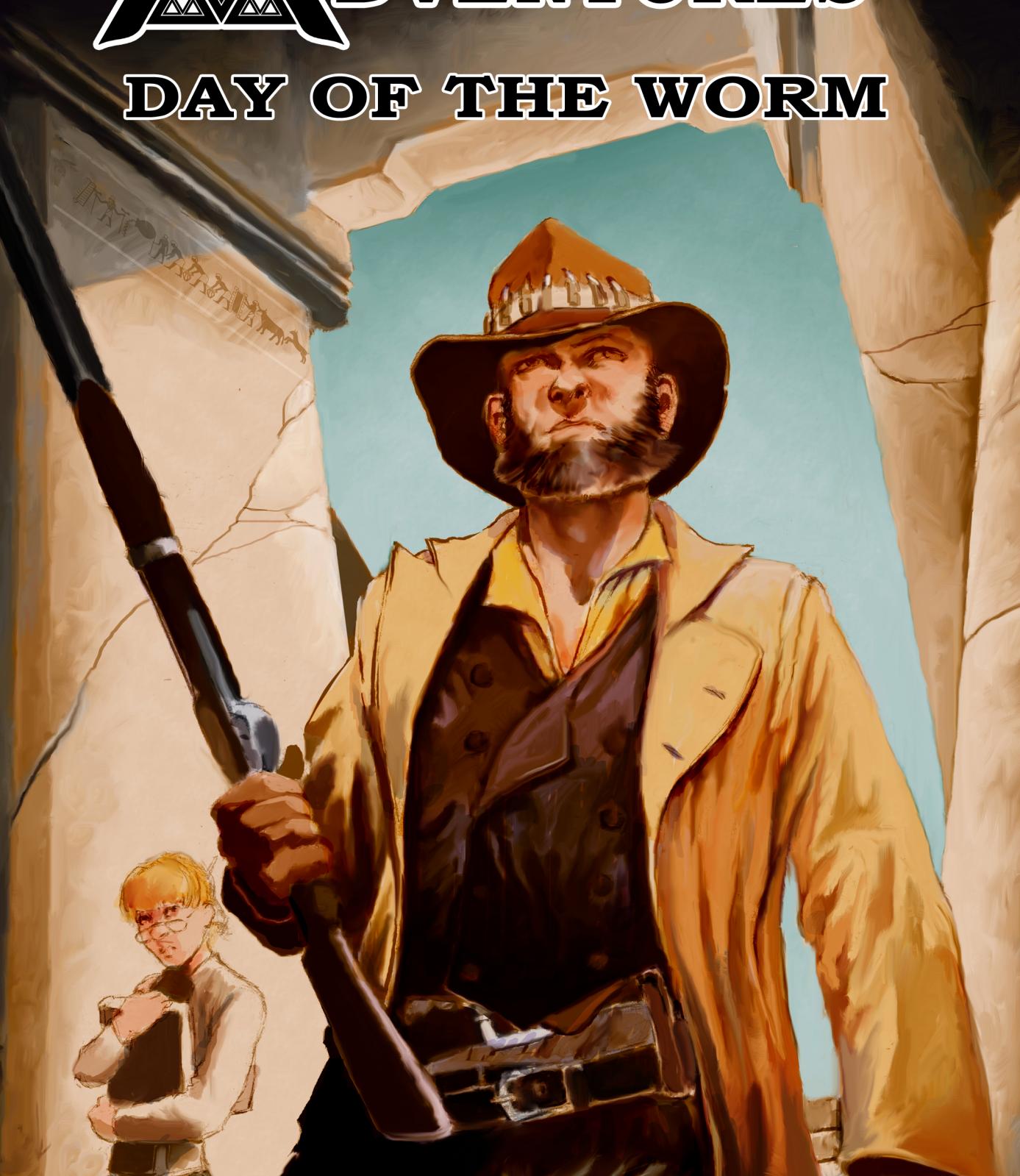


MAZING ADVENTURES

DAY OF THE WORM



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DAY OF THE WORM

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An adventure for 4-6 characters of level 1-4

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DAY OF THE WORM

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Day of the Worm, our first adventure module for Amazing Adventures. We hope to follow this one with many more, and we hope you enjoy it!

This scenario is designed with the assumption that players have gone through the “Heart of Yhtill” adventure scenario in the Amazing Adventures core rulebook; it picks up directly after the previous adventure ends, and continues the headaches visited upon our heroes by the Thule Society and Alice Diamond, who of course hads not perished at the end of the previous adventure, but inexplicably survived certain death at the hands of the shoggoth in the sinking Black City.

In this adventure, the Thule Society acquires the Heart despite the PCs and Ormazd Society’s best efforts to protect and hide the gem, and a new menace arrives on the scene: the malevolent aliens known as the People of the Worm, who seek to ensure that World War II devastates the entire planet, leaving humankind ripe for conquest...and consumption. The PCs, working with the Allied forces, and alongside their Ormazd Society allies, find themselves in a race against time to stop the People of the Worm from unleashing a doomsday device from within a hidden tomb in Egypt’s Valley of the Kings. Along the way they may make uneasy allies with members of yet another alien race whose motives are mysterious, but likely equally unfriendly: the Grays.

The adventure is structured to increase the looming threat of the Thule Society (and rarely has there been a more appropriately Pulp villain than the all-too-real Nazi Thule Society!) as well as create new threats that can be used to repeatedly challenge and frustrate our heroes. While the first scenario in this series was purely mystic in scope, this one introduces elements of pulp science fiction. For those GMs who find sci-fi elements in their pulp games distasteful, the People of the Worm can be presented as Lovecraftian horrors from beyond, instead of sci-fi style aliens, and the Graeys can be agents of the Outer Gods or simply excised altogether. Much of it lies in how the GM chooses to present the villains herein, beyond their basic statistics.

With that, it’s off to Saudi Arabia and Egypt—the danger of the Thule Society looms large!

NOTES ON THIS ADVENTURE

Constructing a good adventure scenario for a role playing game is not an easy task. Consider, those GMs who pick up adventure modules such as this one, are doing so because they don’t have the time, generally, to construct their own adventures. Thus, it’s important to have as much information available for the time-constrained GM as possible. However, the adventure still needs to be generic enough to be run by just about any group. This means it must be easily tailored with a minimal amount of extra work.

Where possible, we will present options that can be very quickly and easily used to tailor the adventure to the GM’s tastes on the fly. For example, the villains in this module as well as the MacGuffin are both introduced in the prior adventure in the series, and it is highly recommended that “The Heart of Yhtill” be run prior to this adventure.

However, it is not absolutely necessary for the players to have gone through the previous adventure; if they have not, it is suggested that the GM find another way to introduce the Thule Society and the Heart of Yhtill, which is a fist-sized gem that appears to be a ruby and supposedly possesses unspeakable mystic power. It will also be necessary to get the PCs to the Middle East. This could be a very simple process, however, and the following alternate scenarios are suggested:

- o The Heart of Yhtill (more likely called something akin to “The Heart of the Desert”) is on display at a local museum. The museum is robbed (or even assaulted) and the gem stolen. The PCs get mixed up in the investigation. During the course of their investigations, they come into contact with Thule agents or People of the Worm, leading them to suspect something far darker and more sinister than a simple gem theft has occurred. The Ormazd Society can show up to recruit the PCs to chase the gem down, leading into the adventure herein.
- o The characters are OSR agents stationed in the Middle East, where they uncover a Nazi plan to use the gem for some horrific ritual. Again, the Ormazd Society arrives on the scene to provide information and ask for help, and the adventure begins!

The suggested “scenarios” above require little pre-planning on the part of the GM. Simply narrate the problem, use the statistics for Thule cultists and/or People of the Worm herein, feed them the information you need, and dive into this scenario. Again, however, we do highly recommend running the “Heart of Yhtill” scenario in the Amazing Adventures core rulebook, as

it provides a rollicking first adventure for the characters and gives them a direct personal stake in the events presented herein.

Other references to the previous adventure will abound throughout this scenario. In general, it is not absolutely necessary for the PCs to have full familiarity with these things. For example, the darts with the zombie drug made from scopolamine will instantly alert PCs who have played the prior scenario that their enemies are still out there. Those who have not played the previous scenario will simply encounter a new and mysterious threat in terms of a mystical drug that creates ravenous, undead zombies from living people. Efforts to reproduce the drug will, of course, be fruitless, though characters with knowledge of chemistry and the proper facilities to reverse engineer the chemical will be able to discover that it is some sort of heretofore unknownheretofore-unknown scopolamine derivative, but with some sort of mysterious x-factor involved that they will be unable to isolate (because it's dark magic).

PLOT ELEMENTS FOR DAY OF THE WORM

The story involves a plot by People of the Worm to infiltrate the Allies and Axis forces in World War II and escalate the conflict to unimaginable levels, and the return of Alice Diamond, who has made a bargain with the People in exchange for power when they have completed their dominance of the Earth. Alice has been horribly scarred by her experiences in the original adventure, and will use various methods to disguise her face, from magic to veils.

Alice, of course, is still obsessed with obtaining the Heart of Yhtill, and the adventure takes the scales up a notch, involving the Worm's infiltration of the Society of Ormazd itself in an effort to determine where the player characters left the gem at the end of their original adventure. The governments of the Allied forces also get involved, backing the efforts of the PCs to stop the Thule Society at any cost.

Also appearing on the scene are the Grays, who are revealed in the end as the species that seeded humanity on the planet to begin with, but who are not at all benevolent; why they put us here and guided us (or even if they really did at all) will be left open.

Using the plotting outline discussed in Amazing Adventures, here are the four hooks used in this scenario:

- o Different Murder Weapon: Infection by People of the Worm
- o Different Location: Egypt
- o Different Object: Alien artifact (the Heart of Yhtill)
- o Menace: Thule Society, People of the Worm, Greys.

ACT ONE

The characters return to At Taif after their adventures in the desert to a shocking discovery: over the past several weeks that they have been gone, war has come to the Middle East in a big way. Truth be told, war has been in the Middle East for some time, but now the Italians and Germans are making a real show of it, and as Americans or other nationalities likely affiliated with the Allies, it's a difficult time and place to be.

Even though Saudi Arabia remains nominally neutral but leans towards Allied support, the country is surrounded by enemies and without Amanda (Alice) to take care of their needs with her vast social network, the players will face a difficult challenge getting back to the States, or even to friendly soil. The Society of Ormazd would love to help, but they are a loosely-connectedloosely connected network of traditional warriors who are dedicated to a sole purpose, and simply don't have those kinds of connections. Not to mention, as the PCs will soon discover, the Ormazd Society has its own problems.

If the PCs make arrangements to go home (and despite all efforts by the GM to make it difficult due to war, clever PCs will find a way), fear not: a sequence of events will occur to keep them in the Middle East.

AN UNWELCOME VISIT

The Ormazd Society has become aware that the Thules are still active in the area, and are concerned that their own brotherhood has been infiltrated by a subtle and nefarious enemy. At some point, the handsome young Persian, Arad Hassani, who has acted as the PCs' contact before (see "The Heart of Yhtill"), will approach the group. If Arad did not serve as the PCs' contact in the previous adventure, GMs should feel free to replace Arad with whatever NPC has already been developed for the Ormazds. Likewise, if this adventure is being run on its own, Arad will approach the PC's at some point early on—perhaps a run-in with some Thule cultists in an alley combined with suitable heroics will convince Arad that the PCs could make valuable allies; particularly if the PCs save Arad from the Nazis.

Regardless, at some point, the PCs get a visit from Arad begging their help; it seems that several members of their group have begun acting strangely, showing no emotion whatsoever and lacking even the most basic understanding of social courtesy or etiquette. One of the members was questioned extensively; Arad has few details; the mole claimed to be a creature not of this earth, and made a cryptic statement about the worms consuming the Earth from the place where the great kings sleep, and the tomb where the heart's body lies.

Assuming that the Heart was re-buried by the PCs at the end of the previous module, the Society has become

aware of digging activities in the area where the Heart was re-hidden, and are afraid that the Heart's location has been revealed. If the Heart is still in the care of the PCs, the Society fears for their safety, as the Heart has almost certainly been compromised. Finally, if the Society has the Heart, it is being removed from Saudi Arabia to an uncompromised branch of the Ormazds in Egypt, and Arad would like the PCs to accompany the gem.

Again, if the PCs have not run through the "Heart of Yhtill" adventure, Arad can fill the group in on the duty of the Ormazd Society to protect the mystical gem, buried in a lost city deep in the desert, and present his fears that the cult of Thule has discovered the gem's location and is out to use its terrible power to rule the world.

ARAD HASSANI (this 3rd-level LN human has vital stats HD 3d10 (16 hp) AC 14, move 30ft. His primary attributes are Dexterity 16 (+7), Intelligence 14 (+6), and Wisdom 16 (+7). He attacks by a .308 rifle for 2d8+4 damage or a khopesh desert sword for 1d8. His special abilities are Survival (as per the Raider ability) and Hide/Move Silently (as per the Hooligan)

ORMAZD SOCIETY WARRIOR (These 2nd-level LN humans have vital stats HD 2d10 (11 hp each) AC 13, move 30ft. Their primary attributes are Physical. They attack by .380 rifles for 2d8+4 or khopesh swords for 1d8. Their special abilities are Survival, Hide, and Move Silently

REGARDING ARAD

Arad Hassani is no longer the PCs' noble ally. He has, in fact, been replaced by one of the People of the Worm, who have put their entire hive mind into helping him to appear human in all respects—this means hiding his alien nature from psychic probes and managing on some level to passably mimic human reactions and social graces—something at which the People are not normally adept. Arad's alien nature will become apparent in Act Three or Four; for now his mission is to use the PCs to get him to the Great Serpent and he will act as their staunch ally until such time as he is ready to reveal his true nature. Stats for Arad as one of the People of the Worm can be found on p. 4

BATTLE AT THE AIRFIELD

Eventually, the PCs will likely end up at an airfield one way or another, be it to try to go home, or to accompany the Ormazd society to Egypt. This is where things get hot. Just as the PCs are about to board the plane, a small boy runs up to them, begging them to stay away, to not get aboard. The boy has seen suspicious men messing around with the plane and can tell the PCs that he has seen them planting something with wires and blinking lights on board. Just as this information is delivered, the plane explodes in a gigantic ball of fire. PCs should all make a Dexterity-

based save at CC 15 or be thrown to the ground and suffer 1d6 damage from the blast.

Chaos erupts across the airfield as multiple explosions rock the area in a chain reaction. Realizing that they have failed in their efforts to eliminate the PCs, a group of Thule cultists emerge with rifles and Luger. A firefight erupts on the airfield. GMs should tailor the number of cultists to the situation; if the Ormazd society is with the PCs, there will be more Nazis, while if the PCs are alone there will be fewer. The PCs should be at a disadvantage here, but not overwhelmed. Drag the fight out for a few rounds before the PCs are victorious or look like they are about to lose, and don't be afraid to throw extra Nazis into the fray.

During the battle, some of the Thules will fire darts at civilians, who drop dead and arise one round later as zombies—exactly like those created by Alice Diamond in the PCs prior encounters.

Finally, during this battle, *at least* one or two of the Thules will in fact be People of the Worm and when killed will explode into a shower of maggot-like fragments.

THULE CULTISTS (These 2nd-level NE humans have vital stats HD 2d10 (11 hp each) AC 13, move 30ft. Their primary attributes are Physical or Mental. They attack by Luger Pistols for 1d10 damage or 8mm Mauser rifles for 2d8+4 or knives for 1d4. Their special abilities are none (Physical Primes) or Spells (Mental Primes only; Cha-based; 15 MEP, 0-level; Dancing Lights, Ghost Sound, Influence, Stun 1st-level; Command, Daze)

ZOMBIES (these undead monsters have vital stats HD 28 (8 hp each), AC 12, move 20 ft. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by slam for 1d8 damage or bite for 1d6 damage, following a successful grapple check. Their special abilities are slow and feed, dealing 1d4 per round following a bite until the grapple is broken or the zombie killed).

PEOPLE OF THE WORM (these extraplanar monsters have vital stats HD 10d6 (35 hp) move 30ft. Their primary attributes are Mental. They attack by Luger pistols for 1d10 damage or knives for 1d4. Their special abilities are Alternate Form, Darkvision, Hive Mind, Infection, Mentalism, Regenerate 4 hp per round, Twilight vision. Their mentalist powers are Meditation, Mental Resistance (+2 to all mental saves for a total of +7), Psychic senses, Psionic Powers (Choose three from Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Combat Awareness, Mesmerism, Mental Stun). Saving against their powers is CC 20.)

How long this battle goes on is up to the GM—it can be merely a set piece to set the stage, or it can be a major conflict; gauge this depending on how much fun the players are having. Encourage them to take advantage of the landscape, perhaps granting combat bonuses for

creative use of things such as tools, crates, carts, or other pieces of equipment that may be present.

As things look hopeless or as the PCs finish off the Thules only to note police and/or military closing in on them, a Rolls Royce speeds up. The door opens and an American in a dark suit bids the characters “Get in, quickly!” If they hesitate, he flashes identification marking him as a member of the U.S. government; his associate, also wearing a well-tailored suit, says in a cultured British accent, “I’d do as he says, mates. You lads don’t want to be here when the questions start.”

They two men are indeed British and American government agents who, impressed by their actions previously, want the PCs to engage in a covert action to support the Allied war effort. The PCs are already in neck-deep with the Nazis, and the Allies have information that they are willing to share. The PCs (and any surviving Ormazd society allies) are escorted aboard a Douglas C47 transport plane and escorted to an air base in England, where they are in for a surprise. Arad, if he is with the characters at this time, will be permitted to accompany the group.

TROUBLESHOOTING

It’s possible that one or more characters may simply wish to go home and leave this nightmare behind. You are well within reason to point out that such is not the way pulp heroes behave; there are certain conventions that players and GMs need to buy into for games of this nature. In addition, most of the world believes the Axis powers to be the greatest evil the planet has ever faced, and would go to great lengths to do their part in defeating the threat. If the players push, a murder in one of their hotel rooms can serve as an introduction to the Thule cult’s current activities, and as a means by which to keep them in town for a bit:

When the PCs return to their hotel room, one of them finds a woman murdered in a rather grisly fashion on their bed; she is disemboweled, laid spread-eagled, and the lightning bolt emblem of the SS is painted on her forehead. There are definitely signs of a struggle; the room is, in fact, a shambles. There is, however, no sign of forced entry. Any psychics or mystics in the group can make a Wisdom check to sense the presence of corrupt magical energies on the scene; if “The Heart of Yhtil” has been run, these are similar to those that infused the Black City.

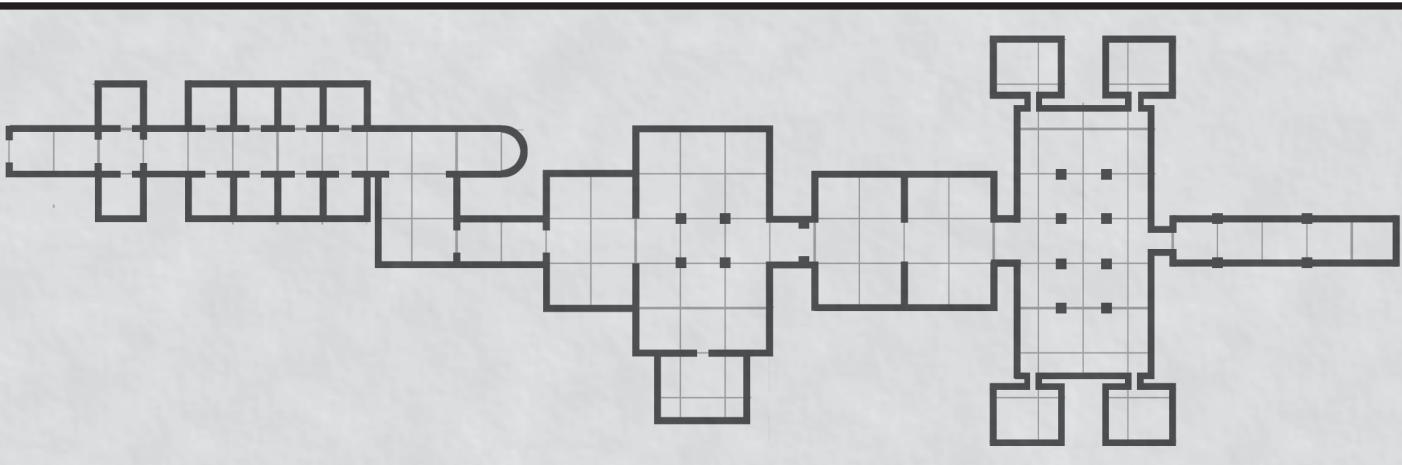
If you really want to push things over the top, have the body rise as a zombie and attack!

There are two possible courses of action here: if the PCs call the police, they will be questioned and ordered not to leave town until the mystery is solved, but will not be detained, as having reported the incident reflects favorably upon them.

If they flee, they will quickly become fugitives as prime suspects in the murder, but will be able to find shelter with the Ormazd Society, who have come looking for them as they, too, have become aware that the Thules are still active in the area. Indeed, this could lead to a direct confrontation with Thule assassins—say in an alley in the city—where the PCs encounter Arad or another Ormazd Society member and make allies by fighting side-by-side.

Why the PCs were targeted in this manner isleaves something of a red herring, but it will be a case of “run with it,” for the GM. There’s any number of reasons the Thules could target the PCs, be it deliberately or mistakenly. If the GM wishes to extend their adventures in the city before diving into the overall plot of the People of the Worm, this could set up a great deal of intrigue between the Thules and Ormazds, even revealing the survival of Alice Diamond early.

If even after the use of the murder victim in the hotel room, the player is still insistent that her character would not go along for the ride, inform her that the government arranges passage home, and that she should now make a new character. This is a better option than forcing a player on a path that she doesn’t feel her character would follow.



ACT TWO

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

The PCs do not see their two government contacts again until they reach England, at which point they are escorted through the airbase to a dark conference room, where the two agents are waiting. The agents, who introduce themselves as Agents Smith and Jones, respectively (and gladly admit that these are aliases), question the PCs extensively about their prior encounter with the Thules. Again, the GM can gloss over this or can play out the interrogation. Remember, however, that for the most part this is a debriefing; Agents Smith and Jones know most of what the PCs have been up to and are mostly gauging their loyalty to the Allied cause.

When they are satisfied, they congratulate the PCs on a job well done, and ask, “Now how would you like to see something that’ll really blow your mind?”

The PCs (save for Arad, about whom the agents have “national security concerns” given his Persian origin) are then escorted underground, through a maze of tunnels and sealed doors, and into an observation room with a large window that is obscured by a heavy black curtain. Psychic characters will receive strong flashes of alien emotion from somewhere nearby. The sensation is so inhuman that each player must make a Wisdom save at CC 18 or be unsettled, nauseous and dizzy from the experience. If using Sanity rules, this would be a case where a SAN check is in order, the resultant damage being 0/1d6 SAN loss.

Agent Smith, the American, steps up to the curtain and says, “Boys [or ladies and gentlemen as the case may be], meet one of the architects of that power source the Thules are after.”

He opens the curtain to reveal a Gray alien on the other side (Amazing Adventures, p.[?]). Obviously, GMs should not simply say, “you see a Gray alien,” but should describe the creature in detail. The alien walks aimlessly around a featureless white room, then suddenly turns and looks directly at the window. Despite Agents Smith and Jones assuring the characters that it cannot see them, as the window is a two-way mirror, everyone gets the sense that the creature knows exactly where they all are.

Agent Smith explains that the creature is the lone survivor of a group who made contact with the United States government in 1937. To avoid public panic, they were taken into protective custody, but this one’s three companions died quickly of Earth diseases before the fourth was able to help U.S. scientists develop a vaccine to protect it. The government believes the aliens to be a potential threat and has been analyzing their technology to further the war effort against the Axis and to determine their purpose. This creature, though it has been a model prisoner, has not been forthcoming as to the nature of their visit, aside from saying it was based on “scientific and evolutionary curiosity.”

Suddenly, everyone hears a voice in their minds. The voice is smooth as silk, soft, and calming. Players can attempt a Wisdom save at CC 20 to close their minds off if they wish; Mentalist characters gain a +2 to this save, while Arcanists suffer -2 due to being open to the energies of the Deeper Dark. The feeling of the voice is unsettling, and mystically-inclined characters will get the impression that the creature, while it views them as potential allies, does so as allies of convenience—it is not entirely friendly to the human race.

It says, “Agents Smith and Jones have undergone extensive training to resist my probes, but the rest of you are as transparent as your glass. You have encountered the People of the Worm. They want our power source. I can help you, if you will allow me.”

The alien will not reveal any information about from where it comes, or the nature of the power source, or what it’s used to power. Nor will it tell the group why it wants to help them, save to say that the People of the Worm seek to wipe out all resistance on this planet so that they can stage an invasion that will drain the world dry. If the players ask what they will drain from it, the gray Gray will reply, “Why, humans, of course. How do you think they both reproduce and feed?”

The alien can give details about the physiology of the People of the Worm, how they feed upon and steal the bodies of humans and other intelligent life for reproduction and food. It will say that its people have long been at war with the Worm, and will offer to fabricate small quantities of a serum that will make the PCs immune to their biological assault.

Unfortunately, the alien is only a technician and has no knowledge of where any machines may be secreted for the Worm to steal. If the group askgroup asks it about the place where the great kings sleep or the tomb where the heart’s body lies, it will posit that its people had much contact with the humans in what we now call Egypt; there was in that country a great city of the dead where many kings are buried. It suggests that somewhere in the heart of that place the machine might lie, but it does not know what the machine is.

The alien can whip up a sort of medication to stave off infection by People of the Worm; unfortunately there isn’t time to create an unlimited supply. There is approximately enough time to create 2d6 doses. The Graey explains that the drug supercharges the human immune system, enabling it to fight off any poison, pathogen, or foreign body.

This drug requires injection into the victim within one minute of infection; such an injection allows the character an additional Constitution-based saving throw at +3 to resist the worm; it automatically neutralizes any other poison or ailment. Each injection will allow a character to fight off a single infection.

OFF TO EGYPT!

Arranging passage is little trouble; soon the characters and Arad are en route to Egypt. If anyone is hesitant to bring Arad along, point out that the Ormazds are valuable allies and he knows how to get in touch with others in the society in ways that the PCs do not have.

About halfway through the journey, the PCs can make Wisdom-based checks at CC25 to sense that something feels wrong about this trip. The cockpit is sealed and they cannot get in; they have not seen another soul since before takeoff. If anyone in the group has the Ace Generic Class Ability or the Navigation (air) Knowledge, the CC for this check is only 20, and the character will sense that the plane has somehow veered slightly off course.

Eventually, just as the plane begins to descend, the door to the cockpit opens and with a clank, a cylinder bounces into the room. The door then closes. The cylinder is a gas grenade; PCs should make a Constitution-based save every round at a cumulative -2 per round to remain awake. Wrapping their nose and mouth in cloth will buy the some time; grant a +3 on saves if they take this precaution.

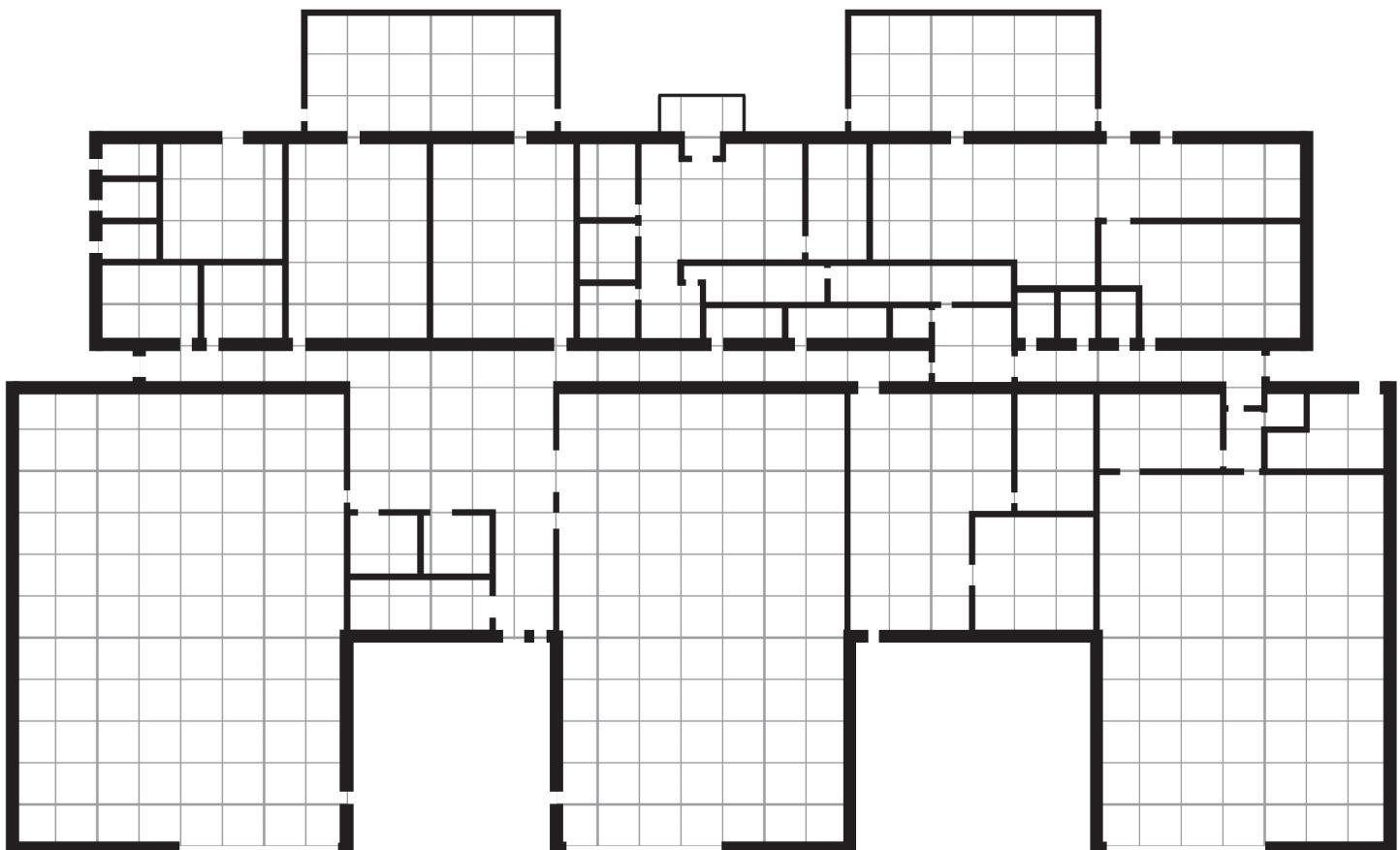
The plane has been hijacked by Thule Cultists who want to know what the PCs have on them. When the plane lands (assume 1d10 rounds after the grenade is

tossed), any PCs who have managed to remain awake will find themselves facing down twenty soldiers wearing SS uniforms and aiming submachine guns at them.

The characters are bound to chairs in separate rooms (any who were awake are blindfolded). Here they are tortured and interrogated over a period of days. There is a 10% chance that any given interrogator is one of the People of the Worm. They should catch a glimpse of a shadowy figure wearing a veil (Alice Diamond, deformed from her experiences before) moving around in the background, watching on occasion, but never actually get near enough to get a good look.

It is up to the PCs how they escape this trap, but if they dally too long, put their lives in jeopardy. Perhaps the Thules have decided they know nothing and are of no further use, and send in an assassin, forcing the PC's hand. On their way out, the GM may wish to facilitate the PCs learning a few key pieces of information of their own, such as where the tomb is, in the Valley of Kings and when the operation begins, to recover the machine (which they refer to as "raising the serpent god," or even, if you're feeling spicy, "Returning the mighty Yig to the world of man"). This information should come in the form of communiqués and Egyptian stehles that the PCs gain access to in the enemy base.

AIRPLANE HANGAR



How difficult you wish to make it is up to you; but in general the base is staffed by both Thule cultists and SS officers, some of whom may actually be People of the Worm.

A map of the base is not entirely necessary; the building in which the PCs are being held is an aircraft hangar with smaller interrogation and meeting rooms around the perimeter. There is a gigantic hangar bay door at the front, and two to four normal doors scattered around the walls that can provide an exit. All, of course, are guarded. The aircraft that carried the PCs here is likely still in the bay, as it's a stolen American craft. Engineer a few encounters with cultists, soldiers, etc., as the PCs work to free their companions and escape, and at some point get them into an office which holds the data they need. A great deal of planning isn't necessary here; simply think of all the "escape" films and stories you've seen and run it off the cuff.

One interesting complication is that Egyptian hieroglyphs cannot be quickly or easily read—it will take a few hours to interpret the symbols, which means carrying a few stone tablets with them, or getting a good rubbing done.

If the PCs get into too much trouble, don't be afraid to bail them out by having the Ormazd society show up in force and assault the Thule base.

Once the PCs have the information and are able to meethook up with the Ormazds in Egypt, the final phase begins.

ACT THREE

This act is a race against time to beat the People of the Worm and the Thules to the Valley of Kings. The PCs have discovered that the Heart is in fact an alien power source of great energy and will be used to power some sort of doomsday weapon under the sands of Egypt. In the end, they believe they've cornered their enemies, and Alice Diamond is revealed not only to have survived, but also to be running the show—revealing that these Thule Cultists are not Nazis, but an independent offshoot.

THE VALLEY OF KINGS

At first, this should feel somewhat familiar to the PCs—racing across the desert ahead of their foes. Unfortunately, the difference this time is that the Thules actually have a leadhead start on them; when the PCs reach the Valley of the Kings there are already Nazi digs going on. However, if the PCs gained proper information from the hieroglyphs in the hangar, allow an Intelligence check at a CC of 17 to realize that the Thules are digging in the wrong place. The stehlessteles provide a detailed explanation of exactly where to go; the Thules have made a basic error in calculation that would be easy to overlook for most people.

Fortunately, the PCs are pulp heroes and tend not to miss these things!

There is room for a great deal of intrigue and investigation, here: stealth-oriented PCs could decide to spy on the Thules to gain information or even sabotage their efforts. Socialites could use their natural wits and charm to not only gain intelligence, but to help hire discreet guides and diggers for the PCs. In general, this section is fairly open, as it's difficult to predict what the player characters will do. If the Thules have the Heart, the PCs may wish to try and steal it back. As GM, you'll need to be flexible and think on your feet in this section. Make up the details of the archaeological dig as you go if needed be. Do you need a tent filled with war plans and details of the dig? There's one there. Things going to easily for the PCs? Then just as they gain a vital piece of information, they're discovered and a chase or firefight erupts.

Alice Diamond is intended to be revealed at the climax of this scenario, but there's nothing to say you couldn't have the PCs discover her existence here and now if it will add dramatic tension to the scene.

THE TOMB

Eventually, the PCs will discover the tomb wherein lies the body of the Great Serpent—actually a biomechanical doomsday weapon in the shape of an enormous serpent, which can be activated by the Heart of Ytill.

The tomb consists of three corridors, followed by a ritual shaft whichshaft, which is not a true shaft, but a sort of ramp that travels at a steep angle into the earth. The shaft opens into a hall of pillars, followed by two more corridors, a vestibule, and an ornate burial chamber with an annex behind it. Archaeologists in the group will note that the corridors seem wider and higher than they should -- , by a significant margin --, as if someone very important and grand were buried here...or something gigantic in size.

Note that if the PCs have discovered all of the information in Act Two, They may know of the rear exit—a narrow crawl shaft leading upward from the Annex that was designed to allow workers to get out of the tomb. This shaft allows only single-file navigation on all fours. Combat would be near impossible and if the PCs encounter trouble it could be a death trap. Any Raider or archaeologist in the group would know this without a roll. Finding the passage from outside requires 1d4 days of searching and a Wisdom check at CC 25. People of the Worm have an ancestral memory of the area and once the correct tomb is uncovered can find this "back door" in a mere 1d6 x 10 minutes.

Arcanists and Mentalists will sense a great deal of dark power and energy in this place. Something that positively stinks of the Deeper Dark corrupts the very air here.

There are, of course, booby traps to discourage tomb raiders such as the PCs. Hooligans and Raiders can make use of their class abilities to locate these traps; the GM should make a check to see if the Raider notices something odd (if the Raider chooses to search, add +2 to this check), while Hooligans must choose to search for traps. In either case, the CC to discover the traps is noted under each one.

At this time, here it should be noted that Arad (or another NPC the GM deems appropriate) has in fact been infected and become one of the People of the Worm. At some point, he should betray the PCs and leave them stuck in a death trap, revealing his nature and affiliation with the Thules—and Alice, who has followed along secretly. A good way to handle this is, if the party has no Raider or Hooligan, Arad can function as the trap detector for the group, but deliberately spring one of the traps after he gets safely out of the way. As one of the People of the Worm, Arad knows about the secret passage to/from the Annex, and once he realizes that the PCs have found the right tomb, he can lead the Thules in the back way.

1. In the second corridor, stepping on the wrong tiles causes the hallway to fill with a barrage of poisoned darts. All caught within the barrage gain two saving throws: a Dexterity-based Save (CC 20) will avoid the trap altogether, while those hit need to make a Constitution-based Save (CC 17) or suffer 1d6 points of Constitution damage every minute for 1d6 minutes. If Con reaches zero, the PC dies. A Raider can make a Survival check (also CC 17) to concoct an herbal poultice that will slow or negate the poison; such a poultice will allow an additional save every time damage would be suffered; a successful save means the character suffers no further damage from the poison. With bed rest, those afflicted regain 1d6 points of Con damage back per day. To notice this trap and find the safe path through the corridor, a PC must make a Traps check at CC 16
2. The ritual shaft contains a boulder trap. Pressure plates on the floor cause a ramp to drop down behind the PCs and unleash a giant boulder that rolls down the ramp towards the PCs. All characters must make a Dexterity-based save (CC 15) to run down the ramp and get into the Pillared Hall—the door to the hall is too large for the boulder to roll through. Failure means the PC is struck by the boulder for 5d10 points of damage. Those who survive this trap after taking damage are thrown into the hall of pillars by the impact, rather than being run over and squashed. The CC to notice this trap and avoid the pressure plate is 20—note also that the boulder, once unleashed, apparently bars the PCs means of escape (though see the passage in the Annex).

3. In the hall of pillars, walking through a shaft of light from high above causes the doors to drop and seal, and the room to be filled with a toxic miasma. PCs caught in the cloud must make a Constitution save (CC 20) every minute or suffer 1d10 damage from the cloud, which also grants concealment as per the Cloudkill spell. It will take 2d6 minutes for the room to fill with gas; it is a good idea for the GM to inform the players that he is tracking real time and allow Intelligence checks (CC 15) to guess how long they've got to figure a way out. Once they formulate a plan, determine how long it will take in game time to put the plan into action; adding this to the real time that has passed formulating the plan will determine how many saves the PCs must make. For example, if the room will take 12 minutes to fill, and the players spend 6 minutes formulating a plan that the GM determines will take ten minutes to pull off, this total of sixteen minutes means that the PCs will be in the cloud for four minutes, requiring four saves.

The only way out of this trap is to find a way to drain the gas or open the doors—the GM should roll with any clever ideas the PCs come up with, remembering that they are pulp heroes and rewarding good role playing and clever use of class abilities, backgrounds, etc., with Fate Points. For example, a Gadgeteer might come up with the idea of spending “on the fly” gadget points to pull out his breeze-o-matic 9000 Air Purifier, calling upon the third-level spell Gust of Wind. This should work. Thinking further outside the box, Obscuring Mist or Fog Cloud could be argued to dilute the cloud enough that it becomes harmless. Hooligans and Raiders could call upon their unique skills to find a fulcrum to force the doors open, etc. Your goal is not to kill the PCs, but to give them a palpable sense of danger. The CC to notice and avoid this trap is 20.

In addition or alternately, the GM could include a few tomb guardians here, perhaps in the shape of Anubis, lord of the dead. This would be appropriate for groups who enjoy combat more than death traps. Treat these as clay golems and note that most golems are controlled by their makers who in this case are long dead. This means that these golems are automatically considered Berserk.

TOMB GUARDIAN (Clay Golem): *(This creature has vital stats HD 9d10 (45 hp) AC 22 move 20ft. Its primary attributes are Physical. It attacks with Slam (3d10). Its special abilities are Berserk and Immunity to magic except Move Earth, Disintegrate, and Earthquake)*

TROUBLESHOOTING

If things are looking too bleak for the PCs, it's possible to have the Ormazd society (or even the Grays—see Act Four) come to their rescue. It's also possible to skip the encounter in the burial chamber in Act Four and simply have the Great Serpent blast through the doors on its way out. Of course, this leads to the necessity to get the players information on how to stop the thing—this could simply be handled by having any archaeologist or Raider make an Intelligence roll to have the thought that nobody would bury such a thing here without leaving information how to shut it off. Such information is indeed present in the burial chamber in the next Act.

ACT FOUR

The PCs extricate themselves from certain doom and face off against the People of the Worm. GMs should strongly encourage the use of Fate Points in this section—narrative tinkering is key to high action and the players should be encouraged to think in suitably pulp terms. Don't be afraid to remind them, "You know, you have fate points that you can use for dramatic editing."

In general, this act should include a massive battle between the People of the Worm, the Thules, the Ormazd Society, and the Grays. The GM should keep track of what's going on carefully here and be sure to have the Ormazds ride in as the cavalry at an opportune moment - otherwise, the PCs find themselves alone in the middle of a mass combat, which is generally bad.

After the fight is concluded, the Grays try to take possession of the Heart and are revealed to not be allies after all. A means to destroy the heart is found—do the PCs take it, or decide to keep the heart, or turn it over to the Allies for use in the war effort? The punch line of course, is that Alice escapes once again.

THE BURIAL CHAMBER

Eventually, the PCs are going to make it to the burial chamber. This chamber is full of wealth and riches beyond the PCs' wildest dreams; any Raider will find themselves driven to see that it is all protected and properly catalogued; Hooligans will likely try to fill their pockets. Everything from ancient children's games formed with boards and pegs to tiny ushabtis and elaborate gold-gilt sarcophagi to ornate thrones studded with gold and gems, to gold-gilt daggers can be found herein. GMs can go as crazy as they like describing the overwhelming wonders of this place, which will hold the entire life of the wealthy priest buried herein.

Unfortunately, the tomb is not to remain pristine. Aside from the Thules and People of the Worm

(who may already be here, depending upon how the GM ran the previous section), the PCs must deal with one final trap: the guardians of the tomb—Mummies!

There is one lesser mummy per two PCs and NPCs present, a formidable guard. However, if the PCs are having too easy a time, feel free to throw in a greater mummy in the form of the long-forgotten priest buried herein.

LESSER MUMMIES (*These creatures have vital stats HD 7d12 (42hp) AC 20 move 20 ft. Their Primary attributes are Physical. They attack with slam (1d12). Their special abilities are Despair, mummy rot, darkvision, immunity to sleep, charm, poison and paralysis, fire vulnerability, subject to raising*)

Written on the walls of the tomb are strange pictographs depicting a gigantic serpent breathing fire and laying waste to everything in its path, and strange creatures with egg-shaped heads (who look similar to the Gray alien the characters have already seen) standing around it, apparently at war with hundreds of smaller serpents. The huge serpent is depicted as having a glowing heart. Examining the pictures points to a hidden lever whichever that causes the main sarcophagus to swing aside, revealing a stairwell going deeper into the earth.

Descending the stairs reveals a cavernous room in which appears to rest the perfectly preserved body of the largest serpent the PCs have ever seen: it is easily over 100 feet long, its scales glistening even in the dim light from above. Closer examination reveals the thing to be some sort of gigantic metal construction, albeit a metal the characters have never seen before. Along the walls, more hieroglyphs depict a three-way great battle between men, Grays, and man-shaped creatures made of tiny serpents. The major points are clear: the Grays and Worms want the device, and the humans want to destroy it. The details are foggy, including how the device ended up down here or why it was not destroyed, but any Raider or character with a Background or Knowledge allowing them to decipher hieroglyphs can determine that there are clues to destroying the thing here, but they'll need time to decipher.

This would be where things get interesting (assuming they are not already so). The Ormazd Society, Thules and the People of the Worm arrive on the scene if they're not already there, and a pitched battle for the machine begins. The Thules, of course, wish to place the heart within the serpent and use it to escalate the war; doing so would create a new Dark Age for man, making humans easy pickings for the Worm to mount a full-scale invasion.

At some point soon after the battle starts, a contingent of Gray aliens should also appear on the scene, having been tracking the PCs' actions and intent on taking their weapon back. The battle can spill out into the Tomb, or even into the Valley of Kings itself, should the Thules activate the machine.

If she has not already made her presence known, this will be an ideal opportunity for Alice Diamond to appear on the scene as the mastermind behind the entire operation. Her motives are still nebulous and unrevealed; likely the PCs will never know why she is in league with the Worm. But she is horribly scarred by her encounter with the shoggoth, and may use magic to disguise her injuries. She now hates the PCs like no others, and will go out of her way to see them destroyed.

Remember also that the Thules still have the zombie drug and won't hesitate to use it. If a PC gets hit by a zombie dart, treat it as a Type 5 poison, requiring a CC 25 save; if failed the PC takes 1d10 damage and must make a second save; failing this second save means the PC dies in 2d4 rounds and rises as a zombie. Injecting oneself with the Graey serum will instantly neutralize this poison.

RUNNING THE BATTLE

There's no room here to include a detailed narrative mass combat system, but to nicely abstract things, each round lasts one minute of time. During this minute each side makes a single d20 roll. This roll gains a bonus equal to the average Int bonus of its group (+2 for the Thules, +1 for the Ormazds, +2 for the Allied forces, +3 for the Grays). The winner rolls a d10 to inflict casualties on another side: the Grays will always inflict casualties on the Thules first, while the Ormazds and Thules will divide casualties equally amongst their opponents. The result of the d10 roll times two equals the percentage of casualties taken by the other side; thus, a roll of 3 means six percent casualties have been inflicted. When any side's casualties reach 100, that side is out of the fight entirely. Every 10% casualties a side has taken subtracts 1 from its d20 roll.

As long as the Thules control the Great Serpent, they gain an additional +3 to their roll. When the Ormazds and Graeys arrive and take the side of the Allies, the GM may choose to add a similar +3 roll to the Allied forces based on a morale boost.

GMs should allow opportunities every round for PCs to engage in heroic acts to give their side a bonus of +1 to +3; these acts could be anything you can dream up so long as they are appropriately "Pulp." Some examples include:

- Fighting to directly protect the scholar as an enemy directs attacks at her.
- The Socialite places herself in danger to give a rousing speech to inspire greatness.
- Engaging a specific enemy in battle in order to stop the other side from achieving a specific objective, such as holding the entrance of the serpent against those with the Heart.
- Defending a fallen comrade to keep them from being killed.

Each heroic act should carry with it the potential for the PC to suffer some sort of damage. Alternately, the PCs can also spend Fate Points—each Fate Point spent grants +1 to their side's d20 roll (or +2 if they agree to suffer an attack from a random foe), but they must describe what heroic act they perform in the process.

GRAY ALIENS (*These extraplanar creatures have the following vital statistics: HD 5d10 (30 hp) AC 13 Move: 30 ft. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack by Ray gun (+10 to hit, 4d6 damage) or by psychic powers. Their special abilities are Mentalism and Gadgets. They have ten gadget points for "on the fly" gadgets and their psychic powers are Telepathic Communication, Telepathic Probe, and any four other Basic Powers—usually chosen from Pyrokinesis, Biokinetic Heal Metabolic Control, Mental Stun, Mesmerism, and Empathic Transmission. There is a 10% chance of an individual having all powers above as well as one Advanced power, usually Biokinetic Harm or Mind Control.*)

ALICE DIAMOND (*this third-level CE Socialite/first-level Arcanist has vital stats HD 3d8+1d6 (20 hp), AC 15, move 30 feet, her primary attributes are Dex 15, Wis 14, and Cha 18. She attacks with a small dagger for 1d4 damage or a Luger pistol for 1d10 damage (BtH +2). Her special abilities are Charm Person, Connected, Exalt, and Embolden. She has 9 MEP and knows the following spells: 0-level—Ghost Sound, Influence, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation. 1st level—Change Self, Command, Daze, Hypnotism, Shield. She wears a veil to hide her scarred appearance and has just recently learned Shield and Change Self to protect herself and to temporarily resume her previous appearance. She will have only three first level spells prepared of the five she knows.*)

ARAD HASSANI (*infected) (This CE People of the Worm has vital stats HD 10d6 (40 hp), AC 15, move 30 feet, his primary attributes are Mental. He attacks with a .308 Rifle for 2d8+4 damage (Bonus +11), a Luger Pistol for 1d10 damage (Bonus +10), or a khopesh for 1d8+1 damage (Bonus +6). His special abilities are Darkvision 60', Hive Mind and Mental Resistance (+5 mental saves), Regenerate 4 hit points per round, Meditation, Psychic Senses, and Psionics. His Psionic powers are clairvoyance, combat awareness, and mental stun.*)

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The only way to "win," so to speak, is to destroy the machine. Determining how to do so will take Raiders or other hieroglyph-readers 2d10 minutes, at the end of which a CC 17 Intelligence check is required to decipher the meaning of the writing. The result of the 2d10 roll determines how long the PCs need to hold out in combat and protect their scholars. It would be ideal if the Thules do manage to activate the machine

and pilot it out into the Valley; this will make for a relatively awesome climactic scene, but if it doesn't play out that way, so be it.

In the end, the key will be for the scholar and a character with some sort of technical know-how (a gadgeteer will be ideal, but a Hooligan or other character with a trap ability or mechanical Background will do nicely; in a pinch, go with the character who has the highest Int) to get into the machine and create an overload in the chamber where the heart resides, and to do this, the heart must be in the chamber. This means that the Thules must achieve their objective for the PCs to win. Once this happens, the Serpent will leap to life, shoot up through the floor into the chamber of pillars, and up the ramp (through the boulder if need be) out into the Valley, where it will encounter a great battle between Allied and Axis forces, who have come to investigate the unusual activities herein, and begin battle. The PCs, no doubt, will be in hot pursuit and need to catch the serpent to get inside and destroy the thing.

To destroy it, the scholar must make an Intelligence check at CC 20 to remember exactly what to do (if he fails, he may try again after a minute), and the mechanic must make a series of 1d6 Intelligence Checks (Gadgeteers use Jury Rig for this) at the same CC to successfully detonate the chamber.

If the scholar makes a CC 23 Intelligence check, she can also determine how to create enough feedback to destroy the Heart of Yhtill itself. This will require 1d4 additional checks on the part of the mechanic. However, this is a big decision. The Heart is a source of unthinkable mystic power and energy. It would be a real treasure to have in one's collection, or a boon to the Allied war effort if its secrets could be unlocked. However, the PCs are technically members of the Ormazd Society, meaning they have a choice to make whether to protect or destroy the thing—the society is so old even they are not sure what they'd do given a chance to be rid of the thing.

Meanwhile, the other PCs and their allies must do everything they can to figure out how to slow down the beast before it reaches civilization. The doomsday device has no stats, as it cannot be destroyed by earthly means; however, artillery from tanks or aircraft bombs could knock it backwards and slow it down. Getting in the machine and doing battle with its pilots is an effective way to stop it.

Alternately, PCs can opt to use their side's casualty rolls instead to delay the progress of the serpent; that is, instead of rolling for casualties, they can simply decide to have stalled the serpent for one more round.

After the heart chamber is set to blow, the PCs have 1d6+4 rounds to escape before the entire machine is consumed by the dark energies of the Heart. If they

are still inside, they should be considered dead (unless they spend Fate Points for "Left for Dead," in which case their bodies are later found amongst the ruins, barely alive.) When the machine goes up, it should be suitably dramatic: it rears up like a serpent about to strike, freezes stiff, begins to tremble and shake, and then glow and give off waves and pulses of energy. The ground shakes and everyone runs for cover; if any PCs are still outside the thing doing battle, they must make a CC 20 Dexterity save or suffer 4d6 subdual (temporary) damage. This can result in them being knocked unconscious.

Finally, the machine goes up in a massive explosion the likes of which none of the humans present have ever even imagined. The machine, of course, is completely consumed. If the PCs opted to overload and destroy the heart as well, it, too, is gone. Otherwise it sits untouched in the middle of the desert floor. What happens to it at this point is up to the players and GM. With all of the forces at play it's unlikely the PCs end up with it, but not impossible. And if they don't, then who does? The Thules? The Ormazds? The Allies? The Axis? Or the Grays? Let it play out and see what happens, or just make a narrative call and go with it.

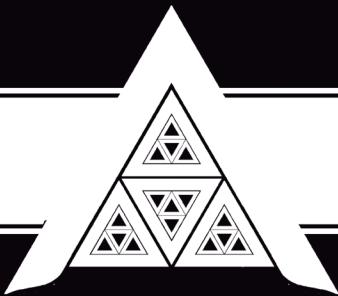
DENOUEMENT

When all is said and done, the People of the Worm will flee, not wishing to push the issue when their plans have been so soundly defeated. The Grays as well are uncomfortable with having been seen by so many humans. They will transport to their silver saucers in orbit and vanish (preferably, from their point of view, with the Heart). They may make some cryptic and ominous statements about their unfriendly agenda but will give away nothing specific.

Alice Diamond should survive this battle, though she may end up taken into Allied custody (or even whisked away by the Grays, who are fascinated by her capacity for amorality and her raw power). She can make for an excellent recurring villain, a sort of Moriarty or Fu Manchu whose schemes the PCs defeat time and again. Her direct role here is apparently small, but the GM can feel free to ramp up her participation and involvement to whatever level he sees fit.

The Allied or Axis forces (depending on who won the battle) will retreat, and the other side will begin establishing a mobile base right here in the Valley of Kings. The PCs could end up being prisoners of war, setting up yet another adventure for our heroes.

Alternately, if the Allies were victorious, Agents Smith and Jones could arrive on the scene to congratulate the heroes for a job well done and offer them a new assignment...



"PULP: HARD-BOILED DETECTIVES, FEDORA-WEARING ACTION HEROES, AND STEAMPUNK GADGETEERS ROCKETING TO BATTLE WITH THEIR JET PACKS AGAINST BLOODTHIRSTY THULE CULTISTS OF THE THIRD REICH."

THE THULE SOCIETY, A DARK NAZI CULT DEDICATED TO FURTHERING THE ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE THAT FUELS THE EVER GROWING THIRD REICH, MAY HAVE ACQUIRED THE ANCIENT HEART OF YHTILL AND ALL THE POWER IT PROMISES. WORSE STILL, THEY APPEAR TO HAVE PARTNERED WITH MALEVOLENT ALIENS KNOWN AS THE PEOPLE OF THE WORM, WHO SEEK TO ENSURE THAT WORLD WAR II DEVASTATES THE ENTIRE PLANET, LEAVING HUMANKIND RIPE FOR CONQUEST...AND CONSUMPTION...

HAVE COME SEEKING THE HEART AS WELL.

THE PCs, WORKING WITH THE ALLIED FORCES, AND ALONGSIDE FANATICAL ORMAZD SOCIETY ALLIES, FIND THEMSELVES IN A RACE AGAINST TIME TO STOP THE PEOPLE OF THE WORM FROM UNLEASHING A DOOMSDAY DEVICE FROM WITHIN A HIDDEN TOMB IN EGYPT'S VALLEY OF THE KINGS. IF ONLY THE NAZIS AND THE PEOPLE OF THE WORM WERE THEIR ONLY WORRIES: THERE IS ANOTHER, EQUALLY MYSTERIOUS FORCE WHO WANT THE HEART OF YHTILL FOR THEIR OWN ALIEN AGENDA.



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