vedrati
Mencey	Pearl	Sceclo	Suoto	Vegli
Menzsi	Porlo	Schia	Surkeslol	Vello
Mesi	Postor	Schidenat	Tabiyif	Venzionsi
Mide	Pragore	Scitrat	Takkirs	Verefet
Mododo	Proggita	Seif	Tassestta	Verol
Moncial	Pronitson	Selechunu	Tastion	Viglian
Monto	Prono	Semedser	Tattormov	Walyphash
Muhsiz	Protrute	Senno	Thadat	Wereekan
Mysse	Pupericion	Sentbi	Thaver	Wey
Nerdirb	Pursi	Sentto	Theful	Whatat
Nerduel	Quato	Serbi	Thertenek	Wingson
Okduzer	Qui-Bia	Shoust	Topicinion	Wortron
Oklmaksi	Rarat	Silerif	Tracksi	Y'dem
Okmu	Redeth	Sittalbo	Traguaz	Yakkind
Okularak	Repaute	Slef	Trion	Yazi
Ooesmunj	Retiere	Smern	Troomad	Yenin
Oolek	Revolimso	Somparm	Trozzio	Yerter
Oondrons	Ribleal	Sonash	Turelensa	Yurak
Oosonden	Rinattno	Sonunuz	Turrab	Ywonyar
Oowere	Riondi	Sophide	Twichou	Ziono
Oplomos	Ripovelta	Sorobsi	Twissumson	
Ortif	Risisi	Sourece	Ucceschi	





Tweaks

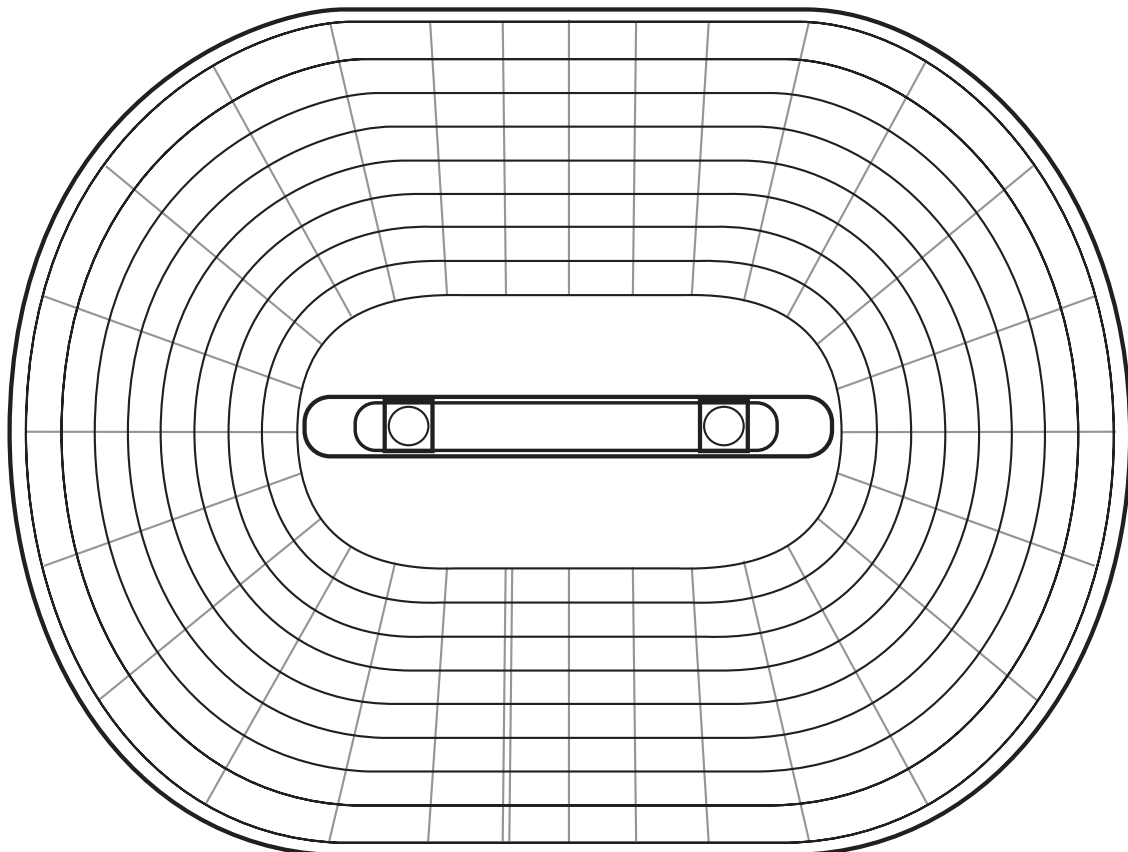
NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	PAGE
"Ah, The Zandab Defense" (Gambling)	The Tracks	161
Air of Imminent Conversion (Persuasion)	Canal Town	39
Beast Assessment (Driving /Riding)	The Tracks	161
City Survival (Living Rough)	The Fringe	49
Coalescent Discernment (Magic)	The Scholasticarium	127
Communicable Revulsion (Resist : Gourmandism)	The Threek	141
Decipher Lunatic Ramblings (Scuttlebutt)	The Fringe	49
Deodandic Imputation (Scuttlebutt)	The Undercity	179
Devastating Witticism (Persuade : Glib)	Odkin Prospect	85
Exigent Citation (Pedantry)	The Scholasticarium	127
Eyes On The Game (Ability)	The Tracks	161
Felonious Deportment (Imposture)	The Fringe	50
Impeccable Pedigree (Etiquette)	Odkin Prospect	85
Incorruptible Rectitude (Resist : Avarice)	The Palace & Environs	100
Ink-Stained Intrigue (Persuasion)	The Scholasticarium	127
"Is It By Design That You Missed This Gleaming Object?" (Perception)	Canal Town	40
Just a Poor And Simple Soul (Rebuff : Wary)	The Threek	141
"Let Us Repair To Less Exposed Surroundings" (Perception)	The Fringe	50
Lichen Resistance (Wherewithal)	The Undercity	179
"Oh, She Has A Sneaky Look, That One Does" (Resist : Rakishness)	The Threek	141



NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	PAGE
Otherworldly Demeanor (Imposture)	The Undercity	179
Reek of the Waterman (Imposture)	Canal Town	39
Smoldering Pout (Seduction)	The Scholasticarium	128
Splendid Affectation (Persuade : Charming)	Odkin Prospect	84
"The Prince's Deodands Lust For Flesh" (Persuade : Intimidating)	The Palace & Environs	100
Unappetizing Countenance (Health)	Canal Town	40
Vigil Training (Defense : Parry)	The Palace & Environs	100

The Racetrack

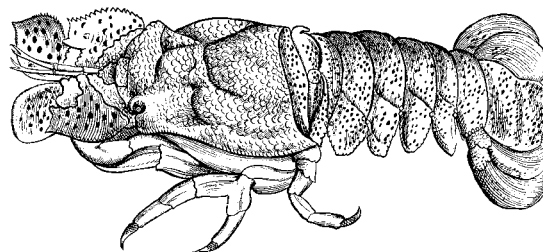
For 'The Climactic Race Sequence', p163. Not to scale.





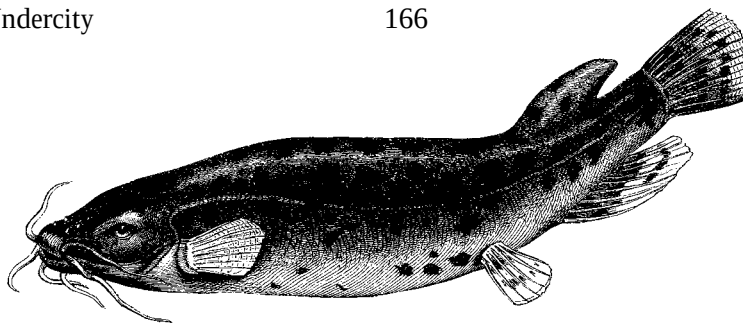
A Brief Inventory of Beasts

Barnacles	Canal Town	25
Baspagn	The Market	69
Bees, singing	The Scholasticarium	105
Brilliantine quare	The Market	68
Cassecc	The Market	70
Cer	The Market	70
Chun The Unavoidable	City Overview	17
	The Market	61
Clams	<i>importation</i> Canal Town	30
Crabs	Canal Town	30
Crab, sand	Canal Town	36
Creep of Inaccuracy	The Scholasticarium	125
Deodand(s)	<i>in well</i> City Overview	18
	<i>pit</i> Palace & Environs	97
	<i>disguised</i> The Undercity	166
Dhjetar	The Market	71
	<i>racing</i> The Tracks	143, 162
	<i>appearance, behaviour</i> The Tracks	161
Elephant	The Scholasticarium	105
Erb	How to Use This Book	7
Gid	How to Use This Book	7
Gjido	The Fringe	45
Horses	<i>riot control</i> Canal Town	37
	<i>Prince's men</i> The Fringe	43
	<i>Bandits</i> The Fringe	45
	<i>edible</i> The Fringe	45
	The Tracks	143
	<i>poisonous</i> The Fringe	48
Leucomorph	How to Use This Book	7
Lobsters	<i>importation</i> Canal Town	30





Mermelant	How to Use This Book	9
Onichle	The Scholasticarium	118
Oxyhs	The Tracks	143
Oyster	<i>edible</i> Canal Town	25
	<i>thriving, beds</i> Canal Town	35
	<i>importation</i> Canal Town	30
Quelo	The Market	71
Ristato	The Market	72
Sandestin	Canal Town	32
	<i>error in instructing</i> The Market	66
	<i>in the kitchen</i> The Market	68
	<i>affecting ristato</i> The Market	72
	<i>contact with Flolad</i> Odkin Prospect	79
	<i>bored</i> The Scholasticarium	101
	<i>Masdrio</i> The Scholasticarium	111ff
	<i>gambling</i> The Tracks	151
Scallops	Canal Town	25
Scorpions	The Threek	138
Shellfish	<i>edible</i> Canal Town	25
	<i>illegal</i> Canal Town	28
	<i>seeding</i> Canal Town	35
	Canal Town	39
	The Market	59
Shrimp	<i>importation</i> Canal Town	30
	<i>thriving</i> Canal Town	35
Slug, garden	The Scholasticarium	115
Slug, sea	The Market	66
Snakes, poisonous	The Threek	138
Squid, giant	The Market	59
Tarmi	The Market	72
The Vlark	Canal Town	32
	<i>Festival</i> Canal Town	37
Worm, ear	The Undercity	166



White-walled
KAIIN
Glory of Ascolais

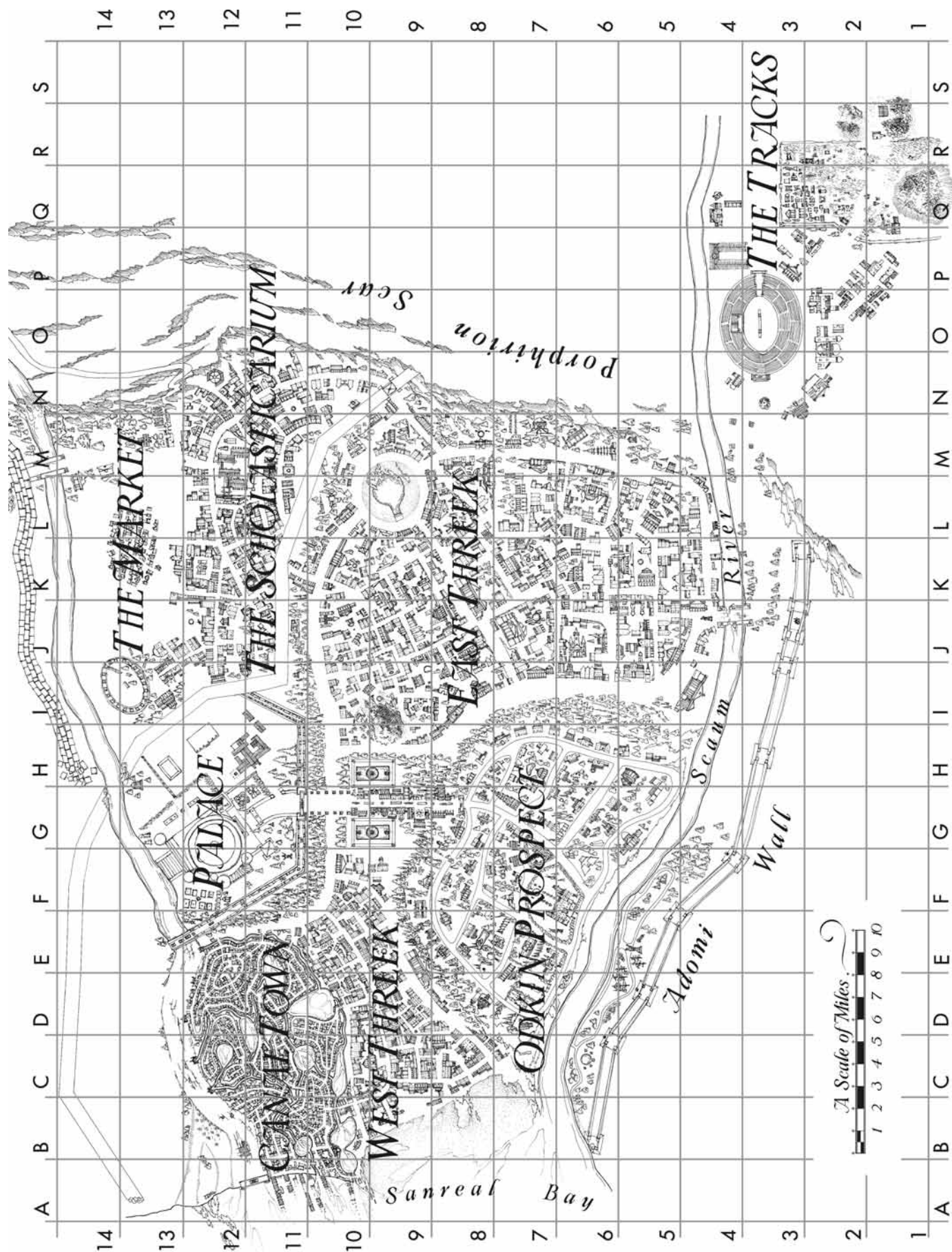


THE OLD TOWN
extends a considerable
distance to the west

note the few surviving
examples of Palaces
representing a notable
ancestor of the builder

as does
THE FRINGE







Contacts

Apprentice/Researcher, The Scholasticarium	106	Maugifier, The Scholasticarium	107
Aristocrat, Odkin Prospect	76	Menial, The Fringe	44
Artisan, The Threek	130	Merchant, New, Odkin Prospect	77
		Old, Odkin Prospect	77
Bandit, The Fringe	43		
Barmen, Canal Town	27	Neighborhood Gossip, The Threek	131
Beggar, The Fringe	43		
The Marketplace	53	Oysterman, Canal Town	28
Bet Taker, The Tracks	144		
Bowler, Canal Town	28	Pickpocket, The Tracks	146
Builder, Canal Town	28		
Busker, The Marketplace	53	Scavenger, The Fringe	44
		Sergeant of Integrity, The Tracks	146
Captain of Integrity, The Tracks	144	Servant, The Marketplace	53
Comber, Canal Town	28	Odkin Prospect	77
Crier, The Marketplace	53	The Palace & Environs	88
		Student, The Scholasticarium	107
Deranged Pedant, The Scholasticarium	106	Sweeper, The Scholasticarium	108
Dhjetar Wrangler, The Tracks	145		
		Tout, The Tracks	146
Functionary, Odkin Prospect	76	Trollop, The Tracks	147
The Palace & Environs	88		
		Vendor, The Marketplace	54
Gambler, Casual, The Tracks	145	The Scholasticarium	108
Desperate, The Tracks	146	Vigil, The Marketplace	54
Well-Heeled, The Tracks	145	Odkin Prospect	78
		The Palace & Environs	89
Institute Lecturer, The Scholasticarium	107	The Threek	131
Laborer, The Threek	130	Waylayer, The Tracks	147
Loutish Scion, Odkin Prospect	76	Workshop Manager, The Threek	132

