

THUNDERS OF VENUS



SPACE
1889

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Credits

An adventure by Steven S. Long

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Thunders of Venus

An Adventure for *Space: 1889* by Steven S. Long

When an experimental liftwood ship intended to fly safely in the Venusian atmosphere crashes deep in the alien jungle wilderness on a test flight, the adventurers and other passengers must find their way across the planet to reach civilization and safety. Can they cope with the myriad dangers of the Venusian jungle—and the fact that one member of their expedition is a spy for a foreign power?

Character Recommendations

Nations: British or British allies; German characters could require some alterations (depending on their political conviction and loyalties).

Characters: All; especially Adventurers, Reporters, and Engineers.

Adventure Background

Despite their success as colonizers on Earth and Mars, the British have enjoyed no similar triumphs in their attempts to explore and lay claim to Venus. Their first three expeditions to the jungle planet—Armstrong's in 1873, the Royal Society-financed Collingswood expedition of 1874, and the London Times-financed Stoat expedition of 1876—all suffered crashes. In fact, to Britain's embarrassment, the pitiful survivors of these disastrous journeys had to be rescued by the Germans during the Heidelberg expedition of 1878.

The failure of the British expeditions wasn't due to any incompetence on the part of their members, but to scientific facts of which they were unaware: on Venus, liftwood rots with unusual speed due to some as yet not clearly understood interaction with the Venusian magnetic field. The success of the Heidelberg expedition resulted in part from the fact that it used ether dirigibles, which don't depend on liftwood. Germany's advances with this mode of transportation have made it the leader in the colonization of Venus—indeed, it claims a strategically significant portion of the planet's northern hemisphere as its territory, much to the chagrin and annoyance of the British (who believe they have a strong claim since they landed the first "settlers" there: the three failed expeditions of 1873–76).

The British have worked for over a decade to establish lasting colonies on Venus, with mixed success. Other than one large, well-situated colony based around Fort Collingswood, it has only a few outposts and trade enclaves to show for its troubles (though the Germans don't have much more themselves). But now it seems the tables may have turned, with Great Britain poised to take the lead in the race for control of the humid, swampy world. The key to this new advance is the "Kincaide field," named for its inventor, the genius scientist **Roger Kincaide**. Briefly put, the

Kincaide field "harmonizes" with the Venusian magnetic field in such a way that liftwood treated in a "Kincaide bath" no longer decays after just a few days on Venus.

Liftwood ships could travel far faster and more reliably than the ether dirigibles used by the Germans and other colonizers. Thus equipped, British explorers could easily open up huge swaths of the planet previously not visited by humanity, found and build colonies, and locate and exploit valuable resources. In practical terms the British could outflank Germany in the struggle for Venus and better prepare for the conflicts that will almost certainly result at some point in the future.

While the British have tried to keep Kincaide and his work under wraps, naturally rumors (some accurate, others inaccurate) of what he's doing have leaked out. The possibility of the British gaining such an advantage on Venus has caused a great deal of consternation among the high officials of several governments (particularly Germany), while a number of industrialists wonder how they could make use of Kincaide and his inventions for their own benefit. More than a few nations, companies, and men of power would like to kidnap (or kill) Kincaide and steal (or destroy) his technology. For Germany, Russia, and Italy, this would maintain (or improve) their current footholds on Venus; for others it would give them a chance to establish their own footholds or to reap enormous profits.

And the best opportunity to succeed with their nefarious schemes has just arisen. Roger Kincaide has reached the point in his experiments where work in the laboratory can't take him any further—he has to perform field trials of his equipment. With the assistance (and oversight) of the British government, he recently came to Venus to construct a liftwood ship christened the *Aphrodite*. Now that it's complete, he plans to make several trips around Venus to prove that the Kincaide process works. If all goes well, Britain will soon establish some major colonies on Venus, and Kincaide will become an immensely wealthy man.

Adventure Summary

The *Aphrodite* is ready to launch. *Abteilung Z* tried several times during its construction to sabotage (or steal) the project, but thanks to sharp-eyed British security personnel, all these efforts failed miserably. Now the German intelligence service is down to one last chance: hijack or destroy the ship (and its inventor) during its maiden voyage.

In an effort to drum up public relations support (and financial investment) for his inventions, Kincaide is carrying a significant number of passengers along on his first trip despite its experimental nature. His work has caught Britain's attention, and competition to be a part of Kincaide's work has been fierce—obtaining a spot on the ship is something of a social coup. The Player Characters, naturally, are aboard (though depending on their social class and skills they may work with the laborers and sailors rather than socialize with the passengers). Some of the other notables on board include:

Liftwood On Venus

Being able to use liftwood on Venus could be a real game-changer, especially for campaigns set on Venus. It has the potential not only to alter the geopolitics of the planet, but to affect the way characters go on adventures. If you don't want this to happen in your campaign, consider the following:

- Just because the Kincaide Process works in the lab, and on this one test flight, doesn't mean it will always work. The test flight in the adventure may turn out to be a fluke—many inventions that look good at first often turn out to be impossible or unworkable for some reason.
- The Kincaide Process may turn out to have “side effects” that make it impractical to use. Perhaps the Kincaide field poisons people after sufficient exposure, for example. Or perhaps the freak storm that wrecks the *Aphrodite* during the adventure isn't a freak at all—maybe the Kincaide field somehow *caused* it.
- Even if the Kincaide Process works, setting up ships with it may be so hideously expensive that even major governments like Great Britain and Germany can only afford to maintain one or two liftwood ships on Venus at a time. That creates interesting tactical and adventuring possibilities without radically changing the Cytherean setting.

- **Andrew Robertson**, an “old Venus hand” and expert hunter who is along in case of trouble;
- **Colonel Everett Ashingham**, one of the junior commanders of the military force sent to Venus to protect Kincaide;
- **Lady Alice Asquith**, a wealthy socialite who paid a great deal of money for her spot on the *Aphrodite*'s first flight;
- **Randolph Marcus**, a businessman with significant plans for Venusian commerce and a lot of top-level connections in the British peerage and government; and
- **Sir Hugh Dudley Griffin-O'Dell**, a British nobleman, traveler, and adventurer.

One of these five—the businessman Marcus—is actually a freelance spy. He intends to kidnap (or kill) Kincaide and steal the *Aphrodite* for sale to the highest bidder (probably Abteilung Z, for whom he's worked in the past).

Unfortunately for both the Germans and the British (not to mention the PCs), during the *Aphrodite*'s flight a particularly intense, sudden storm occurs. A chance lightning bolt strikes the ship's steam engines and it crashes, resulting in the deaths of most of the passengers aboard. Kincaide believes the test of his technology was a success, though—and more importantly, that he can salvage the treated liftwood and the Kincaide stabilizers. Obviously this also means enemies of Britain and greedy opportunists could find and seize them as well.

For any salvage to occur, though, the survivors have to reach civilization: the crash has stranded them hundreds of miles from any human settlement, in the uncomfortable Venusian lowlands. As they journey there, they have to work together to overcome the dangers of dinosaurs, the environment, and ultimately their own mistrust if they're to survive long enough to reach safety.

The survivors (including the PCs) must start by making some difficult decisions. First, they have to figure out the best way to maintain a supply of food and potable water. Not everything in the Venusian jungle is safe for humans to eat (and meat tends to spoil quickly in the Venusian environment), and not every stream is safe to drink from. Keeping themselves fed may take several hours each day.

Second, do they try to reach the nearest human settlement—a German one—or head for the more distant British outpost? As discussed further below, most NPCs, as loyal British subjects, prefer to head toward a British settlement, like Fort St. George or Fort Collingswood. But ultimately the Player Characters are the ones who will decide (since they're the protagonists of this story), and Marcus's arguments in favor of heading for the German Protectorate may sway them. Further complicating the situation is the fact that it's relatively easy to get to German territory from the Venusian lowlands (at least if the group approaches from the north or east), whereas getting into British-held lands probably requires climbing gear or other such equipment.

Before they get to any colony, though, the Earthfolk find themselves embroiled in a native conflict. Their journey brings them into the territory of the Ssunadi, a tribe of lizard-men simultaneously involved in a war with another tribe (the HoJumi) and suffering from a period of internal dissent. The arrival of a group of humans in their territory only exacerbates matters and puts the PCs in a situation where they must choose sides and try to help resolve the situation so they can continue their journey safely. If they succeed, they can probably make it to civilization—though they may have other dangers to contend with along the way. If not, their bodies become more fertilizing muck at the bottom of a Venusian swamp.

Non-British Player Characters

Given the sensitive nature of the Kincaide project, and its importance to the British government, the Queen's officials on Venus are wary of any Player Character who's a foreign national (particularly German, Russian, or Italian). They won't absolutely forbid non-British characters to participate in the *Aphrodite*'s maiden voyage, for obvious reasons, but they'll check such characters' papers and references *very* carefully and keep a suspicious eye on them at all times. After the officials decide to let the characters on board, they talk about “fostering good relations between our governments” and make similar diplomatic statements.

Members of the Expedition

Besides the Player Characters themselves, the following are the primary passengers aboard the *Aphrodite* on her maiden voyage.

Roger Kincaide, Genius Scientist

Although he's only 25 years old, Roger Kincaide—referred to by practically everyone, including life-long friends, as “Kincaide” or “Dr. Kincaide”—already seems destined for greatness and success. A British subject of Scottish descent, he's the son of a butcher and spent his early days assisting in his father's shop. During his spare time he tinkered with whatever he could get his hands on and developed an interest in science and engineering. A local nobleman took note of Kincaide's talents and saw to it that he received a proper education.

After finishing secondary school at age 16, Kincaide went on to Oxford, where he studied chemistry, physics, and various related subjects. He graduated with honors and took a teaching position that allowed him the freedom to continue a project he began at university: the development of liftwood for use on Venus. After several years of continued experimentation, he created a prototype of what's now referred to as the “Kincaide field” (or, more broadly, the “Kincaide Process”). With examples of his work in hand, he approached British officials about his invention. Intrigued, Her Majesty's government not only agreed to fund further work (thus allowing Kincaide to leave his teaching job), it sent him to Venus for field trials.

For the past several years, Kincaide has lived at the British outpost of Fort David. The ability to study the Venusian magnetic field first-hand, not to mention access to government funding to pay for expensive liftwood and other materials, has allowed him to advance his work swiftly. At last the time has arrived when he's ready to prove that his inventions work in practice, not just in the laboratory.

Most of the time Kincaide is an easy-going, amiable person who can make friends with just about anyone. But stress from his work and his strong desire to protect and advance it has made him tense and edgy. He's likely to seem fidgety and nervous at first, and may snap at people who touch his devices or “get in his way.” Ironically, after the wreck he'll become calmer, more level-headed, and easier to get along with.

While Kincaide's nigh-obsessive focus on his “great work” (as he calls it) has led many on Venus to think he's a monomaniac, the truth is he has many other interests. He sings in his church choir back home. He collects butterflies, and hopes to branch out into whatever the Venusian equivalent is once he has a little more time on his hands. (He's already made a few minor studies of Venusian insect life, building on the work of previous scientists.) He enjoys relaxing with a good book and his pipe whenever he gets a few minutes to himself. He speaks French fluently and German haltingly.



Primary Attributes

Body: 1 **Dexterity: 2** **Strength: 2**
Charisma: 2 **Intelligence: 6** **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move: 4** **Perception: 8**
Initiative: 8 **Defense: 3** **Stun: 1**

Health: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Bureaucracy	6	2	8	(4)
Diplomacy	2	2	4	(2)
Craft (Mechanics)	6	3	9	(4+)
Firearms	2	2	4	(2)
Linguistics	6	1	7	(3+)
Science	6	5	11	(5+)

Talents

Skill Mastery (Science)

Resources

Contacts 1 (British government)

Languages

English, French, German

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N
Wbley Mk I Revolver	3 L	0	7 L	(3+) L

Colonel Everett Ashingham, Stalwart Soldier

A twenty-year veteran of the Queen's military, Col. Ashingham is one of the junior commanders on Venus. He has the (perhaps dubious) honor of leading the detachment of soldiers providing protection for Kincaide and his "great work." Thus he finds himself on the *Aphrodite*'s maiden voyage—and soon after that, marooned in the Venusian jungle.

Now in his late 30s, Col. Ashingham is the very embodiment of staunch British devotion to duty. He accepts his orders with good grace, no matter how difficult or humbling they might be, and then does everything within his power to carry them out. After the liftship crashes, he interprets "doing his duty" as "keep Kincaide alive and get him to safety in British hands, even at the cost of my own life." He sticks to Kincaide like glue, protecting him from every threat, real or imagined. He gets along well with anyone who agrees with (or at least tolerates) this attitude, but has stuffy disdain for anyone who has anything less than military-level personal discipline. He naturally assumes command of the "expedition" to reach civilization without bothering to ask anyone.

Underneath his hard shell, though, Col. Ashingham has deep concerns about the "expedition's" fate. He knows what Kincaide and his "process" mean to the British Empire, but fears he will fail to get the scientist to safety. On a more personal note, he has a wife and two children back on Earth, and his heart aches at the thought that he might never see them again. If push comes to shove, there's a *tiny* chance he might sacrifice Kincaide's life to save his own—but a far greater chance that he'll nobly sacrifice himself for Queen and country, consoling himself with the final thought that his son will know he died a hero.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Dexterity: 4** **Strength: 4**
Charisma: 2 **Intelligence: 2** **Willpower: 3**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move: 8** **Perception: 5**
Initiative: 6 **Defense: 7** **Stun: 3**
Health: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	4	2	6	(3)
Diplomacy	2	2	4	(2)
Firearms	4	4	8	(4)
Intimidation	2	4	6	(3)
Melee	4	2	6	(3)
Stealth	4	1	5	(2+)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)

Talents

Inspire

Resources

Rank 4 (British Army)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N
Machete	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Lee-Enfield Rifle	3 L	0	11 L	(5+) L

Lady Alice Asquith, Wealthy Socialite

Despite her relatively young age (27), Lady Alice is one of the toasts of British society. Beautiful, intelligent, witty, vivacious, insightful, gregarious, and with a memory like a steel trap when it comes to names, faces, and social relationships, she's the sort of person everyone wants at their parties. But she's not entirely

content with a life of society galas and country outings; she has a certain thirst for adventure and new vistas. She's traveled extensively on Earth, and has now expanded her horizons to Mars (one all too brief trip) and Venus (it's her first time on the jungle planet). It cost her a lot of money and favors to get her ride on the *Aphrodite*, but it will pay off handsomely in the stories she'll have to tell in salons and around dinner tables back in London—assuming she survives.

One thing about Lady Alice that may strike the PCs as odd: she's not married, and never has been. Among some parts of her social stratum, her unmarried status is practically a scandal, and it certainly troubles her parents to no end. She has the confidence and self-assuredness of a woman of far greater years, and decided long ago she would marry only for true love—to someone whose heart sings in unison with hers, with whom she can share not just her life but her interests. Perhaps a male PC will fit the bill.

Unfortunately, Lady Alice doesn't really bring any useful skills to the "expedition" across Venus. She's never even gone hunting, much less tried to survive in the wilderness, to fire a military-grade rifle, or to kill a dinosaur. Her innate sense for social situations may come in handy when the group has to interact with the Ssuna and the HoJumi, though. She also has a knack for picking up languages. Her French, German, and Russian are all decent (though she's never studied any of them formally for very long), and with enough exposure to lizard-man speech she'll probably learn to speak it as well (though her human mouth will have trouble with all the hissing and clicking, and her dignity with the possibility of accidentally spitting).

Primary Attributes

Body: 1 **Dexterity: 2** **Strength: 1**
Charisma: 3 **Intelligence: 3** **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move: 3** **Perception: 5**
Initiative: 5 **Defense: 3** **Stun: 1**
Health: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Literature)	3	1	4	(2)
Art	3	1	4	(2)
Diplomacy	3	4	7	(3+)
Empathy	3	3	6	(3)
Linguistics	3	1	4	(2)
Performance	3	2	5	(2+)

Talents

Attractive 1

Resources

Status 1, Wealth 3

Flaws

Phobia (raptor lizards)

Languages

English, French, German, Russian

Sir Hugh Dudley Griffin-O'Dell,
Noble Dilettante

The eldest son of a prominent British noble family of storied and lengthy heritage, Sir Hugh carries on the family's traditions as best he can. He has no particular interest in matters commercial or military, so instead he's taken the route of becoming a world (now worlds) traveler, explorer, and adventurer. He takes a decidedly dilettantish approach to these pursuits—no sense putting one's self in danger or making one's self uncomfortable, after all—but

he has seen some amazing things, explored many strange places, and become a fairly skilled hunter (and a particularly good marksman and tracker). While he is in theory the head of his family's business enterprise, he leaves the management completely to his sister Lady Martha, who showed far more aptitude with figures and commerce. Sir Hugh acquired a certificate of land grant on Venus through some dubious channels and is desperately working on making this investment pay, sometimes to the chagrin of his sister who sees it as a waste of money. He also put a small sum into the Kincaide Process back before Kincaide approached the government, and that will entitle him to invest further, if he thinks that's a good idea (and he survives his latest adventure). Beyond that, though, his eyes and ears remain open for promising opportunities. If he thought he could get away with it and would earn a strong return, he might even involve himself in investments that are not entirely in the best interest of the British Empire but would serve his family well.

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Dexterity: 4** **Strength: 2**
Charisma: 2 **Intelligence: 2** **Willpower: 3**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move: 6** **Perception: 5**
Initiative: 6 **Defense: 6** **Stun: 2**
Health: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Diplomacy	2	2	3	(1+)
Firearms	4	5	9	(4+)
Linguistics	2	1	3	(1+)
Melee	2	2	4	(2)
Stealth	4	2	6	(3)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)

Talents

-

Resources

Status 1, Contacts 1

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N
Knife	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L
Martini-Henry Rifle	3 L	0	12 L	(6) L

Randolph Marcus, Shrewd Businessman

Randolph Marcus stands out a bit from most of the passengers on the *Aphrodite*. He's well-dressed, but in a somewhat simpler style than the lords and ladies around him. That's because he's not a noble—he's a businessman. Born to a father who worked in a shop and a mother who used to work in the same shop, you might say he has business in his blood, and he wouldn't deny it. He started working alongside his father when he was a teenager, and through hard work and shrewdness eventually bought that business... and then another... and then another. Today he's the owner of a small but profitable commercial empire. Now he's expanding that empire, and he's come to Venus in search of business opportunities that will vault him from the ranks of the successful into those of the obscenely rich.

Or at least that's what he tells everyone. The truth is more complex. His father did work in shops, but it was after emigrating to Britain from Germany, and he always retained his loyalty to his fatherland. He inculcated that same loyalty in his son. When Marcus needed money for his early commercial dealings he became a freelance spy, selling his services (and the proceeds of his illicit activities) to whoever was willing to pay for them. His



rise in British society has had as much to do with secret funding from his various "patrons" as with his business acumen.

Marcus's latest scheme is easy to describe, but hard to accomplish: secure Roger Kincaide and his plans/designs (failing that, he may try to kill Kincaide and destroy his work out of spite). Marcus thinks his best market for these "wares" is Germany (and he's probably correct), but he'd happily sell to Russia, Italy, another inventor, or whoever else can pay what he's asking. (He might even keep the information for himself.) Under the guise of investing in the Kincaide Process, Marcus has stayed close to the young scientist since Kincaide arrived on Venus. Kincaide considers the affable businessman a friend as well as a valued investor.

Marcus visits other countries frequently (allegedly to look after his financial interests there), and during some of those trips has received extensive espionage training. He's a crack shot, good with disguises and forgery, an expert cryptographer, an experienced outdoorsman, a talented lockpick/burglar, and adept in a wide variety of social situations. He won't reveal any of these abilities, though, unless they're necessary to save his own life (or get away with Kincaide in tow); as long as he can he'll pretend to be an ordinary businessman.

Once the crash occurs, Marcus tries to exploit the opportunity to his own benefit—ideally Kincaide can simply "disappear," never to be found, while he toils away in secret for the Kaiser. But to accomplish that, Marcus has to get rid of every other survivor of the flight without raising suspicion. He looks for every chance to be alone with one other person in the hope of arranging an "accident." He also volunteers to carry and use any of the guns the group has access to, claiming to be a skilled shooter and hunter, all the while keeping his Derringer carefully concealed.

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Dexterity: 3** **Strength: 2**
Charisma: 4 **Intelligence: 3** **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move: 4** **Perception: 6**
Initiative: 6 **Defense: 4** **Stun: 2**
Health: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Diplomacy	4	2	6	(3)
Larceny	3	2	5	(2+)
Con	4	4	8	(4)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Firearms	3	3	6	(3)
Stealth	3	2	5	(2+)
Survival	3	1	4	(2)

Talents

Agile

Resources

Contacts 2

Languages

English, German

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N
Pocket Revolver	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L

Andrew Robertson, Skilled Hunter

Born and raised over fifty years ago in rural Scotland, Andrew Robertson has hunted for food and also for fun ever since he was big enough to carry and shoot a rifle without falling over. He developed a sterling reputation as a local hunting guide, and eventually travelled to Africa to ply his trade there and explore the innermost reaches of the continent. After many successful years guiding hunters around the East African savannah and exploring ruins in the jungles of the Congo basin, one of his best clients offered him the chance to lead an expedition on Venus. He jumped at the opportunity and soon found himself stalking the swamps and forests of the jungle planet, looking for game and ancient ruins alike. More than that—he found himself at home. Something about Venus really appealed to Robertson and when his client left, he remained, and has resided on Venus ever since. He has always been a Gentleman and even manages to keep his good manners and care for his elaborate moustache in the thickest jungle—and furthermore, his age has brought him a calm that many younger explorers lack. Nowadays he is far more crafty and wise about endeavors rather than leaping into everything head-first as he did in his younger days.

The grey-haired Mr. Robertson is an ‘old Venus hand’ now, as knowledgeable about the planet as a human can be (he even speaks the lizard-man language, though he’s not necessarily good with dialects). That’s why Kincaide hired him to be part of the test flight. In short, if you have to crash land on Venus hundreds of miles from civilization, he’s just about the best person you could have with you. On the other hand, at this point Robertson identifies more as ‘Venusian’ than ‘Earthling’. Lacking any particular loyalty to the British crown, he’d at least consider offers to assist Germany (or some other power) if he thought their intentions were better for Venus than those of the British. But he’d really prefer for humans to more or less leave Venus alone to chart its own course. He knows that’s a pipe dream at this point, but he can’t help wishing.

A superbly skilled hunter and guide, Robertson is the only person (aside, perhaps, from the PCs) who foresaw the possibility of trouble and brought along useful equipment. He has his elephant gun, a pistol, a machete, a canteen of fresh water, matches, and a few other small, potentially useful items stuffed in his pockets. Furthermore, he’s the only one of the six major NPCs described here who’s dressed as if he’s going to spend a lot of time slogging through the Venusian wilderness; everyone else looks like they’re attending a garden party.

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Dexterity: 3** **Strength: 2**
Charisma: 4 **Intelligence: 3** **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move: 4** **Perception: 6**
Initiative: 6 **Defense: 4** **Stun: 2**
Health: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Geography)	3	2	5	(2+)
Athletics	3	2	5	(2+)
Firearms	4	5	9	(4+)
Melee	3	1	4	(2)
Stealth	4	1	5	(2+)
Survival	2	6	8	(4)

Talents

Danger Sense, Skill Aptitude (Survival)

Resources

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0	0
Machete	2 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Pistol	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Elephant Gun	4 L	0	13 L	(6+) L

The Crew

While the *Aphrodite*’s flight is Kincaide’s baby, technically he’s not in command of the ship. That honor falls to Captain Albert Fitzsimmons (“Bert” to his friends), a skilled member of Her Majesty’s air-ship forces. He’s a tough, no-nonsense sort of captain who tolerates Kincaide’s peculiarities only because he realizes just how important the scientist’s work is to British interests.

The rest of the crew are about a half-dozen experienced air-sailors. They keep everything running smoothly, get Kincaide whatever he needs, and so on. Unless you want to develop one of them through roleplaying, they’re nameless NPCs.

The “crew” also includes several armed soldiers that Col. Ashingham has brought along as guards. Their main purpose is to provide a source of salvageable weapons, if you want to let the PCs arm themselves after the wreck.

None of the crew lives through the crash of the *Aphrodite*, unless you want to add to the pool of survivors.

Servants

Most of the notables on board brought at least one servant with them. After all, it just wouldn’t do for a highborn man or woman to have to get his own drinks or clean up after himself! Kincaide and Captain Fitzsimmons tolerate these people as a social necessity but don’t particularly like having them around. Again, unless you have a reason for adding to the pool of survivors, all of them should die in the crash.

Part One: The Storm and the Crash

The launch of the *Aphrodite* takes place on (for Venus) a relatively calm, sunny day. There's a pleasant breeze that dispels some of the usual humidity and everyone's in good spirits. The launch site (which is open only to passengers, and heavily guarded by British troops) has something of a festive atmosphere while everyone waits for Kincaide and Captain Fitzsimmons to allow them aboard. This is a good opportunity to introduce the major NPCs to the players. Randolph Marcus, Lady Alice, and Sir Hugh in particular will all try to get to know everyone involved—Marcus for espionage reasons, Sir Hugh because he's on the lookout for chances to make money, and Lady Alice because she's a social butterfly.

After one final inspection, Kincaide announces that the *Aphrodite* is ready to lift off and would everyone please come aboard. If any of the PCs inspect the ship themselves, they notice that it doesn't seem to suffer from the usual "Venusian rot" one would expect to see in the liftwood; otherwise it seems like an ordinary air-ship.

Player Characters and Equipment

As you can see from the main text, except for Robertson none of the NPCs has brought along a lot of equipment. You should encourage the same approach for the PCs.

It's natural for Player Characters to expect trouble and want to go onto the *Aphrodite* "loaded for bear." This makes perfect sense from a "meta" perspective, since the players know something's going to go wrong and they want their characters to be prepared for every possible contingency.

But in the context of the story being told in this adventure, that doesn't make much sense. As far as anyone knows this is a short test flight of an experimental aerial ship. It's not an extended expedition into the wilderness, so there's no need for guns and gear. There are women on board, for heaven's sake—how dangerous could it be? Leave all that ironmongery at home, please.

Furthermore, given the sensitive nature of the project, the British military may look on anyone who shows up carrying lots of weapons and gear as a potential saboteur or thief. Colonel Ashingham won't hesitate to order a PC off the ship if he doesn't like the look of the PC or he thinks the PC is acting suspiciously.

Of course, from your perspective as GM, you don't want the PCs to have lots of weapons and gear because it reduces the fun of the "struggle through the wilderness" aspect of the adventure. So do your best to persuade them to leave most of their supplies at home. As discussed in the main text, if you want to provide them with weapons to increase their chances of survival, you can let them salvage some from the ship's wreckage.

The takeoff and initial stages of the flight go as smoothly as any loyal British subject could hope. Kincaide and Col. Ashingham are both in good spirits as the flight progresses. Unfortunately things soon take a turn for the worse.

The Storm

After several hours, dark clouds begin to gather. Rainy weather is a fact of life on Venus, and the *Aphrodite* is built and operated to withstand most storms. But this is no ordinary storm. If any of the PCs have skills pertaining to *Science (Meteorology)* or *Pilot (Air Ships)*, you can allow them to roll (threshold 2) to analyze and react to the storm. Anyone who succeeds realizes it's going to be a monster.

Just as Captain Fitzsimmons and Kincaide realize they'd better turn back, a tremendous clap of thunder sounds right over the *Aphrodite*. Everyone on the ship is deafened for 8-BODY turns. You shouldn't allow characters to speak to one another—restrict communication to hand gestures, writing, and the like.

The wind picks up to the point where Fitzsimmons can barely keep the ship under control; it's rocking back and forth wildly and soon goes completely off course. The PCs see a minor NPC—a crewman or servant—get flung over the side to his death by the turbulence. If any PC has *Pilot*, they can try to assist the captain to control the ship, but even their combined efforts should only have the slimmest chance of success, and in any event can only ameliorate the disaster, not prevent it (see below).

The situation goes from bad to worse as lightning strikes the *Aphrodite*! One bolt hits the engines, others strike on deck (possibly killing some minor NPCs). The ship begins losing altitude at a disturbingly fast pace, all the while being blown wildly off course by strong Venusian winds. At this point everyone's being tossed around pretty strongly. More people will go overboard and die, though the PCs might be able to save some of them if they're fast, strong, and clever. Play the scene for maximum excitement and dramatic impact.

Captain Fitzsimmons, realizing the futility of efforts to keep the ship flying (or even on course), shouts as loudly as he can for everyone to secure themselves to something sturdy and brace for impact!

The Crash

The ship smashes into the Venusian lowlands with a tremendous noise, crashing through trees and into rocks and stumps until it remains finally come to rest. It breaks into three major pieces, strewn debris over a large area.

All unnamed NPCs and Captain Fitzsimmons die in the crash. The PCs and the named NPCs described above walk away from the disaster. They're in a tough spot already; if you want to make things even harder on them, roll on the accompanying Crash Injuries Table for each PC and NPC.



Crash Injuries Table

Every character has to make an **Acrobatics** or **Athletics** roll. You can adjust the difficulty of the Skill roll depending on how the players reacted during the crash. Talents might be used as well, according to your discretion as Gamemaster. For each 2 successes from **Science (Meteorology)** or **Pilot (Air Ships)** with threshold 2, add 1 die.

Successes	Result
0	Serious Injury: A character suffers 4 points of Lethal damage and is wounded (e.g. a broken limb, concussion, deep puncture wound to the torso and so on).
1-2	Minor Injury: A character suffers 2 points of Lethal damage.
3-4	Trivial Injury: A character suffers 2 points of Non-lethal damage.
5+	No injury at all.

The Aftermath

It doesn't take long for it to sink in that the survivors are trapped in the Venusian wilds. Robertson (and/or a PC with appropriate Skills) estimates that the crash site is 300 miles from the nearest British outpost. (Reduce this by 10 miles per point by which

Capt. Fitzsimmons and/or a PC made a *Pilot* roll in their last, desperate attempts to control the *Aphrodite*). Whatever the distance to the British outpost is, there's a German outpost 40 miles closer.

Thus, the first thing for the group to decide is where it wants to go. Colonel Ashingham immediately tries to assume control and head toward the British outpost, but unless the PCs support him this isn't likely to work. Instead the group has a long conversation/debate about what the best option is. You should roleplay the various NPCs while letting the players do all the talking they want.

Randolph Marcus argues strongly in favor of heading toward the German outpost. He has ulterior motives for this, of course—the sooner he gets himself and Kincaide to safety, the sooner he can try to capitalize on the situation. But he's absolutely correct that the group can reach the German outpost more easily. As Robertson can attest, 40 miles through the wilds of Venus is no easy march, so reducing the trip by that much increases everyone's chance of survival.

On the other hand, Kincaide, Lady Alice, Sir Hugh, and Col. Ashingham would all rather add the 40 miles to the trip than go to a German settlement. Kincaide and the Colonel are well aware of what happens if the young scientist falls into German hands. Lady Alice and Sir Hugh, as loyal British subjects, wouldn't think of letting the Germans get their hands on a strategically valuable "asset" like Kincaide even if it means exposing themselves to discomfort and danger. They realize that climbing the plateau to get to Fort Collingswood may not be possible, but they'd rather take the chance on finding a way than go to the Germans.

Taking Stock: Equipment

The PCs probably want to know what sort of equipment they can scrounge up to improve the odds in the group's favor. The *Aphrodite* is almost a total loss, though Kincaide believes he can salvage equipment if he can return with a team of engineers. Here's what the major NPCs carry that may be of use:

Let's get out of here!

The adventure assumes that the "British faction" among the surviving party will eventually assert its reluctance to enter German territory. Should the characters prefer to get out of the jungle as quickly as possible and ignore the intricacies of intercolonial affairs, you can proceed with the adventure but may have to make amendments in some parts. For example, Randolph Marcus could expose himself much earlier if he is trying to contact a German outpost or to lure the party into an ambush.

- Kincaide: some scientific tools; a box of matches
- Ashingham: a Webley Mk 1 revolver (fully loaded but without any extra ammunition)
- Asquith: a lady's parasol
- Griffin-O'Dell: a pocketknife; a pocket watch; a box of matches
- Marcus: a two-shot Derringer that he keeps concealed
- Robertson: an elephant gun (use Buffalo Rifle stats) with 10 cartridges; a Colt Peacemaker (fully loaded and with another 6 rounds); a machete; a knife; a canteen of fresh water; a box of matches; a pocketknife
- Captain Albert Fitzsimmons (dead): box of matches; a pipe and some tobacco; a few log book pages; a set of heavily-damaged maps of the surroundings, (as useless or useful as the GM wants them to be)
- Soldiers (dead): a shaving knife; a few canteens of water; several Lee-Metford Rifles plus ammo. The GM should decide how many of them are still in order and how many bullets can be saved.
- Crew and servants (dead): a pocket knife; tools like a gripper, a hammer, a partly-damaged toolkit
- In the wreck: Delicious food for 2 days; rope (30 meters); chains; a few magnesium torches; a mostly broken mosquito net from one of the cabins; 1-2 rain coats; a few square meters of undamaged sailcloth; 2-3 sleeping bags

Be sure to keep close track of the bullets for all of the guns. The group has very little ammunition, so the characters shouldn't shoot unless it's absolutely necessary.

However, you should keep in mind that the jungles and swamps of Venus are *very* dangerous places. Without the help of more weapons, the PCs and NPCs may end up as dinosaur chow in very short order. If you're concerned about this, you can allow the PCs to salvage some guns and ammunition from soldiers killed in the wreck of the *Aphrodite*.

Clothing and equipment on Venus tend to corrode quickly unless properly treated and regularly cleaned. As a result, the group

could easily go from ordinary clothes, to tatters, to virtual nudity during the course of their journey if you want to emphasize this "realistic" aspect of life on the jungle planet. If you don't want to concern yourself with such details, assume that Robertson knows of native saps and substances the characters can use on their clothes and possessions to preserve them in decent (if not good) working order.

Taking Stock: Useful Abilities

It also improves the group's chances of survival if everyone has a clear idea of what each member of the group can do. Here's a quick rundown of the useful skill sets the main NPCs have:

- Kincaide: his knowledge of butchering may come in handy to get maximum meat yield from any animals the party kills; his studies of Venusian entomology may help the group avoid dangerous insects and find useful ones.
- Ashingham: the Colonel is a military man experienced at leading small groups, at various sorts of fighting, and at "roughing it"/surviving in the wild.
- Asquith: Lady Alice's social skills and knack for languages aren't much good at first, but may prove crucial once the group encounters lizard-men.
- Griffin-O'Dell: Sir Hugh has some skill as a hunter, tracker, and outdoorsman.
- Marcus: as far as the group knows, Marcus is a pretty good shot/hunter, but that's it. He conceals his espionage-related skills (which aren't likely to be of much use during the trip anyway) unless he needs them to ensure his or Kincaide's survival.
- Robertson: just the sort of person to have along on this "trip." He's an expert hunter/tracker, a superb shot, and an "old Venus hand" who knows how to survive on this planet and how to speak to the natives.

Part Two: The First Part of the Journey

Food and Water

The second part of *Thunders of Venus* focuses on the characters' struggles to survive the harsh Venusian wilderness and make progress toward the safe haven of the British outpost. As the GM, you need to adapt to the players' plans, throwing obstacles and encounters at them to make the journey interesting but not overwhelmingly dangerous. Do what you can to convey the discomfort and frustration the characters feel. For example, at first you might impose minor penalties to reflect how badly the intense humidity and extended physical effort affect characters who aren't necessarily used to such things. ("After a day of chopping through the undergrowth with Robertson's machete, your arms are so tired and sore you'll take a -2 penalty to all rolls that require you to use them until you've had a full night's sleep.")

Here are some examples of problems—or opportunities—the group might encounter:

The first concern for everyone in the group should be ensuring an adequate supply of food and water.

Water is the more immediate concern, since humans can't survive as long without it as they can without food (especially in the Cytherean heat). Fortunately there's *lots* of water on Venus. Unfortunately, most of it isn't fit for human consumption: it's full of particulates, bacteria, and other things the characters don't want to ingest.

The most promising source of potable water is Venus's rainstorms, which tend to occur at least once a day (if not multiple times). But that means the characters need some way to collect rainwater, and better yet a way to store and carry it. Lady Alice's parasol turned upside down would catch some rain, but the players hopefully have plenty of other ideas. Let them discuss it for a while and try to devise a solution. If necessary you can simply let them make some *Survival* rolls to see if they can come up with something (if they can't, Robertson probably can), but it's more fun to let them think and roleplay instead of just rolling dice.

Food is also a concern, though less of one. Robertson can point out edible fruits and roots which grants the group a minimum

Covering the Basics

Before they can head out across the face of Venus and try to make their way home, the characters need to consider some basic issues.

provision of 3 food rations per day, while Kincaide may know of insect species humans can safely consume, but the PCs may add to this with good ideas and the appropriate (modified) Skill rolls (some PCs may be experienced hunters or survival experts; if so, let them take the lead). Many of the dinosaurs that stalk the Venusian jungles and swamps have meat that's edible by humans (though as even Robertson admits, some of it's not very tasty to the human palate). Of course, the group only has so much ammunition to shoot dinosaurs with, which raises the issue of...

Weapons

An unarmed PC is an unhappy PC, generally speaking, so the players will probably try to arm their characters as soon as possible. (Some of the NPCs may think along similar lines.) It's not too difficult to find sturdy fallen branches to serve as clubs, and rocks (or even appropriately-shaped sticks) they can use as missile weapons. But those are literally the simplest weapons humans can wield, and the PCs will want something better.

If characters succeed with appropriate *Craft* or *Survival* rolls, you can allow them to fashion crude but serviceable weapons from the natural materials they find around them. These include:

- hammers or axes with wooden shafts and shaped stone heads
- bows made from branches and vines that fire arrows tipped with shaped stone arrowheads, hard thorns, or dinosaur teeth
- spears with sharpened wooden points hardened in a fire, or perhaps tipped with shaped stone heads
- slings made from vines or strips of dinosaur skin

Robertson knows the lizard-men make weapons from a reed-like lowlands plant that hardens after harvesting, but they've never taught him how to do it. He can point out the plant (*omajolima*, the "mother of weapons"), and maybe the PCs can figure out how to make crude weapons (and even armor) with them, but without knowing the lizard-man techniques they can't make truly effective equipment.

Of course, even if they can make weapons, the characters may lack the skills to use them properly, in which case they suffer the standard Untrained Skill Roll penalty. Even if they have the skills, they may (at your option) still suffer a -1 penalty on attack rolls because of the crudeness of the weapons. (You may also want to reduce the range for fired weapons such as arrows.)

Rate of Travel

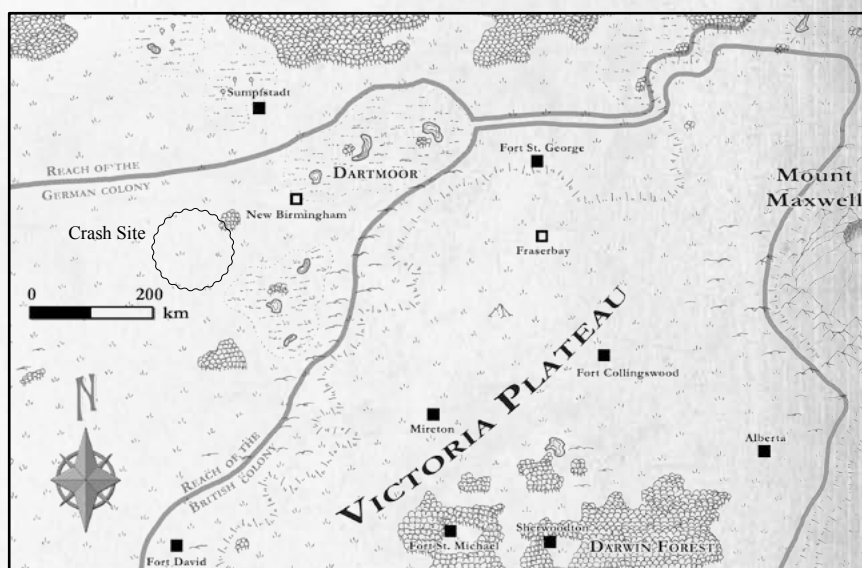
For game purposes, assume the group can travel at an average rate of 10 miles per day across Venus, so it will take close to a month to reach the British outpost. (This assumes they travel each day, but in fact they may have to spend some days making weapons, procuring food, or the like.) If you want to vary things a little and are willing to track what happens day by day, you can roll each morning on the accompanying Travel Table. Low

results indicate the group runs into obstacles that slow them down (particularly thick jungle, a large swamp, a herd of dinosaurs they have to go around...), while high results mean things work out in their favor (they can make good time rafting down a waterway, the jungle gives way to plains for a while, or the like). Of course, any encounters the group has (see below) may affect their travel for the day regardless of what the table indicates.

Travel Table

At the beginning of each day, one PC has to make a *Survival* roll—other characters can assist them with the usual Teamwork rules (see **Core Rules** p. 151). At the Gamemaster's discretion, the PCs might use Talents to modify the roll. The result gives the distance travelled that day, as detailed in the table below.

Successes	Distance travelled
0	A truly miserable day: the group travels 1 mile
1-2	A poor day: the group travels 1d6+4 miles
3-4	A typical day: the group travels 10 miles
5-6	A good day: the group travels 2d6+10 miles
7+	A great day: the group travels 2d6+15 miles



Perils, Threats, and Dangers

The group sets off toward the British outpost using Robertson's knowledge and their own orienteering skills (if any) to guide them. But this isn't a walk in the park! Every meter of Venus is at least uncomfortable to humans, and quite possibly deadly dangerous. Here are just a few examples of encounters you can spring on the PCs whenever you like.

Dinosaurs Attack!

The most common (and perhaps exciting) encounter the group may have is with dinosaurs. These range from small dinosaurs suitable for food, to large herbivores that pose a threat due to their bulk or territorial nature, to carnivores that regard the little humans as tasty snacks. It's entirely possible for the group to have multiple run-ins with dinosaurs, so try to vary them a little—the PCs should certainly be attacked by a tyrannosaur-like reptile at some point, but make sure that's not the only type of dinosaur they encounter. For some inspiration, see the *Flora and Fauna* chapter in the **Core Rules** starting p. 106 or the **Venus** sourcebook starting p. 89.

Dinosaurs aren't necessarily just dumb brutes. They're not intelligent, but the meat-eating ones at least have a predator's cunning and instincts. A particularly tough or tenacious one may stalk the group across the landscape, countering their brains and weapons with its stealthiness, knowledge of the wilderness, and fangs.

Dinosaurs represent opportunity as well as danger. Besides their meat, they have teeth, claws, and perhaps spikes the characters can adapt for use as weapons, heavy bones that might make functional clubs or weapon parts, feathers the lizard-men might prize (and which thus serve the humans as trade goods), skin the characters can make various useful items out of, and so on.

The Nighttime Predator

If you've allowed some nameless NPCs to join the group, now's their chance to fulfill their traditional role and become victims of threats that will soon come after the PCs. Here's an example:

One night, despite the fact that one or more humans stood watch, some sort of reptilian predator crept up to the campsite, snatched a sleeping human away, and escaped without anyone being any the wiser. All that's left is an empty spot where the victim slept



Marcus Leaving the Expedition early

Marcus has the opportunity to leave the rest of the party behind and strike out on his own at several points during the adventure (assuming, of course, he can take Kincaide with him). As the GM, you should manage this possibility for maximum excitement and dramatic impact. Consider the following:

- Marcus isn't an idiot (far from it). He knows his chances of surviving on his own are slim unless something tilts the odds in his favor (such as stealing a warceratops from the lizard-men). He'd rather stay with the expedition as long as he reasonably can for safety's sake, then make a break for it at the best possible moment.
- the longer you can build up the possibility of "is someone in the group a spy?" the stronger its dramatic impact. (This assumes, of course, that the players have such suspicions—but the odds are they will.)
- if the PCs somehow discover early in the adventure that Marcus is a spy, this forces his hand—but also creates additional dramatic possibilities. He could try to escape right then and shadow the expedition, waiting for an opportunity to strike. He could plead for his life, claiming to know valuable secrets (or pointing out that he has valuable skills). Having a known potential traitor in the PCs' midst could make the game even more enjoyable than simply suspecting that one of the NPCs might betray them—assuming you can prevent the PCs from killing Marcus right then and there.

and a few clawed footprints of a type the characters have never seen before.

As long as the characters take no steps to hunt down and kill this predator, it strikes again and again, night after night, eventually taking victims from the ranks of named NPCs. The predator is actually a pack of velociraptors, which are astonishingly intelligent and extremely stealthy despite their size. Thus they can avoid guards, traps, and other counter-measures with a devilish cunning, and also leave false trails for the PCs to follow if they pursue them.

This can only go on so long, of course, before the PCs decide to tackle the problem directly. At that point you should start to give them some indirect glimpses of the beasts to tempt them into plunging into the jungles and swamps on their trail. Once that happens, the creatures can try to lure them into traps and dangerous areas so that they can safely ambush them. Eventually the PCs should triumph, but it should take every ounce of their skill, wits, and muscle to do so.

If Randolph Marcus can arrange to be on guard duty with one other person, the nighttime predator encounter might be a good

way for him to remove someone from the picture—assuming he can easily hide the body (and fake the creatures’ footprints if necessary).

Velociraptor

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Dinosaur **Health:** 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Charisma:** 0
Dexterity: 5 **Intelligence:** 1
Strength: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 6
Move: 8 (16) **Defense:** 8
Perception: 6 **Stun:** 8

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

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Run (doubles its movement when running)

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

Hostile Lizard-men

The sentient life on Venus can be just as dangerous as the bestial. Many tribes of lizard-men regard humans as invaders to be slaughtered, food to be captured and eaten, or both. Use the accompanying character sheet for a typical hostile lizard-man that the group might encounter.

Primitive Venusian

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Dexterity:** 3 **Strength:** 2
Charisma: 2 **Intelligence:** 2 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move:** 5 **Perception:** 5
Initiative: 5 **Defense:** 6 **Stun:** 3
Health: 6

Skills

Archery 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Melee 5, Stealth 6, Survival 5

Talents

Combat Skills (Survival), Keen Senses

Weapons

Punch 4 N, Stone Knife 6 L, Bow 7 L, Slingshot 6 N

The Mushroom Forest

The group crests a small ridge and comes upon an astonishing sight: a forest of giant mushrooms rather than trees! The tallest of them is about three to four times the size of an adult human, with a proportionally-sized cap. Smaller, but still enormous by Earth standards, mushrooms fill the ecological niches of saplings, shrubs, and the like.

The mushroom forest is more a resource for the PCs than a threat. First, some of the mushrooms are edible (though unpleasant to the taste of everyone except Randolph Marcus, who likes them a

great deal). Second, if they can figure out a way to bring down a large mushroom without damaging it, the cap could be hollowed out into a small boat for use on a nearby river that flows in the general direction of the British outpost. (Alternately, they could tie several mushroom stalks together with vines and make a raft.) Felling a “Venus ’shroom” without breaking the cap is difficult, though. The task requires long-term rolls on a skill or any skill combination of *Survival*, *Craft* and/or *Science (Engineering)* with threshold 3 and 10 required successes. Every roll takes 2 hours of planning, finding materials, or actual work.

But never let it be said that anything on Venus comes without a price! You can have some dangers lurking in the mushroom forest if you want to keep the pressure on the PCs. Perhaps some of the mushrooms are poisonous and an NPC dies horribly after eating one—or maybe they give everyone (except Robertson) stomach problems at first. Maybe an insect living in the forest bites someone, leading to problems later (see “A Minor Irritation Becomes A Major Problem,” below). Or efforts to bring down a tree-sized mushroom could result in an injury to a character, such as a broken arm or leg.

If the group begins sailing down the river, it carries them for d6/2 days before petering out into a shallow swamp. If you’re using the Travel Table, treat each day on the river as a “good day” (3d6 miles, minimum of 11).

Quicksand

As an often swampy place, Venus is perfect for that old pulp standby: quicksand. Unfortunately quicksand isn’t much of a threat to a group of people, since it’s easy for anyone outside the quicksand patch to help rescue the victim. So save this encounter for when just one or two PCs are off on their own (perhaps while they’re pursuing the nighttime predator or out hunting for food).

To identify an area as quicksand a character has to be successful with a *Perception* roll (threshold 3). They can then avoid the quicksand area. If they fail, they are trapped and can attempt to free themselves once every minute with an *Athletics* roll (threshold 2). If the roll fails, they sink deeper into the quicksand. If somebody helps them, the rules for **Teamwork** apply (+2d for each helper with a value of at least 4 in *Athletics*). For each further try after a fail, however, the character loses two dice (see rules for 2nd try). When three rolls have failed, they begin to suffocate. They can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their *Constitution* value (and can make that many rolls on *Athletics*), before they start swallowing sand and receive one lethal wound per round until they can breathe normally again, or die.

Storms

Storms are a fact of life on Venus. It rains on practically every square inch of the planet every day, and many places get multiple rainfalls per day. Nor is it uncommon for a rain shower to turn into a driving storm almost in the blink of an eye—the wind picks up until it bends the trees over, the rain comes down so hard anyone caught out in it can barely see, the thunderclaps are deafening, lightning blasts features of the environment into nothingness. (Emphasize the thunder at least once; it’s in the title of the adventure, after all.) More dangerous weather, such as hailstorms, can also occur.

For the most part, storms are an inconvenience to the characters, and a source of fresh water. But a strong storm at the wrong time can pose a serious problem, usually represented by penalties to

skill rolls and the like. For example, rain and wind make walking on a narrow cliffside (see below) much more difficult, or can churn up river waters until the characters' boats capsize. Floods, in both regular and flash form depending on the topography, will at the very least hamper the characters' progress, and could threaten their lives.

The Venus Man-Trap

The *Space: 1889* core rulebook's description of Venus mentions that the natives have spoken of carnivorous plants large and fierce enough to catch and consume an adult lizard-man—or human. If you want these stories to be true, now's the perfect time to prove it to the players by unleashing such a creature on the PCs. What at first looks like typical jungle growth unfolds to become a Venus flytrap-like plant six to eight feet tall—and it's hungry!

This encounter isn't likely to pose a serious danger to the group. It's just one plant, it can't run away or maneuver, and if it grabs someone in its "mouth" that probably prevents it from attacking effectively for at least a turn or three. But the encounter can throw a scare into the PCs, teach them that danger lurks around every tree and bush in Venus, and perhaps whittle down their health or resources a little. On the other hand, it might provide some useful resources, like hard, sharp thorns to tip arrows with, long fibers to use as string/rope, or a plant part large enough, sturdy enough, and properly shaped to serve as a shield or breastplate.

The Narrow Cliffside

While most of Venus is covered with jungle and/or swamps, that's not all there is to the second planet. In places, the swamps give way to relatively easy to travel plains; in others, the landscape rises, forming hills and mountains. When your players tire of endless descriptions of marshes and greenery, try throwing something different at them.

But, of course, just because the terrain changes doesn't mean it's any less dangerous! Plains, hills, and mountains all possess perils of their own. The classic example of this is a narrow cliffside that the group has to traverse. Require each PC and NPC to make an Acrobatics roll at a Difficulty Rating of 4. Anyone who fails by

1-2 slips and nearly falls, but catches themselves (or is caught by those near him); anyone who fails by 3 or more falls, probably to their death (or at least a severe injury). You should of course allow the PCs to attempt heroics to save someone before they fall.

Plains, on the other hand, mostly pose a threat due to what lives there: herds of large, herbivorous dinosaurs (and the carnivores that prey on them, possibly in packs). This offers the PCs plenty of opportunities to hunt for food, but also exposes them to the risk of stampedes. If the PCs are in the way of a rampaging herd of enormous reptiles, typically they have two options: get to some sort of high, protected ground (such as a rocky hill or up a tree); or the old chestnut of "shoot the lead animal dead at the last minute so the rest of the stampede flows around it and misses the characters."

The Minor Irritant that Becomes a Major Problem

Last but not least, another trope of "dangerous travel" stories that you can use in this part of the adventure is some sort of trivial problem that turns into a major difficulty because the characters ignore it at first. The classic example, a perfect one for use on Venus, is an insect bite. It's painful when it happens, but has no immediate effect; it doesn't even impose any penalties on skill or attack rolls. But it soon worsens: the victim doesn't wake up the next morning because he's deathly ill; the affected arm or leg swells up to the point of uselessness; high fever causes the victim to hallucinate, become unable to walk, or suffer other handicaps.

Unless the victim is an NPC, there's no real chance of death from this—that would be mighty anticlimactic after everything the PCs have survived so far during this adventure. The real hindrance is that this event (a) deprives the group of one character's abilities and help, and (b) forces the others to put in extra effort looking after the victim. And if the victim's vital to the group's survival—for example, if it's Robertson—the loss of his knowledge and skills could put everyone else in serious danger.

Please also see the Venusian diseases in **Space: 1889 Core Rules** and in **Venus** page 105, which might occur for one or some of the characters.

Part Three: Drums of the Ssunadi

Once you've run the group through enough of the above encounters to give them a real taste for the problems facing them, or you think the players are tiring of such "random" challenges, it's time to move on to the third stage of the adventure.

As the PCs proceed onward, they begin to hear a constant rumbling of thunder. It's not like the thunder in a storm; it's faint at first, but grows louder as they keep walking toward it. Sometimes it stops for a while (particularly whenever rain falls), but it always resumes again. Soon this strange thunder is loud enough to become a serious distraction.

But it's not thunder, of course. As the players soon figure out, if they haven't already, it's lizard-man war drums—huge instruments made by covering the hollowed trunks of enormous trees with dinosaur hide, played by two lizard-men at a time using drumsticks the size of quarterstaves. The characters will get to see them first-hand soon enough.

These are the drums of the Ssunadi, one of two large tribes of lizard-men who dominate the immense swamp that covers this part of Venus. The other is the HoJumi. These two tribes are going to war—and the PCs are about to walk right into the middle of the conflict.

The Roots of War

For centuries the Ssunadi and the HoJumi have co-existed in the swamp, which is large enough and contains enough sources of food to allow both tribes to abandon their formerly nomadic existence and settle into village life. They've never been particularly friendly; minor skirmishes and squabbles occur frequently, and the young warriors of both tribes make a game out of hunting the

fighters of the other. But all-out war never had to occur because the swamp had plenty of room and food for everyone.

That's no longer the case. In recent years the tribes have grown to the point where they exceed the swamp's capacity to support the population, causing serious problems. Typically this sort of pressure would cause one tribe (likely the Ssunadi, as the smaller, weaker tribe) to emigrate. Unfortunately there's no area nearby that supports the combination of primitive agriculture and hunting/gathering on which the Ssunadi have become dependent. So war becomes inevitable...at least in the eyes of some. The HoJumi, a fierce and aggressive tribe, are united in their desire to go to war and destroy the hated Ssunadi. The Ssunadi, however, are divided. About half of them, led by the biggest, toughest warriors, want to fight, even though they know the odds are against them. They feel that an honorable defeat is better than the cowardice of seeking a peaceful resolution to the problem or fleeing the swamp altogether. The other faction believes that surviving is more important than maintaining honor, and prefers to seek a new home elsewhere. While the Ssunadi continue to debate and argue, the HoJumi prepare for battle. Unless some miracle occurs, the chances of the Ssunadi surviving as a tribe, other than as HoJumi slaves perhaps, is very, very slim.

Enter One Miracle

That's the powderkeg the PCs and their friends walk into. The drumming may alert them that something unusual is going on (though even Robertson won't recognize the sounds; he's never heard or seen two Venusian tribes enter into full-blown war this way, since most tribes lead a nomadic existence).

Not long after the group enters the swamp where these two tribes live, have all the characters make rolls on *Perception* (threshold 2). Anyone who succeeds realizes the insects and small reptiles have gone uncharacteristically quiet. Give them one turn to make any preparations they want, and then a large group of lizard-men ambushes them! Depending on how the characters are traveling, the Ssunadi warriors may swoop down from the trees or come paddling toward them in one-man boats (made of dinosaur skin stretched over an *oma jolima* frame). But in any case, their intentions are defensive, not hostile. As a relatively "civilized" tribe, thanks to their shamanistic religion (see below), the Ssunadi aren't inclined to massacre the humans out of hand, but they're definitely suspicious of them.

This is a delicate encounter for the PCs. If they start shooting right off the bat, they ruin any chances of peaceful relations and an alliance with the Ssunadi (which in turn means they lose the Ssunadis' help in completing their journey). So let them make *Perception* rolls (or an *Empathy* roll with a +2 bonus, if any character has that skill); anyone who succeeds realizes the lizard-man warriors take defensive, rather than aggressive, stances and aren't immediately following through with their "attack." If no one succeeds, have Robertson shout "Wait!" in an effort to calm the situation down and prevent hostilities.

Once the tension ebbs enough for the two groups to talk, Robertson begins a halting dialogue. The Ssunadi dialect is about 80% similar to the standard Buao he speaks, so he can hold a conversation with them. (If any PC wants to learn the Ssunadi dialect of Buao, you can let them spend Experience Points to do so, but perhaps at a slow rate [such as 1-2 points per day] to represent how they gradually pick up words and grammar from exposure to lizard-man speech. Lady Alice is definitely doing this, given her knack for languages.)

Robertson learns that this group of lizard-men belongs to a tribe called the Ssunadi. They're preparing for war with another tribe, the HoJumi, so they're guarding their territory closely. The leader of these warriors, a tall, strong-looking lizard-man named Five Stumps, is a wise and insightful person who recognizes that this group of humans may be just what the Ssunadi need to give them a tail up in the coming war. He invites the group to follow him to the main Ssunadi "town" and enjoy the lizard-men's hospitality, provided they give him their word not to become hostile or violent (he's willing to make the same promise in return).

The Ssunadi: A Brief Description

Once the PCs arrive in the Ssunadi town you can introduce them to Ssunadi culture, and more importantly to the key members of Ssunadi society that they have to interact with during this part of the scenario.

Ssunadi Culture

The Ssunadi are a relatively advanced tribe of lizard-men. They consist of about a thousand individuals scattered over half a dozen villages of varying size (Five Stumps takes the PCs to the largest one, the "capital" where the chief and most other key members of society live). Until "our grandfathers' grandfathers' time" they were a smaller, typically nomadic lizard-man tribe. Then they discovered their current home marsh and its vast bounty of both animal and vegetable food sources. Rather than move on, they stayed and formed permanent settlements to take advantage of the food (and for protection against marauding dinosaurs). They've even begun to develop the rudiments of agriculture by planting and cultivating a specific type of berry-growing bush. Until their dispute with the HoJumi became serious, they led a rather prosperous existence, for lizard-men.

Unfortunately that existence is now threatened, both from without and within. The external threat is, of course, the aggressive HoJumi tribe. The internal threat is dissent within the Ssunadi themselves. Some, including most of the warriors, want to fight to the last man (if that's what it takes). Others prefer the path of peace—they think that the survival of the tribe is the most important thing, and that if they leave they can find another home somehow. The two factions seem to split the people almost evenly, and the resulting paralysis may doom the tribe no matter what they decide. The arrival of the PCs throws a spanner into the works, but could also be what preserves the Ssunadi from destruction or the loss of their way of life.

Leadership

For the most part, the Ssunadi don't need an elaborate government. Thanks to the communal nature of their society, the Ssunadi rarely get involved in serious disputes with one another. But sometimes a quarrel becomes heated, or issues of interest to all Ssunadi arise, in which case the tribe's leaders step forth.

In theory, the leader of all the Ssunadi, known by a title that translates into English simply as "Chief," makes the final decisions for the tribe when necessary. In practice, the Chief is just "first among equals" of a council of elder lizard-men composed of the oldest, wisest tribesmen from all the towns. The Chief's views carry strong weight, but in nearly all cases if the council "votes" against him, he does what the council prefers.

Religion

The Ssunadi used to have an entirely animistic religion that involved propitiation of countless nature spirits. Shamans interpreted omens, spoke to the spirits, provided healing, and in other ways administered to the spiritual needs of the tribe.

Since the Ssunadi settled into villages, their faith has changed slightly. They still believe in nature spirits, shamanic visions of the future, and the like, but several spirits have ascended to the status of true gods, with a mythology and a defined body of religious ceremony and worship practices:

- *HoOma*, the creator god, chief of all gods and spirits
- *PeAsa*, the mother goddess, wife of HoOma and goddess of women and childbirth
- *Gorran*, god of hunting and warfare
- *DoKa*, the goddess of sky, thunder, and storm, who wears a mantle made of clouds and sometimes reveals the sun or stars to her worshippers as a sign of her favor
- *Sorn*, god of fire

The Ssunadi faith preaches a more peaceful, more civilized way of life than the HoJumi lead. The Ssunadi don't attack strangers (they stop and question them, and perhaps befriend them); they

respect differences of opinion among themselves; they favor traditional roles for males and females but don't rigidly impose them.

Names

The Ssunadi give their children names based on the patterns they see on their belly skin. Five Stumps, for example, has five prominent areas of coloration that to Ssunadi eyes resemble stars. Wild River's skin striations look like a rushing river, while Flying Pterodactyl's resemble that creature in flight. There's no differentiation between male and female names, so it's impossible to tell a lizard-man's gender from his name—a male's name might involve something that humans consider "feminine" (like Green Flower or Woven Basket), or a female's name a "masculine" phenomenon (such as Strong Spear or Dinosaur Claw).

The Ssunadi Warpacks

Until recently the Ssunadi had never engaged in an actual war, only isolated skirmishing, so their "war machine" isn't particularly large or elaborately organized. It consists of approximately 200 warriors divided into four war-bands of 50 each: *Tall Dragon*; *Bold Heroes*; *Thorn Spears*; and *Enduring As Tree*.

The Ssunadi warriors recognize the leader of the Tall Dragon war-band, *Curling Vine*, as their overall "general" and chief commander.

The other war-band leaders—*Five Stumps*, *Large Spider*, and *Big-Jawed Bug*, respectively—advise him (as do the chief and elders when possible), but ultimately he makes the major strategic and tactical decisions himself. See below for more information about all of these lizard-men.

Ssunadi warriors typically carry spears, javelins, and clubs, all made from *oma jolima*. About one-third of them also carry bows. Most of them wear *oma jolima* armor.

The Warceratopses

The Ssunadi's other major war asset is a pack of three creatures whose name Robertson translates as *warceratops*.

They're triceratops-like dinosaurs that the Ssunadi make more intelligent, loyal, and, when necessary, aggressive by feeding them a special combination of herbs and potions prepared by tribal shamans. When fitted with an *oma jolima* saddle, they're easy to ride and devastatingly powerful on the battlefield. If not for the fact that



the HoJumi have *six* warceratopses, these three would give the Ssunadi a decisive advantage in many confrontations.

The three warceratops's riders—*Chartreuse Hand*, *Spear Point*, and *Four Leaves*—are practically inseparable. They do nearly everything together, and even complete one another's sentences. Naturally they're all part of the "war" faction; they want a chance to take their beloved beasts into battle.

The warceratopses represent an opportunity that Randolph Marcus can't overlook. Although they're "war machines" rather than draft or riding animals, the fact remains that riding one is the fastest, most comfortable way to cross the surface of Venus that any of the humans in this scenario have seen so far. If he could kidnap Kincaide and one of the riders (or if the Ssunadi let humans learn to ride the beasts), he could flee for the safety of the nearest German outpost and easily outdistance any humans on foot. Of course, he'd have to disable the other warceratopses and/or kill their riders so that the Ssunadi couldn't pursue him...

Warceratops

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Dinosaur **Health:** 11

Primary Attributes

Body: 6 **Charisma:** 0
Dexterity: 2 **Intelligence:** 1
Strength: 6 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2 **Initiative:** 3
Move: 8 (16)* **Defense:** 8
Perception: 4 **Stun:** 6

Skills

	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	6	12	(6)
Stealth	2	1	1*	(0+)
Survival	1	2	3	(1+)

Talents

Robust (Health +2)

Skill Aptitude (Brawl +2)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Horns	4 L	-2	14 L	(7) L
Trample	4 N	-2	14 N	(7) N

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

**Warceratopses suffer a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Warceratops Rider

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Dexterity:** 3 **Strength:** 2
Charisma: 3 **Intelligence:** 2 **Willpower:** 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move:** 5 **Perception:** 4
Initiative: 5 **Defense:** 6 **Stun:** 3
Health: 5

Skills

Archery 5, **Athletics** 4, **Brawl** 4, **Melee** 4, **Ride** 9, **Stealth** 4, **Survival** 4

Talents

Animal Affinity, Finesse Attack (Melee)

Weapons

Punch 4 N, **Bow** 7 L, **Slingshot** 6 N, **Spear** 7 L

Notable Ssunadi

Besides potentially meeting plenty of rank and file Ssunadi during their time with the tribe, the PCs (and human NPCs) are likely to interact with many of the leaders of Ssunadi society. Here are brief profiles of the Ssunadi "movers and shakers."

Black Jaws, Chief of the Ssunadi

Once one of the greatest warriors the Ssunadi had ever known, Black Jaws retired from the life he loved—stalking HoJumi fighters, raiding their villages at midnight, and hunting the fiercest dinosaurs—when a HoJumi spear pierced his left leg, leaving him partly lame. His insightfulness and innate talent for conflict soon led him into the thick of Ssunadi "politics," and within a few years he ascended to the position of chief when the old chief, Two Feathers, died of illness.

Age and experience have tempered Black Jaws's aggressiveness somewhat. In his heart he favors the war faction, but his mind tells him that the peace faction makes some points that are hard to dispute. He has yet to express a firm opinion for either side, which is one reason the debate continues. He continues to listen carefully to all arguments, but he knows the time's coming when he'll *have* to make a choice, and that his choice will likely determine what the Ssunadi will do.

Black Jaws won't greet the humans very warmly at first. He'll treat them with the same sort of respect he'd give a visiting dignitary from another tribe, but he'll remain suspicious of them until they prove their friendship for the Ssunadi. He's heard rumors of the despicable things humans have done elsewhere on Venus, so he won't hesitate to turn the "soft pink ones" out into the swamp, or even to order them served up as part of a feast, if they give him any reason to. On the other hand, if the PCs help the Ssunadi, they'll earn his eternal friendship and support.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Dexterity:** 2 **Strength:** 3
Charisma: 4 **Intelligence:** 3 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move:** 5 **Perception:** 6
Initiative: 5 **Defense:** 5 **Stun:** 3
Health: 6

Skills

	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	2	2	4	(2)
Diplomacy	4	4	8	(4)
Empathy	4	3	7	(3+)
Intimidation	4	2	6	(3)
Melee	3	3	6	(3)
Survival	3	3	6	(3)

Talents

Inspire

Resources

Status 2 (Chief), Followers

Flaw

Lame

Weapons

	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Stone Dagger	1 L	0	7 L	(3+) L
Bow	2 L	0	6 L	(3) L

Upward Raptor, High Shamaness

The chief shamaness and “high priestess” of the Ssunadi is Upward Raptor, a middle-aged lizard-woman who has been a shamaness ever since she began having prophetic dreams as a child. She possesses a particularly strong gift for foretelling the future based on omens or casting shells, and her knowledge of the medicinal properties of swamp herbs is second to none. The Ssunadi never do anything as a people without consulting her first, and individual tribesmen often speak to her before making important life decisions.

Upward Raptor adamantly refuses to offer an opinion about war with the HoJumi. “I merely interpret the will of the spirits, and the spirits have not spoken to me on this matter,” is all she says when pressed on the issue. But she admits the spirits have told her that a major, unexpected change is in store for the Ssunadi.

The arrival of strange beings—humans—seems to Upward Raptor to be the harbinger of that “unexpected change.” War brings easily-predicted changes, but who knows what effect humans may have on Ssunadi society? They could destroy it, uproot it, or transform it with their strange ways and “magical devices.” Thus she takes great interest in the humans, watching them openly or secretly nearly every waking minute, and talking to them whenever she gets the chance. Eventually she’ll come to see them as the Ssunadis’ salvation. She’ll support whatever they want to do as “the will of the gods”—provided they don’t offend her in some way, or do something so monumentally stupid that they put the entire tribe at unnecessary risk.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 2	Dexterity: 2	Strength: 1	Charisma: 4	Intelligence: 3
Willpower: 3	Secondary Attributes			
Size: 0	Move: 3	Perception: 6	Initiative: 5	Defense: 4
Stun: 2	Health: 5	Skills		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (Venusian Spirit World)	3	2	5	(2+)
Performance	4	2	6	(3)
Diplomacy	4	3	7	(3+)
Empathy	3	3	6	(3)
Medicine	3	4	7	(3+)
Melee	1	1	2	(1)
Science (Chemistry)	3	2	5	(2+)
Talents				
Skill Aptitude (Medicine)				
Resources				
Status 2 (Shamaness)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	0 N	(0) N
Stone Dagger	1 L	0	3 L	(1+) L

Curling Vine

The leader of the Tall Dragon war-band also commands the Ssunadi warriors as a whole. He earned this prominent place in the tribe through a combination of fighting skill, tactical cleverness, and defeating all of his rivals in one-on-one combat (often with fatal results for his opponent).

Curling Vine has a reputation for ruthlessness and practicality, and it’s one he deserves. Most Ssunadi take care not to anger him

or question his judgment too openly. But despite his often harsh exterior, he loves his people and would unhesitatingly sacrifice his own life to save them if he had to. He rubs nearly everyone the wrong way sooner or later, but he isn’t a wrong person. If the PCs interact with him enough, particularly through fighting by his side on the battlefield, they’ll earn his respect, and hopefully vice-versa.

Initially, though, Curling Vine is highly suspicious of the humans. He’s a traditionalist through and through, and these strange new beings, with their upsetting ways, roil his thoughts and make him lash his tail with frustration. He won’t give them any slack at all; if they falter in the slightest or show any weakness, he’ll be right there to take advantage of it.

Not surprisingly, Curling Vine is the head of the war faction in Ssunadi society. As far as he’s concerned, surviving by running away isn’t surviving at all; it’s just a way of dying slowly. Better to fall in battle, if fall the Ssunadi must, than to betray their long history of valor, honor, and courage. Even if the tribe votes to leave the swamp, he’ll stay behind to fight a one-lizard-man guerrilla war against the HoJumi. Once he realizes what powerful allies the humans can be in a war against the HoJumi, he’ll definitely start to warm up to them.

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Dexterity: 3 Strength: 4
Charisma: 2 Intelligence: 2 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Move: 7 Perception: 4
Initiative: 5 Defense: 5 Stun: 2
Health: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	4	2	6	(3)
Brawl	4	5	9	(4+)
Melee	4	5	9	(4+)
Stealth	3	3	6	(3)

Talents

Agile, Flurry

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	9 N	(4+)
Stone Dagger	1 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Spear	3 L	0	12 L	(6) L
Oma Jolima Club	3 N	0	12 N	(6) N

Five Stumps

In contrast to his commander, Five Stumps, leader of the Bold Heroes war-band, is open to change and new possibilities. Noble and intelligent, he sees in the humans an opportunity to save his people somehow—which is why he invites them to the town. He doesn’t know *how* they’ll save the Ssunadi, but he has a gut feeling they’ll do it somehow.

Five Stumps supports the war faction, though he’s not as intense about it as Curling Vine. He thinks death in battle is an honorable death, but the idea of his people being wiped out or enslaved troubles him. If he sees a third option, or a way to make the war option more certain, he’ll take it, regardless of the cost to himself.

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Dexterity: 2 Strength: 2
Charisma: 2 Intelligence: 3 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Move: 4 Perception: 5
Initiative: 5 Defense: 5 Stun: 2
Health: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	2	4	6	(3)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Diplomacy	2	3	5	(2+)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Calculated Defense, Intelligent

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N
Sling Shot	1 N	0	7 N	(3+) N
Bow	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L

Large Spider

The captain of the Thorn Spears war-band is almost the opposite of Five Stumps. Surly, temperamental, overbearing, and a martinet, he's not particularly popular with his warriors—or anyone else among the Ssunadi (except for Black Jaws). Only his consummate skill as a warrior and scout earns him a place in Ssunadi society. Among other things, he's his people's best archer. The humans' firearms utterly fascinate him.

Unfortunately for all concerned, Large Spider is more than just an annoying bully—he's a traitor. Having seen the HoJumi fight first-hand on many occasions, he's convinced that the Ssunadi cannot win this war. The HoJumi simply have too many warriors and are, as he puts it, "proper thinkers" on the question of war. So he's begun selling them information about Ssunadi plans. In exchange he gets useful objects and a promise that he'll get a leading role in the HoJumi war pack. (The HoJumi actually intend to kill him when he's no longer of use, of course, but he doesn't realize that.) The need to keep the HoJumi informed about the humans and their actions may strain his ability to maintain secrecy. If captured he'll be ashamed and (sincerely) offer to do anything he can to make amends.

Sisthu

These small, flying reptiles are able (a) to fly home like carrier pigeons, and (b) can memorize short messages like parrots. At some point Five Stumps can show the PCs how the Ssunadi employ sisthu to send messages among themselves. This way their use by Large Spider won't come as a complete surprise to the PCs. For example, Five Stumps could carry a sisthu in a wicker cage and release it to inform Black Jaws that he's bringing strangers to the town.

To make a sisthu send a message, a character has to roll successfully on *Animal Handling*. Sisthu are very swift, but it is possible to follow them to their destination with a successful roll on *Athletics* (threshold 4). Catching a flying sisthu requires a roll on either *Athletics*, *Survival* or *Stealth* with threshold 3. Its message can then be found out by a roll on *Animal Handling*. To shoot one of these small animals, a successful roll on *Firearms* or *Archery* with threshold 3 is required. A hit will kill or severely wound it.

If Randolph Marcus is the only one who finds out what Large Spider's up to, he may try to use the situation to his own advantage.

When Large Spider learns something he wants to communicate to his HoJumi allies, try to arrange matters so he can slip away and inform a HoJumi scout who lurks nearby at all times awaiting him. That way he becomes a suspect when the PCs realize one of the Ssunadi is a traitor. If that's not possible, assume he passes along his message by means of *sisthu* (see box below).

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Dexterity: 4 Strength: 3
Charisma: 2 Intelligence: 2 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Move: 7 Perception: 4
Initiative: 6 Defense: 6 Stun: 2
Health: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	4	5	9	(4+)
Athletics	3	1	4	(2)
Brawl	3	2	5	(2+)
Con	2	3	5	(2+)
Melee	3	2	5	(2+)
Stealth	4	2	6	(3)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Robust, Skill Aptitude (Archery)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	5 N	(2+) N
Bow	2 L	0	11 L	(5+) L
Stone Dagger	1 L	0	6 L	(3) L

Big-Jawed Bug

One of the biggest, strongest, toughest lizard-men on Venus, Big-Jawed Bug is a stolid war-band leader who doesn't balk at even the most dangerous orders. Other Ssunadi consider him humorless and dull, but in private with people he likes or respects he's often talkative and shows a penetrating intelligence.

Big-Jawed Bug supports the war faction. The idea of giving up his wonderful home and migrating into the wilderness to end up who knows where terrifies him—he'd rather die fighting the HoJumi.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 Dexterity: 2 Strength: 4
Charisma: 1 Intelligence: 3 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Move: 6 Perception: 5
Initiative: 5 Defense: 5 Stun: 4
Health: 7

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	2	2	4	(2)
Athletics	4	2	6	(3)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Melee	4	3	7	(3+)
Survival	3	2	5	(2+)

Talents

Iron Jaw, Robust

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	8 N	(4) N
Spear	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Stone Dagger	1 L	0	8 L	(4) L

Broken Tree

Calm and composed in even the most trying circumstances, Broken Tree radiates tranquility and wisdom, bringing comfort and insight to those around her. She's a junior shamaness of the Ssunadi, subject to the commands of Upward Raptor, but nevertheless is quite popular and has a large following. She leads the peace faction. From Broken Tree's perspective, being wiped out (or enslaved) just to make a point about honor and courage is foolish. "We know our warriors are brave," she says. "We know they have honor. They know this as well. There is no need for them to sacrifice their lives to prove the point. Let them come with us and protect us from the dangers of the world beyond the marsh until we find a new home. Better to have them alive among us in a strange land than for all of us to die."

Broken Tree claims the spirits have spoken to her and advised her to take this course of action. Upward Raptor, who says they have *not* spoken to her, refuses to offer an opinion about Broken Tree's claims (though privately she's skeptical of them; she thinks Broken Tree believes what she says, but is hearing from the gods what she wants to hear). More than a few Ssunadi wonder why the gods would talk to a junior shamaness but not the high shamaness, leading them to question the legitimacy of Broken Tree's statements. Others see this as proof that the spirits support the peace faction and that until Upward Raptor openly declares her opinion, the gods will have nothing to say to her.

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Dexterity: 2** **Strength: 1**
Charisma: 4 **Intelligence: 2** **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move: 3** **Perception: 4**
Initiative: 4 **Defense: 4** **Stun: 2**
Health: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Empathy	2	2	4	(2)
Medicine	2	3	5	(2+)
Performance	4	3	7	(3+)
Science (Chemistry)	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Captive, Charismatic

Interacting with the Ssunadi

Regardless of whether the PCs choose to help the Ssunadi (see below) or not, they can still interact with the lizard-men before continuing their journey. This can include:

Trade

The Ssunadi happily trade with the PCs—assuming the PCs have anything worth trading. At this point the PCs' clothes are probably a lost cause, and most of the supplies they have left are vital to their survival as they continue their trip. But they may have gathered dinosaur feathers or other things along the way that the Ssunadi want. Furthermore, the Ssunadi value things the PCs may not think have much worth at this point. This includes jewelry (which commands a high price among the Ssunadi, who have nothing like it), empty shell casings, leftover buttons and buckles

from ruined clothing, and the like. Since the Ssunadi probably give them better weapons gratis (see below), the PCs can trade for body armor (which the Ssunadi have to custom make to fit each human), food, tools, or even the services of a Ssunadi guide.

Weapons

Once the Ssunadi and the PCs realize they can trust one another, as a sign of good faith the Ssunadi provide them with better weapons than the crude ones they made at the start of their journey. This eliminates the -1 penalty for poorly-made weapons.

Survival Training

Assuming the Ssunadi and the PCs form an alliance, the lizard-men can teach them how to better survive the dangers and discomforts of Venus. Robertson may already have done this, but if not this is a great opportunity for any character to spend Experience Points on *Survival* or similar skills. Alternately, you may assume that the lizard-men's training eliminates any *Survival* check penalties the PCs incur for being on a planet other than Earth.

Subjects of Prophecy

If and when you're ready to ratchet up the emotional stakes a little bit, arrange a meeting between Upward Raptor and the PCs. (You may want to assume she has refused to talk to them so far, instead sending junior shamans if she has a message to convey.) The Ssunadi chief shamaness has said on many recent occasions



that the spirits have told her a significant, unpredictable change is coming for the Ssunadi. When she first meets the humans, she examines them closely (some of them, including Lady Alice and Randolph Marcus, may even take slight offense at her attention). After she finishes her inspection, she proclaims, “The spirits have spoken! The forces of transformation have arrived in the form of the pink tailless ones. It is they who will lead the Ssunadi down the path we must take. Treat them with all honor and courtesy!” Then she falls silent.

Upward Raptor won’t explain her words or offer a further opinion about the humans, saying that to do so would interfere with the will of the gods—the humans must make their own choices, “unfettered” by her wisdom. If asked whether this affects her views on war versus peace, she says only, “All debate now is meaningless. It is up to the pink tailless ones to choose our path.”

HoJumi Attack

If the PCs are on the fence about whether to help the Ssunadi against the HoJumi (see below), you can emphasize the fact that the Ssunadi are good and honorable while the HoJumi are cruel and aggressive by having the HoJumi stage a sneak attack on the town one night. It’s just a raid, not a serious assault. But the viciousness of the attack (in which the HoJumi don’t hesitate to kill women and children as well as warriors, and to set huts on fire) should leave no doubt in the PCs’ minds as to who the good guys and bad guys are in this situation.

The War

It doesn’t take long for Curling Vine, Five Stumps, and the other pack leaders of the Ssunadi to realize that the humans could have two important effects: first, they could convince the Ssunadi to support the cause of war; second and more importantly, they can help the Ssunadi fight—and win—that war. With that in mind, they make the humans an offer: if the humans join forces with the Ssunadi to fight and defeat the HoJumi, after the war is won the Ssunadi will provide the humans with (a) guides to see them safely through the swamp and then to their ultimate destination (since they hope to open up trade with the human settlements); and (b) supplies to help them during the rest of their journey (food, extra weapons, and so forth).

Colonel Ashingham and Robertson firmly support fighting for the Ssunadi. Sir Hugh is less enthusiastic, but he sees real potential in “getting in on the ground floor” of trading with one of the few “civilized” lizard-man tribes, so he’s willing to fight as well. Marcus hopes the fighting provides a chance for him to kidnap Kincaide and escape, so he’ll opt to join the Ssunadi cause. Kincaide and Lady Alice would prefer to keep traveling, but if the vote goes against them they’ll pitch in as best they can. (Kincaide, for example, might use his scientific skills to design Venus’s first “siege engine.”)

Seal Team 1889

The PCs may wonder what they can do to help. They’re only about a dozen among armies of hundreds, and they’re not even

used to fighting in this environment. It’s true that a group of humans isn’t likely to be of significant help in the middle of a pitched battle, but they may underestimate their value as “special forces” soldiers to accomplish specific, crucial, missions for the Ssunadi. You should let them discuss among themselves what they want to do and implement plans to do it, but some of the possibilities include:

- disabling, killing, or best of all stealing warceratopses: the HoJumi have six warceratopses to the Ssunadi’s three. That’s a serious advantage. If the PCs can neutralize them somehow, that not only weakens the HoJumi, it strikes a serious blow to enemy morale. The best thing to do would be to steal the beasts, thus diminishing the HoJumi forces while strengthening the Ssunadi. But that’s also the most dangerous option, since riding a warceratops when one isn’t its trained rider can quickly lead to all sorts of problems (and hilarity).

- kidnapping or killing HoJumi warpack leaders: the PCs may have rifles (at least one NPC, Robertson, does), and that means they can function as snipers, picking off important HoJumi from a distance well beyond what lizard-men’s arrows can reach. If they’re ambitious, they might even try to kidnap some of the HoJumi commanders for interrogation.

- raids on HoJumi positions: a small group of PCs can penetrate HoJumi territory and make sneak attacks on their villages, waylay their messengers, steal or ruin their food stores, disrupt their supply lines, and so forth. The lizard-folk don’t have writing, so the PCs can’t steal crucial military documents, but they may be able to deduce the HoJumi strategies by looking at pictures they’ve drawn on the ground.

- disabling the enemy army: by slipping poison into the food supply to make soldiers sick (or dead), luring large groups of soldiers into wild goose chases, using their superior scientific knowledge and skills for the purposes of trickery, and the like, the PCs can hamper the HoJumi warpacks in serious ways. This evens the odds, making a Ssunadi victory much more likely because they’re no longer significantly outnumbered.

Unfortunately there’s a fly in the ointment the PCs aren’t aware of yet: Large Spider. The treacherous war-leader can inform the HoJumi about every plan the humans come up with (assuming they don’t keep their activities secret from all the Ssunadi). Thus the HoJumi will prepare ambushes, traps, and counter-attacks to take advantage of the information provided by the traitor. After this happens a few times, the PCs should realize there’s a serpent in their midst—though finding him won’t be easy. If the PCs don’t come to this realization on their own, have Five Stumps or Upward Raptor hint at it until they do.

Since the HoJumi have at least some knowledge of the PCs’ plans, preparations, and activities, there’s a strong possibility that they’ll capture the PCs at some point using nets, overwhelming force of numbers, or similar methods. (Of course, there’s also a chance they could seriously injure or even kill the PCs, but that doesn’t make for a very enjoyable adventure, so try to substitute “capture” for less pleasant fates.) If that happens, you should run an adventure where the PCs have to cope with captivity and eventually escape from the HoJumi stockade. This won’t be easy. The HoJumi keep prisoners in deep pits covered with “doors” made from a bamboo-like plant. They enclose the pits area (which is on an isolated island away from any of their villages) with a strong, tall fence made from the same material. Tough, well-armed guards oversee the place at all hours.

HoJumi Warpack Leaders

Some of the key figures among the HoJumi include:

Usar, the Great Chief

Among the HoJumi, a chief rules each village. Each of them is a vassal of the Great Chief, who functions in effect as a king. Usar, the current Great Chief, is a greedy and unprincipled lizard-man who has no qualms about crushing the entire Ssunadi civilization if it gets him more land, wealth, slaves, and lizard-women. He's easy to spot on the battlefield due to his well-made armor, elaborate headdress, and bodyguard of elite warriors.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 3	Dexterity: 2	Strength: 3		
Charisma: 3	Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 5	Perception: 5		
Initiative: 4	Defense: 6*	Stun: 3		
Health: 6				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	2	5	2+
Diplomacy	3	2	5	2+
Melee	3	4	7	3+
Intimidation	3	5	8	4
Con	3	2	5	2+
Talents				
Fearsome, Inspire				
Resources				
Status 3 (Great Chief)				
Flaw				
Greed				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	5 N	(2+) N
Spear	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L

*Usar receives a +1 bonus on his Defense rating from his armor.

HoJumi Shamaness

The Ssunadi don't know this lizard-woman's name, but she's frequently seen in the Great Chief's retinue, offering advice and, if necessary, the use of her shamanic powers. It's said that she commands a trio of powerful spirits who do her bidding—which often includes slaying her enemies.

The Scar-Faced One

The HoJumi's greatest warrior and their leader, the Scar-Faced One is the strongest, roughest, toughest, and ugliest lizard-man the Ssunadi have ever seen—he dwarfs even Big-Jawed Bug. His favored weapon is an enormous club studded with sharp bits of stone.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 3	Dexterity: 3	Strength: 5		
Charisma: 1	Intelligence: 1	Willpower: 2		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 8	Perception: 3		
Initiative: 4	Defense: 6	Stun: 3		
Health: 7				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	5	4	9	(4+)
Brawl	5	4	9	(4+)
Melee	5	5	10	(5)
Survival	1	2	3	(2+)
Talents				
Flurry, Robust				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	9 N	(4+) N
Spiked Club	2 L	0	12 L	(6) L
Stone Knife	1 L	0	11 L	(5+) L

Kassu the Spear

A bold and (by HoJumi standards) honorable warrior, Kassu is known for his consummate skill with the spear (both thrown and in melee). He wears heavy necklaces strung with a finger-bone from each warrior he's slain.



Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Dexterity: 2** **Strength: 3**
Charisma: 3 **Intelligence: 3** **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move: 5** **Perception: 5**
Initiative: 5 **Defense: 4** **Stun: 2**
Health: 6

Skills

	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	3	4	7	(3+)
Diplomacy	3	3	6	(3)
Melee	3	4	7	(3+)
Stealth	2	3	5	(3)
Survival	3	1	4	(2)

Talents

Bold Attack (Archery), Guardian

Weapons

	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Spear (Ranged)	1 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Spear	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Stone Dagger	1 L	0	8 L	(4) L

Suchakk the War Shamaness

Warrior and shamaness both, Suchakk invokes the dread spirits of blood, violence, and weaponry to make herself unstoppable in

battle—or so she thinks. So far the record seems to bear her out, but she's never confronted humans armed with guns and metal blades.

Victory of Defeat?

It's up to you to decide, with infinite GM wisdom, whether the Ssunadi or the HoJumi win this war, and what effect victory or defeat has on the PCs and the other humans. If the Ssunadi win—the most likely outcome, thanks to having the PCs on their side—they'll keep their bargain with the PCs. If only a few HoJumi are left, they'll incorporate them into the Ssunadi tribe; otherwise they'll drive them from the swamp to find another home.

If the HoJumi win, the PCs' lives just got a lot more complicated. That probably means either (a) the HoJumi captured them in battle, or (b) they had to flee when it became obvious the Ssunadi would lose. In the former case they lose their firearms and other possessions, and then have to figure out a way to escape from captivity/slavery. Even if they get away from the HoJumi, if they have to leave their guns and gear behind, the odds of their surviving the rest of the trip to the British outpost are mighty slim.

One way or another, though, the PCs and other surviving humans eventually get back on the road.

Part Four: The End of the Journey

Whether they leave with Ssunadi help as victors, or flee in the wake of a disastrous defeat, the humans resume their trek to the British outpost. (If they have a Ssunadi guide, assume all travel days are "Good" days, and possibly "Great" days instead.) By the time they leave the vast swamp where the Ssunadi and HoJumi live, they're well over halfway to their destination. That doesn't mean they're out of danger, though:

Any of the encounters or incidents described in Part Two that you haven't used yet, or that you'd like to re-use, could occur during this part of the scenario. In particular, dinosaur attacks shouldn't stop being a potential danger until the characters reach a human outpost. Hopefully, now that the Ssunadi have provided better weapons (and perhaps training), the adventurers will have an easier time dealing with any carnivorous reptiles.

Marcus's mission

Second, Randolph Marcus knows he's running out of time. The closer the group gets to the British outpost, the worse his chances of completing his mission successfully become—and the more strongly he has to consider the final option of killing Roger Kincaide. He has a few cards left to play before he has to take that drastic step, though. For example:

- he can continue to argue that the group should head for the nearer German outpost rather than push on to the British one. If some of the humans have died or become weakened through injury or disease, he can point out that their chances of making it another forty (or however many) miles through the dangerous Cytherean wilderness are dropping rapidly due to lack of manpower. (This is especially true if Robertson is one of the casualties.) Eventually he may convince enough of the NPCs to cause a serious discussion, or maybe even a change of destination—though Kincaide, at least, will insist on trying for the British outpost until such time

as the rest of the group says it will head for the German outpost without him if necessary.

- if he still has his Derringer and bullets for it (which is likely) and the rest of the group is out of ammunition (which is at least a strong possibility at this point), he may try to kidnap Kincaide at gunpoint. In that case he'll head for the German outpost with Kincaide, hoping that if they don't make it, at least they'll both die and at best the British will only get Kincaide's fragmentary notes (he's not as organized as he should be) and prototypes.

- he might have learned something from the Ssunadi that he could use to his advantage now. For example, perhaps they trained him to ride warceratopses. If the PCs have a chance to catch a triceratops and tame it, he could then steal it and escape with Kincaide. Or, while spending time with the Ssunadi shamans, he might have picked up some knowledge of Venusian herbal lore that would allow him to poison the other humans and flee with Kincaide as his prisoner.

New Perils

Besides using (or re-using) encounters from Part Two, you can create some new threats for the group that are specific to this part of their journey. These include:

German Patrol

Neither the Germans nor any other colonizers of Venus regularly patrol the deep jungles and swamps; that would be dangerous and profitless. But if they have good reason to send a patrol out to look for something valuable—such as a lost scientist who's developed a way to make liftwood work on Venus—they'll do so. Abteilung Z

or a powerful German business entity (such as Siemens & Halske) might order or persuade officials at Venusstadt (or another German settlement) to send a patrol out to find Roger Kincaide.

For that matter, if the British, Russians, or Italians get the idea that Kincaide survived, they might send patrols out to look for him as well. It's possible that two or more of these patrols could get into a skirmish over Kincaide, with yet another side (possibly even the Germans) swooping in as rescuers. (Though of course, the PCs and NPCs won't necessarily realize that at the time.)

If a German patrol gets close, Randolph Marcus makes his move. He seizes Kincaide and holds him at gunpoint, shouting to the patrol in German that he's an agent of Abteilung Z and these other people are enemies of the Kaiser. (He's lying, of course, but it's the easiest way to get the Germans' attention.) What happens after that depends on the PCs' heroic efforts and luck, but don't forget that, unlike the PCs, the German soldiers are well-armed. The PCs may once again find themselves taken captive and have to find a way to escape (preferably with Kincaide) before they reach a German outpost or town (at which point the chance of escape becomes slim at best, and the chances of being summarily executed so Germany can keep Kincaide's fate secret rise considerably).

HoJumi Vengeance

If the PCs provided crucial help that allowed the Ssunadi to defeat the HoJumi, a group of surviving HoJumi soldiers—possibly led by the Scar-Faced One or some other skilled, powerful commander—may pursue them to seek vengeance. Dinosaurs are plenty dangerous, but a bitterly enraged squad of skilled HoJumi soldiers willing to give their lives to kill the people who helped destroy their tribe make a tyrannosaur seem tame. These reptilian commandos will stalk the humans without faltering and use every trick and sneak attack they know to ensure that the HoJumi are avenged.

The Final Dramatic Turn

Whatever new threats they face (and hopefully survive), the PCs are now getting close to the British outpost, so you need to arrange a final, climactic cliffhanger to conclude the adventure. Ideally you should pace the end of the scenario to keep the dramatic tension high and action almost non-stop, but that's not always easy to do when you have to juggle so many NPCs and events, so plan ahead as best you can.

The key to the cliffhanger is having some form of help (most likely a British patrol) ready to come to the PCs' aid. So the PCs should face peril after peril—perhaps escaping a HoJumi vengeance squad, only to fall into the hands of the Italians, who in turn get cut down by a German patrol intent on acquiring Kincaide at any cost—to create a situation where things seemingly couldn't get any worse. Just as the situation looks inescapably grim, the British show up and the final battle begins in earnest. Or the two- or three-way battle discussed above could bring British rescuers on the run.

But of course it's no fun for the PCs to have to depend on outside assistance too strongly. Arrange the situation so they have to risk their lives to help their rescuers as part of the confrontation, or so that their skills prove crucial to the overall rescue somehow.

On the other hand, if things tilt in favor of the PCs too quickly, complicate matters. Perhaps a German soldier sneaks in close enough to snatch Kincaide and run for it. If worse comes to worst, remember Chandler's Law: "When in doubt, have a man come through a door with a gun in his hand." In this case that could mean a fourth patrol showing up to try to grab Kincaide, or better yet some rapacious dinosaurs attracted by the sounds and smells of gunfire. It's great when the Russian patrol suddenly stops firing at you—it's less great when the three or four tyrannosaurs that just crushed the Russians come looming out of the mist and gunsmoke and try to eat you too!

German Soldiers

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Dexterity: 3	Strength: 2
Charisma: 1	Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Move: 5	Perception: 4
Initiative: 5	Defense: 5	Stun: 2

Health: 4

Skills

Brawl 3, Firearms 6, Melee 4, Survival 4

Talents

Rapid Shot, Vigorous Defense

Weapons

Knife 5 L, Punch 3 N, Rifle 9 L

Conclusion

Barring tragedy or the players' dice turning on them, you should now be able to bring the scenario to a happy conclusion. Either the British patrol that arrived to help out can escort them back to the outpost, or they can make their way to it without any further dangers rearing their ugly heads. Once the story of the group's adventures gets back to Earth, the PCs are sure to be lionized for their heroics; newspaper stories and perhaps even book or lecture tour deals may follow!

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Note: some of these titles were translated into English with the help of Professor Hapworth's Amazing Pan-English Stereopticon Reader.

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Everything Jules Verne could have written.
Everything H. G. Wells should have written.
Everything Arthur Conan Doyle thought of
but never published – because it was too fantastic.

SPACE

1889

Thunders of Venus

The exploration of Venus was ill-fated for the British right from the start. All three of their Venus expeditions between 1874 and 1876 disappeared without a trace. The surviving expedition members could not be rescued until years later when—to the embarrassment of the Empire—a German zeppelin recovered them. Ever since, the British have been searching for ways to stop the decaying process the precious liftwood of their ships is exposed to on the Morning Star. The British hope to regain air supremacy on Venus now lies in the young and ingenious scientist Roger Kincaide. Over the years he has developed the so-called 'Kincaide Field' and the day has come that he wants to field-test his invention with the airship *Aphrodite*. The player characters are invited to join the maiden flight. A day of celebration, that could change the course of future history—if it weren't for the Thunders of Venus that turn the cruise into a fierce struggle for survival...

This adventure is set on Venus. A test flight of an experimental air ship ends in a catastrophe and the player characters, surviving crew and guests find themselves in the middle of the Venusian jungle. Will they be able to fight their way through to the next human outpost? Will they survive the threats of the jungle or will they end up as raptor food? What are they going to do when they are caught in the crossfire of a conflict between two rival Lizard-men tribes? And why can't they shake the feeling that someone might have sabotaged the whole thing...?

The adventurers should be favorable towards the British Empire which in turn should trust them. The events in this adventure are especially suited for characters experienced in the wilderness. Be they Adventurers, Explorers, Hunters, Survivors of all kinds, Doctors or Soldiers, they will all be able to put their skills to use. However, social skills will be useful as well, so that Celebrities, Moneybags, or Academics, seemingly lost in the jungle at first, will have their chance to shine too.

