



Rivalry - Chapter 3

[Note - Some dialogue in this chapter will vary based on which route the heroes took to arrive in San Francisco. For instance, if they traveled by train and stopped the kidnapping (Chapter 2A), then the Kellersons will be particularly friendly towards them. If they traveled by air, then it is more likely that Governor Haight and the Kellersons are simply treating the group as notable adventurers.

Prologue

You have finally arrived in San Francisco and safely delivered the automaton prototype to the Wells Fargo office there. You are enjoying a well-deserved rest in the city, although it turns out that tales of your travels are beginning to spread.

After fielding numerous questions and offers for free drinks at saloons around town, you receive an offer from a more prominent source. Henry Huntly Haight, the Governor of the State of California, has invited you to dinner at his house in San Francisco. (He ordinarily lives in Sacramento but regularly travels to the capital to meet with President Stanford.) In attendance will also be Grant Kellerson and his family.

Scene 1 - Dinner With the Governor


The dinner scene should be played as a free-form conversation. It will begin with thanks and congratulations (and more requests to hear stories) directed towards the heroes. There is also some discussion about the kidnapping of the Kellersons' young son, Edward. However, as the conversation continues, a number of facts may be revealed:

- There have been a number of other raids on Wells Fargo shipments, mostly over the last few months.
- Most but not all of the raids were carried out by agents of the Southern Pacific or its subsidiary railroads.
- All of the shipments were of automatons or steam machinery bound for Weaverville, a small mining town in the mountains to the southwest of Mt. Shasta.

- Weaverville is a town controlled entirely by Chinese immigrants and even Chinese nationals. The RMR has very generous property sovereignty laws, meaning that owners are allowed to determine legality within the boundaries of their own private property, as long as it is not within an established municipality. Using these laws, the Chinese landowners have declared Weaverville to be officially part of China. After the shipments arrive in Weaverville, it is presumed that they are then airlifted to the coast and put on ships bound for China, thus avoiding scrutiny and tariffs that would come from shipping the items normally through the San Francisco port.
- Wells Fargo, under the local direction of Grant Kellerson, has been supporting the nation of China and its efforts to smuggle high-end technology out of North America. Kellerson does not consider this process to be in any way illegal, since the letter of the law is followed at every step.
- Governor Haight, on the other hand, is upset not only about the loss of tariff revenue, but the growing power of local Chinese politicians who he believes are supported by money from China through this quasi-legal trade. He also has a somewhat isolationist viewpoint and would prefer that North American technology remain on the continent. He sees this as both a money and a resource drain on his state and his nation.
- Governor Haight has actually been working with the Southern Pacific Railroad, providing them with information that will help them intercept the smuggled goods before they arrive in Weaverville.

Exactly which of these facts are revealed and how they are explained depends on whether the adventurers seem more inclined to support Mr. Kellerson or Governor Haight, how they feel about Wells Fargo and Southern Pacific, and even how they feel about China and the RMR. This is a point at which they will begin to take a side in the greater rivalries that guide the





politics of the region. There are many reasons for choosing each side, and the GM should use the NPCs involved in this conversation to argue for and against each position. There will be more opportunities later in the campaign to change sides, but these decisions should not be taken lightly.

As some of the initial facts are brought out into the open, Governor Haight has a heated argument with Mr. Kellerson. Kellerson takes his family and leaves, allowing the heroes time to discuss further with either Kellerson or the Governor alone. This determines which of the deeper secrets the heroes can learn, and what perspective they might take on those secrets.

Scene 2 – The Jailbreak

Whether they are now conversing with Mr. Kellerson or Governor Haight, the group will be approached by a runner with an urgent message: the man who kidnapped Edward Kellerson on the train to San Francisco has broken out of jail before he could be put on trial. Upon hearing this, the Kellersons will hurry to their expensive hotel and secure themselves there, pleading for the adventurers to do something about this dangerous man. The Governor will wonder aloud how someone could have broken out of the jailhouse and will ask the adventurers if they would mind checking it out and making sure it wasn't an inside job.

Investigating the jailhouse itself is somewhat difficult, because there is a crowd of gawkers gathered outside the door. The heroes must find a way to persuade, trick, or sneak their way into the jail if they want to see what's happening. If they are able to do so, they will discover that the two guards who had been on duty are having head injuries tended. They had been knocked out and their keys taken from them. Neither one remembers who it was that knocked them out, only that they had called a nearby runner to bring them some food.

Further Streetwise or Investigation outside will reveal that the runner, a boy named James, went to order the food at a local saloon, but he did not actually bring it to them. The saloon is called "The Wealthy Mountain," which James says is owned by some local Chinese businessman. He doesn't really know any more than that.

Scene 3 – The Wealthy Mountain Saloon

The Wealthy Mountain Saloon is a typical one-story wooden building with a sloping roof and a wooden front porch. It is along a sloping street, so one side of it is actually slightly in the ground and the other is slightly raised. The underside seems to be built on brick, and it has a large brick chimney in the back.

There is an old British gentleman in a pith helmet smoking a pipe on the front porch. He is courteous and polite to all passersby, especially the ladies. He has only been there for an hour, but is curious about anything the group wants to tell him about the goings-on at the jailhouse.

Inside, there are a number of tables, an automaton playing the piano, and a bar in the back corner. At one fairly central table, there is a poker game happening, where a rather loud and brash woman seems to be doing quite well. She will invite the heroes to join so there can be new money for her to win. (If any of the adventurers are good enough at Gambling to actually beat her, she will lose in a very loud but good-natured way.) If asked her name, she will give it as Myra Maybelle Shirley Starr.

Several of the other tables are occupied, mostly by what appear to be miners. Everyone is clearly curious about the newcomers, but no one will speak up aside from the woman and the bartender, who will merely ask what they want to drink.

Whether or not the group starts asking questions about the jailbreak, the bartender is immediately suspicious. A very difficult Notice roll (-4) will catch him knocking his foot on the floor in a specific place behind the bar. If the heroes do not make this roll, they may still spot the impressive number of Derringers the woman at the poker table has lining the inside of her jacket, and they cannot miss the shotgun hanging on the wall behind the bar. Aside from the bartender and the woman, however, no one seems to be armed.

If the group rushes the bartender or asks him questions, they will only have to fight him at first. If they wait too long getting a lay of the land, the bartender's help will arrive through the front door and start the fight. If the adventurers have played poker or otherwise befriended the woman, she will help them. If they barge in and disrupt everything, she will try to hinder them. Either way, she will cause further complications later.



BELLE STAR

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Strength d6, Spirit d10, Vigor d6

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 4, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d4, Gambling d10, Shooting d10

Edges: Level Headed, Quick Draw

Equipment: 12 Derringers

BARTENDER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Strength d6, Spirit d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d6, Shooting d8

Equipment: Double-Barrel Shotgun

When the bartender's reinforcements arrive, there should be as many of them as there are party members:

REINFORCEMENTS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Strength d8, Spirit d6, Vigor d8

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d8, Shooting d8

Equipment: Colt 1860 Army

A round or two after the help arrives, another complication occurs. A deep voice calls from outside of the Saloon, "Belle Star, drop your weapons and come on out of there." It turns out that a bounty hunter has been tracking Belle, since she is a wanted leader of an outlaw gang. She will now ignore the rest of the fight and get into a shootout with him. If the group appears to be helping her, the bounty hunter will attack them as well but will try to focus on Belle. Either Belle or the bounty hunter will give up after sustaining two wounds.



BASS REEVES

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Strength d8, Spirit d6, Vigor d8

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Fighting d6, Shooting d10

Edges: Gunslinger Profession

Equipment: Starr Revolver

Once the many aspects of this fight are resolved, the group can check behind the bar, where they will find a trapdoor leading into the hidden cellar, which has a loading door covered by dirt outside. Down there they will find the kidnapper hiding out with another scorpion automaton (see chapter 2A). Depending on how the last combat went, the GM can decide whether or not to make fight these two again.

From either the kidnapper, the bartender, or Belle Star, the heroes will discover that the owner of the saloon and the man who contracted the kidnapping of young Edward Kellerson is a local businessman named Mr. Nakamura. Some of these people are aware that he is not in fact Chinese but rather Japanese. However, a few quick inquiries will also reveal that he has recently left town.

Epilogue

Why is a Japanese businessman involved with a kidnapping? Where is he getting these large and very advanced automatons? What is happening in the Chinese-controlled mining town of Weaverville? What connection does all this have to Wells Fargo and the Southern Pacific Railroad? There will be much more to discover in Chapter 4!



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