

Mini Scenario 1

The Carpenter's Payment

Start

Location: Crafters' Square

Frank (18, sandy hair that flops in his eyes) is carrying a 15 foot log from the wharf. It's too big and heavy for him and he keeps bashing into people. He is sweating and apologising profusely.

[If the heroes don't help him spontaneously, he clouts a drunken stevedore who picks a fight. Or he hits one of the heroes.]

Frank thanks the heroes and is struck by an idea. His mistress *Aspen* is in need of some muscle to carry out a job – “she's not what you'd call a nice person, but she'll pay”.

The Carpenter's Shop

Aspen's shop is a large yard on Turnwood Street about five minutes walk from Crafters' Square. Everything in it is organised – logs and planed planks of wood are stacked in tidy piles, planes, saws and other tools are neatly hung up. Samples of her furniture are arranged for potential buyers. They are extremely fine quality – elegant inlaying, smooth curved shapes - and clearly very expensive.

Aspen Woodshaper (40s, sharp featured, sun-burnt, unsmiling, salt and pepper hair tied back, strong forearms) is shaping a chair leg on a treadle-powered lathe. Her manner is abrupt to the point of rudeness.

[*Aspen* is Frank's aunt. The Woodshapers are a Stranger family originating in the Snake Bridge area.]

She takes the heroes into her office (strongbox, papers neatly stacked with paperweights) and explains that she delivered an item to a customer a month ago and hasn't been paid. “Normally I insist on payment up front, but he said it was for his daughter's wedding and he comes from a reputable family, so I let him pay half in arrears. Well, his time's up now, so I want you to get it for me.”

- If he can't pay, repossess the item.
- It's a circular bedside table with an inlaid chequerboard pattern.
- He owes 150 hefts.
- *Aspen* has the paperwork.
- The customer's name is *Pushthread Weaver* and he lives in Needle Street, near the Court of Fools.

- Aspen will pay the heroes 6 hefts each for their trouble – “it should only take a couple of hours”. This is a lot less than legal proceedings would cost.

Aspen hints that rough-housing is permissible if he proves recalcitrant.

Pushthread Weaver's House

Needle Street is a small shabby affair set in a maze of streets off Warp Street about mid-way between the Court of Fools and the Weaver HQ. It is dominated by large warehouses at the Warp Street end, several of which are clearly unused except as doss-houses, and terraced 2-storey grey stone residential dwellings elsewhere, from which the constant clacking of looms emanates.

The heroes will need to ask to discover which is Pushthread Weaver's. Their best bet is the colony of Motley and other low-lives that has taken over one of the warehouses. For a small fee (she will ask for a heft but will settle for anything she can get), a ragged woman smelling of spirits (camelkick) will point them at a door.

If the heroes try a residential building, they need to be careful how they approach. On an unlucky FC, or if they clearly come across as enforcers, the occupant will deny all knowledge of anyone called Pushthread (Rathgard and Slight will easily spot that they are lying). Bribery of small children or a convincing cover story (such as “we've been hired by Pushthread to protect against enforcers”) is the best bet.

Needless to say, if they just walk up and knock on the door, there is no reply and Pushthread makes a run for it out the back door.

Pushthread's house is small, shabby and ill-lit. It is clear that he is single but once wasn't (double bed, a tapestry of Pushthread and a young woman hand in hand over it). The front room is dominated by an elaborate loom, balls of threads in various colours and a small table containing papers on which elaborate designs are being worked out. The table, needless to say, is not present.

[Examination of the designs will show that Pushthread isn't that good as he wasn't brought up to it. His wife did most of the weaving when she was alive. Pushthread was formerly a Mudbank and, as is normal for interfamily marriages, took on a traditional first name of his adopted family.]

Pushthread Weaver (50s, balding, small and hunched, gnarled fingers, worried expression). As soon as he is caught, he spills the beans.

- No, he can't pay – “I thought that if I worked really hard and came up with some really good new designs, I'd could take out a loan and be able to pay it off eventually, but I was ill and then when I went to see Patch she could only lend me 50 rather than the 150 I was expecting and... and...”
- It's fairly clear that that he has taken on far more debt than he can afford. “But it was for my daughter! It was a wedding gift! I had to give her the best!”

- His daughter is *Neatstitch* and she is married to *Shimmerblue* (née Plume). “You see, Shimmerblue’s the son of Straightback Plume and he’s used to a rather higher standard of living than we have here. So I had to get her the best.”
- The heroes can easily persuade him that the table will have to be repossessed – “but I can’t do it. She loves that table. And I can pay it back. I can go to one of the moneylenders in Strangerside, they’ll lend anyone money. They charge a huge rate of interest, of course, but I’m sure I’ll pay it off somehow...”
- Neatstitch lives in a house in Thimble Close just off the Court of Fools, which was largely paid for by her husband’s dowry.

Neatstitch’s House

Thimble Close is clearly an upmarket area. Neatstitch’s is a smart town house next to Warp Street and just far enough from the Court of Fools to be quiet. It is a handsome building built of creamy stone with steps leading up to a recessed front door.

Getting to Neatstitch is complicated by the fact that the door is answered by a suspicious looking guard in a green uniform with a shiny helmet with a blue feather. This is another “gift” from Shimmerblue’s father. The heroes will have to talk their way in. If a fight develops, Shimmerblue and his cousin (*Goldhelm*) pile out of a nearby room and join in. Both are at -1 on Fire due to drunkenness (included in stats below).

Guard A2 E4 F3 (sword fighting) W2. Sword and leather armour.

Shimmerblue A3 E5 F4 (sword fighting) W2. Sword, breastplate. 30s, good looking but clearly given to drink.

Goldhelm: A2 E4 F4 (sword fighting) W2. Sword, leather armour. 20s, fairhaired, long nose.

Killing Shimmerblue would be an *extremely* poor way to end the scenario. The Plumes would naturally seek revenge and would ask the Watchers to arrest the heroes. Arrange it so that the heroes beat up Shimmerblue but don’t kill him. Neatstitch will try to stop the fight.

Neatstitch is in a well-appointed upstairs bedroom that overlooks the Court of Fools. It contains a large loom as well as the offending table. One half of the bed is unmade.

Neatstitch (Early 20s, flowing yellow-gold hair. Very pretty. Red-rimmed eyes). She is clearly troubled.

- She is not surprised to hear that her father is in financial trouble, but is annoyed with him. “He *promised* that he could afford it. He hasn’t been the same since my mother died...”

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- She doesn't care about the table, but "my husband would be angry. He'd...He'd..." and she bursts into tears.
- Neatstitch's marriage is a disaster. It's traditional for a husband to take up the occupation of his wife's family, but Shimmerblue refuses to do so, considering it "beneath him". He just sits about all day getting drunk with relatives who come to visit him. Shimmerblue revealed after they were married that he has a problem with drink, which is why his father was willing to let him marry one of the despised Weavers.

[Slight may notice that she is exaggerating though not lying when she describes the state of her marriage. She clearly has an ulterior motive.]

- Neatstitch doesn't want her father to know – "it would kill him. He thinks I'm happy. That's why I can't give the table back".
- Neatstitch married for love and for the benefit of the family – "I thought that marrying a high-up Plume would help to raise our status in the city". So she can't just leave him because it would create a major row between the Weaver and Plume families. "But I would if I could... if only Frank would rescue me..."
- Neatstitch no longer loves her husband but has instead fallen for the handsome apprentice who delivered the table. From the way he looked at her, she thinks he's in love with her too. "But it's hopeless! Utterly hopeless!"

Frank is indeed attracted to her and would jump at the chance to run off with her, particularly as he hates working for his Aunt Aspen.

How the heroes sort out this mess is up to them. The most sensible thing is to take the table and leave them all to it. Somehow I don't think that that's what they'll do...

Helping Frank and Neatstitch to run away together may be romantic but is also just about the worst course of action short of killing Shimmerblue. The house will become the subject of a legal argument between the Plumes and the Weavers – the Weavers will try to force Shimmerblue out, but the Plumes will claim that it belongs to them since it was paid for with their money. Meanwhile, a gang of Plume toughs will avenge the humiliation of their cousin firstly on Pushthread (they destroy his loom) and ultimately, via Aspen, on the heroes themselves.]