

JADEPUNK™ TALES

vigilance committee vol. 2



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JADEPUNK TALES™

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Jadepunk Tales: Vigilance Committee Vol 2

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How to Use This Book

Jadepunk Tales is a series of scenarios (also known as adventures) linked together by an overarching plot that explores the setting detailed in *Jadepunk: Tales From Kausao City*.

Each volume in a tale will lead your through a scenario that ends with a significant milestone. In the final volume of a *Jadepunk Tale* you will be given a major milestone to progress your players, as well as a suggestion for the next *Jadepunk Tale* to begin with your newly empowered group.

Required Materials

Jadepunk Tales requires that you have read *Jadepunk: Tales From Kausao City*.

Telling Tales

Any text written in open space (like the text you are currently reading) is meant for you, the **Game Master** (GM). This is where we give you relevant information concerning the scene that is either meant to help you set the scene and control the flow of events, or to be kept secret from the players until a later point in the game.

Text written on parchment is meant to be read directly to your players.

Text in the split-page is where you will find mechanical information, like write-ups of assets, faces, or villains.

Splatter text is supplemental information that is designed to give you extra help as the game develops.

Scene Essentials

It's inevitable that your group will change the course of a scenario at some point as you move forward, or that they will perform actions that suggest new scenes to explore before coming back to one of the scenes written here. In all of the back and forth, it can be easy to lose your place in the scenario. To help you out, we will provide you with some scene essentials to act as sign posts, signaling that you can't progress to the next scene in this scenario without that essential.

A **scene essential** is an important element of a scene that is required to keep the scenario moving forward. If you follow the scenes as written, you won't have any trouble getting all of the scene essentials. But sometimes things don't go as planned—your players don't interact with the scene in the way you thought they would, or they decide to go in another direction altogether. If this happens, use a scene fractal to get them back on track.

Scene Fractals

The purpose of the **scene fractal** (for more information, see *Jadepunk: Tales From Kausao City*, page 114) is to give you the tools to easily create new scenes on the fly. If your players didn't get a scene essential from a previous scene, or they took the scenario in a direction that was off course, use the scene fractal in conjunction with the scene essentials to help them explore this new tangent, give them what they need (the scene essentials), and get them back to the story at hand.

Getting Started

Vigilance Committees can be played with characters of virtually any level, but if they have hit more than one or two major milestones already, or if there are more than five of them, they may not be very challenged by what lies ahead. The only thing this tale assumes is that the characters are heroes of the people, ready to fight for their safety, and are not willing to turn away from someone in need. Since that's the default setting for characters in *Jadepunk*, that shouldn't be too difficult to impress upon the players.

If your group is playing vile underworld personalities, or something else that has tweaked the default setting, then you'll need a sufficient hook to make the characters care about the events here.

Scenario Aspects

Goal: Find and rescue Eli's daughter

Threat: Underworld Thugs

Last Time in Jadepunk Tales...

This Jadepunk Tale picks up right where *Jadepunk Tales: Vigilance Committee Volume 1* left off. If you are following the *Jadepunk Tales* series, you will want to make sure you have run or at least read *Jadepunk Tales: Vigilance Committee Volume 1* first.

To recap:

- ✚ After a violent encounter with the Order of the Righteous and Avenging Wind, Boyd, the head of a local vigilance committee, commissioned the players to track down the Order by infiltrating an underground fighting tournament.
- ✚ At the tournament players encounter Hahn Xin, the Immortal Fist and leader of the Order of the Righteous and Avenging Wind. They overhear the pleas of a distraught Jadetech engineer, Eli Watson, who claims Boyd had his daughter kidnapped and sold into slavery.
- ✚ Hahn Xin recognizes the players from the fight at the teahouse and accuses Boyd and his committee of corruption. He releases the players with twenty-four hours to decide whose side they are on. Hahn Xin suggests that the players investigate the kidnapping of Eli Watson's daughter.
- ✚ One way or another, the players are able to confirm that Boyd is running a criminal operation under the guise of his vigilance committee. After another fight at the Divine Cup, the players find out that Boyd had the engineer's daughter given to his slaver contact in the Narrows.
- ✚ On their way to the Narrows, the players meet Hahn Xin's personal assistant who welcomes them to the ragtag family that is the Jianghu of Kausao City.

A Tale in Summary

After uncovering Boyd's criminal ambitions, the heroes are bound for the Narrows to hunt down a young woman he had kidnapped as leverage against the engineer, Eli Watson. But Boyd is only a taste of the seeping rot found at the heart of the world's most important city--the adventure is just beginning.

Scene 1: The Narrows

District Aspect: **Vertical Shanty Town**

The mouth of the Narrows consists of an immense fortification manned by a division of Kausao City Marines. For many foreigners arriving by sea, the forbidding gates and enormous guns are their earliest memory of the world's most important city. The cliff walls beyond, however, display a part of Kausao City that the Council would rather visitors never see.

Thousands of Kausao's poorest citizens live stacked one on top of the other, their tiny homes dug into the cliff face. In the Narrows, rickety bamboo scaffolding and swinging rope walks stand in place of cobblestone streets. The military has official jurisdiction over the Narrows, and as such the district has become a refuge for fugitives and those without the money to bribe the city guard or watch. While the district is regularly patrolled, the regiment in charge of the Narrows augments their pay through criminal enterprise, and most real crime goes unnoticed.

A teeming water market supplies the needs of the Narrows residents. Merchants pole their small craft along the banks to several long piers which stand in the shallows, out of the path of the great ships passing day and night. Not everything sold is legal—in fact, the Narrows is well known for its trade in contraband substances.

Getting to the Narrows is an easy trip, with a jaderail terminal not far from the mouth of the passage and small, private water taxi's scuttling along the banks at the base of the cliffs. The smell of sweat and sewage and straw fire cook-smoke combines with the flutter of laundry and the chatter of street children as they swing monkey-like from level to level, house to house. Outsiders are common in the Narrows and nobody takes extraordinary notice of your passage.



Face:

Boy King Alistair

Portrayal: Boy King of the Lonely Alliance

Need: We Stand Together

Secret: I'm Not Proud of What I'm Forced to Do

Competency Bonus: Great (+4)

Threats:

Portrayal: 1st Regiment Kausao City Marines: Cliff Hawks

Need: Protect the Smugglers, Collect our Pay

Secret: Smuggler's Pay Feeds Our Children

Competency Bonus: Good (+3), +1 Teamwork with one or more stress boxes unchecked.

Assets:

The Monkey Has Four Hands



Type: Technique

Guiding Aspect: **Cliff Hawks Thug.**

Features: Harmful 1, Focus 1

Flaws:

Situational (Only usable on the extensive bamboo scaffolding in the Narrows)

Stress:   (three members)

Cliff Hawks Strategy: The Cliff Hawks rely upon their environment to defend their turf and have no compunctions about fighting dirty. Swinging surprise attacks from an upper level or reaching through the floor to disable a leg is quite common. Born acrobats, the Cliff Hawks are well aware of make full use of balance, position, and gravity. They often finish fights by knocking their less capable opponents off the scaffolding to fall to their deaths. The Cliff Hawks will make every effort to keep the fight located on the rope-walk and scaffolding where they have the upper hand.

Zones and Scene Aspects

There are three zones in this conflict, each requiring a Fair (+2) obstacle to move between them: the scaffolds, the docks, and the ropewalk.

The Scaffolding: The scaffolding is **Rickety** and **Multi-Leveled**

The Docks: The small smuggler's docks are **Covered in Crates and Tackle**

The Ropewalk: The ropewalk is **Frayed** and **Swaying**

Scene essentials:

- ⊕ Meet Alistair the Boy King
- ⊕ Discover the connection between Haji the Smuggler and The Worm.

Ask players how they go about tracking down The Worm and who they ask. You may wish to create some minor faces in the form of vendors at the water market, or perhaps a beggar or street child. If they are a Scoundrel themselves they might know a local ear who can point them in the right direction.

The Worm is a well-known figure in the criminal underworld, and players will have no difficulty finding out that he has connections in the Narrows. **With an Aristocrat or Scholar roll of Great (+4) or higher** you will be able to discern that The Worm's foreign smuggling connection is a man named Haji, seen from time to time here in the Narrows. **A second roll of Great (+4)** will reveal that Haji has recently docked his scow at a private dock a half-mile up the Narrows closer to the gates and his military protection.

After several minutes of rumor-mongering, have one of the players check their pockets to discover that their wallet, coin purse, or other small valuable item is missing. In its place is a note telling them that if they want to get their item back to go to the old conservatory at the top of the cliff. If the players were unable to identify The Worm's smuggler, the note also mentions an opportunity to find out.

Players will gather a variety of rumors while searching for The Worm.

The GM should feel free to create more rumors as needed.

- ⊕ The Worm is a scary-looking hairless Kaiyumi man with shiny albino skin.
- ⊕ The Worm escapes the guard thanks to an inhuman ability to slip underground.
- ⊕ The Worm is seven feet tall and blind.
- ⊕ The Worm once shot a man out of the guns on the Narrows for failing to pay his debts.
- ⊕ The Worm knows the governor, and someone saw them eating together at a posh restaurant in High Town.
- ⊕ The Worm buys babies to eat at a secret market on Scavenger Island.
- ⊕ The Worm is an evil spirit awakened by a foolish magician whose body he now inhabits.

After a long climb the players arrive at an abandoned conservatory. **Players with a Good or higher (+3) in Scholar** will remember that it was built by a long-since deceased governor for his mistress and abandoned during the Siege of Kausao City. Now an overgrown shamble of broken glass and rusting iron, it nevertheless seems to cling to a certain woe-begotten civility. A small bit of exploration within the building will lead you to a large open area beneath the central dome. In the center of the massive room, a blond haired, blue eyed teenage boy sits on a pile of crates. As players draw near the makeshift throne, dozens of dirty faces peer out at you from the verdant shrubbery. **Players with a Good (+3) in Scholar** will immediately recognize this as the Boy King, meaning the tiny horde around him is likely made up of members of a coalition of street gangs known as the Lonely Alliance.

A waist-high Naramel boy steps into your path and reads from a tattered shred of paper in a high voice. "Alistair King of the Lonely Alliance, by the grace of Ehal, and defender of the weak and fatherless. Prince of the Narrows, Duke of the Ratworks, Emperor of the Scavengers Isle, and the first of his name."
"People get awfully attached to these things." The young ruler tosses you the stolen item, leans back and folds his arms. "I hear you're looking for The Worm. I don't care why you want him, but I can help. I just need you to do something for me. Kill him."

Alistair will explain that he considers himself the protector of Kausao City's street children. As a slaver, The Worm makes a living of selling these same children to workhouses and other less than savory businesses throughout the city. A figure-head and information broker, Alistair doesn't have the resources required to fight a protracted street war with the Worm and his allies. A crack team like the players is another story altogether. Should they dither, remind the players that befriending the street children of Kausao City or even just the Narrows would be a significant boon to any future plans.

Should they agree to assist Alistair in expunging The Worm, he will pledge his support and indicate that he will contact you again soon. If the players have failed to find The Worm's smuggler connection, Alistair will tell them that Haji is The Worm's link to the world outside Kausao City and his own private source for a potent Naramel drug known as Zephyr. Haji will know where to find The Worm.

If the players agree to assist Alistair, give them a temporary Ally Asset which will last until the end of the scenario:

Type: Ally

Function Aspect: Child Agent of the Lonely Alliance,

Features: Numerous 2, Independent

Flaws: Limited (once per scene), Situational: Only available above ground.

As they approach, players can see the smuggler's scow tied up to a small private dock. Unfortunately, you're not the only ones here. A trio of men in Kausao City military garb are conversing with the smugglers and pointing downstream to the water market. As you approach, a whistle sounds from somewhere above the players, and they suddenly find themselves surrounded by no less than a dozen Kausao City Marines armed with riot sticks and cutlasses.

During the conflict, Haji and his crew cast off, riding an artificial breeze on white jade sails, out of the Narrows and into Kausao Bay itself. Once the conflict is concluded, players should hurry to follow Haji before he loses them in the Bay.

Scene 2: Busiest Port in the World

District Aspect: Busiest Port in the World

Often called the "Busiest Port in the World," Kausao Bay is filled with a staggering number and variety of vessels. Old world Túyangan junks and stately tall ships from the last century are dwarfed by immense cargo liners and low drafted paddle-wheelers. Jade-powered modifications have allowed aging technology such as wind power and steam to keep up with powerful blue jade jet engines, if only just. Tug boats, tenders, and harbor patrols cut back and forth in a chaotic dance, slipping in and out among the steel canyons created by ships hailing from the Great Nations and beyond.

Private docks and marinas line the misbegotten corners of Low Port, and this is undoubtedly where Haji is headed. He might even try and cut up the Miznu River past Refinery Row. Your best chance of catching him and tracking down The Worm is here in the Bay itself. Like any good smuggler, the moment he lands, Haji will go to ground, and it might be weeks before you are able to find him again.

Face:

Haji, Naramel Smuggler

Portrayal: People Pay A Lot For Things They Shouldn't Have

Need: Setting Up a Smuggling Empire is Expensive

Secret: Smuggling is Safer than Going Home to Naramel

Competency Bonus: Good (+4)

Threats:

Portrayal: Naramel Smugglers

Need: Make It Out Alive

Secret: Nothing Can't Be Sold

Competency Bonus: Great (+4)

Stress: ☐ ☐ ☐

Assets:

Naramel Naval Training

Type: Technique

Guiding Aspect: Naramel Smugglers

Features: Protective 1, Focus 1 (Competency Bonus)

Flaws:

Situational (Designed to repel boarders, this technique is defensive and only applies on the smuggler's own vessel)

Situational (Only applies in close-combat situations)

Naramel Smuggling Scow

Type: Device

Function Aspect: White Jade Modified Naramel River Scow,

Features: Exceptional (+1 to all chase/speed related actions), Sturdy 1

Flaws:

Situational (Exceptional feature applies only on a roll of +3 or higher)

Stress: ☐ ☐ ☐

Naramel Smuggler Strategy: The smugglers only desire is to escape. As such, they will always try to outrun the players and will only take defensive actions unless boarded. The smugglers are at home aboard their own vessel, though, and will fight ferociously should they become cornered.

Faces and mooks who don't use professions can still use the *Focus* Asset Feature. It provides a flat bonus to competency under the specific circumstances listed under the *Situational* flaw.

Zones and Scene Aspects

There are two zones in this conflict, each having a Fair (+2) obstacle to move between them: the rigging and the deck. The GM may add additional zones should the conflict move to other vessels or the water.

- ⊕ **The Rigging:** The rigging is *Creosote Covered Hemp and Tackle*.
- ⊕ **The Deck:** The deck is *Cleared for Combat*.

Scene essentials:

- Find out that The Worm has his headquarters at a deadhouse in Low Port.

A few different boats are tied up at adjacent piers with engine parts and appropriate tools scattered across the old boards. Players may wish to improvise Jadetech devices to improve their chances of catching up with Haji. **An engineer or Scholar roll of Great (+4)** while choosing a boat will grant players the temporary aspect *Coax A Little More Speed* which can be invoked to grant a +1 bonus to chase related actions in the vessel. If so inclined, a player may also create other temporary Assets using rules to be found on page 56 of *Jadepunk: Tales of Kausao City*.

The chase through Kausao Bay will consist of a series of contested rolls interspersed with more specific challenges as the GM sees fit. Due to the fight with the Cliff Hawks, Haji has a significant head start and has already made his way into the busy main waterways at the inside mouth of the Narrows. Once the players enter the waterway, **a roll of Great (+4) or higher in Scholar or Explorer** will allow them to catch sight of Haji's boat. A series of three contested rolls will allow players to catch up to Haji. Every two rounds, or as the GM sees fit, the GM should compel the district aspect *Busiest Port In the World* to create a temporary obstacle with an appropriate difficulty.

Hazards of Kausao Bay

- + The wake of a much larger boat creates a sudden wave. (+3 Explorer to maintain balance)
- + A smaller ship cuts across your path (+2 Engineer to avoid collision)
- + Haji steers his ship into the rapidly narrowing space two immense ships. (+3 Engineer to avoid crushing damage)
- + The engine or Jadetech powering your boat suddenly cuts out. (+3 Engineer or Scholar to identify or fix the problem; +4 Fighter to hit it repeatedly until it restarts.)
- + Haji dodges around a bigger ship, cutting you off. You have to go around it quickly to keep up. (+3 Engineer or Explorer to avoid tangling in the bigger ship's cables.)
- + Harbor Patrol swings in to investigate. (+3 Aristocrat or Scoundrel to talk your way out; +4 Explorer to outrun.)
- + Flotsam, a half sunken buoy, an old fishnet, or other garbage gets tangled in your engine or prow. (+3 Engineer or Fighter to unjam or cut free; -1 to all chase related rolls until successful.)
- + Run off from Refinery Row has pooled into a thick slurry of jade waste. All Jadetech temporarily overloads, making it unusable until the area is cleared. (+4 Engineer or Scholar to restart Jadetech; +3 Explorer to move manually through the waste until you can restart the tech.)

Once the players catch up to Haji, remind them that they need him alive if they are to find The Worm. Haji and his five-man crew will defend the ship until incapacitated. Depending on the pacing and skill level of the characters, the GM may wish to continue to introduce hazards throughout the fight. Once incapacitated, the smugglers will immediately turn on The Worm, revealing that he can usually be found at his headquarters, a deadhouse set against the cliffs in Low Port. Should the players ask, they will also reveal that The Worm is extremely paranoid even for a criminal, and personally handles the distribution of his goods. He will be the only one who knows where Margaret is.

Scene 3: Lair of The Worm

District Aspect: Cliffside Deadhouse

While the Narrows is often home to the cities most wanted and desperate, Low Port is home to its more affluent criminals. It's no surprise that The Worm makes his home here, even if it is somewhere as unconventional as a deadhouse.

In the years following the first jade rush over a hundred years ago, the miles of old mining tunnels beneath Kausao City were converted into catacombs. Buildings like this sagging, unpainted lean-to are quite common at the base of cliffs and often cover entrances to the catacombs. Last rites are performed here, and here the dead are prepared for their eternal rest in the fashion of their fathers. You have a sneaking suspicion that The Worm uses this particular building for something else entirely.

There are no guards at the front doors, and the small, dimly lit foyer, with its tiny desk and single wilted lotus, is empty as you enter. You can immediately see that the building is built some ways into the cliff and is significantly larger than it first appears. Behind the desk, a pair of cheaply-ornate doors stand partially open. A moment later a bleary-eyed woman with dark hair sticks her head into the room.

"Sorry, we're...uh...closed."

Threats

Portrayal: *Maggots*

Need: *Protect the Worm, Protect the Happy*

Secret: *Burnouts Weren't Always Burnt*

Competency Bonus: Good (+3)

Stress: ☐☐☐

Maggots Strategy:

The Maggots amount to criminal groupies. Their penchant for violence has more to do with a fear of losing their drugs and ostensible criminal connections than loyalty. As such, most Maggots will flee after taking two boxes of stress.

Jade-Laced Zephyr

Type: Device

Function Aspect: *Jade Laced Hallucinogen.*

Features: Protective 2

Flaws:

Trouble: I Think I'm Seeing Things (see sidebar)

Zones and Scene Aspects

There are three zones in this conflict, each having a Fair (+2) obstacle to move between them: the preparation room, the body storage, and the casket room.

+ **The Preparation Room:** The Preparation Room has *Shelves of Chemicals and Racks of Macabre Tools*.

+ **The Body Storage:** Body Storage is giving you a *Second-Hand High and the Creeps*

+ **The Casket Room:** The Casket Room is *Covered in Cushions and Heady with Incense*

Scene essentials:

- Find out the location of The Worm's catacomb bolt-hole.

Zephyr is a powerful plant extract from the deserts of Naramel. When combined with powdered jade, it creates a powerful, dissociative high. Along with feelings of intense physical empowerment and invulnerability come vivid hallucinations and confusion. For mooks using Zephyr, the GM must make an unmodified Fair (+2) roll every round, reducing the mook's competency bonus by the number of shifts he fails.

The next room is not a sight for the weak of stomach. A rusting blue jade preservation table holds the unclothed remains of an elderly man. Around him, apparently unaware of the table and its occupant, are a half-dozen members of The Worm's personal entourage. Along the walls above their heads, shelves hold pungent embalming fluids while racks beneath hold a variety of unpleasant looking implements. A **Good (+3) Scholar roll** will allow a player to immediately identify a variety of drug paraphernalia spread around the room. A **second Great (+4) Scholar roll** will reveal that these individuals appear to be taking heavy doses of a high-end drug known as Zephyr.

As the players enter, the entourage, six in number, will tell them if they are looking for The Worm that he is at the back, in the coffin room. The next room is even less welcoming than the first, and colder. On three-tiered racks along each wall, wrapped bodies await burial. Blue jade inlay on the walls and floor keep the room chilly. Another three of The Worm's groupies are huddled in one corner smoking something out of a communal pipe, and the air is filled with eye-watering second-hand fumes. A Scholar roll of Good (+3) will reveal that the occupants are smoking something made from powdered jade run-off known as "slag."

In the final room, the players encounter an array of ornate coffins and burial goods piled against the walls. In the middle of the floor is a large double trap door. In one corner a humongous man with mottled grey and green skin is hunched, apparently sleeping. Opposite him the players at last encounter "The Worm."

The Worm glances up as the players enter, shooing away a pair of scantily clad and noticeably intoxicated women. Meeting him, it's easy to see how the man acquired his name. An albino by birth, The Worm is also tall and thin. Years of drug use have left him completely bald with a moist, opalescent sheen to his colorless skin. His bulging red eyes flicker constantly.

He is immediately suspicious. Few would visit a deadhouse unannounced. The moment players make any threatening actions or ask The Worm about the whereabouts of Margaret Watson, he lets out a deafening and unmanly shriek. Instantly the huge figure in the corner rises and grunts loudly, crossing the room in a single step and blocking The Worm from view with his huge body. A second later, both the huge figure and The Worm have disappeared through the coffin-sized trap door in the floor. It falls shut behind them with a decisive click, and the characters find themselves surrounded by nine of the Worm's angry, bleary-eyed drug groupies.



After the fight, questioning a downed Maggot will reveal that The Worm has a panic room deep in the catacombs and this is likely where he has gone. A **Good (+3) Aristocrat roll** will reveal that one of the women likely knows exactly where this room is. A **second Good (+3) Aristocrat roll** will reveal some marginally lucid directions requiring a **Great (+4) Explorer roll** to decipher.

A **Scholar roll of Fair (+2)** while searching the hideout will reveal a meticulous schedule of funerals and related expenses. The Worm appears to be running a legitimate business as a cut rate undertaker. Searching the preparation room with a **Great (+4) Scholar roll** will reveal that The Worm keeps a supply of blue jade laced jellyfish neurotoxin. This toxin creates a deathlike paralysis and it seems unlikely that The Worm was using it in his embalming work.

Scene 4: Among the Dead

District Aspect: **Lightless Catacombs**

You drop down through the trap doors into a long, dark passage. Instantly you are reminded of a dozen terrifying stories from your childhood. Except for the Church of Ehal, every major religion of Kausao City believes that to disturb the dead is to invite their wrath. Even the most rational Jadetech engineer grew up hearing about violent death, disease, and madness caused by often unintentional encounters with the dead. Operating on instinct, you tread lightly.

The stone floor is worn smooth and littered with bits of dried flowers. The lingering smell of funeral incense hangs in the air. Along both walls, oil lamps stand dark and cold, reservoirs dry with disuse. At the far end of the passage you can make out a pair of heavy wooden doors standing ajar, likely left so by The Worm in his rush to escape.

As you pass through the doors, you run headlong into a serried row of spears. Before you can stand you see four looming figures in featureless masks, their lamellar armor the color of night itself. These are the Shi-Gado, guardians of the dead. Intractable as they are incorruptible, these elite warriors spend their days deep beneath the earth, protecting the dead of Kausao City. One of their number issues a challenge. "What business do you have in these, the halls of the dead?"

Threats

Portrayal: Shi-Gado Guardians

Need: Honor the Dead, Protect the City

Secret: Even the Shi-Gado Must Eat

Competency Bonus: Fantastic (+6)

Stress: ☐☐☐☐☐

Shi-Gado Strategy: The Shi-Gado believe that the peace of the dead is vital to the peace of their city. Operating in the near pitch black of the catacombs, ambush is by no means beneath them should thieves or other ne'er-do-wells penetrate the tombs and mausoleums beneath Kausao City. If overwhelmed or outnumbered, a Shi-Gado will take up a defensive position and activate his badge, alerting nearby guardsmen to his distress. Many an unwitting assailant has slain a Shi-Gado only to turn and find a dozen remorseless silver masks staring at him in the flicker of his torch.

Assets:

White Jade Lenses

Type: Device

Function Aspect: **White Jade Lenses**

Features: Focus 2 (Competency Bonus)

Flaws: Situational: Only useful in dark or low light settings. Troubling: Exposure to a strong light source while wearing this device will result in temporary blindness.

Shi-Gado Badge

Type: Device

Function Aspect: **White Jade Resonator**

Features: Exceptional: On the third round after activating his badge and for each following round, an additional Shi-Gado guard enters the conflict zone. This effect continues until the badge is deactivated.

Flaws: Situational: The resonator must be within range of a receiver in order to alert guards of their presence.

The players are unable to convince the Shi-Gado of their righteous intentions. Nobody goes into the catacombs without the proper paperwork in place. Funerals happen according to schedule or not at all. The Shi-Gado have no interest in the affairs of the world above, and smuggling, narcotics, and slavery are none of their concern. If the players inquire as to how The Worm got past them, the Shi-Gado will inform the players that “Mr. Ouroboros” bears a unique “undertakers mark” which gives him access to the tunnels in order to ply his trade.

While speaking to the Shi-Gado **an Engineer or Scholar roll of Good (+3) or higher** will reveal the use of white jade in their masks, allowing them to see in the unlit catacombs. **A second**



Engineer or Scholar roll of Good (+3) will allow the players to notice white jade inlay in the walls and ceiling, running from past the doorway behind you into the darkness ahead. **Another Great (+4) Engineer roll** will allow the players to recognize a resonance detection network linked to badges worn by the Shi-Gado that is capable of detecting intruders not wearing the proper badge or mark. (Refer to scene assets on page ##) This is likely how the Shi-Gado were immediately aware of the players' presence.

Ask the players how they will get past the Shi-Gado. You may need to remind them that as members of the Jianghu, simply cutting their way through wave after wave of honor-bound Shi-Gado, while vaguely possible, would fall well outside the scope of their righteous cause. There are numerous alternative methods of getting past the Shi-Gado. Have the table brainstorm a plan, bearing in mind that time is of the essence. With Boyd's threats against Margaret Watson and with the Cliff Hawks, Haji, and the Maggots left in the wake of the players' righteous fury, it's not unlikely that Boyd has received word that you are hunting The Worm. The GM will likely be required to use the scene fractal to accommodate the plans that the players may devise. (See page 114 of *Jadepunk: Tales from Kausao City* core book for more on scene fractals) Should they become stumped, feel free to suggest some of the following options:

- ✚ The Worm's deadhouse is well-equipped to stage a real or fake funeral, complete with coffins and a schedule.
- ✚ A highly skilled jadetechnician (Engineer +5) could duplicate the white Jade-tech found in the badge of a Shi-Gado or the undertakers mark. A physical original is required to duplicate.
- ✚ Black jade, while rare and extremely expensive, could be used to obscure the players presence long enough to get past the resonance field or prevent a Shi-Gado from signaling for assistance.
- ✚ A diversion of significant size or seriousness could draw enough Shi-Gado away from a specific sector to allow the players passage with little interference.
- ✚ The members of the Lonely Alliance may know of alternate routes into the catacombs, or perhaps a kindly Shi-Gado would allow the players to sleep out of the rain for an evening. This may be exploited.

If the player agreed to assist the Boy King Alistair, they will receive a message via barefoot courier whilst preparing for their plan. Alistair informs the players that The Worm is protected by an enormous man known as "The Grub" who follows The Worm out of a carefully shepherded addiction. Alistair asks you to spare

the poor man if at all possible, as he is only blind, dumb, and childlike, and to turn him over to Alistair's care should he survive.

Once players find their way past the Shi-Gado, they will have reached a minor milestone. Take a minute to breathe the damp under-city air and count the number of people you have permanently maimed. Feels good, right? (See page 40 of *Jadepunk: Tales of Kausao City* for more information about milestones.)

Scene 5: The Bone Pit

District Aspect: Deep Beneath Kausao City

There are fewer and fewer graves, mausoleums, and ossuaries the farther you go from the surface. Mosaic-covered walls turn to living rock, and passages get rougher and narrower. The deeper you go, the more these catacombs start to look like the abandoned mine shafts they once were. The drip of water and the smell of sewage replace the solemn funereal aspect of the shallower tunnels, and the tension you might have felt among the dead ebbs away. It's time to find The Worm and end this.

Threats

The Grub

Portrayal: Jade-Tainted Idiot

Need: RAAAH!

Secret: RAAAH?

Competency Bonus: Great (+4)

Stress: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

The Grub Strategy:

The Grubs only purpose in life is to make it to his next fix courtesy of The Worm. Unable to speak or see, it is unlikely that he truly understands who he is and what he is capable of. As such, he will fight until he drops dead or is in some other way incapacitated.

The Worm

Portrayal: Drug-Addled Psycho Slaver Boss

Need: Slaves Equal Money and Money Equals Party and the Party Don't Stop

Secret: Terrified of Dying

Competency Bonus: Superb (+5)

Stress: ☐☐☐☐☐

The Worm Strategy:

A coward of the highest order, The Worm will surrender after taking two stress boxes or when it becomes clear that he cannot escape or defeat his opponents. He is not entirely without skill, however, and until cowed, will fight with a desperation borne of unbridled terror. If he loses his immense handgun, he will fight dirty, biting, scratching and kicking in a maelstrom of limbs and insanity.

Assets:

Blockbuster

Type: Device

Function Aspect: ~~Red Jade Hand Cannon~~,

Features: Exceptional: Blockbuster ignores the *Protective* feature on all assets up to +3; Harmful 3

Flaws: Demanding: one action to reload after each use; Troubling: The Biggest Damn Gun You Ever Saw; Situational: Only on a success with style.

Zones and Scene Aspects

There are two zones in this conflict, each having an Average (+1) obstacle to move between them: the passage and the lair.

⊕ **The Passage:** The Passage is ~~Long and Wide~~.

⊕ **The Lair:** The Worm's lair is ~~Lamplit and Low-Ceilinged~~.

Scene Essentials

- Learn that Margaret Watson is held at a mansion on the shores of Lock Mythos.

Once the players have passed the Shi-Gado and into the depths of the catacombs, a series of Explorer rolls will be required to ensure safe passage to The Worm's bolt-hole. The GM should consider repeating the pattern seen in the Kausao Bay by issuing a series of challenges the players are required to overcome to find their way.

A passage narrows, allowing only the most limber members of the party to pass. (+3 Explorer roll to pass, +2 Explorer roll to find an alternate route.)

Crudely scratched directions are marked on an ancient stone tablet. Arrows point in three directions. (+3 Scholar to decipher correct path)

An unmarked shaft drops away at the end of the passage where the players find an ancient elevator. It looks very unsafe in its current state. (+3 Engineer to repair and use)

The Shi-Gado have set a series of spike traps to prevent would-be thieves from entering one of the deeper and wealthier mausoleums. (+3 Engineer to identify the mechanism, +3 Scoundrel to disarm)

An oil reservoir has burst, covering the floor and walls with flammable liquid. Exposure to open flame could result in instant immolation for the entire party. (+4 Explorer roll to move on dark and slippery floors)

You hear the footsteps of an approaching Shi-Gado in the passage behind you. You are farther in than your excuse allows. (+3 Scoundrel to hide or +4 Aristocrat to convince the Shi-Gado of your legitimacy.)

You encounter a party of priests who claim to have been granted exclusive access to this passage for their ceremonial mourning. They are less than pleased with your presence and threaten to call the Shi-Gado. (+3 to Aristocrat to explain)

The floor of a lesser-used passage is covered in tiny gravel, making your footing very unsteady. (+2 to Explorer to pass without taking stress damage.)

A rickety rope bridge gives way, separating your party on either side of a chasm. (+3 Explorer to find alternate route, +4 Engineer to repair.)

As the players reach the wide, final passage, a roar echoes through the tunnels and their path is blocked by the enormous figure that spirited The Worm away when you approached him at the deadhouse. This is The Grub, The Worm's personal body guard. An idiot and blind, The Worm binds the monstrous figure to him with an addictive cocktail of drugs and jade. Though he is unable to speak or see, the cumulative levels of green, red, and black jade in his blood allow him to "see" using a form of echolocation. This same cocktail grants him inhuman strength and durability.

See the *Jadetech* supplement series for more information on combining jade and creating potions of your own.

After defeating or otherwise incapacitating The Grub, players will pass immediately into The Worm's bolt-hole, a small room stacked high with crates. A number of large bamboo cages are against one wall, and the rumpled blankets and empty plates make it clear that while now empty, the cages are meant for human occupants. The Worm himself stands in the center of the room, leveling the largest revolver you have ever seen. He fires as soon as he sees you.

After subduing The Worm, he will immediately tell you where to find Margaret Watson in hope of saving his own life. If players killed The Worm during the fight, a **Fair (+2) Scholar roll** will allow them to find a detailed ledger with the identities of kidnapped and enslaved individuals and the people they were sold to. It will also detail his methods for transporting visibly dead individuals through the catacombs to locations all across the city using his own proprietary tranquilizer and his standing as an undertaker. In either case, it becomes clear that Margaret Watson is located at a large mansion on the shores of Loch Mythos. She was sold to an "M. Varner" of the Four Winds Trading Company.

If they spared The Grub's life, players will be required to lead or carry him out of the catacombs. Depending on the pace of the game, you may wish to utilize any unused hazards at this time, upping the difficulty to reflect the nature of their burden. Thankfully, due to the undertakers mark on his skin, the players will encounter no difficulty with the Shi-Gado. Once outside, players are met by a grateful Alistair who takes charge of the immense figure, disappearing into the night.

Scene 6: In the Lap of Luxury

District Aspect: Lakeside Mansion

It's been a long haul and, heroes though you are, you require a few hours of sleep before finally rescuing Margaret Watson. You arise with the dawn and reconvene to make your plans. Getting Margaret back is easier said than done.

Mr. Malcolm Varner is a wealthy executive of the Four Winds Trading Company. It is a powerful business with more capital and political weight than many small nations, and crossing one of their people is not a task one undertakes lightly. It's safe to assume Varner's estate is well guarded and that the city guard will come running at a moment's notice. You'll need more than muscle to finish this fight.

Faces

Margaret Watson

Portrayal: Dangerous Red Head

Need: Get Back to My Father and Take Down Boyd

Secret: He's Not Half the Genius Without Me

Competency Bonus: Great (+4)

Cyric Mooney

Portrayal: Foreman, Head of Security, Tool

Need: When the Boss is Gone, I'm the Big Man

Secret: Not Even My Mother Likes Me Anymore

Competency Bonus: Great (+4)

Stress: ☐☐☐

Threats:

Three Sisters of the White Crane

Portrayal: White Crane Sisters, Aspiring Martial Masters

Need: Protect Our Patron, Hone our Skills

Secret: If We Win the Tournament We Can Buy Our Freedom

Competency Bonus: Superb (+5)

Assets:

White Crane Style

Guiding Aspect: White Crane Sisters, Aspiring Martial Masters

Features: Harmful 1, Exceptional (**Stunned** is added to targeted player for the next round. All damage attacks against players with this aspect are doubled.)

Flaws: Situational (only on a success with style); Limited (can only be used once on any given player)

Three Sisters of the White Crane Strategy:

The Three Sisters of the White Crane were purchased from far inland Túyang, and are in training to take part in the Tournament of the Four Winds. Promised their freedom and transport home should any one of the three win, they are desperate to please their master and live long enough to earn their freedom. They will fight until incapacitated, making full use of their White Crane Style.

Kausao City Guardsmen

Portrayal: **City Guardsmen**

Need: **Keep the Peace**

Secret: **Looking the Other Way has Become a Way of Life**

Competency Bonus: Good (+3); +1 Teamwork when 2 or more stress boxes are unchecked

Stress: ☐☐

Assets:

Guard Armor

Type: Device

Function Aspect: **Guardsmen's Armor**

Features: Protective 1

Flaws: Troubling (**Recognizable as a City Guardsmen**)

Jian and Clockwork Pistol

Type: Device

Function Aspect: **Guardsmen's Weapons**

Features: Harmful 1, Numerous (one sword, one pistol—same stats)

Flaws: Demanding (Requires a round to switch from ranged to melee weapons)

City Guardsman Strategy:

The city guard is a force to be reckoned with, especially in numbers. They are trained in squad tactics and will almost always suppress and flank when given the opportunity.

Zones and Scene Aspects

There are five zones in this conflict, each having an Average (+1) obstacle to move between them: the boat house, the garden, the great hall, the atrium, and the street.

⊕ **The Boat House:** The boat house is full of **Neatly Stored Rowing Gear**.

⊕ **The Garden:** The garden has an **Imported Marble Fountain and Waist-High Hedges**.

⊕ **The Great Hall:** The great hall has **A Long Table and Towering Windows**.

⊕ **The Atrium:** The atrium has **Marble Floors and a Sweeping Double Staircase**.

⊕ **The Street:** The street is **A Stately Tree-Lined Avenue**.

The lakeside mansion of Malcolm Varner is a two-story white stone edifice built in Aerish Colonial style. It has a large garden and boathouse abutting Loch Mythos in the rear and opens directly onto a pleasant tree-lined avenue at the front. Ask players how they intend to infiltrate the mansion. Approaches by air, land, and sea are all viable. Kicking down the front door is also an option, but a GM should plan on escalating levels of guard presence as the mission proceeds to reflect the “heat” drawn by such a brazen action.

By water, players should have little difficulty infiltrating the mansion through the boathouse. A **Good (+3) Scoundrel** and a **Fair (+2) Engineer** roll is required to modify the vessel to ensure it is not stopped by guards patrolling the shoreline. Additional efforts to mask the players’ appearances will require a **Good (+3) Scoundrel** roll. If they are stopped while approaching the mansion by water, a **Great (+4) Aristocrat** roll will be required to talk their way out of it. Failing that, a discreet bribe using a **Good (+3) Scoundrel** roll and a fate point should get them off the hook.

By air is a much simpler matter as the lakeside mansion’s proximity to High Port makes a steady stream of air traffic a normal occurrence. That said, an airship cannot linger over the mansion for long without attracting too much attention, and entering by airship is a one way trip. Climbing down a rope ladder onto the roof or into the gardens requires a **Good (+3) Explorer** roll.

Possibly the most straight-forward method of approaching the mansion would be by land. The jaderail runs to several points within the upper city and from there an overpriced rickshaw or carriage can take you the rest of the way. The guards here are eagle-eyed, however, and social status is more than just a matter of perception. If you don’t look like you belong you probably don’t, and you may find yourself speedily ejected. Open display of weapons, unwashed clothing, visible tattoos, and bizarre hairstyles or piercings are enough to be noticed by the guards. A **Great (+4) Scoundrel** roll will be required to expunge all remnant of your former self while a **Great (+4) Aristocrat** roll is required to sound the part as well as look it if stopped by guardsmen. If all else fails, a discreet bribe is advisable by means of a **Good (+3) Scoundrel** roll and the loss of a fate point.

Once inside the mansion, players will find it staffed primarily by surprised servants. Mr. Varner and his family are aboard their air yacht somewhere over the Sea of Storms for the holiday. The GM may wish to add Surprised Servants in order to compel this for pacing purposes. How the staff reacts to the players’ presence will determine the ease at which the players are able to locate Margaret and escape the mansion.

On an Aristocrat or Scoundrel roll:

- ⊕ On a roll of Average (+1) or lower, servants will be alarmed, assume the players are burglars and immediately inform the overseer who then informs the nearest guardsmen.
- ⊕ On a roll of Fair to Great (+2 to +4), servants will cautiously accept the excuses offered as to your presence and will direct you to Margaret. Any unusual actions taken in their presence, however, will result in a state of alarm.
- ⊕ On a roll of Superb (+5) or higher, servants will openly support your efforts to rescue Margaret. Add the aspect **A House Divided**.

The reactions of the servants will determine when the players encounter Cyric Mooney and the Three Sisters of the White Crane. If they are able to convince the servants of their good intentions or garner their support, it will occur after meeting with and rescuing Margaret. Otherwise, the conflict will begin immediately.

When the players finally meet Margaret Watson they will find her on her hands and knees scrubbing a floor. She is small, with long red hair and intelligent green eyes that she inherited from her father—she is an altogether lovely girl with a fighting spirit. Margaret will immediately realize your purpose, informing you that if someone had not come within the next week she would have staged an escape of her own. She also informs you that the vast majority of the servants except for the overseer, Cyric Mooney, are slaves rather than hired help. Rescuing them and returning them to their families would be an honorable and heroic act worthy of the Jianghu.

Ask the players what they choose to do. Mr. Vander owns no less than twenty-three persons, and transporting them undetected from this premises is impossible. If the players attempt to escape with this number on foot, the city guard will appear in force to intercept. By water, they will likely need a bigger boat, even without a giant shark. The GM may be required to use the scene fractal based upon the players' plan of escape.

In either case, the players will not get far without running into the overseer, Cyric Mooney. A brutal Aerish man with a red face and a vest that barely meets across his belly, he immediately demands to know your business. Cyric is exceptionally nasty and will immediately summon the Three Sisters of the White Crane to dispatch you, even taking part in the fight himself when able. If Cyric is allowed to survive this conflict and the guard has not been summoned he will run into the street to do so as soon as the Three Sisters are defeated.

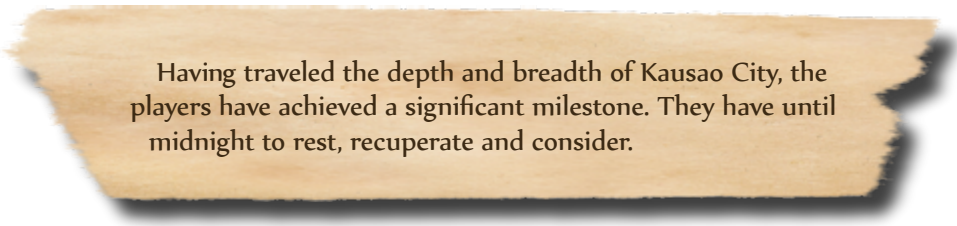
When the alarm is raised, be sure to make much of the Three Sister's entrance. In flowing white silk, they seem almost to fly, moving in small, rapid steps everywhere they go. Preparation for the Tournament of Four Winds has included training in martial etiquette and they will not attack until they have bowed to each opponent. Attacking before this process has ended is considered very dishonorable and players who do so should earn the temporary aspect **Without Honor**.

If the players are embroiled in a sprawling street fight with the guard, you may

wish to simulate the escalating nature of their situation by adding an additional squad or two every three rounds of combat. Should the fight become too much, if the players agreed to help Boy King Alistair and rescue The Grub, The Grub can be inserted into the fight as a temporary Ally Asset for the players. Remind the players that escape is the highest priority at this point, as the guard is several thousand members strong.

Once away from the wealthy shores of Loch Mythos and into neutral territory, the players will encounter another of Alistair's emissaries. The tiny figure will relay the news that Boyd has seized Eli Watson, and if they wish him to live, they will meet him by midnight at his livery. Failure to do so will result in the death of Eli Watson and a significant bounty being placed on each of your heads.

It looks like it's time to take down Boyd once and for all.



Having traveled the depth and breadth of Kausao City, the players have achieved a significant milestone. They have until midnight to rest, recuperate and consider.

A **significant milestone** usually occurs at the end of a scenario or the conclusion of a big plot event (or, when in doubt, at the end of every two or three sessions). Unlike minor milestones, which are primarily about change, significant milestones are about learning new things—dealing with problems and challenges has made your character generally more capable at what they do.

In addition to the benefit of a minor milestone, you also gain *both* of the following:

- ✚ If you have a severe consequence that's been around for at least two sessions, you can clear it.
- ✚ Raise the rating of one profession by one.

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