

Possibly the people who come to Kasskar for help are some of the newly “orphaned” Hobnails from his neighborhood...there’s a junior leadership figure to lend a little bit of credence to their plea. They play on Kasskar’s good tendencies by talking about how they’re struggling to help the victims from their neighborhood but now they’re being undercut by the smugglers and admiralty.

Exposing human smuggling in Mikal’s org could add a little punch to the game. The smuggling could be voluntary, like US / Mexico smuggling, or add a twist like the smuggled girl in Firefly, or maybe an artifact (idol god) of some kind. Obviously it could be greencake or even the Philosopher’s Stone...it could be Lethe’s star? Possibly Mikal could have built this smuggling operation into something beyond just smugglers, into some interest force for good....that’s a good idea. Or, maybe the smuggled person could be a double of one of the players. They could be escapees from the Caliphate....this would be really good for leading into Kelly’s campaign. If I had set this up more carefully early in the game, this could have been something they were looking for. It could be a powerful item for the PCs. Hmm...maybe Lethe’s Star would be interesting here, although it isn’t actually connected to Hollin.

Maybe the smugglers would be a trading house, rather than just some dock workers. So, the climax of the session could be the trading house, maybe in a different party of Hollin than braddock. I guess first things would be at the dock, then it would go to the trading house. Hmm, could it be the vampire house? In dealing with the trading house there could be some diplomatic options too.

Possibly the authorities (we finally see some real law in Hollin) would be on the party because Aeris was their friend, thinking they were in league with them.

Kasskar is presumably still a thug and enforcer, some other guys right hand man, and looking for money.

Kasskar could possibly take some of the hobnail gang and go over to the smugglers.

Maybe the witches chorus appears and gives Kasskar a straight-up moral test: they’ll tell him where his mother’s soul is and how to help her, or they’ll tell him where there’s some money. The city of Hollin has become a horrible place for dead souls, since it is now so crowded with souls that died in the fire.

“Low-risk shady wealth” seems to be the order of the day.

Maybe at this point Kasskar would know where to hit to pick up some low risk wealth, where there would have been some. This would be vaguely like looting, it might make sense to double check with Keith that he’d do it. This could be the headquarters of the hobnails or some other gang, one of Kasskar’s rogue contacts could suggest it or Kasskar could just know to go there. Maybe Kasskar finds that it was a particular guy who turns the Hobnails on his original boxing thing.

Kasskar originally wanted to start a for-profit boxing racket of his own. Maybe now he can be approached with some kind of opportunity like that.

At this point it's hard to tell if there's a big dog / faction that Kasskar would side up to. Maybe we should role play where Kasskar meets different factions and we should see who he sides up with.

Kasskar can find an item on Lacewing's body that helps give her the shadow skill, something that can help with his sneak attack.

Maybe a Q-like character tempts Kasskar with something great to make him turn alignment.

Imposter thing -- each character thinks another character might be an imposter.

characters bred for hostility.

to do (pre game)

recap from last time

Aeris casts Firestorm from Apogee, destroying Braddock with a consuming tornado of fire. He casts Yawning Graves, raising the victims as undead who attack the remaining survivors. The party, now Beowolf, Kasskar, Ord, and Aeris's resurrected brother Jaris, arrive soon after and defeat Aeris's party, with Jaris killing Aeris.

questions for players

- What does the party do with the items from the Aeris' defeated party?
- What do they do with the evil PCs who surrendered (I think this was Treasach and Kane?)
- What is the party going to do now?

Raven Forge

If the party decides to go to the Raven forge, they'll find an item on Lacewing that helps here stealth, which Kasskar could use in conjunction with his sneak attack.

Destroying the phylactery

Soon after the battle ends, the midwife Wren arrives on Apogee and surveys the scene.

If they discuss how to destroy the phylactery, she'll listen without saying anything. If they settle on something lame (like throwing it in the river), or if they ask her, she'll suggest that the phylactery has an indestructible space-time shell, which would be inert in a place without space-time.

She'll tell them that the plane Kairos is a place without time. She says there is, and has always been, a horse and carriage in Braddock's market that can take them there. She describes it as a highly polished black carriage with silver-painted wheels, fine trim, and a black horse. She says you can distinguish it from other black carriages because it has no windows and no driver.

Given this description, Kasskar realizes he's seen a carriage like that in the market hundreds of times when he was working there as a child. He never thought about it, and he can't say he's ever seen the driver or seen anyone use the carriage. Kasskar remembers that children in the market used to say that the horse could quote "count" by pounding its hoof, but no one was ever able to actually make the horse count.

If the party looks down into the Braddock market now, they can actually see a shining black carriage with a black horse and no driver, standing unhurt among all the destruction.

Burns

Once the party decides what they're going to do, Burns looks out over the scene of Braddock destroyed below. He tells Kasskar that he's going to go burn the Hedgepeth, since it's cursed. On an insight roll, this seems strange, since Kasskar can look down and see that the Hedgepeth is already burned.

The Shambles

When they approach the horse, they can use questions and experimentation to figure out that the horse doesn't count, it plays MasterMind. It has the code:

2231

If nothing is right, it shakes its head the way that horses do. It whinnies once for each correct number in the right place (<http://soundbible.com/429-Horse-Neigh.html>), then hits its hoof for each correct number in the wrong place.

The horse needs a cool name still -- I had Thimblorig before, but I don't like that looking at it now.

Kairos, the plane without time

When the party gets the combination right, the horse whinnies four times and the door of the carriage pops open. When they get in and close the door, they can feel the carriage start to move, and they hear the clip-clop of the horse's hooves. The clip-clops go at a walking pace for a little while, then accelerate to a hard gallop. After a few minutes, the carriage stops rudely like it has hit a difficulty and the party is thrown around inside the carriage a little. They notice that the space-time shell around the phylactery dissolves, leaving just a chunk of the meteor Noreste spinning to a stop in the character's hand -- the carriage must be in the plane without time. You're still sitting in the carriage looking at the piece of Noreste when you feel the carriage start rocking.

When they get out of the carriage, they're on a desert plane that stretches to the horizon in all directions, next to a long, deep blue river running to the horizon in both directions. The wind blows a tumbleweed by.

You see that the carriage is stuck in deep mud, and that there are already four guys trying to push it out -- who you recognize as Beowolf, Kasskar, Jaris, and Ord. The Beowolf says, "Hey -- quit standing there and help us push the carriage out of the mud."

If the players help them push the carriage out of the mud, the second party thanks them. If the "real" party asks the party what's happening, they say that since there's no time in Kairos, events have no order. So, it seems that the party's carriage left Kairos before they arrived. They get in the carriage, telling the "real" party to wait for the next one. The "real" party watches their carriage drive off to the horizon.

Witches' Chorus

After the party watches the horse and carriage leave, they turn and see the Witches' Chorus standing near them. The young witch Irja says, "Well met, Kasskar, Ord, Beowolf, and now Jaris."

- **Beowolf.** Irja, the young witch with dark skin, says, "Beowolf sinister, your animal spirit is the white dragon Celendril, who protected the Inkeri from the horrors of Hilde's waste in ages past. But, traitors were able to drive you out of Hilde."

"Hilde's horrors are awakening again, and the city of Highpyre is the Inkeri's real protection against them. In times past, the jewel called Lethe's Star lit Highpyre through Hilde's sunless winter. You could rally the Inkeri there by finding the star and raising it there again."

- **Kasskar.** The pale-skinned red-haired witch Kaisa says, "We've come to talk to you,

Kasskar. Although you're Good, self-interest has been your real game. But, after fighting Krill and the dragon Vecassitrix, killing Lahar, and watching Hollin burn, we find it hard to believe that pocketing a little shady cash is still your life goal." Kaisa says, "Besides self-interested, you can also be vengeful. Aeris betrayed you, and you battled to destroy him. Now destroying the phylactery will stop Aeris from returning to Hollin at will, but Aeris' spirit will still live." Kaisa says, "If we offered you the the choice between true-deathing Aeris for vengeance or doing something truly good, which would you choose?"

- **Ord.** Alissa, the young witch with copper skin and intense eyes, says, "Ord Redding. Aeris helped you find Prosper and put down the usurper Zephyr. But in the last few hours, your friend Aeris and his evil party have burned Hollin and raised the victims as undead to attack the living. Are you sure that your other friends aren't evil as well?"

"Aeris's spirit also killed Kidu, Gradska's Angel of Death, in the royal mummy cache. With Kasskar killing Lahar/Gradska, and Aeris killing Kidu, Krohn believes there are no wildcards left to keep him from wiping out the Ninety-Nine. The Ninety-Nine represent vices or virtues -- patience, mercy, destruction -- but they came to our world, Balaal, to preserve our universe. If Krohn kills the Ninety-Nine, the universe's existence will be laid bare to possible extinction."

- **Jaris.** The crone Kanna says "Jarvis, or should I say Eldred the harpooner? You killed your brother Aeris, who loved you and gave you this perfect specimen for a body. Didn't you have just as much cause for revenge on Hollin as Aeris?"

Kanna says "I told Aeris where Firestorm and Yawning Graves were, and I stand behind that decision -- Aeris accomplished his destiny in spectacular fashion."

Kanna asks, "What will you do with your parents' bodies?"

Kanna says, "I believe that Aeris still has something of yours [meaning the skull]."

As the party finishes talking with the witches, one of them spots a black speck on the horizon. As the speck gets closer, they can see that it's a black carriage, being pulled along the river by a hard-galloping black horse. As it's about to blast past the party, it suddenly gets caught in the mud and is nearly wrecked. Four disheveled guys get out -- Beowolf, Kasskar, Jaris, and Ord. If the two parties get it out of the mud, the "real" party can assert themselves to take it back to Hollin.

After each of you have climbed into the carriage, the pale-skinned, dark-haired witch Lahja steps up and puts her hand on the carriage door to close it. She looks into the carriage to make sure that everyone's hands are clear of the door. She says, "You know, if you wanted to go to a place without time, there's a place without time right in the middle of Hollin." Looking at each of you a

last time, she says, "Our drama is approaching its end." She shuts the door, and you can feel the horse start to pull the carriage and accelerate to the same hard gallop as before. Soon, the carriage slows and the door pops open. When you get out, you're back in the Shambles.

Return to Hollin

When the party returns from Kairos to the marketplace, they can see that they lost a little time in Kairos, maybe a few weeks. Although the Shambles is still a charred ruin, there are people there getting a few of the stalls repaired. Even in the charred ruin, people still have to eat, and a few people have started to buy and sell some animals and fruits and vegetables already.

Is there anything the players want to do?

The Hobnails

After a few days of e.g. staying at the burned-out Mooncalf, a few young Hobnails go there to talk with Kasskar. They say they understand that Kasskar killed the Hobnail kingpin Horst and his second-in-command and so maybe has the kahunas to claim some leadership among the hobnails.

But, they ask not generally but because have a specific problem. A lot of their time was spent protecting the locals from Admiralty press gangs, and as perverse as it seems, it appears that press gangs have been taking some of the few survivors in Braddock even despite its near destruction. They need Kasskar's help to track down some specific people who've been taken. They tried to fight a largish press gang off but they were outnumbered and they took this lady's 18-ish son to a particular warehouse, which they thought was weird.

Maybe on a streetwise roll, Kasskar thinks that's weird because that's a known smuggler warehouse.

Maybe Mikal was smuggling in food to take to the poor of the city of the dead? this would include piglets that they could raise.

When they end up at the trading house, it's incongruously filled full of pigs, smuggled food, etc. also, almost like a market place.

Mikal

There could be a prisoner's dilemma here?

house to house fighting in the city

demons steal cannons

OK, another party comes and wants to hunt down the "monster that violates the natural order"...it turns out to be Mikal.

Maybe something along the lines of, Mikal had all these people doing things under his control, and when the psychic trauma hit, he lost fine control and they all started doing weird shit. Maybe Mikal also has a few allies -- who don't know the party -- who he's taught to unlock their own psychic abilities. So, the party could be fighting these guys without fighting Mikal. What new psychic protections did they suddenly learn they had when the disaster hit?

Possible plot lead in -- the party has to help with the disaster.

Mikal's original motivations were money, becoming a smuggler, and revenge...I want to put revenge aside for now because the entire campaign has been largely revenge. He had an in with the admiralty, so the best way for him to become a successful smuggler would have been to infiltrate both the admiralty and his enemy's organization. What interesting thought could he put in the mind of his smuggler enemy to most benefit himself?

I guess the issue is I don't see the problem here. Mikal infiltrated the orgs and he's getting paid and it's all good. Maybe that's what was happening until the psychic trauma hit, or until the Hobnails were beaten down by Kasskar -- maybe Mikal realizes the Kasskar could be coming for him next, and Kasskar is not under his psychic influence. If this is the case, possibly Mikal could have Burns ask Kasskar to do something that doesn't make sense.

I guess part of the idea here was that the "punchline" is that it's revealed that Mikal is behind this stuff. But that's not enough of a plot line...also I don't necessarily want to make Mikal into one more enemy they have to kill.

Smuggling quinine thing.

Maybe it's the smuggler's accountant who discovers that something is fucked up and goes to Kasskar -- maybe those accountants are the same guys who worked for Ishild.

While Mikal could have become very powerful or disturbed by the psychic trauma of the god and then Firestorm, I want to do a few adventures here that contrast with what came before by being less over the top. He could have also been affected by victims of the Volker's mind control. Maybe Mikal creates a virus-like thought that goes from enemy to enemy. Maybe the adventure starts because one of the players contracts this thought.

psions can manipulate the wishes of their victims. Invisibility is a recurring theme in the psion powers.

I guess at this point, Mikal probably might have been driven mad by the mental anguish of firestorm and yawning graves, and he might have gone down to visit the new god and had some psychic interaction with it.

Mikal motivation: wanting to be a smuggler, now also revenge. Was at the sanctuary.

post game summary

The party destroys Aeris' indestructible space-time phylactery in Kairos, the plane without time. Back in Hollin, the young Hobnail Karn asks Kasskar to get his brother back from an admiralty press gang, who kidnapped him despite the desperate ruined caused by Firestorm. Searching at the admiralty forge, they're attacked by a disturbed and inexplicably psychic press gang.

treasure given out

to do (post game)

- player questions to answer
- requests to send players after the game