

THE STRANGE LAND



SPACE

1889

Credits

An Adventure by Gareth Hanrahan

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The Strange Land

by Gareth Hanrahan

Character Recommendations

Nations: Every Earth nation, especially British

Archetypes: All; especially Adventurers, Academics, Explorers.

Notes: This adventure takes place at different times in different locations, on Earth and on Mars; it is possible to embed both parts within a larger campaign and thus arrange for the characters to reunite with the main character, Kime, later on.

Structure, Time, and Place: This adventure has two parts. The first section takes place on Earth, in England, during the London Dock Strike breaking out on 14 August 1889. The second section is set on Mars, some months or years later.

Abstract: In the **first part**, the characters visit Lord Feltam-Hithe, a noted Areophile and proponent of Martian exploration. He keeps a Canal Martian child, Kime, as a guest (or pet) in his mansion. After a dinner party attended by the player characters and several other dignitaries, Kime vanishes. Lord Feltam-Hithe asks that the characters aid him in finding the lost child.

The trail leads to a travelling freak show, where the proprietor attempts to trick the characters into believing he has nothing to do with Kime's disappearance. From there, the characters follow Kime by train to London, where they become embroiled in the events of the London Dock Strike.

In the **second part**, the characters are summoned by Captain Creighton, a British military officer in an outlying town in Parhoon. It seems that a young Martian has stirred up trouble among the canal workers by convincing them to strike. The Martian nobility intend to make an example of the young troublemaker, and demand British weapons in order to arrest him. Creighton asks that the characters help defuse the crisis before it becomes a regrettable massacre.

Memories of Earth

If your player characters are adventuring on Mars, a return trip to Earth to play part one of this adventure may not fit your campaign. You can, instead, treat it as a flashback. In this variant, you start by playing the opening scene of Part Two first. Here, Creighton has heard that the leader of the rebels is called Kime, and mentions that name at the end of his briefing. At that point, tell the players that they once knew a young Martian of that name, back on Earth, and even had an adventure involving him. You then run Part One. Should Kime perish in the flashback, you can still run Part Two. Kime's death on Earth made him a martyr back on Mars, a symbol to those who defy Shune's cruel reign. Another Martian took on Kime's name to honor him, and the rebels now look upon Kime the way the Labor League honors Karl Marx.

Part One - Earth

Since Edison's marvelous flight in 1870, humans have become an increasingly common sight on the distant world of Mars. In ever-growing numbers, the strangers dominate the cities and canals, and their strength can topple even the greatest Martian ruler.

Martians on Earth, though, are still a rarity. Edison brought a curious Martian back with him when he returned, and many others have made the crossing for one reason or another – as ambassadors, as scientific specimens, as university students, or even as adventurers. Still, this is just a drop compared to the rushing tide of traffic from Earth to Mars.

In 1886, a Martian noble, Shune, dispatched one of his advisers to Earth to petition the British parliament on his behalf. The particulars of this errand are unimportant, and related to liftwood logging rights in Shune's domain. The actual purpose of the mission was to exalt Shune's reputation above his peers by demonstrating that he dealt not with the local British officials, but with Her Majesty's Government directly. It also had the useful side benefit of ridding his court of the troublesome Oothran, who had fallen out of favor with the noble. Oothran left for Earth along with his wife, three servants, and his son Kime, not yet come of age. They arrived in London in February of 1887.

By May, all but one of them was dead. Earth is a hellish world – crowded, damp, horrifically humid, and rife with alien diseases. Oothran was the first to sicken, long before he could ever petition Parliament. Only Kime survived. Once Oothran's purse ran dry, and Shune refused to reply to requests for money by the hotel, the still-delirious Martian child was thrown of the delegation's rooms, and would have ended up in some orphanage or dying on the streets of the city if it were not for the kindness of **Lord Feltam-Hithe**. He arranged for the boy to be taken to his Hampshire mansion, where Kime could recuperate. Over the next six months, Kime slowly recovered.

Lord Feltam-Hithe cared for the young alien, but was also eager to show off his guest to friends and peers. The nobleman hosted innumerable dinners, private lectures, and scientific salons, all focused on Mars' environment and culture, and all with Kime as the star attraction. Curious guests came to see a Martian with a very special talent, and Feltam-Hithe's standing rose. Feltam-Hithe's ultimate goal is to attract investors for his planned business ventures on Mars, although his interest in the red planet is genuine and not driven solely by base commerce.

Kime's illness had a curious effect. His lifting gland – normally vestigial in Canal Martians – was hyper-stimulated as a result of the illness. Kime developed the ability to levitate. This strange gift provides the climax for Feltam-Hithe's Martian soirees – at the end of each evening, he asks Kime to levitate for the amusement and wonder of the guests.

The Player Characters

At the start of the adventure, the characters are guests at one of Feltam-Hithe's Martian dinners. Most such guests are wealthy, or have some scientific or military experience. Those who have previously visited Mars, of course, might also be invited regardless of wealth or class, as their experiences and insights are certain to be illuminating to the other guests – indeed, Feltam-Hithe offers speaking fees to experts on Mars.

If a player character falls into none of these categories, they still have an invitation to the dinner. Ask the player how their character obtained such an exclusive invitation and what they intend to do there.

The Invitation

According to the invitation, the evening commences with a reception at Feltam-Hithe's estate in Hampshire, followed by a seven-course dinner including faithful recreations of Martian dishes. Dinner is accompanied by speeches and discussion of Martian history and culture, including the opportunity to question a living Martian, Kime of the Canals. Interested parties may then subscribe to the planned business venture outlined by Feltam-Hithe in one of the lectures, although there is no compunction to do so.

The Estate

Lord Feltam-Hithe's country home is certainly impressive, with its acres of ornamental gardens surrounding the rambling mansion, but it is an open secret in London society that selling the mansion and all its lands would not cover even a quarter of Feltam-Hithe's debt. True, much of this debt was accrued by his father, whose gambling and profligate spending were notorious a generation ago, but Feltam-Hithe added to the problem by investing unwisely in failed ventures and increasingly desperate schemes to make a fortune. As for the most sensible and traditional way of dealing with a lack of money – viz., marriage to a young lady of lower status but higher income – well, Feltam-Hithe's engagement to Ms. Alice Groves ended suddenly, and the silence on the part of both parties left a void for scandalous rumors to infest.

More prosaically – the estate lies about fifty miles outside London. A high stone wall encloses the gardens and some farmland; a dozen outbuildings surround the main house. Guests arrive usually by carriage, driving along the main avenue of white stone that runs from the gate on the main road to the circle in front of the house.

As Lord Feltam-Hithe is unmarried and has no immediate relatives, he has only a small staff of nine to tend to his

needs and those of the house. On nights like this, when he invites guests to one of his dinners, he hires extra staff. All told, there are thirty staff members in the house tonight.

Lord Feltam-Hithe

John Feltam-Hithe makes an excellent first impression. Tall, charming, a bone-crushing handshake and a dashing demeanor all add up to make him seem like the perfect English daredevil, the sort of brave young man who built the Empire in India, Africa, and Mars. It is only when you get to know him that you notice he's always too eager to impress, that his fingernails are bitten down to the quick, and while he may offer his guests expensive cigars from a silver case, he furtively smokes cheap cigarettes when no-one's watching.

The Lord greets the characters warmly and introduces them to the other guests. If the characters have been on Mars before, he introduces them as 'top-notch experts on the planet'. Otherwise, he calls them 'very interested parties' and gives the impression that their involvement in his schemes is a fait accompli.

Kime

The young Martian is an enigma to most humans. He sits serenely on a divan next to Feltam-Hithe, his alien eyes and slightly pointed ears drinking in the sights and sounds of Earth. He wears open sandals, showing off his four-toed feet. His chest labors, and a strange configuration of veins pulses greenly beneath his yellowish skin. His four-fingered hands occasionally touch his ornamental belt, the only physical reminder he has of his dead father and distant homeworld.

If questioned, Kime carefully considers his answer, and uses as few words as possible. This gives him the appearance of possessing deep mystical insight, but a character who knows Martians (or has medical training) can tell that the boy is just trying to save his breath.

Other Guests

Notable other guests at the gathering include

- *Stanley Dornet*, Martian explorer. In fact, Dornet has never been more than a few miles outside

Parhoon, where he was a clerk in the Governor's office. Since his return to Earth, he's been dining out on tales of his 'adventures'. Dornet tries to impress the characters with his stories; if they question his experiences, he tries to bluff them by saying that he was in a different part of Mars to any they've heard of. ('Ah, you were stationed in East Parhoon. I was in West Parhoon. That's where they have the giant fire-crabs. Very territorial creature, your Martian firecrab. They don't stray far outside their hunting grounds – that's why you never saw one. Or heard of 'em.')

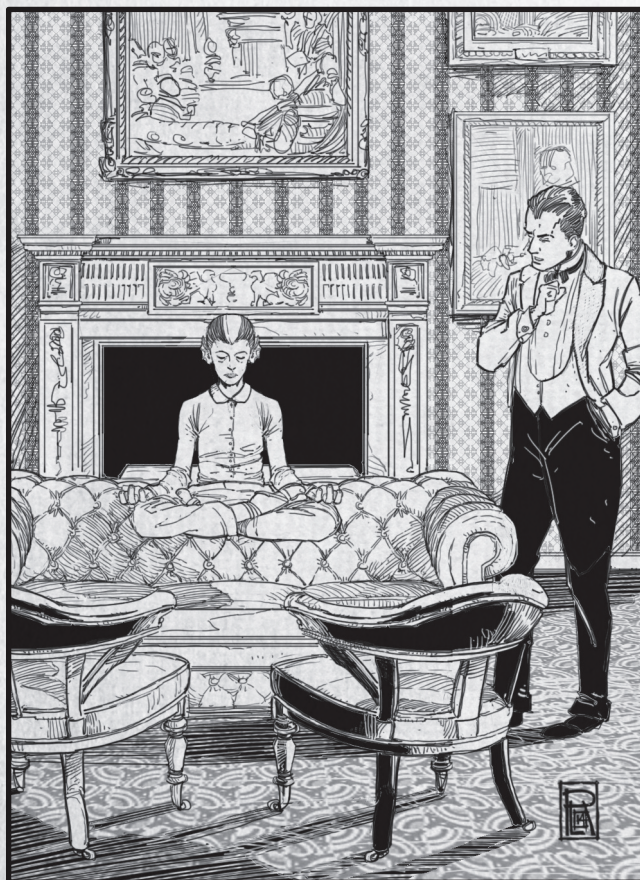
- *Arthur Penn*, Industrialist. Penn's main interests are in steelworks, and he is interested in the possibility of exporting metal to Mars at a more favorable rate than he could find elsewhere. If Penn signed on with Feltam-Hithe, it would be the making – or, more accurately, the remaking of the nobleman's fortune. Penn attaches himself to any player character who seems knowledgeable, and asks them about their opinions of Mars. Penn's also a staunch churchgoer, and is eager to learn about missionary efforts on Mars.

- *James Taylor* is introduced as another businessman, but characters with knowledge of the criminal underworld recognize Taylor's name – he's a moneylender and investor with a bad reputation. He's not the sort to risk his money on an uncertain venture like one of Feltam-Hithe's schemes. The only explanation is that he's not here for the lecture – Feltam-Hithe must have borrowed money from him. (Note that Taylor shows up later in the adventure – Feltam-Hithe isn't his only debtor in the area. See page 10.)

- *Muriel Slate* is a local artist and poetess. She feels that she lacks inspiration on Earth, and wants to turn to Mars

to thrill her soul into, as she puts it, 'spouts of genius'. Ms. Slate's talents are questionable, but her credit is not – her family is wealthy, which explains why Lord Feltam-Hithe was eager for her to attend.

- *Edouard du Plessis-Mornay* is a French landowner and investor. The old man is a dilettante explorer and inventor, despite his great age. His English is excellent, his eyesight and hearing considerably less so; he tends to have erudite and insightful conversations with potted plants and oak trees. His long-suffering valet ensures that Plessis-Mornay avoids life-threatening mistakes, like actually test-flying any of the fanciful machines he designs.



The Dinner Party

Play through or elide over most of the dinner party as you see fit. Much of the conversation at the table is about current events on both Earth and Mars. Drop in a mention of the current troubles in London – a dispute over dockworker’s pay has brought the whole port of London to a halt, and the strike may drag on for weeks!

Each of the notable guests introduces a topic of conversation at Feltam-Hithe’s prompting; let the players discuss these topics if they wish. Eventually, someone asks Kime what he thinks, and Kime’s brief answers are invariably the last word on the issue.

- *Dornet* begins by talking about the dangers of the alien planet. ‘Mars is a terribly perilous and exciting place. All sorts of strange monsters and lost cities. It’s a really strange land, the frontier of knowledge!’ Kime responds that his parents lived on Mars, but died on Earth. Which, then, is more dangerous?

- *Penn* asks about trade with Mars. On average, how much liftwood could one get for a shipload of British steel? What about the restrictions on selling guns to the Martians – how desperate are the Martians to get their four-fingered hands on real weapons? Kime thinks, then says that when you’re truly desperate, you’ll do anything and it doesn’t matter what your weapon is made out of.

- *Taylor* stays quiet. He grunts rudely when Muriel Slate tries to draw him out in conversation. Kime twitches in alarm – or fear.

- *Slate* asks Kime about the ancient wisdom of the Martians. She has read that the Martians of old knew secrets far beyond anything humanity has discovered. Surely, some echo of that lore must have been passed down to Kime. Kime just stares at her, and then says ‘no’. She tries to press him on the issue, insisting that he must know ancient Martian wisdom, but the boy just becomes confused and nervous.

- *Plessis-Mornay* asks several penetrating questions about Martian wildlife, especially insects and butterflies. Regrettably, he addresses most of these questions to one of the player characters, having mistaken the PC for Kime.

Kime’s Levitation

Finally, at the end of the party Feltam-Hithe calls upon his Martian boy to perform. Kime unfolds from his bench, walks to the head of the table, crosses his arms over his chest like an Egyptian mummy, and closes his eyes. He concentrates, and the strain on his face is palpable.

His chest flushes red – and then he rises smoothly into the air and hovers there for several seconds. He extends his arms out to the sides, and then gently descends again. He finishes with a courtly bow. Feltam-Hithe announces that Kime must now go and ‘meditate’; observant characters notice that as soon as the boy is out of sight of most of the guests, he nearly collapses, and a pair of servants half-carry him up to his room in the mansion.

Feltam-Hithe starts to talk about his planned business venture on Mars, but is interrupted by the sound of rain

hammering against the window. It is a torrential downpour outside, with strong winds blowing in from the north, which makes all the talk of arid, distant Mars seem fanciful.

Social Class & Mysteries

We’re playing a mean trick on the players in this section. The dinner guest NPCs are the ones who get the detailed descriptions and are put in the foreground of the action, while the staff are depicted as virtually invisible non-entities. If some of the player characters are of a lower social class, they might interact with the staff as equals and so gain a head start when the time comes to search for the missing Martian boy.

During the Night ...

After-dinner drinks and conversation go on late into the night. Unless the player characters were especially persuasive, Penn does not sign up for Feltam-Hithe’s trading plan, but he remains interested. As it is quite late, and the weather is frightful, all the guests accept Feltam-Hithe’s offer of a bed for the night.

The following events happen during the night; the player characters may observe some of them, but not Kime’s abduction.

- *Feltam-Hithe* argues with the staff: A dispute arises between Feltam-Hithe’s butler and the extra staff hired for the evening, on the matter of pay. It seems that some of them are still waiting on back wages from the previous two dinners. To keep the argument from becoming too loud and attracting attention, Feltam-Hithe personally promises to ensure that the staff are paid promptly.

- *Plessis-Mornay* argues with Dornet: The two nearly come to blows in an argument over Martian history; the Frenchman is overcome by the exertion, and has to be carried up to his bed, still shouting at Dornet and demanding satisfaction in the form of a duel.

- *Dornet* gets drunk: Dornet finds his way into the mansion’s wine cellar, liberates several bottles, and may be discovered having his way with one of the maids in a potting shed.

- *Kime* is abducted: One of the extra hands, Robert Bolmer, kidnaps Kime in the dead of night. His sister, Sarah Bolmer, is one of the maids in the house and has the keys to Kime’s room. They break in, grab Kime, and bundle him up. Robert then carries the boy out with a pile of soiled tablecloths from the dinner, while Sarah plants Kime’s shoes near the north wall of the estate.

- *Slate* and *Taylor* leave: Both Slate and Taylor leave abruptly – one might almost say suspiciously – in the early hours of the morning. Slate was struck by inspiration, and rode home despite the rain to write a poem about Mars. Taylor heard that another of his debtors was in the neighborhood – see page 10.

Keeping Watch

Paranoid player characters might stay up all night or even try watching Kime's room. For the adventure to proceed, distract them. Possible options:

- Felham-Hithe visits them with a bottle of fine wine, either to thank them for attending or to continue lobbying them for support.
- One of the maids takes exception to Dornet's advances, and screams.
- As a distraction, Robert sets fire to a pile of rubbish on the far side of the house. When the alarm is raised, everyone rushes to put out the fire, leaving him free to act.

Searching for Kime

The next morning, Feltam-Hithe approaches the player characters in a state of barely concealed alarm. Kime is gone! The boy ran away during the night – and Earth is no place for a weak Martian child. He begs the characters to help him find Kime. There is no time to go to the police (this is a half-truth – Feltam-Hithe is as concerned with avoiding scandal and gossip as the dangers of delay).

Checking Kime's room reveals the following clues:

- The door was locked. Several of the staff have copies of the key. Feltam-Hithe suggests that Kime must have climbed out the window, but the window faces north and there's no water on the floor. If the window was opened, the rain would have come pouring in.
- Kime's sandals are missing, but the ornamental Martian belt he wore is still hanging on the back of a chair.
- There's a broken piece of china under the bed; Kime drank a restorative cup of tea after returning to his room, and the cup was broken in the struggle with the Bolmers.

A search of the grounds quickly finds Kime's sandals. The obvious interpretation is that the Martian levitated out over the wall, but again, the weather argues against that. Martian levitation only negates gravity – Kime would have been blown south, away from the wall, when he rose into the wind.

Questioning the Guests

The only remaining guests are Penn, Dornet and Plessis-Mornay, none of whom can shed any useful insight on the mystery. Dornet angrily tries to deflect suspicion from his own nocturnal activities by speculating that 'batty' Muriel Slate could be involved, suggesting that her obsession with Martian mysticism might have driven her to kidnapping the child. Penn does not speculate, but makes it clear that if Feltam-Hithe cannot find the boy, then the investor will be unable to put his trust in any business proposals. Plessis-Mornay merely reminds the players that Kime nearly died on the streets of London when he first arrived; if the

Martian did run away from home, he will likely perish within a few days.

Visiting *Muriel Slate* is a waste of valuable time. While she lives only a short distance away from Feltam-Hithe's estate, she insists on reading her latest magnum opus to the player characters. If asked, she speculates that Kime has gone to the Himalayas to consult with the Secret Masters of Theosophy. (And characters who follow a red herring that big deserve every penny of their fares to Kathmandu.)

Tracking down the moneylender **Taylor** requires a *Street-wise* check, and leads the characters to Crumlyn's circus (see p. 9) by a different route.

Questioning the Staff

The household staff all denies involvement. Keen-eyed investigators, though, can uncover some clues pointing to the involvement of Sarah Bolmer.

- Her brother Robert argued most disrespectfully with the butler last night over pay. He was nowhere to be seen this morning.
- Sarah was one of the staff entrusted with a key to Kime's room.
- Sarah has a cold and runny nose, but showed no signs of being ill last night – she was caught in the downpour while helping her brother kidnap Kime.
- Mentioning Sarah Bolmer to Lord Feltam-Hithe elicits an odd reaction. He takes the appropriate player character aside and warns that Ms. Bolmer is prone to hysterical lies and self-delusions, and that he employs her mainly out of charity. Question her by all means, but be wary of putting too much faith in anything she says.

Questioning Sarah

Sarah confesses almost immediately when confronted. She admits to helping her brother kidnap the Martian boy. Robert becomes terribly angry when drunk, and threatened her if she did not help him. He wants to hurt Lord Feltam-Hithe, and spiriting Kime away was the best way to do that. She made Robert swear that the boy would not be harmed.

Robert, she tells them, can be found at home nearby.

Questioning Robert

The characters must rouse Robert by hammering on the door for some time, or even forcing an entry – he got very drunk after taking Kime, and is asleep in bed. Once he learns that his sister confessed, he realizes there is no point in prevaricating and admits his involvement. He also accuses Feltam-Hithe of mistreating and dishonoring his sister by having improper relations with her. Robert has no proof of this, and Sarah denies everything for fear of losing her job.

As regards the matter of the Martian, Robert says that there's a travelling carnival the next town over with a collection of curiosities and wonders, and that he sold the Martian boy to the owner. That's just what Feltam-Hithe was doing with the boy, isn't it?

The Circus

The brightly painted sign outside now reads 'THE WONDERS OF THE AETHERS' where once it read 'MARVELS OF THE FAR EAST' and before that 'CARNIVAL OF THE GROTESQUE', but the faded canvas tents remain the same. Crumlyn's circus is a travelling show of beasts and monsters. Crumlyn changes the name to capitalize on the latest craze, and these days that's Mars. The animals are all diseased and old; when they finally perish, Crumlyn has them cut up, sews assorted bits together and pickles them in brine as 'the remains of fantastic monsters from other planets'.

Despite the best and entirely scruple-free efforts of Crumlyn, the circus is still losing money. He needs a new star attraction - a genuine Martian boy. He already has a fake Martian - a feeble-minded ten-year-old boy covered in luminous paint - but the fake cannot fly. Crumlyn wants Kime, and hired Robert Bolmer to kidnap him. Bolmer's grudge against Feltam-Hithe meant he was only too ready to agree.

The Switch

Getting hold of Kime is only half of Crumlyn's plan. He knows that Feltam-Hithe's men or the police will certainly uncover Bolmer's involvement, or make a connection between the vanished Kime and a circus that advertises a flying Martian. Crumlyn's plan is to discredit anyone who accuses him of kidnapping Kime by confusing the two Martian boys. He intends to strenuously deny that Bolmer brought him a Martian, and should the authorities force their way in, Crumlyn can then present his painted boy, making them look like fools, while Kime is safely stowed away somewhere they will never find him (see *Smuggler's Well*, page 13). Once the attention dies down, he intends to bring the circus to the continent, or perhaps even the United States, where he will substitute the genuine Martian for his ersatz boy.

Once the characters start investigating Crumlyn, he takes more direct measures to secure Kime.

At the Carnival

When the characters arrive at the shoddy little circus, they are met by two of Crumlyn's workers, a pair of muscular brutes with arms like corded pythons. One of them grunts that the manager is 'in a meeting' and cannot be

disturbed; the other leers at any female player characters or the meekest-looking male. The characters may wait there for Crumlyn to finish his meeting (he is cloistered with his creditor, Mr. Taylor), or wander around the carnival while waiting.

These brutes - and their compatriots, if the player characters are rough-and-tumble types who could easily overcome just a pair of thugs - are the major obstacle blocking access to Crumlyn and the circus. They are not easily amenable to bribes, threats or other methods of social pressure; their loyalty to their boss would be commendable were it not so inconvenient for the player characters.

Brutes

Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Dexterity: 2		Strength: 3
Charisma: 1		Intelligence: 1		Willpower: 2
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Move: 5		Perception: 3
Initiative: 3		Defense: 5		Stun: 3
Health: 7				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	4	7	(3+)
Melee	3	3	6	(3)
Intimidation	1	3	4	(2)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Talents				
Robust				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	7 N	(3+) N
Cudgel	3 N	0	9 N	(4+) N

There are three tents open to visitors:

- "TREASURES OF THE STARS" is a dark, musty tent filled with dilapidated display cases purporting to hold relics and weapons from other worlds. It's so poorly lit that hardly any details can be discerned, making it slightly harder to prove that everything in there is fake. At least the shadows hide the thin wires holding the 'Martian liftwood galleon' aloft. There is a cheap copy of an Edison Luminiferous Coil, a gadget that produces an eerie electric glow like St. Elmo's fire when activated.
- The second tent, "SAVAGE BEASTS FROM THE OUTER PLANETS" smells even worse. Most of the savage beasts are already dead, and float suspended in brine in large glass tanks. They are stitched-together fakes with thoroughly implausible names - wonder at the Martian Crocophant or the Venusian Fire Snake. Sturdy steel cages contain living animals, which are Earth animals disguised to appear alien. One cage holds a shaved gorilla that shivers in the cold English climate; a painted tiger prowls back and forth in another.
- The third tent advertises "STRANGERS FROM BEYOND", and it's home to three 'alien visitors' - a 'Martian Prince', a 'Pasha of Venus' and a 'Dog Boy of Saturn'. Each of these three supposed extra-terrestrials has a little booth to sit in, with a glass screen to protect them from the

crowds. The backdrop of each booth is painted with a fanciful scene from the appropriate planet, and Crumlyn provided props for each of his freaks.

The Martian Prince's booth is empty – Crumlyn's intellectually disabled fake Martian is hidden in another tent, having his luminous paint touched up. The other two booths are occupied, and the characters may talk to the occupants.

The Dog Boy of Saturn

The 'Dog Boy' is actually Bob Trent. He suffers from mild hypertrichosis, a medical condition that causes excessive hair growth. Augmented with make-up and fake fur, he made his living as a 'werewolf' or 'ape-man' in freak shows across Europe and America. Now that the imagination of the public has been captured instead by alien worlds, Trent has followed the trend and now pretends to be a visitor from Saturn. He still slips back into his old werewolf routine when he forgets his extra-terrestrial backstory, which usually happens when he's drunk. Trent is a bitter, mean alcoholic. He is loyal to Crumlyn, who keeps him supplied with gin. If questioned, Trent quickly becomes abusive, but not before he confirms that Crumlyn has had a Martian boy for months. Once he lets his Saturnian mask slip, Trent even admits that the Martian boy is just some local 'idiot boy' painted up to look like an alien.

The Pasha of Venus

The other two aliens are, respectively, a painted child and a hairy man, but the Pasha appears genuinely alien. It is only with close examination that the characters realize that they are looking at a tremendously misshapen human. This is John Merrick, better known as the 'Elephant Man'. Merrick's speech is extremely hard to understand due to his deformed jaw, so speaking with him is almost impossible. He communicates mainly by gestures and by pointing at a few English words painted on the booth in front of him (YES, NO, the cardinal directions and the numbers 1–10).

When the characters try to talk to him, Trent shouts at them to talk to him instead, claiming that the Elephant Man is another imbecile like the Martian boy, and can't speak English.

Merrick is effectively a prisoner in the carnival. Crumlyn has his men beat Merrick if the poor man tries to escape or fails to perform his role as the cryptic Pasha of Venus, which involves reading cards and miming fortune-telling for the crowds.

If the characters treat Merrick kindly, he scribbles a note on a scrap of paper and slips it to them while offering to read their fortune. The note reads 'MEET TONIGHT – I KNOW BOY.'



Joseph Merrick, the Elephant Man

In real history, the Elephant Man was Joseph Merrick, although his name was erroneously recorded as 'John' in some early reports. In 1886, while touring Europe with a freak show, Merrick was abandoned by his manager. He returned to England, but had no money and no way of returning home to Leicester. He was rescued by Dr. Frederick Treves and spent his remaining years in the London Hospital, where he died in 1890.

In the *Space: 1889* universe, instead of being rescued by Treves, Merrick was collected by the unscrupulous Crumlyn.

Creditors

After an hour, James Taylor leaves Crumlyn's caravan. The characters may intercept and question Taylor if they wish; he brusquely tells them that he had business with Mr. Crumlyn, who borrowed a sum of money from Taylor; he wished to check on the state of his investment.

Crumlyn then emerges to greet the player characters. The owner is a big man with a thick country accent, although that accent vanishes when he performs as a barker or impresario to attract people into his carnival. When talking to the player characters, he is careful never to give offence or threaten them in any way - his plan for throwing investigators off Kime's trail depends on Crumlyn acting impeccably until his enemies overplay their hands. If questioned about the Martian boy, Crumlyn claims:

He has a Martian boy in his carnival. Of course it's a genuine Martian. All his attractions are genuine.

If pressed, he admits that none of the attractions are genuine, but asks that the characters not tell anyone. He sells 'dreams and inspirations' to a public hungry for news from Mars and the farther reaches of the Solar System.

He knows Robert Bolmer, and Sarah Bolmer too. He grew up in this area.

Bolmer has worked in the carnival from time to time, but is not presently employed there. Crumlyn fired Bolmer for drunkenness, and hints that Bolmer holds a grudge against him. Why, no doubt Bolmer would say anything to discredit Crumlyn. (A successful *Empathy* check suggests that Crumlyn is lying.)

He has heard that Lord Feltam-Hithe has a pet Martian, but has never seen the boy.

If the characters demand to see Crumlyn's Martian, then Crumlyn smugly tells them that the boy is not currently on display, and that they will have to come back to the carnival in a few weeks when he will be performing again. If the characters press the issue, then Crumlyn retorts that they have no right to come into his home and shout wild accusations about him and his business! If they want to see the Martian boy, then they can go and get a policeman!

Crumlyn

Archetype: Criminal			Motivation: Greed	
Style: 2			Health: 7	
Primary Attributes				
Body: 3	Dexterity: 2		Strength: 2	
Charisma: 5	Intelligence: 2		Willpower: 4	
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 4 (8)		Perception: 7	
Initiative: 5	Defense: 5		Stun: 3	
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Animal Handling	5	2	7	(3+)
Brawl	2	0	2	(1)
Bureaucracy	2	2	4	(2)
Con	5	6	11	(5+)
Firearms	2	2	4	(2)
Performance	5	4	9	(4+)
Streetwise	5	5	10	(5)
Talents				
Run, Captivate				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Pocket Revolver	2 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Punch	0 N	0	2 N	(1) N

Should one of the characters happen to be a policeman, then Crumlyn warns that he knows the local magistrate, and will make trouble for the character if he tries to enter the carnival without proof that the missing Martian is on the premises. Similar carnivals and freak shows have been harassed by the police in recent years, so Crumlyn may accuse the policeman of being on an unlawful crusade against him.

A successful *Empathy* or *Diplomacy* roll suggests that Crumlyn's anger is feigned, and that he is deliberately trying to bait the characters into escalating the situation.

Searching the Carnival

With Crumlyn refusing to co-operate, the characters need to decide how they will continue to investigate the carnival. Some obvious options:

- *Going to the police:* It is the word of the player characters – and possibly that of an untrustworthy, thieving drunk like Robert Bolmer – against that of Crumlyn, and while Crumlyn is far from an upstanding member of society, the police will need a little more to justify a search of the carnival. A successful *Bureaucracy* roll or the word of a player character of sufficient stature can tip the balance. This leads to *The False Martian* (p. 12) and *The Clue in the Caravan* (p. 12).

- *Going to Lord Feltam-Hithe:* Lord Feltam-Hithe is initially incensed at the thought that his Martian is being held in some filthy carnival, and promises his full support. Soon afterwards, however, he is contacted by James Taylor, who threatens to call in Feltam-Hithe's debts if the lord continues to harass Crumlyn's circus. Caught between his desire to recover Kime, and his financial security, Feltam-Hithe chooses the latter, and withdraws his support from the player characters. If, for example, they went to the police or demanded entrance on the strength of Feltam-Hithe's name, the characters suddenly find themselves abandoned by their patron.

- *Sneaking In:* During the day, the circus is guarded, making sneaking in difficult (Hard Stealth). At night, it's easier to move around (Easy Stealth), but also more dangerous. This can lead to *Merrick's Testimony* (p. 12), *The Clue in the Caravan* (p. 12) and *Fire in the Tents* (p. 12).

- *Entrance by Force:* Breaking into the circus means dealing with Crumlyn's thugs. Assuming the player characters don't use lethal force, Crumlyn steps in to stop the fight by revealing *The False Martian* (p. 12); if the characters have foolishly drawn firearms and Crumlyn feels that his life is in danger, skip straight to *Fire in the Tents* (p. 12).

- *Watching Crumlyn:* Putting Crumlyn under surveillance means fending off complaints from Lord Feltam-Hithe that the characters are being idle and negligent in not pursuing the search for Kime. However, if they hold to their plan and succeed with a *Perception* check, they are rewarded with the sight of Crumlyn gathering the materials described in *The Clue in the Caravan* (p. 12). He then heads towards Smuggler's Well.

• *Investigating Crumlyn*: Asking around in the locality with Streetwise, or interrogating Bolmer, turns up the fact that Crumlyn was a thief and fence in his younger days. In fact, there's a place near his old family farm called Smuggler's Well, where smugglers hid their stolen goods in previous centuries.

The False Martian

When he believes the characters have overextended themselves, or if circumstances force him to act, Crumlyn brings out his 'Martian Prince' – Albert Jones. The boy is in his early teens, but has a mental age of around four. He can speak only in simple sentences. His head is shaved and his skin painted in luminescent paint; when dressed up in fake Martian robes and seated in his booth in the carnival, he might be impressive enough, but he is absolutely absurd in the light of day.

Crumlyn pillories the player characters if they broke into the circus or called the police. How stupid must they be to think that this idiot boy could be a genuine Martian? He does his best to humiliate them, especially if they brought the authorities to his door.

If the characters refuse to leave, then Crumlyn orders his men to throw them out – and if a fight ensues, then Crumlyn panics – run *Fire in the Tents* (see below) to cover his retreat as he flees to Smuggler's Well.

Merrick's Testimony

Speaking to the former Elephant Man alone requires subterfuge (to avoid the attention of Merrick's keepers) or stealth (to creep past the snoring Dog-Man) and a lot of patience as the characters wait for Merrick to communicate by note. Merrick's laboriously written notes reveal:

- Crumlyn's 'Martian boy' is a clumsy fake.
- He overheard C(rumlyn) and B(olmer) talking about Kime several nights ago.
- Crumlyn went out last night, and again this morning. Both times, he first visited the supply caravan at the back of the circus.
- Crumlyn promised the moneylender Taylor that he had hit on a solution to make a fortune, and Merrick suspects that Crumlyn has indeed kidnapped Kime and is hiding him nearby.
- Crumlyn is a dangerous man. He beats anyone who crosses him.

For added peril, run *Fire in the Tents* (see below) at this point. Otherwise, the trail leads to *The Clue in the Caravan*.

The Clue in the Caravan

Hidden in a brightly painted toy-box in one caravan is a curious collection of items. There's a knotted rope, one end of which is tied into a loop, the other end is damp as

if it trailed recently in water, along with some wrapped parcels of food, a burlap sack, a soiled tablecloth from Feltam-Hithe's dinner party, and a pair of manacles. In the sack, the characters find a shard of china that matches the broken tea-cup from Kime's room. All circumstantial evidence, but it certainly points towards Crumlyn being involved in Kime's kidnapping.

A successful *Investigate* check, or showing the rope to any local, points the character towards Smuggler's Well.

Fire in the Tents

This peril occurs if Crumlyn's attempts to dissuade investigation fail, or if the characters break into the circus during the night. To Crumlyn, Kime is worth more than any of his other attractions, and it is worth sacrificing them to secure the genuine Martian.

Therefore, when the characters trespass in the circus, he overloads the Edison Luminiferous Coil in the first tent. Arcs of electricity leap and spark, igniting the dry canvas. Soon, the fire reaches the tent containing the animals and they panic. Their cages are made of steel, but the clasps holding the doors closed are nothing but loops of old rope that soon catch fire, freeing the terrified beasts. The maddened animals attack everything around them, including the player characters.

The three booths containing the dog-faced Bob Trent, John Merrick and (if present) the fake Martian Albert Jones are all locked, so the characters must force them open to save the occupants from being trampled or torn apart.

Gorilla

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Animal **Health:** 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 5 **Dexterity:** 3 **Strength:** 5
Charisma: 1 **Intelligence:** 1 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move:** 8 (16) **Perception:** 4
Initiative: 4 **Defense:** 8 **Stun:** 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	5	3	8	(4)
Empathy	1	1	2	(1)
Stealth	3	3	6	(3)
Survival	1	3	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Climb (double Move rating)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Punch	0 N	0	8 N	(4) N

Tiger

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Animal

Health: 7

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Dexterity: 5

Strength: 3

Charisma: 0

Intelligence: 0

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Move: 8 (16)*

Perception: 6

Initiative: 5

Defense: 8

Stun: 3

Skills

Base

Levels

Rating

(Average)

Athletics

3

5

8

(4)

Brawl

3

5

8

(4)

Stealth

5

1

6

(3)

Survival

0

4

6

(3)

Talents

Alertness (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons

Rating

Size

Attack

(Average)

Bite

0 L

0

8 L

(4) L

Claw

0 L

0

8 L

(4) L

*Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

Optionally, if the characters threatened or attacked Crumlyn earlier, then he might have stationed some of his brutes outside the tents, armed with cudgels, to murder anyone who escapes the animals. Should the characters survive, they can interrogate one of these scoundrels to learn where Crumlyn has gone – to Smuggler's Well.

Spreading Fire

The fire inflicts 3 L caustic damage if a character is hurled into the flames, and 1 L caustic damage per round if a character is close to the inferno but not actually touching it. At the start of the fight, the fire is still far enough away that the characters are safe from on-going damage, but it comes closer every round, and starts doing damage after three combat rounds.

Smuggler's Well

Smuggler's Well is in a small copse of trees a few minutes' walk outside the circus. The main train line to London runs close by the little wood. A few ruined cottages, long abandoned to the elements,

stare blindly from the edge of the woods at the trains as they steam by.

If Crumlyn is still at large and knows that the player characters are on their way to Smuggler's Well, he races there in the hopes of grabbing Kime before they get there. If Crumlyn is already in custody, or if the player characters manage to discover Kime's prison without alerting his jailer, then they can explore the wood and Smuggler's Well unimpeded by a greedy circus-owner waving a pistol.

The well is an old stone well. There is an opening about half-way down the shaft that leads into a small hidden chamber. In past centuries, smugglers, thieves, and poachers used this chamber to stash their ill-gotten goods; they would lower themselves down on the well rope and clamber through the opening. These days, Smuggler's Well is a half-forgotten bit of local color; tree-roots broke through into the chamber and partially collapsed it, leaving only a cramped space scarcely big enough for a single person to squeeze into. This is where Crumlyn left the Martian boy. For good measure, Crumlyn manacled Kime to keep him trapped.

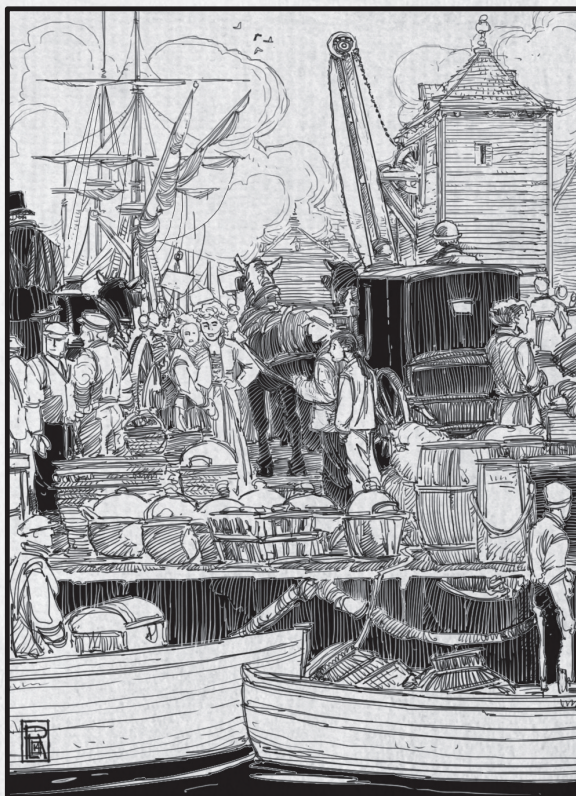
When the characters find Smuggler's Well, it is empty. The Martian is gone.

If Crumlyn is still at large, he arrives at this point. He threatens the characters with his pistol, and accuses them of stealing his livelihood. The characters may be able to talk him down with an *Intimidation* roll (difficulty 5; difficulty 3 if they reveal that Kime has escaped); otherwise, they must overpower him. Fortunately, Crumlyn is a poor shot and is so focused on the well and the prize he believes to be hidden within that the characters can easily flank him.

And what of the missing Kime? Clearly, he wriggled free of his manacles, which dropped into the still black waters at the base of the well. If the characters dive into the

pool, they find no sign of the Martian having drowned. The interior of the well shaft is too damp and sheer to climb. The obvious (and correct) answer is that he levitated out, although that must have required a tremendous effort. The characters saw at Feltam-Hithe's party that just rising a foot off the ground exhausted Kime; what did flying twenty feet up the well do to him? More to the point, where is he now?

The noise of a steam train passing the wood startles the crows, but may inspire the players to make a deductive leap. If not, searching around discovers four-toed Martian footprints in the mud, heading in the direction of the rail line. Kime is on a freight train to London.



To London!

If Feltam-Hithe's involvement with Taylor was revealed, then the penitent lord admits he is in debt to the money-lender. If asked, he also admits that he dishonored his maid, Sarah Bolmer, and that her brother's grudge against him is entirely justified. However, Kime should not suffer for Feltam-Hithe's sins; he asks the characters to pursue the Martian boy to London. Once recovered, Feltam-Hithe will pay for Kime's passage back to Mars.

The nearest train station is not on the express schedules; the next train to depart from that station to London does not leave for several hours. The characters can take Feltam-Hithe's coach to Reading and catch a train there, which is slightly faster, but Kime still has a head start of several hours – and even a Martian can vanish in a city of five million souls.

The Dock-Workers Strike

In the present moment, even a prodigy like a Martian would not be enough to draw the attention of the capital away from the unfolding situation on the docks. On the 14th of August, a dispute broke out between dockworkers and the dock companies and ship-owners over bonus pay for unloading the *Lady Armstrong* at the West India Docks. At the time, the common practice was for a dock to have a 'call-in' every few hours, where the foreman would call out for dockers. There was no guarantee of employment or number of hours; the dock-workers had to wait around for a call-in, and might get no work at all on some days. Pay was poor and conditions harsh.

The dispute over the *Lady Armstrong* grew into the biggest strike in London's history. More than 130,000 dockers and other laborers went on strike, bringing overseas and interplanetary trade in the capital to a standstill. At the time when Kime and the player characters arrive in London, the strike balances on a knife-edge – the dockers are starving, but sympathy for the workers is growing among the public and many of the ship-owners and politicians now speak about a negotiated settlement, which would be a tremendous victory for organized labor. Only a small core of hold-outs block the opening of talks, arguing that if they just hold out a little longer, hunger and deprivation will break the strike and avoid any expensive increase in the rates paid to workers.

The city is in turmoil. The Thames is choked with ships waiting to be unloaded. Picket lines are everywhere; strikers clash with scabs and strikebreakers. Idle dockers turn to crime to get money to feed their families. Sheets hang from every window in some neighborhoods – a sign declaring that the man of the house is on strike, so there is no point in the landlord looking for rent. Dock-workers occupy the liftwood-reinforced South Aerial Docks (see page 16) that hover over Rotherhithe, and have threatened to set the whole complex on fire.

Finding Kime

Kime stowed away on board a freight train from Portsmouth. Some of the freighters that were bound for London's docklands instead went to other ports along the south coast, to have their cargoes transferred to rail or canal transport. This particular freight train, therefore, was loaded with cargo that should have gone through London, and when it arrived at the stockyard strike sympathizers attacked it. Investigating (likely by buying a round of drinks in the nearest pub) the characters learn that a 'Martian beggar-boy' was seen in the melee around the train, although no-one is sure if he was on the train when it arrived, or came with the mob of angry dockers.

Rumors of Kime

Ask the players how they intend to find one Martian boy in a city of five million people. Any reasonable suggestion – offering a reward for information, gathering rumors at the docks, contacting the police, scanning the newspapers for a mention – will eventually turn up rumors of Kime. Unless the players are astoundingly prompt, this will take several days' worth of investigation and research.

The characters unearth confused reports of an 'Angel of the Docks' who has become a rallying symbol for the dock-workers. According to these stories, this mysterious flying figure first appeared above a picket line near Rotherhithe and attempted to read to the assembled crowds, although high winds and shouts of amazement drowned out whatever the 'angel' was trying to preach. On subsequent appearances, the 'angel' remained silent, but his presence – ethereal, unearthly, even holy – is a source of inspiration for the strikers.

From these reports, the characters can guess that Kime is somewhere near the South Aerial Docks. The same reports mention violence and even anarchist bombs in that area. Apparently, some of the most committed supporters of the strike operate from there.

Searching for Aid

The characters can go straight to Rotherhithe and the Aerial Docks if they wish (see *To the Aerial Docks*, p. 16), but will need to work out their own methods of getting onto the flying platform. However, they may have allies or contacts in London who can be of aid. Consider these three figures – are any of them potential past associates of the player characters? Optionally, pick a player character and tell the player that they know one of the NPCs – the player must then describe which NPC they know, and how they came to make their acquaintance.

Cardinal Manning is a cardinal of the Catholic Church and archbishop of Westminster, making him the head of the Catholic Church in England. He was a member of the Church of England until he converted in 1851. At the time of this scenario he is eighty-one years old, but still a force to

be reckoned with. Historically, Manning was instrumental in settling the dock strike, as both sides were willing to accept his mediation.

Manning has heard of the so-called 'Angel of the Docks' and has guessed correctly that it is not supernatural at all. His agents on the docks believe that this 'angel' is staying with a Communist group called the Labour League. This group were responsible for taking over the Aerial Docks, but have lost control of both the situation and the flying platform. Manning believes that the docks are going to be a flashpoint for violence, and that if the characters intend to rescue Kime, they had better act quickly. He can provide them with a guide, **Father Kilgore**, whose parish is in the shadow of the aerial docks.

Everett Clyde is a ship-owner and industrialist, and one of the owners of the Aerial Docks. He considers himself a patriot, and believes that the striking dock-workers are committing treason against the British crown. Every day that the docks stay closed is another day that the Empire falls behind her continental rivals in the great race, and as for the threat to the Aerial Docks – why, that is sabotage, plain and simple!

He intends to reclaim the Aerial Docks by force. He has prepared a military force of strike-breakers and soldiers who are ready to storm the Aerial Docks from a private flying ship. Why, if the strikers do not surrender, Clyde vows to drive them off the platform at bayonet-point! The splatter of their bodies on the rooftops below will drum out a message to the rest of the traitors! See *Clyde's Counter-attack* down below.

Clyde has spies on board the Aerial Docks, and they have reported the presence of a Martian on board. This Martian has become a rallying symbol for the dockers, and has therefore been designated a secondary target in Clyde's plan to retake the docks. If the characters wish, they may join Clyde's counter-attack; otherwise, they must race to rescue Kime before he is killed in the attack.

Bleaker – no first name, no title, no 'Mr.', just Bleaker – is an unlicensed private detective and fixer in the London underworld. He knows everyone in the East End, and can get into anywhere. He has seen Kime, and knows exactly where he is hiding – up on the Aerial Docks! Bleaker warns that that is the worst place in all London to be tonight – he's heard that the dock-owners are going to try to break the strike by force, and the Aerial Docks are the first target.

Bleaker can guide the characters and even get them onto the docks, but it won't be cheap. £50 will buy access to a balloon that's hidden in the Rotherhithe docks. If the characters cannot afford that – and there is no time to wire Feltam-Hithe for the money – then Bleaker offers a compromise. There's a warehouse on the Aerial Docks containing Martian liftwood. If the characters can fetch some of that, it'll pay their debt and be a tidy profit for both sides.

Into Rotherhithe

Without a guide, the first challenge is to navigate the alleyways and back streets of the docklands without attracting undue attention. This requires a *Streetwise* roll; failure means the characters are spotted and treated according to their social class. If obviously wealthy, then a mob surrounds them, begging for money to buy food and telling stories of how there is no work to be had for a fair price. If the characters appear well-armed, they are mistaken for strike-breakers and have stones hurled at them from the rooftops and alleyways. If poor, then the characters are met by a picket line to ensure they are not scabs, and must bluff their way past.

The second problem is actually getting onto the Aerial Docks. Two methods are described below; characters without a guide must find their own way up.

Bleaker's balloon is hidden in the garden shed attached to a workshop owned by an inventor named **Jeremiah Buckley**. The balloon is an experimental self-inflating prototype – as Buckley instructs, all they need do is light the ignition cord, and the folded balloon will inflate itself and rise out of the storage crate it's kept in. Buckley's workshop contains many other examples of the inventor's questionable genius. For example, there are many prototypes of his current project, a self-heating food can intended for use by the British military. Currently, the self-heating element works as a beef-flavored incendiary grenade instead of providing piping-hot warm stew (light-fingered characters can borrow a self-heating can or two with a Larceny test; treat them as nitro-glycerine charges). Despite its uncertain provenance, the balloon is quite functional and can carry the characters aloft.

Once the characters meet Father Kilgore, he shows them to a church with a tall steeple. They follow him up a narrow winding stairs to the very top of the spire. Kilgore explains that there are some trailing lines from the Aerial Docks that sometimes brush against the steeple when the wind is right. All the characters need to do is catch the flying rope, then clamber up it to the docks above.

Clyde's Counterattack

Everett Clyde's men mount their counterattack from a private dock north of the river. His strike team consists of some hundred men crammed into a small liftwood ship, the *Hotspur*. The ship also carries a specially built pumping apparatus.

Most of the crew are former marines, or dockworkers who have some grudge against their fellows. Clyde's plan is to land at the Aerial Docks and drop off the marines. The *Hotspur* will then circle over the river and drop down a long leather hose into the water. Should the marines be unable to capture the Aerial Docks before the strikers carry out their threat to set fire to the structure, the *Hotspur* will spray water from the river on the blaze in the hopes of bringing it under control.

The commander of this wholly private and likely illegal operation is **Captain Greenaway** (stats see Leaders of the Strike-Breakers, p. 20), a veteran of many expeditions to the East. Greenaway shares Clyde's view that the strikes put the Empire in jeopardy, but is confident that he can recapture the dock without 'undue' loss of life. As a reward for leading the attack, Clyde has promised Greenaway a well-paid posting on Mars as the company's troubleshooter.

Strikebreaker

Primary Attributes				
Body: 3	Dexterity: 3	Strength: 3		
Charisma: 1	Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 6	Perception: 5		
Initiative: 5	Defense: 6	Stun: 3		
Health: 6				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	3	6	(3)
Firearms	3	3	6	(3)
Gunnery	2	3	5	(2+)
Melee	3	4	7	(3+)
Pilot	4	3	7	(3+)
Talents				
Dodge, Mobile Attack				
Flaws				
Overconfident				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Cutlass	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Pistol	3 L	0	9 L	(4+) L

To the Aerial Docks

The South Aerial Docks are elephantine monstrosities of commerce that will dominate the London skyline for generations. A frame of wood makes up the skeleton of the structure, with liftwood panels and hydrogen-filled buoyancy balloons incorporated to lift the platform into the air. The docks are designed to receive goods from both terrestrial and aerial ships. Flying ships and zeppelins can moor at the edges of the Aerial Docks, while goods from ships on the river or even from train-cars and canal-boats can be winched up via 'skyhook'. These skyhooks consist of open squares lined with winches, which allow for moving goods up or down the aerial docks. The dock platform itself supports warehouses as well as workshops and offices.

The entire construction is tied to the ground with steel cables to prevent it from drifting away. The cables, however, are not strained, in order to make the structure more flexible and allow for it to react to blast of winds or other agitations.

Access to the Aerial Docks was by flying ship or by stairs, but the specially-built hydraulic access stairs was damaged by the strikers and is currently some thirty feet short of being able to connect with the ground.



Since their completion, the Aerial Docks have been a source of discontent to the dock workers, as they must pay a half-penny to use the access stairs, and going to a call-in on the 'Up End' means potentially spending half a penny and still getting no work that day. To avoid the cost, many dockers took to sleeping on the Aerial Docks, and even built shacks and other temporary housing on unused parts of the superstructure. Now, there are tenements and flophouses balanced precariously high above London.

When the strike broke out, the Aerial Docks were seized by workers under the direction of the Labour League.

(You will find a map of the Aerial Docks on the next page and in the Appendix on p. 27).

The Labour League

The League is a small coterie of revolutionary Marxists, mostly rebellious sons of the petit bourgeoisie. They believe that the dock-workers strike is a flowering of revolutionary consciousness among the proletariat, and that while it may have begun as a dispute over wages, it can be leveraged into a full-blown Marxist reformation of society. The League is well-meaning but largely irrelevant – their one good idea was seizing control of the Aerial Docks.

Kime ended up in the hands of the Labour League. He was exhausted and injured after his escape from Crumlyn's prison and his journey to London, and was found unconscious on the train by one of the strikers. **Bertram Jarnel**,

one of the League members, is a physician by trade, and the strikers brought Kime to him for treatment.

Since recovering consciousness in London, Kime has been surrounded by Marxist thoughts and ideals, and has come to agree with many of their theories. He attempted to read an extract from 'Das Kapital' to the strikers, but succeeded only in becoming a symbol of resistance to them.

Meeting Kime

There are two likely scenarios that lead to the characters meeting Kime.

1. They sneak onto the Aerial Docks (via Bleaker's balloon or Fr. Kilgore's church spire, or by other means). They then find Kime at the Labour League's headquarters minutes before Clyde's offensive arrives.

2. They accompany Clyde's assault, and rush ahead of the marines to find Kime.

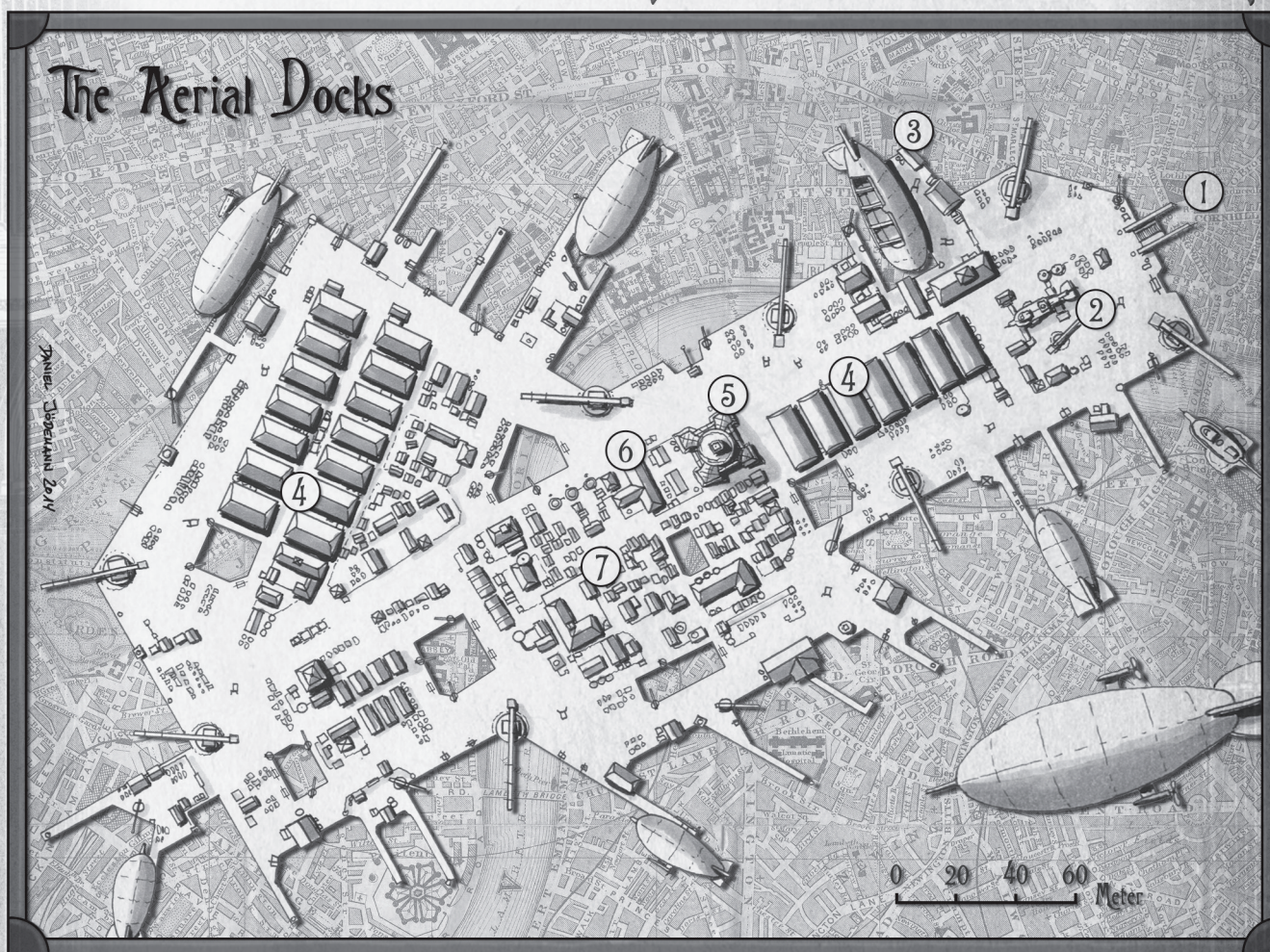
The following text assumes the former scenario; if the characters arrive with the marines, run *Strike-Breakers* (page 18) first, then return to this section.

The Labour League's headquarters on the docks is located in what was the foreman's office, near the middle of the structure. A reinforced 'cage' hangs outside the office – during call-ins, the foreman would stand in this cage to protect him from the crowds of work-hungry dockers.

Assuming the characters reach the Aerial Docks without attracting too much attention, they can easily make their way through the docks to the Labour League. At the start of the strike, the Aerial Docks were crowded with strikers and supporters, but most of this mob has melted away as workers return home to the city below. Now, the only inhabitants of the Aerial Docks are those few families who live in the precarious shanty village, the most militant strikers who are spoiling for a fight, and the Labour League. Most of those who remain on board spend their days watching for intruders or trawling for food from below – they lower down fishing lines, and supporters in the streets hook baskets of bread and cheese on to sustain the strikers above. Once the characters get past the outer perimeter, they can proceed to the Labour League's office unhindered.

Aerial Docks

- 1: (Damaged) hydraulic access stairs
- 2: Shipyard for aerial flyers
- 3: Shipyard for airships
- 4: Warehouses
- 5: Lighthouse and control tower
- 6: Foreman's office
- 7: Workshops and dockers' housings



There, they encounter **Bertram Jarnel** and the other Marxists, who are eager to explain that there is no supernatural 'Angel of the Docks', but that the flying figure is in fact an eager Martian student of Marxist thought. They also seek news from the city below – how are the strike negotiations proceeding? Have the bourgeoisie retreated? Is there any news of support from overseas?

Once their curiosity is satisfied – or if the characters threaten them with weapons – they show the characters into the office to meet Kime.

The quarry they have chased across England perches on a high stool, surrounded by books and pamphlets. He clutches a mug of cold tea, and looks paler and sicklier than he did at Feltam-Hithe's dinner, but his eyes are bright and fired with a new purpose.

In conversation, Kime can describe his adventures since he was kidnapped from the mansion, and how he came to be here in this unlikely company. If told that Feltam-Hithe is willing to send Kime back to Mars, the boy agrees that it would be best if he returned to his native world – he has seen enough of hot, wet Earth, and longs for the red deserts and antique canals of his youth. However, Kime asks to be allowed to remain in London until the tide of events turns to favor the strikers.

Good sirs, until quite recently, I believed myself to be the most wretched creature on the face of this planet. I lay in the darkness, cold and damp and bound by chains, contemplating a future of forced servitude with no hope of escape save by death – but I held onto hope, and by hope I was delivered.

I see now that I am the sole creature on Earth who is truly liberated. I am a man with no family, no history, no nation and no religion. I am free even of the bonds of gravity! I have no entanglements save those I choose to accept – and I have chosen to help those oppressed by society.

Now, it is within your power to deny me that freedom, and force me to go with you. I ask you, sirs, to let me fly one more time, to be a symbol of liberation for all the suffering masses of your world.

Jarnel points out that other dockers' unions are rumored to be collecting money for the support of the strike, money that could be used to buy food and other necessities to keep the strike going through the winter. The dockers of London need only endure for a few days' more – one more flight by Kime could make the difference.

If the characters agree to let Kime fly again, then they must protect him when Clyde's strike-breakers attack. If they decide to take the boy away immediately, then Clyde's forces arrive before they can make an escape.

Strike-Breakers

Under cover of darkness, the *Hotspur* approaches the Aerial Docks. The pilot cuts the engines and lets the wind carry his vessel in the latter portion of its flight, so not even the noise of its propellers alerts the sentinels on the dockside to the danger. The first sign of the airship's presence is when

Greenaway's marines open fire with a fusillade of warning shots, designed to clear a landing space. However, the marines have strict order not to fire against the structure itself as they would risk igniting or even detonating the hydrogen balloons underneath it.

If no one on the aerial docks puts up notable resistance, the marines storm the dockside and then split into three platoons of some thirty men each. The second and third platoons move left and right respectively along the edges of the platform, while the first platoon heads straight down the middle, towards the Labour League's headquarters.

Captain Greenaway commands the first platoon, and his friend **Carnever** the second, but the leader of the third platoon is a mercenary named Polmarsh. While Greenaway and **Carnever** are willing to show some restraint, Polmarsh is a butcher (stats see *Leaders of the Strike-Breakers*, p. 20). He orders his men to throw any strikers they encounter over the railings, and sets fire to any buildings or warehouses where strikers are hiding.

If the characters are with the marines, they may split off from the three platoons, or accompany one of the platoons as they search the platform.

Kime's Flight

Clyde arranged for two simultaneous attacks tonight. While his marines on the *Hotspur* attempt to retake the Aerial Docks, he sends gangs of thugs into the docklands below to harass and demoralize the strikers. The sounds of explosions and gunshots – as well as any fires set by Polmarsh or the strikers – bring many people out into the streets to see what the aerial commotion might be, exposing them to attack by Clyde's gangs. Without a rallying symbol the strike is in peril of collapsing tonight.

Kime asks the player characters for permission to fly. If they agree, then they must clear a flight path for the boy – as soon as he flies within sight of Polmarsh's platoon on the west side of the platform, they will shoot at him. The characters must distract or otherwise occupy Polmarsh's men. They might:

- Capture the *Hotspur* when it returns to put out fires, and train the airship's high-pressure water cannon on the marines
- Rally the strikers and the Labour League
- Convince Captain Greenaway that Polmarsh is committing an atrocity
- Lure Polmarsh's men with the promise of loot, like the cache of liftwood mentioned by Bleaker
- Attack Polmarsh's men

The strikers (for stats see p. 20) will give their lives to protect Kime, their only symbol of hope, and will have the characters' backs. Should the characters succeed in letting Kime fly in front of the dock workers, all of a sudden the aerial docks stand still. Everyone hold their breath while Kime rallies all his strength to lift into the air in front of a stunned crowd, gracefully and much higher than the characters witnessed back at Lord Feltam-Hithes estate. Kime

addresses the crowd (even Greenaway's men if they are currently present) with a strained, yet penetrating voice and gives a fiery speech – the simple dock workers and soldiers understanding not even half of it. But the event causes everyone around to pause for a moment, the soldiers are temporarily perplexed and diverted while the dock workers gain new hope and are now ready to 'go all the way' and fight for their just cause.

Should the characters refuse to help Kime fly, then they need to spirit Kime off the platform before he is arrested. To do so, the characters must:

- Escape the Labour League headquarters before Greenaway's platoon arrives to besiege it
- Decide how they will get off the platform. Greenaway's platoon approaches from the north; heading east or west means running into Carnever or Polmarsh, and the south side of the platform inconveniently catches fire as the characters flee through it
- Dodge both marines and strikers

Hazards of the Air

Throw in any of the following hazards as the characters flee the fighting on the Aerial Docks:

- *Fleeing Strikers:* A mob of terrified dock workers and other civilians pour along a narrow walkway, moving in the opposite direction to the player characters. The characters must make *Athletics* checks or be carried backwards, or even knocked overboard.

- *Warren of Passageways:* There's no clear way through; the characters must clamber over barricades and find their way through warehouses and passageways. An *Athletics* check is required to navigate the obstacle; failure means the characters risk being caught by the advance troops of the boarding parties.

- *Unstable Liftwood:* Damage to the braces holding the Martian liftwood causes some of the planks to tumble and change their orientation to the planet surface below. Some of the liftwood smashes into the warehouse roof; other pieces break through and shoot into the sky. Unless the characters act, the valuable liftwood will all rip free and float away.

- *Burning Buildings:* Fire catches a building nearby, sending burning timbers falling towards the characters. Call for a *Perception* test; those who fail take 2 L damage.

- *The Hotspur Opens Fire:* Characters who pass a *Gunnery* or *Perception* test see the *Hotspur* lining up for a fusillade from her guns and take cover, avoiding any damage other than minor cuts from flying debris. Those who fail are caught unawares and take 2 L damage.

After the Aerial Battle

A day after the battle in the skies, word arrives from Australia of a collection taken up by the Brisbane dockers, who have sent £150 for the support of the strike. If the strike continues, then over the next weeks and months, other unions send more than £30,000 to the London dock strike, ensuring the strike endures until even the most obstinate opponent relents and agrees to improve condition.

If Kime flew, or if the characters prevented Kime from flying but the situation on the Aerial Docks did not end in tragedy, then the strike continues. However, if Kime was prevented from flying and the Aerial Dock strike was violently broken, then the strikers' morale collapses and the strike ends prematurely.

Return to Feltam-Hithe

Of course, the fate of labor relations and conditions in London may not be germane to the player characters – their task was to recover Kime. Once they have the Martian boy they may return to Lord Feltam-Hithe. On the way to his mansion, they spot a notice in the newspapers that the Feltam-Hithe estate is for sale – their former patron has decided to sell his ancestral home, rather than try any more get-rich-quick schemes to solve his financial problems. Indeed, by the time they arrive, Feltam-Hithe has an interested buyer – the money-lender Taylor offers to purchase the estate for cash, putting Feltam-Hithe's debts to him against the purchase price.

With the proceeds of the sale, Feltam-Hithe buys passage for Kime to Mars. Optionally, if you wish to provide a route for the player characters to travel to Mars, he asks the characters to accompany Kime on the voyage home.

To Mars!

Kime came to Earth accompanied by his father Oothran and his family; he returns alone. The only luggage he carries with him, beyond clothing and other necessities, are his jeweled belt and a collection of books given to him by the Labour League. He spends the interplanetary crossing reading and writing, but refuses to discuss the contents of his journals with anyone.

On arrival on Mars, Kime returns to his family home in the domain of Shune, on the outskirts of Parhoon. If the characters accompanied him, they may leave him there and go off on other adventures on Mars. They should believe that they have succeeded in their task, and that Kime will fall back into conventional Martian society.

Experience changes a man – or a Martian. Something is fermenting in Kime's brain, a mode of thought informed by his experiences on Earth, but also unique to the world of his birth. He has brought wisdom out of the strange land of England, and when the time is ripe, he intends to apply it to Mars. The results of that experiment are described in the second part of this adventure.

Leaders of the Strike-Breakers

Primary Attributes				
Body: 2	Dexterity: 3	Strength: 3		
Charisma: 3	Intelligence: 3	Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 6	Perception: 7		
Initiative: 6	Defense: 5	Stun: 2		
Health: 6				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	2	5	(2+)
Intimidate	3	3	6	(3)
Gunnery	3	3	6	(3)
Melee	3	3	6	(3)
Firearms	3	4	7	(3+)
Pilot	3	4	7	(3+)
Talents				
Inspire, Dodge, Mobile Attack				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Rifle	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L

Dock-Workers/Strikers/Kime's Followers

Primary Attributes				
Body: 2	Dexterity: 3	Strength: 2		
Charisma: 1	Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 2		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 5	Perception: 4		
Initiative: 5	Defense: 5	Stun: 3		
Health: 4				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	2	5	(2+)
Brawl	2	1	3	(1+)
Melee	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)
Talents				
Iron Jaw				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	3 N	(1+) N
Knife	1 L	0	3 L	(1+) L

Part Two - Mars

This section of the adventure takes place some months or even years after Kime returned to Mars. It assumes the following criteria:

- The player characters are adventurers or explorers at large on Mars
- They have good relations with the British Establishment on Mars, and are thought of as trustworthy
- They are currently somewhere on the outskirts of the British sphere of influence on Mars. The precise location is flexible, but it needs to be near an active canal.

We're Not British!

If the characters aren't British subjects, then consider moving Kime to some other part of Mars. Perhaps Kime and Shune are on the edge of Belgian territory, and Quire becomes Van Hoot, an agent of the king who plots to destabilize the British crown colony.

The adventure begins when a British officer, **Captain Creighton**, contacts the characters. The captain's current posting is to a hill station; he is the only British officer in the region, and is responsible for maintaining relations with the local potentates and resolving disputes. Creighton broke his leg while climbing down from a ruumet breehr, and is temporarily unable to travel.

The characters might establish contact with Creighton in several ways:

- They visit the hill station of their own accord, perhaps in search of shelter or simply the company of a fellow human
- A Martian messenger hired by Creighton tracks them down and explains that his employer has need of them
- If flying, the characters spot a heliograph message flashing at them from below, requesting that they land

Creighton's Dilemma

Creighton was once a rising star in the British Army, but he lost his nerve after a series of traumatic battles culminating in a serious injury. When he recovered, he was offered the choice of being honourably discharged on medical grounds, or being put out to pasture on Mars. He is effectively in active retirement at the hill station, which suits him perfectly. He is an amateur painter of water-colors, and spends his days painting the alien landscapes.

The situation facing Creighton – and the player characters, if they agree to help – is a complex one, so the officer first limps around his station preparing tea and other refreshments for his guests. He breaks out a bottle of good wine, puts his servants at their disposal, and does whatever

he can to curry favor with them. Then, apologetically, he broaches the topic of why he summoned the characters.

Creighton explains:

A nearby pumping station, Astolor Station, is in revolt against the local noble, Shune. Creighton does not know the root of this dispute; the Canal Martians are normally quite tractable. He has heard, though, that Shune eliminated several rivals in court a few years ago, and suspects that one of those rivals or perhaps a relative has returned to make trouble. Creighton does not know that Kime is involved in the revolt.

Creighton also does not know if the rebels have threatened the irreplaceable machinery of the pumping station. Damage to a station would be an unforgivable crime in the eyes of both the Canal Martians and the British Crown Colony.

Shune has asked for military support, or British-made weapons, to assist him in retaking the pumping station. Creighton has a supply of firearms hidden in a cache near the hill station, but is reluctant to empower Shune.

The other complication is the possible presence of a hostage. When Creighton initially refused to supply weapons to Shune, the noble replied by sending some curious items by courier. These items imply that either Shune or the rebels have a British hostage, although Creighton is unaware of any reports of missing travelers.

Shune claimed that his scouts found the items near the pumping station, and suggested that the rebels might have the hostage. Creighton suspects that Shune has the hostage hidden somewhere – assuming there even is a hostage. Shune is a wily devil – perhaps he bought some European goods and planted them to draw Creighton and the British Crown into a Martian dispute.

Creighton asks that the characters visit the pumping station and Shune's camp. Ostensibly, their purpose is to resolve the dispute peacefully, and if that is impossible, to see what aid Shune requires in securing the pumping station. Their primary goal, though, should be to determine if there is indeed a hostage.

Creighton will, of course, mention the characters' loyal service in his next report to the governor.

The Items

Creighton then produces the travelling gear 'found' by Shune's men. It consists of:

- An empty water canteen, monogrammed with the initials D.Q.
- A set of surveying equipment
- A fine pocket watch with two dials, showing the time on both Earth (Greenwich Mean Time) and Mars
- A box of pencils and sketch paper. All the sketches are of Martian towns and fortresses outside Syrtis Major.

A successful *Intelligence* check suggests that these are not mere idle sketches – they’re clearly observations of the defenses and military preparedness of the various fortresses.

A close examination of the box with *Larceny* reveals that it has a false bottom. The hidden compartment contains a selection of valuables intended for use as bribes – gold, gemstones, Bhutan spice, another few pocket-watches, steel knives and the like.

A character with connections to the British espionage services or the government in Syrtis Major recalls mention of a ‘Daniel Quire’ who had some nebulous but important role as a spy or diplomat. Optionally, have the player describe how they met or worked with Quire on some perilous adventure. If Quire has indeed fallen into the hands of violent Martians, it is imperative that he be freed.

The Truth of Astolor

As the characters discover over the course of the adventure, the situation at Astolor is both complex and volatile. At the heart of it all is Kime.

After his experiences on Earth, Kime developed his own philosophy, called *Kimism* by his followers. Parts are derived from Marxist thought, other parts come from his Martian heritage and the influence of his father Oothran. Kime’s beliefs threaten the status quo on Mars (see the sidebar).

Initially, Kime was content to reside peacefully in his native village, working on his book. Word of his radical beliefs spread, though, and he attracted supporters among the lower-caste canal workers. Without intending to do so, Kime became a symbol to the canal workers just as he inspired the dock workers back in England. His influence on Mars was even more profound, as Kime brought the very concept of reform back from Earth. Canal Martian culture has been stagnant for millennia, and for the Canal workers to even conceive of the thought that they are being exploited is a staggering development.

Two people in particular took an interest in Kime’s work. The first was the local noble, **Shune**. It was Shune who sent Kime’s father to Earth in the first place, to get rid of his rival. Shune assumed that Kime’s writings were an indirect form of revenge, and that the younger Martian was deliberately attacking the accepted social order to undermine him. Shune wants to make an example out of Kime, and will settle for nothing less than the boy’s painful death.

The other is the British agent, **Daniel Quire**. He saw how quickly Kimism spread among the canal workers, and realized the potential the philosophy had as a weapon. If Kimist beliefs continued to spread among the canal worker population, then Martian civilization could be wracked by revolt or even collapse entirely. Obviously, a complete collapse is not in the interests of the British Crown, and Kimism should be kept out of Syrtis Major – but if Kimism could be transplanted to the cities of Oenotria, then the resulting chaos would allow the British to easily conquer

Kimism

Kime’s book, *Water and Life*, describes his philosophy in detail, but much of it is readable only by Martians; many of the concepts and arguments are nonsensical to human minds. That is why Kimism spreads so easily – it is a synthesis of both human and Martian political philosophies, and applies human flexibility of thought to counter Martian inertia.

The major tenets are:

Mars is a ‘dry’ economy, Earth is a ‘wet’ one. Mars was once abundant, and is now scarce. Earth is abundant with resources, but avaricious human consumption will make it scarce.

An economy may stave off dryness in three ways – through efficiency, through technology, and through expansion into new territories. The humans threaten to drain any remaining moisture from Mars by their expansion; the canals and the Canal Martian culture represent the end product of excessive devotion to efficiency.

Therefore, it is only through technology that Mars can reclaim its wet state, and that includes political technology. The first step, then, is to remove the noble bourgeoisie, and use the freed moisture to recover lost Martian technology.

The ultimate aim is to achieve complete ‘fluidity of life’, a semi-mystical concept roughly cognate to human concepts of utopia. It’s clear, though, that this ‘fluidity’ can come about only by overthrowing both the Canal Martian nobility and the human colonial powers, and parts of the work even hint that Earth will eventually have to be conquered by Mars to bring about fluidity. Kime has yet to complete an essay on where humans will fit in this new order.

or pacify the region. Quire is not a supporter of Kimism in the slightest – once Oenotria is plunged into civil war, then the British can come in on the side of the nobles and stamp out the rebellion, establishing a second puppet government to match their holdings in Parhoon.

Quire was en route to visit Kime (and ‘encourage’ the young Martian to move to Oenotria) when Shune’s forces attacked Kime’s village, and Kime fled to Astolor. Shune knows that the British will not allow one of their own to be mistreated by the Martians, so he intends to use Quire to force Creighton’s hand by blaming Kime for the kidnapping. If necessary, he will kill Quire and plant the corpse near Astolor.

Shune's Camp

The Martian lord has established a military camp two miles down-canal from Astolor. His camp spans both sides of the canal, and is supplied by barges coming up from the nearest town. He has some two hundred soldiers at his disposal, including two light artillery pieces. While Shune also has cloudships in his service, he has decided not to employ them at this point – using cloudships would draw too much attention from his rivals, and damage his claim that he needs British support to deal with the rebels.

Unless the characters are exceptionally stealthy, Shune's scouts spot them long before they reach the camp. If they try to fly over or sail up the canal, then Shune signals them by heliograph to stop and meet with him first. Shune will not fire on a human without provocation, unless he suspects the humans are in league with Kime.

On entering the camp, the characters are given food and water, then asked to wait until Lord Shune has time to see them. This is clearly a power play – all the soldiers are doing is sitting around waiting, and there are no other visitors. Shune is making them wait to impress his authority on them; rude characters who barge into Shune's tent gain a +2 bonus in negotiating with the Martian.

Meeting Shune

Shune looks like a withered creature of the desert, his golden skin bleached bone-white by age. He is blind in one eye, and peers through a crystal lens with the other to see the characters properly. He has no patience, and berates his servants for one imagined mistake or another. Even out on campaign, his clothes and furnishings are of the highest quality. Arrogantly, he treats the characters as subordinates even if they are here as representatives of the Crown. Eight guards stand in readiness in the tent, with another two dozen stationed nearby outside.

Shune demands the characters go back to Creighton and tell him that British guns are needed to deal with the traitorous Kime. If the characters react to the name of Kime, he asks what they know about the traitor, and becomes furious if they tell him that they saved Kime back on Earth. He shouts that this is all their fault, and they must atone for their mistakes by convincing Creighton to supply guns, and

cannons too. Why, it is a mark of Shune's generosity and magnanimous nature that he does not arrest the characters for complicity in Kime's treachery!

Negotiating with Shune (possibly with *Diplomacy* checks) garners the following:

- Kime and his followers have occupied the Astolor pumping station. No-one remembers how the station works – it uses ancient Martian technology and seems to reverse the flow of gravity in the water, making the canal flow uphill. Any damage to the station would be disastrous, as it would not only drain the canal network upstream, but flood the canals downstream. Shune could put an end to the rebels by bombarding them with his Martian artillery, but that would endanger the pumping station. What

he needs are British rifles, precision weapons that can kill the rebels from a distance without endangering the machinery.

- He describes Kime as a 'poisoner of the soul', who wrote a monstrous book out of a misplaced hatred of Shune. Kime, he says, blames Shune for sending his father Oothran to Earth in the first place. Most of the copies of the book were seized when Shune's forces attacked Kime's house, but no doubt Kime's followers have a few copies themselves – and anyway, as long as Kime lives, he can produce more dangerous, treacherous words. Shune claims that he burnt all the copies of Kime's book that he could find, but if the characters press him (*Diplomacy*, Difficulty 4), he admits that he kept a few

copies which he intends to share with his fellow nobles. Just as taking a little bit of poison every day strengthens the body against the attacks of assassins, so too might reading the poisonous thoughts strengthen the soul. He refuses to give the characters a copy unless they promise to provide him with the guns he desires.

- Shune repeats his claim that Kime has taken a British citizen hostage. He claims that while most of Kime's followers are fanatics, bewitched by Kime's philosophy, there are a few who were caught up in the madness of the mob, and have since come to their senses. Once they are assured of Shune's victory, then they will free the hostage. If the characters provide the guns, then Shune will produce the hostage.



• Shune will grudgingly let the characters examine the pumping station, or open their own negotiations with Kime, as long as they swear that he will have Kime's head on a pike by the end of this siege. However, if they accuse Shune of taking a British hostage himself, or express support for Kime, or otherwise insult Shune under his own tent, then he has his men attack the characters.

Attacked by Shune

Shune's followers try to take the characters alive, but their first priority is to protect their master. Four of his guards move immediately to get Shune to safety – two carry him out of the tent while the other two guard his retreat. The other four guards attack the characters with their halberds, while calling for help from outside. Unless the characters flee immediately, the sheer weight of numbers – two dozen guards outside, and another hundred or so within earshot – suggests little hope of victory.

Fleeing characters could steal a canal boat and row away, or leap onto a tethered gashant and ride off into the desert. The only other settlement nearby is Astolor, though the characters could double back and head for Creighton's hill station. Depending on how much they angered Shune, the noble might choose to apologize for the 'misunderstanding', or even besiege the fortified hill station and go into open rebellion against the British regency.

Captured characters are imprisoned in the same cave as Daniel Quire (see *The Caves* down below) and must find a way to escape.

Should the characters kill Shune, he is replaced by his son **Shallor**, who seeks bloody vengeance for the murder of his beloved sire.

Shune

Archetype: Aristocrat

Motivation: Pride

Style: 4

Health: 7

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Dexterity: 3

Strength: 2

Charisma: 4

Intelligence: 5

Willpower: 5

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Move: 5

Perception: 10

Initiative: 8

Defense: 5

Stun: 5

Talents

Headstrong, Focused Attack (Melee), Inspire

Flaws

Paranoia

(+1 Style point whenever he alienates people by mistrusting them)

Weapons

Glass Dagger

Rating 3 L

Size 0

Attack 11 L

(Average) (5+) L

Shune's Soldiers

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Dexterity: 3

Strength: 3

Charisma: 1

Intelligence: 2

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Move: 6

Perception: 7

Initiative: 5

Defense: 6

Stun: 3

Health: 6

Skills

Base

Levels

Rating

(Average)

Firearms

3

4

7

(3+)

Melee

3

5

8

(4)

Talents

Alertness

Weapons

Rating

Size

Attack

(Average)

Flintlock Rifle

3 L

0

10 L

(5) L

Halberd

4 L

0

12 L

(6) L

Finding the Hostage

Shune's men have Quire imprisoned in a cave network near Astolor. Two trusted soldiers keep Quire under guard at all times; they are ready to kill him and move his body to the outskirts of the pumping station at a moment's notice. The characters could find these caves in several ways:

- Faint but discernable tracks lead from Shune's camp to the caves. A character with *Survival* can follow this trail.
- While in Shune's camp, the characters see a group of scouts filling their waterskins from a tap on the canal bank. Each scout has his own waterskin, which is as precious and personal as a child to him. One scout, however, fills a second container – a canteen, identical to the one shown by Creighton. The scout rides off to the caves; following him covertly brings the characters to the caves.
- If the characters make contact with Kime and discover that he does not have the hostage, Kime suggests the caves as a likely hiding place.
- While wandering in the desert, the characters come across the caves by chance.

The Caves

The cave network – carved by some primeval spasm of Martian flood waters – is divided into two sections. The lower portion is larger, deeper, and more accessible. The main entrance to it is via an open cave mouth in the cliff face. The second, upper section consists of small steep shafts leading to narrow caves, and can be reached only by climbing a laborious zig-zag up a tiresome slope. In centuries past, both portions were inhabited, first by Hill Martians, and later by Canal Martian soldiers in the service of Shune's ancestors. Now, the lower portion is home to a mated trio of dangerous beasts, a knoe shoshu. The Martians steer clear of the predator, but if the characters enter the lower caves, they are attacked by the beasts.

The guards are in the upper caves. There are four guards stationed here at all times. One sits atop the ridge near the entrance, watching for intruders or heliograph signals from Shune; another stands guard over the prisoner. The other two sleep or relax.

The prisoner (or prisoners, if any of the player characters are taken captive by Shune) is kept in a cave with a single main entrance, blocked by a wooden door. The cave has no light sources, but prisoners are free to move around. The guards warn prisoners that the floor is uneven, and if they move, they may fall and break their necks.

There is a second exit from the cave – a narrow crack in the floor leads down into the lower caves, should the characters wish to brave the knoe shoshus. Quire decided not to risk that path.

The guards take the prisoners out once a day for fresh air, and bring down a canteen of water and some food twice a day. Two guards stand watch whenever the door to the cave is unbarred.

Daniel Quire

Despite his capture by Shune, Daniel Quire is in good health and better spirits when found by the characters. He looks half-Martian; he wears the garb of a Hill Martian traveler, and his skin is tanned gold from the sunlight and constant wind of the deep desert. He thrives on Martian food, and has a prodigious ability to keep going on only a small amount of water. He is clearly a man well adapted to Mars and this new chessboard of the Great Game.

The better part of his enthusiasm comes from his discovery of Kimism. It is all he talks about when he meets the characters. Quire is convinced that Kimism is the tool needed to establish British dominance over Oenotria and possibly over all of Mars – a weapon more effective than any rifle. The Martian civilization is as brittle as a dried-out tree-branch, and one hit in the right place will shatter it all to kindling. Getting Kimism back to Syrtis Major and into the hands of the political office is, he claims, absolutely vital.

What Quire lacks is a copy of Kime's *Water and Life*. He was on his way to visit Kime when Shune's men captured him. He believes that Shune must have a copy, and presumably Kime has too. Kime's own survival is of lesser importance; in fact, it might be better if Kime became a martyr. Martyrs have more power and are less likely to argue with your interpretation of their works.

Quire cautions the characters that Shune will not allow any copies of the book to survive if he can avoid it. Shune is a canny fellow, and recognizes the danger posed by the book. If the characters do give Shune the weapons he desires – and Quire has no objections to that course of action – they must first ensure that they get hold of a copy of *Water and Life*.

If freed, Quire intends to go to the hill station and get the guns from Creighton. He then plans to trade the guns for Shune's copy of *Water and Life*. However, unless the player characters change his fate, he is caught and killed

by a scouting party from Shune's camp before he reaches the station.

Astolor Station

The pumping station at Astolor is a testament to the lost science of Mars. It consists of eight crystal columns, four on either side of the canal, with a control station suspended from a metal bridge that spans the waters. The columns warp gravity between them; they can make water flow uphill, or lift a barge high into the air. The bridge can move on rails along the canal. Originally, this might have been used for moving cargo or performing maintenance on the crystal columns, but its purpose has been lost in time. It does mean that any artillery attack on the bridge can be avoided by taking shelter behind a column.

The station is automated, and was unmanned before Kime and his followers (for stats see p. 20) took refuge here. No-one dares meddle with the station's controls, in case the machinery stopped working.

Kime and some thirty of his followers occupy the station. They have sent word down the canal, and hope to escape as soon as a boat arrives to spirit Kime away.

Meeting Kime

Assuming Kime and the characters parted on good terms, he is eager to meet with them again. He warns them of the danger posed by Shune, and insists they can only meet for a short time before the characters must leave. If they linger, then they would be in danger when Shune's attack begins.

Kime describes that he developed his new philosophy on the return journey from Earth. He was inspired by what he saw and read on Earth, including the Marxist books he read on the Aerial Docks, but he does not consider himself a Marxist. Such beliefs are for humans; he is Martian, and Mars has its own paths. Therefore, he initially refuses to show the characters the one surviving copy of his book. They can persuade him to do so if they remind him of their shared adventures on Earth, or feign an interest in Martian philosophy.

Kime has given little thought to the practical applications of his philosophy. He never intended to start a revolt on Mars; he intended to finish his book and then let it be a starting point for new thoughts and new dialogues – the first new thoughts seeded on Mars in many centuries. Contact with Earth was the shock Mars needed to start again, but now the Martians must decide what to do for themselves, instead of reacting to humans or being ruled by humans.

He asks the characters for counsel – what do they think he should do? His current plan is to flee Shune and find somewhere safe to finish his book – but where? And what then?

Should the characters suggest that Kime surrender to Shune in order to prevent further bloodshed, Kime agrees – on the condition that the characters ensure his book is disseminated throughout Mars.

The Siege of Astolor

Shune's attack begins when either Creighton provides rifles to Shune *or* Shune's paranoia wins out over his patience, and he feels he must act.

First, Shune sends a detachment of cavalry down to the canal banks. They announce that if the traitor Kime is handed over for justice, along with the other ringleaders, the others will be spared. If Kime does not surrender, the attack continues.

The second step is the deployment of an armed barge that travels up the canal. If Shune's men have the guns from Creighton, they can accurately snipe at the rebels on the bridge. Otherwise, they try to land by the bridge so they can storm it. The rebels are forced to activate the pumping station's gravity-manipulation technology, hurling the boat into the sky.

That crime – meddling with the incomprehensible technology of the ancients – frees Shune to open fire with his artillery. After all, any damage to the pumping station can now be blamed on Kime, as it was his followers who activated the controls and destabilized the system. A few shells wipe out most of the rebels and lock the bridge in place, allowing the cavalry and infantry to take the station and kill anyone within.

If Quire is still a prisoner of Shune's men, then he signals via heliograph or lantern for the guards to kill Quire (and the player characters, if they too are in the caves) and dump the bodies in the ruins of the pumping station.

Shune will only accept the surrender of the rebels if he gets Kime's head. He demands to see the body if told that Kime is dead.

Epilogue: Decisions In a Strange Land

The resolution of the events at Astolor Station is up to the characters, but their decisions will have repercussions across the lands of Mars in the years to come. They must answer the following questions, while the Gamemaster decides on the ultimate results of their decisions.

What becomes of Kime? Unless the characters rescue him again, he is almost certainly doomed to die at the hands of Shune's soldiers. If they do manage to rescue him, where do they put him? Shune will stir up the nobles of Parhoon against the characters if they keep Kime in British territory. Do they exile him to another Martian land, or send him into space once more?

What about Quire's plan? Quire wants to use Kimism to destabilize the Oenotrian Empire. Do the characters give him the tools he needs to accomplish this? Or, if Quire dies, do they take up his scheme?

What of Kimism? Kime's philosophy calls for a realignment of Martian civilization, just as the docker's strike was the first step towards better conditions for workers in England. However, Martian civilization is much more hidebound and inflexible than even Victorian England, and any realignment will result in bloodshed and chaos even if it leads to a better world. What do the characters do with *Water and Life*? What is Kime's legacy to Mars?

Water and Life

There are, in effect, three copies of *Water and Life* in this adventure; the characters need only secure one of them to put Quire's plan into operation.

- Shune has one copy in his tent in the camp
- Kime's followers at the pumping station have a copy
- Kime can write more copies if he survives

