

Mini Scenario 4

Kids Forever!

Hooks

- Slight sees a Nipper pick up the pyramid from Prester Ironholt's stall
- Trace a Nipper picking up Brother Quicksaw's report on Bliss from the Mercy Hospital
- Trace a Nipper leaving the Gaming Houses with a package of Bliss
- The heroes see Silly Me dancing on top of the Walker's Ark.
- Carat leaves posters all over Everway and Strangerside. It is written in a child's scrawl: "HELP!!! My little brother has been KIDNAPPED! I need brave adventurers to rescue him! Ask at the dancing woman. The password is "Ickley Grubs". THANK YOU!"
- On a good Fortune Card, Rathgard, Why or Flame may remember that there is a statue of a dancing woman in the centre of the Court of Fools. Slight will know without a card. Otherwise most Everwayans and many Strangersiders will know.
- The statue is a popular meeting point and there are a large number of people hanging about, including:
 - A middle-aged well-dressed man looking nervously around (he is meeting a lover for a clandestine affair)
 - A fellow with a shock of yellow hair reading a news sheet
 - A small boy playing with a yo-yo
 - A fat woman with a heavy bag of shopping resting her feet
 - Several Motley types. One is giving a performance, a painfully tone-deaf performance of a ballad called "I met my love on the Mercy Bridge".
 - A distracted-looking middle aged woman in a stained alchemist's robe. She is muttering to herself.
 - A man dressed in rags who is mooching around staring at his feet. He is clearly a pick-pocket.
 - A sage sitting cross-legged on the statue's parapet. He is puffing on a pipe and blowing smoke rings from his ears.
- None of them respond if the heroes ask about Ickley Grubs.
- When the heroes start to leave the kid comes up to them and asks them for the password (if they haven't given it already). He introduces himself as *Cudlip* and leads them to the Walker's Ark.

Cudlip: About 10 years old, thatch of black hair, sulky expression. Given to sucking his thumb. Likes sweets.

The Walker's Ark

- Some 60' high, 60' wide and 250' long, the Ark sits in a neglected square off Three Gods Way.
- It is made of grey stone and has a classic ark shape with curving ends and a roofed section on the deck.
- The square in which it sits is unkempt and desolate. Weeds and wild flowers grow in the cracks in the paving.
- The ark is not in much better shape. There are holes in its roof and sides and chunks of masonry have fallen off the balustrade that surrounds the deck. There appears to be rubble at the forward end, though closer inspection will reveal that it is part of the ark itself and is a crude attempt to represent the waves through which the vessel is supposedly sailing.
- There is a dark entrance at the ark's base halfway down one side.

Depending on when the heroes approach, they may see a woman, about 20, dressed in skin-tight leggings and a gold

coat, capering along the roof ridge of the ark. There is a stick over her shoulder with a bundle hanging from the end tied in a red-spotted handkerchief. She's difficult to make out because she is silhouetted against the afternoon sun / only lit by moonlight, but her posture is remarkably similar to that of the dancing woman statue in the Court of Fools. What she is doing is horribly dangerous but she seems unconcerned. As the heroes get closer, she disappears over the far end of the roof ridge.

They may also see some kids running around on the deck. If the woman is present, the kids take no notice of her.

Ground Floor

- The rooms on this floor are empty and dark. They smell of damp and have a few mouldering sticks of furniture.
- Bootprints on the floor indicate that the Watchers check the place out from time to time (mostly for people sleeping rough).
- The large room in the centre was once a kitchen. There is a blackened fireplace that smells of soot. Some corroded hooks are screwed into the ceiling.

The main entrance leads into a dark passage that turns to the right and leads to a broad stone staircase.

First Floor

- As the heroes start to mount the staircase, a high-pitched voice from the darkness above says "Halt! Give the password!"

The password is "Ickley Grubs" which the heroes are unlikely to know unless they've seen Carat's poster.

If the heroes fail to respond and keep coming up, they are bombarded from the dark entrances on either side of the first floor landing with water balloons and flour bombs, to yells of "Kids Forever!". Depending on the lighting they are using, they may see a small child scampering up the stairs ahead of them, shouting "Pirates! Prepare to repel boarders!"

20 kids will attack the heroes from all directions. They know the Ark intimately and are good at fighting dirty.

A 2 E 1 F 3 (thrown missiles, catapults, rope swing, jump from behind) W 3 (evade traps)

Some tactics:

- Push the heroes into trip wires
- Swing on ropes to bowl them over
- Set off fireworks in the heroes' faces
- Tie ropes around the heroes' feet
- Punch them in the groin
- Hit them with wooden swords
- Flour bags
- Stink bombs
- Water bombs
- Catapults
- Glue on the floor
- Treacle
- Jelly

Second Floor

- The rooms here have porthole-shaped windows making them slightly more pleasant than the ones below.
- Piles of rags and a smell of urine indicate that some of them have been recently used.
- Woodbeam's room has stores of torches and candles.
- A pile of rubble in Carat's room hides the records that she and Woodbeam use to control the activities of the Nippers.
 - They list errands carried out and the remuneration received (mostly sweets).
 - Pretty much every Everway family is mentioned with the exception of the Diggers.
 - One paper says "Quicksaw - Mercy Hospital → Mother Immortal Light - Temple of Mercy

- every Earthday – 5th bell noon"

Nipper's Den

- The den and the deck have large numbers of swing ropes attached to beams and the edges of the roof
- The fireworks are stored in the bags on the beams at the top of the swing ropes.
- The walls are covered with children's drawings in crayon and chalk.
- Mouldering food on the wall and floor suggests that food fights are not uncommon.
- Rugs, carpets and bits of cloth have been strewn on the floor.
- Dressing up box. Brightly coloured clothes are strewn in and around it.
- An intact though worn ornate chair has been set up on a box.

If the heroes have approached peacefully, a young woman of around 18 (*Carat*) is sitting in it, wearing a gold crown. Around 20 kids aged from about 8 to 14 armed with toy crossbows, swords, helmets and cloaks are standing around her. "I am the Queen of the Nippers," she says. "Welcome to my domain. You may bow."

Carat

(she will foster the impression that her name is actually "Carrot" and refuses to give her last name – "it's not important")

Female, 19, 5' 8", long dark hair held back in a circlet (a sign of rebellion - Digger women cut their hair short when they go to work in the mines). Vivacious smile. Wears an Egyptian-style tunic and skirt and red bows round her ankles. Adopts a little-girl bashful manner with strangers, especially handsome ones (like Rathgard) but is brisk, business-like and bossy when organising the Nippers.

Personality

It is evident that her childish mannerisms are an act. She hates her mother. Her bossiness conceals a tender heart which is revealed when a Nipper gets hurt.

A4 (charm) E3 F3 W5 (cuteness)

- When the heroes mention her kidnapped brother, she asks them if they are Outsiders.
- If they say yes, she imperiously dismisses the nippers with a wave of her hand, then breaks down in tears (Slight will be able to tell that this is an act)
- "I'm so glad you've come... It's my brother Bean! He's been captured by the Diggers! They'll send him down a mine!" [As far as Rathgard can tell, all this is true]
- [If asked to explain how it happened] "We were playing up at the Digger house a couple of days ago, and all of a sudden these big men with swords appeared and grabbed him and dragged him inside! I managed to get away, but I'm so worried about him!"
- [If forced to elaborate, she will admit that they were playing a prank where they sat on a wall and tried to steal the hat off a fat man who was sunbathing in the garden by hooking it with a fishing rod. "But he's a bad man, so he deserves it. He's lending money to the Masks so they can run a brothel in Strangerside. [Her eyes widen] You don't think they'll send him there!?"]
- [Where is Bean being held?] "I sent Portly to scout, and he says that he's being held in a tower" [she'll give them a sketch]. "It's close to the wall so you may be able to sneak in at night, though there are some guards with lizards."
- [What does Bean look like?] "I'll give you a sketch" [It's a fair likeness, but of what Woodbeam was like 5 years ago].
- [Reward?] "Well, I've got a few hefts that we've made from running errands. Would that do? I was planning to have a feast, but I guess this is more important."
- [Who's the woman dancing on the roof?] "Oh, that's Silly Me. It's all right, she never falls off. Though she sets a bad example to the young 'uns."
 - Silly Me sometimes helps by getting the kids out when they are trapped. She just appears with a key. She only does it when she feels like it, so she can't be relied on to rescue Bean. "Though you could try talking to her."
 - It was Silly Me who suggested the prank on Moneybags.

Silly Me will take an interest in the heroes if Walker is amongst them.

The Digger Family House

- Grand semi-circular metal gateway facing on to the Gardens. Pale yellow wall about 10' high surrounds the rest of the compound which is about 200 yards across
- The compound has many buildings of various ages, arranged in groups. The most impressive are those around the Digger Tower. The central buildings have flat roofs and are heavily guarded.
- Woodbeam is being held in the North Watchtower, a 60' high by 40' diameter cone-roofed building that overlooks the north wall. It has four storeys linked by a 5' wide spiral staircase that winds up the interior wall. There are connections to the adjoining building (Goldring's family quarters) on the ground and first floors. There are round shuttered windows – on a lucky FC, one close to the ground is left open.
- The Watchtower stands to one side of a formal garden containing shade-loving plants in regular 20' square flower beds. The north end of the garden is screened by bushes and trees and there are other bushes near the entrance to the watch tower.
- A path by the wall is patrolled by a guard with a guard lizard every five minutes or so. He will shout an alarm which is relayed to the Digger's Tower. A dozen guards and 3 lizards will show up within a minute.

Guards:

A2 (organise defence)

E3 (knife defence)

F3 (strike to the head)

W2 (sense trouble)

Leather armour, clubs and wooden shields. They aim to subdue intruders rather than kill them.

Watch Lizards:

From the sphere of *Mistmarsh*, these 4 foot high bipedal warm-blooded lizards are semi-intelligent. Their main predators in their home realm are the feral will-o-the-wisps which envelop them and consume them in crackling energy, so they have developed a keen sense for magic and magical beings. Use of magic within 50' will cause them to emit a loud warning cry ("chk chk chk...") and attack. They can absorb magical energy and re-emit it as a bolt, as well as attacking through with teeth and claws.

A0

E4 (resist magic)

F4 (magical bolt)

W4 (sense magic)

Tactics

- Climbing over the wall without screening illusions will be spotted by the guard outside Woodbeam's room. They may get away with it at night on a good FC. There are lamps every 100', including one by the north gate.
- The north gate is locked but can be picked ($F + W + FC > 8$). The heroes will be visible from the house because of the lamp, though Flame can easily snuff it out (she can see it through the gate). Alternatively, Flame can melt her way in, but this will take five minutes.
- Pretend to be guests and blag their way in. Rathgard can do this, but getting to the North Watchtower may take some inventiveness (on a lucky FC there is a feast in the Great Hall which the heroes can attend. They can pick up the "Glisten Gold caught cheese smuggling" and "Almond Weaver is fomenting trouble in the Council").

The North Watchtower

Ground Floor

- Door – locked (F + W + FC > 6)
- Guard room – 5 pallets and personal effects. If heroes are unlucky, a guard wakes as they come in

First Floor

- Woodbeam's and Carat's nanny's room. Currently unoccupied.

Second Floor

Carat's room.

- Bear skin rug
- Miner's lamps on mantelpiece over fireplace
- Wardrobe full of Egyptian-style clothing
- Dolls and dolls house
- Chest of drawers – top one contains some valuable items of jewellery made of gold, rubies and sapphires

Third Floor

Woodbeam's room.

- Guard outside. Has key to room (which is locked) A2 E4 F3 W2
- Games – hoops, skittles
- Large, elaborate fort with toy soldiers
- Woodbeam Digger

Appearance

Male, around 18, 6', shock of black hair, clean-shaven strong jaw.

Rather older than Carat's sketch of him.

Dresses like a child. Shorts and a red button-down shirt. Moves in sudden spurts. Tends to perch on things and swing his legs. Uses children's language and speaks in the higher register of his (naturally bass) voice.

Personality

He is a genuine man-child - gets bored easily, irresponsible, selfish, likes practical jokes, games and sweets - but also likes organising the Nippers and "getting one up on the grown ups" (as he puts it). Claims not to like girls, but is likely to find the sight of Flame arousing (and therefore off-putting).

A4 E3 (Stay put) F4 (Exuberance) W3

An Encounter with Goldring Digger

It is quite possible that the heroes will attract the attention of the guards at some point. If they do, Goldring Digger will arrive with six crossbow men and six senior guards and demand that they stop. Rathgard, if present, can negotiate.

Goldring Digger:

Appearance

F, late 40s

A thin and hard-bitten woman, Goldring's thinning black hair is rarely seen below her remarkably plain and concealing choice of headgear and attire.

Personality

"The Platonic Ideal of the Crafty Merchant", Goldring represents her family and the mercantile interests of Everway in council with a verve matched only by her propensity for acid remarks.

A5 (acid remarks) E3 (resist persuasion) F3 (count money) W5 (haggling)

- Goldring is not aware of the Nippers, only that Woodbeam and Carat go off playing all the time.
- She has confined Woodbeam to his room after a dangerous prank where they tried to hook the hat of their Uncle Moneybags from his head with a fishing rod while he was sunbathing. "They could have had his eye out!"
- The incident has also caused her to decide that it is way past time that Carat and Woodbeam took on their adult responsibilities. They are after all 19 and 18 respectively, and Carat is the heir to the Digger fortune.
- Woodbeam will probably eventually marry out of the family but in the mean time he is expected, as a high prestige member of the family, to learn how to run one of the mines in the Red Mountains. If he turns out to be no good at that, some other suitable occupation will be found for him such as prospector or overseer at the Mint. "What I won't have is him lazing around here all the time. We've got enough idle men as it is. He has to learn a trade, or no-one will want to marry him."
- Goldring will attempt to do a deal with the heroes. She will offer them a lot of money to lead her guards to Carat's current whereabouts and get her to surrender peacefully [if they do this and it goes wrong, Carat will get on to the parapet surrounding the deck of the Walker's Ark and threaten to dash her brains out on the ground below. Why, if present, could save her.].

Consequences

- If the heroes manage to get Woodbeam away, he and Carat will ask the heroes to protect them. The heroes will have to negotiate some sort of truce between Goldring and her errant children.
- Goldring will organise a city-wide manhunt for the kidnappers.
- If the heroes were spotted during the raid and Slight was not around to blur their features, their likenesses will be circulated (again). The heroes will be arrested if they go anywhere near the Watchers and will once again become Persons of Disputed Status. Silly Me could get them out of prison.
- If the heroes turn in Carat and Woodbeam, they will earn Goldring's favour and scads of cash (10 hefts). She will offer them another job – there is trouble at a silver mine in the Blacksands Desert...
- If the heroes free Woodbeam they will earn the favour of Silly Me. She will come to them and tell them that they are in danger, but to understand why they must come with her to meet some people...